

Massachusetts Food Plan—Facilitating Entity

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September 9, 2013



METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING COUNCIL

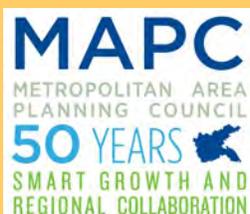
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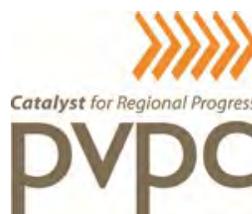
Metropolitan Area Planning Council

In Partnership With:

⚙️ **Franklin Regional Council of Governments;**

⚙️ **Pioneer Valley Planning Commission; and**

⚙️ **Massachusetts Workforce Alliance**



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1. PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

This project comes at a time when one in five households with children in Massachusetts is unable to afford enough food, when farmland continues to be converted to other uses across the state, and when economic recovery from the recent recession has not yet reached many individuals in the Commonwealth. At the same time, our state and other states are experiencing a resurgence of family farms, an explosion of farmer's markets, and a serious and long-standing commitment by consumers to buy local food. Our food system in Massachusetts is vulnerable to the uncertainties in our global food system due to climate disruptions and the pressures on our farmers to navigate an increasingly complex regulatory system; and our residents are grappling with obesity-related health issues. Despite this, we are fortunate to have opportunities to generate energy on farms and by using food waste, to have our anti-hunger advocates integrated into the local food system - as evidenced by the increasing number of farmer's markets that accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits - and to have a long-standing commitment to smart growth and agricultural preservation. Because of this confluence of complex challenges and opportunities in our food system, Massachusetts has come to a point where a strategic, well-constructed Statewide Strategic Food System Plan is a necessity.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and its Project Team, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) recognize the enormous importance of this project to Massachusetts residents. This project highlights ecological resilience, economic vitality, social equity, public health, and food security. We also recognize the importance of focused efforts to support our farms and fisheries, as well as individuals and businesses involved in other sectors of our food system.

There is great opportunity to boost economic development through sound food system planning and policy. Today Massachusetts produces 4% to 5% of the food it consumes, and without concentrated efforts to revitalize our food system, our dependence on foods shipped thousands of miles will likely persist, our vital farmland will continue to be developed, and our dairy farms and fisheries will further decline. Recent studies estimate that with existing agricultural land and food production facilities, we could produce up to 17% of in-state food demand, consistent with what the region around Burlington, Vermont has achieved. An even more ambitious vision, proposed by Food Solutions New England, calls for the region to produce at least 50% of what it consumes. This aspiration assumes access to fresh, healthy foods for all residents, a shift to a healthier diet, a greater use of sustainable farming practices, forest conservation practices, energy conservation, and the use of Smart Growth strategies for development in rural and urban areas.

In order for the Statewide Strategic Food System Plan to boost agricultural production, processing and distribution, it must build on work already in process at the regional and local level, and make connections between those efforts. It must analyze existing conditions related to our food system, such as inputs, production, processing, distribution, access, and waste. It must also gather input from farmers, processors, and others working in the food system, as well as those individuals experiencing challenges with food access and food insecurity. Further, an effective and sustainable Statewide Strategic Food System Plan must garner public support and make local, regional and state-level recommendations with methods and/or indicators for measuring success. These indicators must include not only measures for production, processing, and benefits to farmers, but also measures for food access and food insecurity. Finally, to be sustainable and successful, recommendations in the Statewide

Strategic Food System Plan must be fully integrated into ongoing and existing regional comprehensive planning efforts.

MAPC and its project partners believe this planning effort is inextricably linked to economic development, ecological resilience, social equity and public health in the Commonwealth. We believe some of the most pressing topics related to food system planning in the state and region include economic development, hunger and food security, building food system infrastructure, farmland preservation, access, and affordability, workforce development, food system infrastructure improvements, climate disruptions, clean energy development, over-reliance on the global food system and state and federal regulatory barriers. We look forward to working with the Massachusetts Food Policy Council (MFPC) to prioritize our major topics of focus for the Massachusetts Strategic Food System Security Plan.

2. PROJECT NARRATIVE

MAPC and its partners will work with the MFPC and its Advisory Committee to develop a sustainable Statewide Strategic Food System Plan (Food System Plan) that will establish a vision, goals, objectives, implementation strategies, and progress indicators for a strong, vibrant, and resilient food system. As professional planners, we appreciate the importance of establishing a vision for the food system, such as that developed by Food Solutions New England and its partners. It will be critical to work with MFPC and its Advisory Committee to develop a collective understanding of where Massachusetts fits into this vision, and what the specific food vision is for Massachusetts. We will apply our combined expertise in land use and food systems planning, economic development planning, workforce development, community engagement, spatial data collection and analysis, and coordination and facilitation to ensure that the diverse food-related constituents across the Commonwealth are heard, their concerns are addressed, and their ideas are considered.

A. PROPOSED WORK PLAN

The Food System Plan is divided into two phases, as suggested by the RFR: Phase 1 – Approach and Communications Planning and Phase II – Policy and Food System Plan Development.

PHASE I - APPROACH AND COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING

Task 1. Project Management and Communications

The Project Team greatly welcomes the opportunity to provide expert planning and facilitation services to the MFPC and advisors on this significant planning effort. The team is structured so that MAPC will serve as the overall lead of the project, while the partner Regional Planning Agencies will lead tasks for which they possess the greatest strengths and experience. The Project Team will also engage two other organizations – Mass Workforce Alliance and a yet-to-be-determined Minority and Women Business Enterprise (M/WBE) specializing in public outreach – to round out our powerful team. Please see the Project Team Partner Descriptions and Qualifications section for more information.

As professional planners, we fully understand the importance of open and effective communication. We intend to convene the planning team on a monthly basis via conferencing, emailed communications, and in-person meetings. We also propose a regularly scheduled check-in, possibly bi-monthly, with the MFPC to ensure that the team continues to expand and improve upon the Council Advisory Committee.

Key components of our project management strategy to ensure the successful completion of the Food System Plan include:

- Establishing a project management and communications process outlining roles, responsibilities, expectations and project marketing/communications with MFPC and MDAR.
- Finalizing the project work plan, budget and schedule with MFPC and MDAR, with the assistance of project partners; and
- Managing and overseeing fiduciary responsibilities for all subcontractors.

The Project Team recognizes the 18-month time frame and is committed to a project management and communications process that meets MFPC’s needs. The PMCP is intended to be a “living document” and will be reviewed and updated as the project advances. Our proposed PMCP includes regular communication and information sharing among all project partners. The key features are:

- Early and informed identification of critical issues;
- Flexibility and responsiveness to Food Policy Council needs and priorities; and
- High standards for the quality of public engagement, deliverables produced, and project communication.

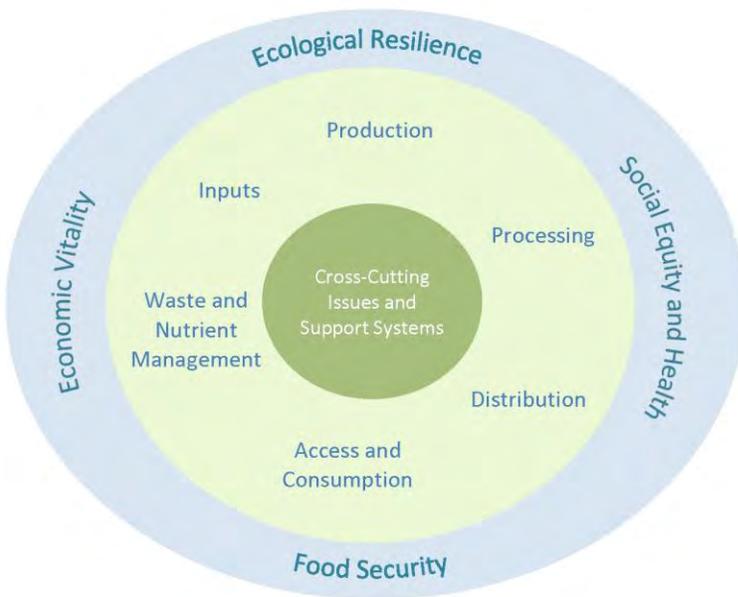
Deliverables:

1. Project Management and Communications Process
2. Finalized Work Plan, Budget and Schedule

Task 2. Food System Plan Advisory Group and Working Groups

The Project Team will establish a Food System Plan Advisory Group and working groups as needed to help Project Team members work through the intricacies of the planning process. Throughout this project, the Advisory Group will ensure that critical stakeholders and experts in food system related sectors are engaged to provide vital knowledge and feedback. The Food System Plan Advisory Group will provide the following value:

- Serve as the focal point of engagement activities;
- Act as content advisors;
- Represent constituents during plan development of the Food System Plan; and
- Help drive implementation and sustainability after project completion.



Project partners will support and facilitate 4 to 8 Advisory Group meetings for the duration of 18-month project. These meetings will be held at geographically representative locations, as feasible. Potential Advisory Group members will be carefully selected with the assistance of the MFPC to provide equitable representation from the food system sectors, as shown in the accompanying figure adapted from the food system diagram used by the MFPC. Advisory Group members could include individuals focused on farming, food policy, food security, public health, hunger and emergency food, workforce development,

academia, institutional food, land preservation, ecological protection, economic development, waste management and composting, as well as agricultural service organizations, nonprofit advocacy groups, nonprofit agricultural assistance programs; local, state, and federal agricultural agencies. We will build

from our positive relationships with agricultural preservation and enhancement partners such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Massachusetts Farm Bureau, and Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources to ensure that the farming and ranching community has a strong voice, as they serve as the fundamental element in the success of the system. In addition, the Project Team will reach out to our New England partners who have shown success in developing food systems plans such as the [Vermont Farm-to-Plate Strategic Plan](#), and others. We will do so in part by continuing to participate in the New England wide State Food System Planning Community of Practice monthly conference calls, which developed as an offshoot of the 2013 New England Food Summit.

Project partners will work with the Committee to identify and engage members of working groups that represent the seven sectors of the food system, as defined by the MFPC. We recommend that invitations are extended to organizations and businesses within each food system sector to be included on specific working groups to provide expertise regarding local issues in their respective sectors. We propose that a series of planning vision meetings or charettes are held for each working group to collaborate on a vision for the Food System Plan, with regard to their particular sector.

The Massachusetts Workforce Alliance will assist in the development of a workforce working group to focus on the subject of workforce development and economic viability in various food system sectors. This important cross-cutting subject warrants the expertise of an outside consultant who is well versed in both workforce development and food systems and with the proven skills to convene diverse perspectives. This working group could include experts in the field such as workforce investment boards, one-stop career centers, community based organizations, community colleges, vocational technical high schools, and for-profit training programs. Members of this working group would prepare a gap analysis of training resources available and needed, as well as strategies for strengthening training associated with the Food System.

Deliverables:

1. Food System Plan Advisory Group formation
2. Facilitation of Food System Plan Advisory Group meetings (4-8 anticipated) including agenda and meeting materials preparation, and meeting notes.
3. Working Group Formation (7-8 anticipated, including Workforce Development).
4. Facilitation of working group meetings including agenda and meeting materials preparation, and meeting notes.
5. Gap analysis of available food system related training resources.

Task 3. Stakeholder and Public Engagement

Without meaningful involvement of a broad range of individuals and organizations, the Food System Plan would lack the momentum needed to ensure that recommendations and strategies are relevant and duly implemented. All members of the Project Team have extensive experience in stakeholder and public engagement, most recently demonstrated in their respective HUD Sustainable Communities Initiatives projects, all of which had a strong emphasis on food system planning. (Please see the Project Team Qualifications section for more information.) PVPC will lead the Project Team through focused engagement of key food system stakeholders collaborating with a Minority and Women Business Enterprise (M/WBE) specializing in public outreach programming, event management and facilitation and organization.

The Food System in Massachusetts is relatively mature, and the Food Policy Council and advisors have laid such a strong foundation for food system planning in the Commonwealth; therefore, we are proposing a strategic approach to the Food System Plan. As such, we will prioritize stakeholder engagement in this planning process; recognizing the need to keep the public involved and informed of this significant planning initiative.

The Stakeholder and Public Engagement Program will be aimed at building a constituency for the Food Systems Plan and establishing a long-term vision for the food system in Massachusetts. Although the engagement program will be shaped based upon the MFPC's desires, we propose that the following elements are highlighted:

- Development of an overall vision for the Food System Plan;
- Establishment of goals and objectives for the Food Systems Plan;
- Identification of challenges and potential solutions via surveys and direct engagement with stakeholders in various sectors;
- Development of implementable strategies.

The public engagement and outreach process will be designed to assure diverse participation in the development of the Food Plan, focusing especially on populations sometimes left out of traditional planning processes, specifically economically disadvantaged people, individuals experiencing food insecurity, racial minorities, limited English speakers, persons with disabilities and the elderly. The outreach plan will also be tailored to members of food system sectors in their geographical regions to ensure relevance to their region, and scheduled to take into consideration potential impact on seasonal activities that are critical in the production sector.

Through our Project Team's extensive experience in community engagement, we understand that diverse stakeholders have multiple ways of communicating their ideas. Our proposed approach to public engagement and outreach will begin with identifying our key stakeholders and forming working groups representative of their respective sectors. We will work with the MFPC and our existing food systems partners to form work groups, and identify and engage stakeholders. We will then engage these stakeholders by discussing the elements of our food system, including existing conditions, issues, and challenges. We also propose facilitating visioning or SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) exercises with these working groups to help determine the best tools to further the outreach plan. These may involve public meetings, focus groups, surveys, and social media. These steps will ensure that the outreach strategy is most effective in garnering support and participation from constituents. Through this effort, the Project Team will aim to foster better overall understanding of our food system and its fundamental importance to the economic vitality, ecological resilience, social equity and health, and food security for the state and its residents. The Project Team believes that a successful outreach effort will build a strong constituency network that is of vital importance in future implementation of the plan.

Project partners will also work with the MFPC and its Advisory Committee to devise a marketing and media plan that will ensure that all stakeholders will be informed about the project and its ongoing progress. The team will develop an online web platform to serve these purposes:

- Offer a place for stakeholders and the public to access plan drafts, meeting notices and agendas, and newsletters;

- Provide a central statewide forum and clearinghouse for information about food systems planning; as well as a long-term portal for links to other existing resources such as neighboring states' food initiatives, land trusts, land matching databases, CISA, etc; and
- Include interactive features to gather public input on topical and geospatial aspects of the Food System Plan.

Deliverables:

1. Stakeholder contact database.
2. Online Food System Plan web platform.
3. Visioning or SWOT workshops (anticipated need: 8-10).
4. Facilitation, handouts, presentation and meeting documentation.
5. Stakeholder survey results.
6. Food access and insecurity public input results.

Task 4. Data Research, Analysis and Mapping

The collection and analysis of existing state, regional and local data and planning documents related to food system planning is critical to establishing a baseline and informing the Food System Plan development process. A priority of the project team is to develop an interactive food resources atlas to be embedded in the project website. The food atlas will be a tool to visually locate businesses, organizations, farms, and other relevant entities in each sector of the food system.

Data analysis and mapping efforts will focus on discerning emerging trends and connectivity between issues and sectors in the food system to ensure decisions made throughout the course of the project are informed and data-driven. For example, overlays of updated statewide demographic data and existing food retail locations using InfoUSA data can identify existing potential food deserts in the Commonwealth; mapping land use and preservation data over time can delineate areas where loss of farmland is most evident; and combining statewide business and employment data can be used to identify areas where education, training, and workforce development is critically needed in the food system. These analyses will help steer the project team in planning the most effective outreach tools, provide context for metrics and benchmarks, as well as paint a better picture of the current state of Massachusetts' food system.

The Project Team will also use information collected from public outreach and engagement efforts, as well as consultations with the MFPC to understand critical gaps and needs in data availability, analysis, and mapping. An ongoing collaboration between key planning and data research staff on the Project Team will develop necessary tools and resources for making data-driven decisions over the course of the project.

The Project Team will also conduct research on workforce development within the Food System to ensure that strengthening and growing the food system happens in tandem with worker preparation and skill development. An inventory of existing training appropriate for a growing Food System across the Commonwealth will provide baseline information for determining training needs.

Deliverables:

1. Online food atlas application.
2. Stakeholder data, to be identified through outreach process and in consultation with the MFPC.

3. Data analysis and mapping, specifics to be determined following consultation between MPFC and the Project Team.

PHASE II – POLICY, METRICS, AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Task 1. Develop Policy Recommendations

Local, regional, state and federal policy recommendations will be geared toward strengthening the Massachusetts' food system, focusing on ecological resilience, social equity and health, economic vitality, and food security. These recommendations will be informed by the data and research collected in Phase I, stakeholder feedback and public outreach, and the Project Team's policy and planning experience. Opportunities and challenges (barriers) to implementing these policies will be identified, as will solutions to challenges. We propose to categorize policy recommendations by their likely implementation timeframe. Doing so will provide flexibility to the MFPC and partners as to when and how action items are implemented, and to ensure that the most implementable actions are first addressed to provide momentum for the Food System Plan.

Deliverable: Policy recommendations, including timeframe and potential partners and funding sources to be included in the Food System Plan.

Task 2. Progress Benchmarks / Metrics

A set of quantitative benchmarks and/or metrics will be developed to measure and monitor long-term economic, social, ecological, and policy impacts, as well as provide a framework for assessing progress in reaching outcomes and objectives of the Food System Plan. These benchmarks and indicators will be SMART"- specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. "SMART" objectives will ensure we have clear, measurable outcomes. The Project Team will formulate benchmarks and/or metrics using regional indicators established in each RPA's long-range regional plans as a starting point for the Food System Plan. The Project Partners will also consult with MAPC's Public Health Division, which is experienced in developing metrics associated with the health impacts of public policies. In addition, neighboring state plans and other resources will be researched to establish benchmarks and/or metrics that best serve the Food System Plan.

The Project Partners will work with the MFPC to develop these important benchmarks. However, a suggested approach may include the following steps:

1. Establish a baseline of the current state of the food system in Massachusetts through research and literature review to develop a guiding document. Information collected would help to answer important questions such as:
 - Who are the current and future stakeholders?
 - What are current state and local policies guiding food systems (both formal and informal)?
 - What are major gaps in the systems and policies?
 - What are best practices/recent innovations, priorities within the foods system?
2. Determine the recommended indicators or best practices used to measure progress such as the following example public health-based indicators:

- Identify indicators that would address health disparities resulting from lack to local, fresh produce and goods by leveraging the Project Partner’s experience in improving access to healthy foods;
 - Align indicators with the Mass In Motion program related to healthy eating; and
 - Define indicators that also capture how food access contributes to improved health outcomes like reduced rates of obesity, diabetes and hypertension.
3. Review regional and neighboring state food systems plans to assess what benchmarks and indicators were used to measure their progress, as well as associated challenges with developing and measuring those indicators.
 4. Consult with technical experts in the food systems field on appropriate benchmarks and indicators that will really help to gauge progress on outcomes within the plan.

In our experience, the facilitation of conversations with stakeholders greatly assists in the understanding of specific indicators that would provide the data needed to evaluate progress and inform decision-making. We’ve also learned that indicators should be flexible, understanding that goals and objectives may change or may need to be refined over time, and that it is important to take resources and the time period available into consideration. Our work will focus on developing overall or global indicators as well as indicators for the 7 areas within the foods system (production, processing, consumption, access and consumption, waste and nutrient management, inputs) so that we can ensure we are tracking all aspects of the plan. We propose to also establish metrics for cross-cutting areas and disparities.

Deliverables:

1. Summary of collected literature regarding the current state of the food system.
2. Develop a set of apparitional progress benchmarks to serve as a guiding document for Food System Plan implementation.
3. Develop specific data indicators to measure progress.

Task 3. Development of the Statewide Food System Plan

The Food System Plan’s primary function will be to provide a blueprint for strengthening our statewide food system. It will be accessible to many different audiences, including the lay person, and individuals working in food system related sectors. The Food System Plan will also be relevant and scalable to regional planning agencies and municipalities, so elements of it will be implementable at those levels.

Proposed Primary Sections of the Food System Plan:

- ✓ Summary results of stakeholder and public engagement
 - Vision, goals and objectives
 - Summary of assets, challenges and solutions
- ✓ Summary of existing conditions
 - Summary data research, analysis and mapping
 - Summary policy recommendations
 - Benchmarks and metrics
- ✓ Strategic action plan

Plan Sustainability:

The Project Team is uniquely positioned to drive the sustainability of the Food System Plan in their regions and across the state. The vision, goals and objectives – and the related Action Plan – will be integrated into many of the Project Team’s local and regional planning efforts. The individual

professionals that make up the Project Team will help ensure the sustainability of the Food System Plan by carrying on the work of the Food System Plan in their many projects, from local and regional land use and food systems planning, to economic development planning, workforce development and community engagement. The Project Team intends to leverage the working groups and constituency we build during the course of the project to carry out the plan.

The Food System plan will summarize information captured throughout the planning process and will include a robust look into the current state of the food system in Massachusetts, its connection with the New England Food Vision, existing regional food plans, federal food security issues and the food system's potential for the future. It will also provide a strategic Action Plan that includes potential projects and potential funding sources. The Action Plan will be developed to function both as a stand-alone document and as an integral part of the complete plan.

The Project Team will focus the Food System Plan on priority topics identified earlier in the planning process. Each priority topic will include a baseline assessment, incorporating information from the Data Research, Analysis and Mapping task. Each topic will also include a summary of assets, challenges, and solutions.

Deliverables:

1. Strategic action plan.
2. Overarching vision and goals.
3. Final draft of full plan.
4. Executive summary of full plan.

B. QUALIFICATIONS

PROJECT TEAM

MAPC has assembled a primary project team that includes key Massachusetts regional planning agencies (RPAs) with experience in food systems planning; Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), as well as the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance and a Public Outreach Subconsultant (TBD). As Massachusetts Delegates at the 2013 New England Food Summit, representatives of partnering RPAs understand the importance of the New England Food Vision and connecting the planning process to various regional planning processes. Moreover, through their previous work in food systems planning, the Project Partners have amassed a network of statewide contacts in food growing, production, processing, food security, advocacy, workforce, legislators, and other key stakeholders in the food system.

The Project Team has had substantial experience in collaborating and forming productive partnerships on a wide range of regional and state planning issues. All three RPAs were among the first recipients of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI) grant; a 4-year, multi-million dollar program to support regional collaboration. The program invested heavily in creating nontraditional partnerships across public, private, and grassroots organizations to address regional issues such as public health and food systems. SCI funding paved way for successful collaboration in RPAs' recent food planning-related activities such as the MAPC Comprehensive

Agricultural Planning Program, PVPC's Pioneer Valley Food Security Plan, and FRCOG's Franklin County Farm and Food System Plan; all spurring additional food system projects in the region.

The Project Team has demonstrated success in engaging stakeholders in every sector of the food system, such as food producers and processors, researchers, business owners, and community advocacy groups for food-related issues. The Project Team also maintains strong bonds with academic institutions throughout the state that actively contribute to the food system planning discourse, such as the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Tufts University, and the Conway School.

The Team understands the importance of workforce development in a sustainable food system. The MWA's latest report, Local Food, Local Jobs: Job Growth and Creation in the Pioneer Valley Food System provides a set of recommendations to stimulate job creation in the Valley and the Commonwealth's food system.

MAPC HISTORY / EXPERIENCE

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is a regional planning agency founded in 1963 serving the people who live and work in the 101 cities and towns of Metropolitan Boston. Our mission is to promote smart growth and regional collaboration. We work toward sound municipal management, sustainable land use, protection of natural resources, efficient and affordable transportation, a diverse housing stock, public safety, economic development, an informed public, and equity and opportunity among people of all backgrounds. Our regional plan, MetroFuture, guides our work as we engage the public in responsible stewardship of our region's future. MAPC is governed by representatives from each city and town in our region, as well as gubernatorial appointees and designees of major public agencies. One of our core functions is to serve as a resource and partner to the region's municipalities. We frequently work with communities on a range of planning engagements, helping to design and develop projects, identify funding sources and provide ongoing technical assistance.

MAPC Officers, Fiscal Year 2013

President: Michelle Ciccolo, Town of Hudson

Vice President: Lynn Duncan, City of Salem

Secretary: Marilyn Contreas, Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

Treasurer: Taber Keally, Town of Milton

Executive Committee

Tina Cassidy
Lynn Duncan
Thomas Tinlin
Louis Gitto
Jay Ash
Robert N. Cohen
Sharon Wason
Stephen J. Silveira
Carolyn A. Kirk

Richard Walker, III
Michelle Ciccolo
Richard A. Dimino
Joan Meschino
Monica G. Tibbits-Nutt
Richard Canale
Joe Cosgrove
Keith Bergman

Joseph Orfant
Taber Keally
Kathleen Baskin
Dennis E. Harrington
Erin Kinahan
Cate Blackford
Marilyn Contreas
Jeanne E. Richardson

Our agency has over 60 staff people with expertise in land use planning and zoning, environment and agriculture, government and public health, economic development, energy, transportation, and housing. The interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of the agency allows us to be innovative, efficient and effective when designing and implementing planning solutions. Community engagement and public participation figure prominently into all of MAPC's planning work. Our staff is trained in facilitation and collaborative problem-solving and is skilled in a wide range of engagement techniques, from traditional community meetings to personalized focus groups and surveys to cutting-edge methods such as interactive gaming. Our dedication to meaningful public participation creates successful, implementable projects and plans, and facilitates lasting relationships between local government, local communities and MAPC. We understand the concerns, aspirations, dynamics and political and social cultures of communities because we have worked directly with them. This on-the-ground experience makes us practical visionaries capable of taking far-reaching community goals and transforming them into implementable, customized plans.

MAPC and its partners have the capacity to facilitate and manage broad-based regional scale strategic food planning. Through the multidisciplinary nature of planning work, we understand how food planning is connected and can be integrated in public health, local economic development, policy, transportation, and the environment. Our Environment Division has paved the way for MAPC's work in food systems planning through a number of critical pilot projects regarding agricultural protection and economic viability, local and regional food systems planning, and overcoming regulatory/zoning challenges. MAPC's public health division is leading the RPAs efforts in improving access to healthy and affordable foods by increasing SNAP and WIC use at farmers' markets and providing technical assistance to local retailers on providing fresh produce in their stores and restaurants.

Relevant Programs and Planning Partnerships

Comprehensive Agricultural Planning Program

This project was piloted in MAPC's Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC). The MAGIC Subregion is comprised of thirteen municipalities that include the least densely populated areas of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) region. These communities are particularly susceptible to encroaching development on lands that are suitable for agricultural production. MAPC is working with project partners and stakeholders to establish a pilot Comprehensive Agricultural Planning Program for the Subregion. The goal of the program is to increase the economic viability of farming and protect sustainable foodsheds within the MAGIC Subregion. The project will provide solutions to promote increased food production and marketing to areas inside and outside the Subregion. MAPC led an extremely successful forum in March, 2013 with over 100 attending farmers, ranchers, and agricultural representatives as part of a pilot comprehensive agricultural planning project. The forum initiated a critical dialogue between the most elemental food system members; farmers and ranchers, and municipal leaders. Project partners are numerous including, but not limited to:

- U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Svc.
- MA Department of Agricultural Resources
- Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation
- MA Association of Agricultural Commissions
- Towns of Action, Bedford, Bolton, Boxborough, Carlisle, Concord, Hudson, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, Maynard, Sudbury, and Stow.
- Conservation Law Foundation
- Land for Good, Inc.
- Tufts New Entry Sust. Farming Project
- Sudbury Valley Trustees

Sustainable Food Systems Toolkit

MAPC partnered with Conservation Law Foundation to develop a food systems guidance document for MAPC municipalities interested in developing local, urban, and regional sustainable agricultural economies. The guide will include assessment tools by which communities can examine the current state of their food systems, including food- and agriculture-related programs, and recommendations for establishing local structures such as Food Policy Councils or local agricultural commissions. The guide also outlines best practices for all aspects of food system planning, as well as links and resources to communities to lay the foundation for building a network among communities interested in promoting sustainable agriculture.

Littleton Village Zoning

The Littleton Village Zoning project is the second phase of a multi-year planning partnership with the Town of Littleton. In 2008, MAPC developed an Economic Development and Action Plan as well as a Development Guidebook for the Town. Based on the results of this plan MAPC began a second phase of work to implement the “Vision of the Village” through new zoning. This work included the preparation of a Farmland Protection Bylaw, which recommended changes to community-wide zoning to allow additional farm-related uses that enhance the economic viability of existing farms and incentives to preserve roadside farmlands as part of cluster subdivisions.

MAPC Public Health Division Programs

The MAPC Public Health Division has been supporting numerous statewide projects that improve access to healthy foods such as the Healthy Markets and Healthy Dining programs that work with local markets and restaurants to carry healthier foods. A searchable database of participating healthy restaurants is included in the MAPC’s [Our Healthy Mass](#) data portal. The Division’s work in preparing Health Impact Assessments is critical for policy development. These assessments determine the impact of a proposed project or policies on the health of communities and include identifying how the proposed policies would affect the local community. This expertise will be invaluable in understanding unanticipated impacts of potential food system policies proposed. This expertise is also useful in understanding how the various components of the foods system intersect. In addition, the Division actively participates in various food-related committees such as the Food Committee for the [Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness and the Healthy Eating Community of Practice](#) to remain aware and active regarding current issues around food access and to craft solutions to address these barriers. Relationships with numerous public health entities such as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Mass Public Health Association, WalkBoston, local planning and Boards of Health have helped to broaden our networks within the foods systems field in Massachusetts and in other states.

South Coast Rail Priority Areas 5-Year Update

A land use planning exercise first took place in 2008 and 2009, when MAPC, Southeast Regional Planning and Economic Development District and Old Colony Planning Council worked alongside local residents, business-owners, officials, and organizations to designate Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Preservation Areas (PPAs) as part of the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan implementation. These RPAs reconvened in 2013 to revisit each South Coast Rail community in order to confirm or revise past designations in light of potential changes in municipal priorities. The RPAs incorporated both new geographic information systems (GIS) data and an understanding of Executive Order 525 into community workshops in order to facilitate decision-making. The process was an innovative approach in

civic engagement, where communities came together to make informed decisions about their local priorities through the use of GIS mapping and data.

I-495/MetroWest Development Compact Plan

The Patrick-Murray Administration, through the Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development, partnered with MAPC, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), MetroWest Regional Collaborative, the 495/MetroWest Partnership, and Mass Audubon to prepare a comprehensive land use and development plan for the 495/MetroWest region, modeled on the award-winning South Coast Rail Corridor Plan. The goal of the Compact was to provide a plan for efficient and sustainable growth, land preservation and infrastructure investments for the 495 region. Over 12 months, MAPC worked with the 495 Compact partner organizations to identify priority development and preservation areas and significant transportation and infrastructure investments for the region. MAPC and CMRPC met with the 37 cities and towns that comprise the 495 region and identified local priority development and preservation areas. Additional meetings, discussions and regional-level public forums provided opportunities for dialogue and feedback on these areas. MAPC provided further analysis to create a set of regional development priorities that protect critical natural resources while minimizing traffic congestion and the need for new infrastructure. The result is a plan that can guide future land use decisions and infrastructure investments so that the region can realize its full development potential, preserve its natural resources, increase its economic performance and maintain the quality of life for residents.

A Best Practices Model for Streamlined Local Permitting

In 2006, changes in state legislation gave authority to local communities to streamline their permitting processes for commercial and industrial development projects. Interested in helping cities and towns access the potential economic benefit of the new law, the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA) began working on a guidebook to help municipalities make local permitting more efficient and effective. The result; [Best Practices Model for Streamlined Local Permitting](#), is a comprehensive, engaging and easy-to-use guidebook that provides communities with a roadmap to more coordinated, consistent and more productive development review processes. MAPC was a key member of the team that created the guidebook. Statewide interviews with local development stakeholders were conducted and focus groups were convened to identify a comprehensive set of best practices to expedite local permitting. Once complete, MAPC showcased the guidebook at the Massachusetts Municipal Association annual meeting and help individual presentations in communities that were interested in implementing the expedited permitting practices. Project partners include:

- Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
- Cape Cod Commission
- Central Mass. Regional Planning Commission
- Franklin Regional Council of Governments
- Martha's Vineyard Commission
- Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
- Montachusett Regional Planning Commission
- Nantucket Planning and Economic Devlp.
- Northern Middlesex Council of Governments
- Old Colony Planning Council
- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Devlp. District

Key Staff

Martin Pillsbury (Food Systems Plan Staff Manager)

MAPC Director of Environmental Planning

Martin Pillsbury will supervise MAPC staff throughout the duration of this project. Mr. Pillsbury has been with MAPC since 1983 and manages all aspects of the agency's environmental and water resources programs. Mr. Pillsbury currently manages MAPC's regional Hazard Mitigation program and a \$1 million EPA Brownfields Assessment program in collaboration with the cities of Peabody and Salem. He also participates in state water resources policy development as a Gubernatorial appointee to the Water Management Advisory Committee. He is the House Speaker's appointee to the Water Infrastructure Finance Commission and the Sustainable Water Management Initiative, as an appointee of the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs. At the local level, Mr. Pillsbury has extensive experience in preparing groundwater and aquifer protection plans for dozens of communities across the MAPC region. He has also assisted the MA Department of Environmental Protection in drafting the state's Model Groundwater Protection Bylaw. Recently, Mr. Pillsbury oversaw the creation of MAPC's Low Impact Development Toolkit, the Massachusetts Guide to Water Reuse, and SummerSmart, a guide to managing peak seasonal water demand. Building on this work, Mr. Pillsbury managed stormwater bylaw and regulation update projects for ten communities in the MAPC region.

Julie Conroy, AICP (Food Systems Plan Project Manager)

MAPC Senior Planner / Subregional Coordinator

Ms. Conroy will serve as Project Manager of the MA Food Plan development. She is a certified planner of the American Institute of Certified Planners and has over 15 years of experience as an environmental/land use planner and project manager. Ms. Conroy has served as a Senior Planner in the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) Environmental Division since 2011. Mrs. Conroy assists in the implementation of the MetroFuture Plan and develops policy documentation and regulations for environmental and agricultural protection in numerous Massachusetts cities and towns such as groundwater and aquifer protection and agricultural preservation-based zoning recommendations. She manages budgets, provides technical advice to staff and MAPC communities, as well as, participates as a professional planner in a wide range of land use planning projects.

Mrs. Conroy currently serves as project manager on the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC) Comprehensive Agricultural Planning Program and the Regional Sustainable Food System Toolkit project. Mrs. Conroy serves as a primary author of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy; to prepare recommendations for local, regional, and state action to reduce vulnerability to future hazards and impacts of climate change. She was a member of the Massachusetts Delegation for the 2013 New England Food Summit. Mrs. Conroy serves as the Subregional Coordinator MAGIC, is a member of the American Planning Association, and is a Board of Trustees for The Boston Harbor Association. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Analysis and Policy and a Master of Arts in Urban Affairs and Environmental Planning from Boston University.

Tim Reardon

Data Services Planning Research Manager

Timothy Reardon has worked at MAPC since 2003. He has over ten years of experience in regional planning, with a focus on using analysis and technology to support public engagement and informed decision-making. He had a leading role in the technical analysis, public engagement, communications, and implementation strategy components of the MetroFuture project, MAPC's long range regional growth plan. This included detailed land use projections for 164 municipalities and creation of an

interactive regional land use model. His contributions to local and regional planning efforts include build-out studies, housing displacement risk assessment, spatial analysis, and quantitative assessment of alternative zoning or land use scenarios. Mr. Reardon leads the applied research activities of MAPC's Data Services Department. These projects include land use planning, scenario modeling for municipalities and development sites, socioeconomic projections, policy-oriented technical analysis, and 3-D visualization. He helped to pioneer the use of technology and decision support tools at MAPC such as wireless keypads, interactive websites, and online data collection methods. Mr. Reardon wrote and produced the Massachusetts Low Impact Development Toolkit, which won an Outstanding Planning Project Award from the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association in 2005. He received MAPC's Robert Davidson Staff Recognition Award in 2008. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Biology and Geology and a Master in City Planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Barry Keppard, AICP
Public Health Manager

Barry Keppard joined the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) in 2010. He has led work for the implementation of the MetroFuture Plan through a combination of public health, land use, environmental and transportation planning work. Mr. Keppard has been managing project work under the Community Transformation Grant for Middlesex County through the Compact Development project. In this role, he has worked with Mass in Motion coordinators, municipal planning and health staff and officials, and other stakeholders. He organized a successful workshop that brought together municipal planners and public health staff in Middlesex County, and provided technical assistance for planning and public health projects in the MetroWest region and the City of Everett. Mr. Keppard's direct work on public health issues is complimented by a portfolio of regional planning projects and a management record that spans other planning focus areas. He managed multiple component parts of the 495/MetroWest Compact project that brought together local, regional and state partners to create a regional strategic investment plan for the corridor. Mr. Keppard has a Master of Regional Planning from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Ursinus College.

Christine Madore
Associate Planner / Food Systems Planner

Christine Madore joined MAPC in April 2012. Ms. Madore supports regional planners in the smart growth department at MAPC. She is currently engaged in priority area mapping efforts in MAPC subregions and jointly with other regional planning agencies as part of the South Coast Rail project. Ms. Madore is also involved in public meeting facilitation, data collection and analysis, and proposal writing in the land use and economic development divisions. While pursuing her undergraduate degree, she delineated and mapped a local food network in the greater Boston area by thoroughly surveying small-scale agricultural producers, community gardens, institutional consumers, and distribution locations in Massachusetts. She is currently pursuing a graduate degree in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning at Tufts University, with a concentration in Food Systems Planning.

PARTNERS HISTORY / EXPERIENCE

Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Franklin County was first established as a Regional Planning Organization in 1974. The Franklin Regional Council of Governments, the successor to the Franklin County Commission, was established in 1997 by

an Enabling Act passed by the State Legislature in 1996. The Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) serves the 26 communities of Franklin County individually and collectively. We are committed to serving town governments, municipal boards and committees, businesses, and our citizens. We work collaboratively with other regions and other organizations. Our goal is to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of municipal governmental functions and improve the quality of life in our region.

Relevant Programs and Planning Partnerships

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) is a regional organization offering a variety of programming, products and services, both on the municipal and regional level, to our member towns. As the Regional Planning Agency for Franklin County we provide housing, transportation, land use, natural resource, and economic development planning services to our communities and the region. In addition, we provide extensive GIS database development, mapping, and analysis services and are an affiliate of the Massachusetts State Data Center. Current projects include:

- Sustainable Franklin County, the recently completed Regional Plan for Sustainable Development sponsored by the HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative
- Greater Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Mass in Motion including the Healthy Markets Program
- Franklin County Farm and Food System Project sponsored by the Henry P. Kendall Foundation
- Scenic Byways Program collaborating with PVPC and Berkshire Regional Planning Council;
- Economic Development projects collaborating with PVPC, other regional agencies and towns

Key Staff

Peggy Sloan, AICP (Food Systems Plan Staff Manager)

Director of Planning and Development

Ms. Sloan is responsible for management of the eleven member professional planning staff with a \$1.2 million budget. Additional responsibilities include project management, grant-writing and RFP development. She manages planning programs including Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS); Sustainable Franklin County: A Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, Rural Brownfields Clean-Up Revolving Loan Fund & Brownfield Site Assessment; Master Planning, land use, natural resources, historic preservation, economic development, energy conservation/renewable energy, and transportation planning. Ms. Sloan also provides technical assistance to towns on environmental permitting, zoning, subdivision, and land use regulations. Additionally, she provides analysis, public testimony and position papers on environmental, transportation and land use impacts. Ms. Sloan attended the University of Massachusetts Amherst and has a Master's Degree in Regional Planning and Master's Degree in Landscape Architecture. Prior to that, she obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Economics, Cum Laude, from Smith College.

Mary Praus, (Food Systems Plan Lead Planner)

Land Use Planner

Ms. Praus' qualifications to help conduct this project include her ongoing work on food system, natural resource, and land use related planning projects. She is currently overseeing the Franklin County Farm and Food System Project, a project focused on food system infrastructure, processing, and distribution as well as food access. She is in the process of developing a strategic farmer survey, designed to provide the data needed to encourage investment in the regional food system as well as to provide value to farmers by connecting them to various resources to help support their farms. In 2011 through 2013,

Ms. Praus was also focused on food systems and natural resources as part of the FRCOG team that developed Sustainable Franklin County, the regional plan for sustainable development. This plan included a particular focus on the regional food system and commissioned the 2012 Franklin County Farmland and Foodshed Study by the Conway School. She also currently oversees the Franklin County Healthy Market Program, a Mass in Motion project, providing technical assistance to small food market owners and helping them to find ways to offer more healthy food options.

Ms. Praus is a graduate of the Conway School, with a Masters degree in Sustainable Landscape Planning and Design, focusing on whole systems design. During her time at the Conway School, Ms. Praus was part of a three-student team tasked with working with the City of Northampton to determine the future use of a 180-acre parcel of prime farmland, which was slated to be converted into a recreational complex. Her vital work on the project, which recommended that the City keep much of the land in farming, helped to lay the groundwork for Grow Food Northampton, a vibrant, community-driven non-profit organization that now owns a 121-acre community farm in the geographic heart of Northampton.

***Jessica Atwood, (Food Systems Plan Associate Planner)
Senior Economic Development Planner***

Ms. Atwood brings to the project significant experience in economic development, a crucial element of the Food System Plan. Her current projects with the FRCOG include overseeing the Greater Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Program, including the creation of regional planning documents and support staff to the CEDS committee. The CEDS Program has been funded by seven annual awards from the U.S. Economic Development Administration. Ms. Atwood was also an integral part of the Sustainable Franklin County project team, helping to identify key areas for concentrating development and infill in the region. She also provides expert consultant services to WesternMA Connect, Inc. and the Massachusetts Broadband Institute to encourage deployment of broadband infrastructure and adoption in underserved areas. Ms. Atwood supports the implementation of the FRCOG Brownfields Program, which includes a revolving loan and subgrant fund for clean-up projects and managing environment site assessment data according to federal requirements. Ms. Atwood manages State Data Center and Business & Industry Data Center affiliate function. She has a Master of Business Administration (MBA) and a B.A. in Geography and Communications, both from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

PVPC is the designated regional planning agency for the Pioneer Valley Region of Western Massachusetts. PVPC is a public agency but is not a direct arm of the federal or state governments. PVPC works with member municipalities, community leaders and other public agencies to define and carry out solutions to area-wide problems that cannot be solved by member communities working alone. PVPC staff has extensive experience and proficiency in facilitating public meetings.

Relevant Programs and Planning Partnerships

In 2003 PVPC, in collaboration with the Capitol Region Council of Governments in Hartford CT, was one of four regional planning agencies selected by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center to participate in a project to advance renewable energy in the Commonwealth. PVPC completed a Review of Regulatory Issues Concerning Development of Small Scale Renewable Energy and Distributed Generation in our

region. We also created a Local Officials Guide to Zoning and Land Use for Renewable Energy as well as an Inventory of Resources, Technology Development, Partners and Activities Related to Renewable Energy.

PVPC has built successful collaborations that have resulted in successful planning partnerships such as:

- Pioneer Valley Food Security Plan 2013.
- Pioneer Valley Sustainability Network -- make the concept of sustainability easy to understand and act on by involving stakeholders and the general public in a facilitated process to both define Pioneer Valley specific metrics of sustainability and identify specific and targeted actions to achieve sustainability.
- Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress: This Plan serves as a blueprint for a strong, vibrant regional economy coordinated by a public-private sector partnership, including cross-border collaboration with Hartford, CT. The Plan includes 14 strategic goals as critical for growing the people, companies, and communities in the region with interest in cross-cutting strategies, emphasis on the Creative Economy in the Industry Clusters cross-cutting theme; and a new Disaster Resilience component.
- Valley Vision Regional Land Use Plan: This Plan received a national award for Best Medium Metro Plan in 2008 and includes creation and facilitation of Valley Development Council advisory group.

Key Staff

David Elvin, AICP (Food Systems Plan Lead Planner) Senior Planner, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

David Elvin has more than 20 years of experience in community and transportation planning. As part of PVPC's Sustainable Knowledge Corridor HUD Sustainable Communities project, he is assisting in the development and implementation of the Pioneer Valley Food Security Plan, which involves facilitating the work of the plan's advisory committee and the prioritizing of recommended implementation actions. These include organizing a regional conference to assist school districts in writing local food sourcing requirements into contracts with institutional food providers; working with local food policy councils; and utilizing PVPC's food security tool kit and other resources to perform analysis of local zoning for conformance with best practices for healthy food access and local food promotion. Mr. Elvin also assisted with PVPC's engagement and roll-out of the food plan to members of PVGrows, a regional network of food producers, nonprofit organizations and agencies involved in expanding the local food economy. Mr. Elvin is also developing and implementing regional plans for transit-oriented development, climate action, clean energy and land use. Previously, he worked for the Hartford Capitol Region Council of Governments, where he assisted in a broad outreach effort to engage farmers, farm stand owners and municipal planners in eleven communities in producing a set of model "farm friendly" bylaws, which earned the 2007 Public Service award from the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association. Mr. Elvin holds a Master of Regional Planning degree from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and a master's degree in journalism from the University of Minnesota. David lives in Hadley, known the world over for its asparagus.

Catherine Ratté (Food Systems Plan Staff Manager) Principal Planner and Manager Environment and Land Use

Catherine Ratté has worked at the PVPC for 15 years and has 29 years experience in community planning and development, starting with the Peace Corps in Cameroon in 1984. Catherine currently

works on sustainability—leading efforts to engage citizens in a regional sustainability planning and doing process. Catherine has expertise in participatory planning, food security, smart growth, climate action, sustainability, energy efficiency, clean energy, adult education, training of trainers, and the intersection of land use and transportation planning—especially bicycle and pedestrian planning. Catherine earned Master’s degrees in urban and regional planning and social work from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has an undergraduate degree in Literature and Society from Brown University.

Massachusetts Workforce Alliance

The work and mission of the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance is to create true economic opportunity for low-income people by uniting individuals, organizations and coalitions to advance sensible workforce development policy. Formed as an alliance of workforce development coalitions more than 10 years ago, MWA is known for its ability to convene diverse stakeholders, identify cross-cutting issues and catalyze opportunity. It is also known for its reports which distill complex concepts for greater understandability.

Relevant Programs and Partnerships

MWA’s orientation, as an alliance of workforce development coalitions, is to understand the ways an increasingly sustainable economy will shift, and to forecast these economic shifts in order to benefit workers. Such forecasting enables education and training organizations, policy makers and employers to be informed, knowledgeable and ready to develop and provide relevant services and to develop the appropriate partnerships (among service providers, employers and workforce development stakeholders) that are required for success.

MWA’s most recent work is the *Down to Earth Initiative* to recognize areas in the growing sustainable economy that offer the potential to create jobs and career paths, particularly those suitable to lower-income, lower-skill adults. The work of this *Initiative* identified regional food systems as a promising area for job creation. Subsequent research in the Pioneer Valley region (in partnership with the Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board, CISA, PVGrows and the PVPC) resulted in the *Local Food, Local Jobs: Job Growth and Creation in the Pioneer Valley Food System* report. In addition to food systems focused work, MWA is working in partnership with the EPA on development of a stormwater sector, also identified through the *Down to Earth Initiative*.

In addition, MWA serves on the Board of the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center as a workforce development representative. The Clean Energy Center is a quasi public entity charged with growing the clean energy sector in Massachusetts.

Key Staff

Alex Risley Schroeder, M.Ed., D.Min.

Program Director

Alex Risley Schroeder, Program Director, Mass Workforce Alliance, was the principal researcher for MWA’s Local Food, Local Jobs study in the Pioneer Valley that identified the current and future work in the Pioneer Valley food system. She was the co-developer and facilitator of MWA’s Down to Earth Initiative, a three-year effort focusing on job creation in the sustainable economy for low-skill and low-

income individuals and communities. The Initiative built collaborative relationships with over 50 organizations in the workforce development, economic development and environmental fields to create solutions to the need for a newly trained workforce. Ms. Schroeder has designed and delivered trainings, round tables, workshops and meetings, including work legislators, workforce development professionals and the public. She has a MEd with a focus on adult and community education and continuing coursework in policy, research and administration from UMass Amherst. In addition, she has worked as a green careers coach for the Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board and designed and co-directed a statewide training program for adult basic education teaching and counseling staff on incorporating clean energy concepts and career information into classroom activities and curricula. Ms. Schroeder also teaches green career exploration courses at two MA community colleges.

Public Engagement Subconsultant (TBD)

A Woman or Minority-Owned Business or Enterprise (M/WBE) will be subcontracted to implement the outreach plan laid out by the Project Team. The subconsultant will have experience in planning state-wide events, marketing, and media outreach.

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4. PROPOSED BUDGET / TIMELINE

The Project Team is extremely dedicated to this project and its successful outcome. As professional planning representatives we are well aware of the budget constraints for planning processes and have requested funding within the confines of the grant. However, we feel that additional resources must be brought to bear in order to create an effective and sustainable Statewide Strategic Food System Plan that boosts agricultural production, processing and distribution, and makes connections between regional and local efforts. Therefore, the Project Team has leveraged additional resources to add to the grant allotment, if awarded.

Table 1. Funding Request

TASKS		REQUESTED FUNDING						% of PRJ.
Primary Task	Subtasks	MAPC	FRCOG	PVPC	MWA	M/WBE	TOTAL	
Communications	Prj. Mgmt., Council Communications	\$19,500	\$9,100	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$38,600	11%
Stakeholder Engagement	Advisory & Working Group Formation, Stakeholder & Public Engagement	\$22,500	\$11,700	\$20,000	\$5,600	\$33,300	\$93,100	27%
Data Analysis	Data Research, Analysis, and Mapping	\$45,050	\$10,400	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$59,450	17%
Food Systems Plan	Policy Recs., Progress Benchmarks, Plan Development	\$57,500	\$50,050	\$29,000	\$5,600	\$0	\$142,150	41%
	Subtotals:	\$144,550	\$81,250	\$63,000	\$11,200	\$33,300	\$333,300	
Direct Costs	Travel, Mailing, Printing, etc.	\$5,500	\$3,500	\$3,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$16,000	5%
		\$150,050	\$84,750	\$66,000	\$13,200	\$35,300	\$349,300	100%

Table 2. Leveraged Resources

PRIMARY TASK	LEVERAGED RESOURCES			
	MAPC	FRCOG	PVPC	TOTAL
Communications	\$10,000	\$6,000	\$4,500	\$20,500
Stakeholder Engagement	\$10,000	\$6,000	\$4,700	\$20,700
Data Analysis	\$11,000	\$6,000	\$4,700	\$21,700
Food Systems Plan	\$12,300	\$6,300	\$5,000	\$23,600
	\$43,300	\$24,300	\$18,900	\$86,500

Table 3. Total Estimated Project Cost

PRIMARY TASK	FUNDING REQUEST	LEVERAGED RESOURCES	TOTAL
Communications	\$38,600	\$20,500	\$59,100
Stakeholder Engagement	\$93,100	\$20,700	\$113,800
Data Analysis	\$59,450	\$21,700	\$81,150
Food Systems Plan	\$142,150	\$23,600	\$165,750
Direct Costs	\$16,000		\$16,000
	\$349,300	\$86,500	\$435,800

In terms of a timeline, we understand that time frames for project phases will be dictated by the MFPC. However, based on our years of experience in facilitating regional and statewide plans, we propose a dynamic yet elastic project schedule.

		Month																	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Phase I Tasks																			
1	Finalize Workplan, Budget, and Schedule	█																	
2	Finalize Project Management and Communication Plan	█																	
3	Identification and formation of advisory groups; meetings		█		█		█		█		█		█		█		█		█
4	Identification and formation of working groups; meetings		█		█		█		█		█		█		█		█		█
5	Identification of stakeholders; public engagement			█	█	█	█	█	█	█									
6	Data research, analysis, and mapping					█	█	█	█	█	█	█							
Phase II Tasks																			
1	Develop policy recommendations												█	█	█	█	█		
2	Develop metrics and progress benchmarks												█	█	█	█	█		
3	Plan development															█	█		
4	Plan production																	█	█

APPENDICES

⚙ Letters of Agreement

⚙ Letters of Support

⚙ Relevant Reports:

- *MAGIC Comprehensive Agricultural Planning Program*
- *Local Foods, Local Jobs: Job Growth and Creation in the Pioneer Valley Food System*
- *Pioneer valley Food Security Plan*
- *Sustainable Franklin County: Focus on Farms and Food*

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LETTERS OF AGREEMENT



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

September 4, 2013

Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street, Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Subject: Letter of Agreement: Partnership on Facilitating the Development of a Massachusetts Strategic Food System Plan

Dear Mr. Rhodes:

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) is pleased to partner with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), and the Massachusetts Work Force Alliance to facilitate the development of a statewide food system plan. Our outstanding project team will facilitate the planning process, with MAPC serving as the lead agency in project management and coordination. Our combined expertise and experience, particularly in food systems planning, land use and natural resource planning, and public outreach makes us uniquely qualified to lead the effort to develop a food system plan. The completed plan will address the importance of the food system in ecological resilience, economic vitality, social equity and health, and food security. Our role as regional planners, representing a wide geographic region and a diverse mix of urban, suburban, and rural communities, makes us well qualified to ensure that all voices are represented in the planning process. We also have the expertise to help implement statewide recommendations at the regional and local levels.

The FRCOG recently completed a HUD-funded project entitled, "Sustainable Franklin County", which is a regional plan for sustainable development that has a strong emphasis on supporting farms and food production and protection of farmland and forests. Additionally, the FRCOG is a recent recipient of a grant from the Henry P. Kendall Foundation to further work in food system planning in Franklin County. The FRCOG is keenly aware of the pressing issues facing farmers and the greater food system. The Kendall project focuses on food access and food system infrastructure, processing, and distribution.

The FRCOG brings to the table significant experience in public outreach as well as economic development, transportation, land use, and natural resource planning. We also have extensive experience with GIS database development, mapping, and analysis services. The primary staff members assigned to this work, as outlined in the proposed work plan, will be Peggy Sloan, AICP, Director of Planning & Development, Mary Praus, Land Use Planner, Jessica Atwood, Senior Economic Development Planner, and Ryan Clary, Senior GIS Specialist.

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments and our partners look forward to working with the Massachusetts Food Policy Council and its Advisory Committee to produce a successful and sustainable statewide food systems strategic plan. We look forward to your favorable review of our team's proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Linda Dunlavy", is written over a faint blue circular stamp.

Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
Franklin Regional Council of Governments



Catalyst for Regional Progress

PVPC

Timothy W. Brennan, Executive Director

September 9, 2013

Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street
Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Subject: Memorandum of Agreement: Partnership on Facilitating the Development of a
Massachusetts Strategic Food System Security Plan.

Dear Mr. Rhodes,

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) is pleased to partner with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), and Massachusetts Workforce Alliance (MWA) to facilitate the development of a Massachusetts Strategic Food System Security Plan. Project partners will collaborate as a single entity with MAPC as the lead agency in project management and coordination.

The primary staff members assigned to this work, as outlined in the proposed work plan, will be David Elvin- Senior Planner, Catherine Ratté – Principal Planner and Manager Land Use & Environment, Molly Goren-Watts – Principal Planner and Manager of the Regional Information & Policy Center, and Todd Zukowski – GIS/Cartographic Section Manager. Tasks to be performed by PVPC staff are outlined in the proposed work plan jointly prepared by all organizations in this partnership.

PVPC and our partners look forward to working with you on implementing this project.

Timothy W. Brennan
Executive Director, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Date: 9/9/13



September 9, 2013

Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street
Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Subject: Memorandum of Agreement: Partnership on Facilitating the Development of a
Massachusetts Strategic Food System Security Plan.

Dear Mr. Rhodes,

The Massachusetts Workforce Alliance is pleased to partner with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), and Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), to facilitate the development of a Massachusetts Strategic Food System Security Plan. Project partners will collaborate as a single entity with MAPC as the lead agency in project management and coordination.

The primary staff members assigned to this work, as outlined in the proposed work plan, will be Alex Risley Schroeder, Program Director and Deborah Mutschler, Executive Director. Tasks to be performed by MWA staff are outlined in the proposed work plan jointly prepared by all organizations in this partnership.

MWA and our partners look forward to working with you on implementing this project.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Deborah Mutschler", is written over a light green rectangular background.

Deborah Mutschler
Executive Director
August 28, 2013

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 5, 2013

Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street
Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

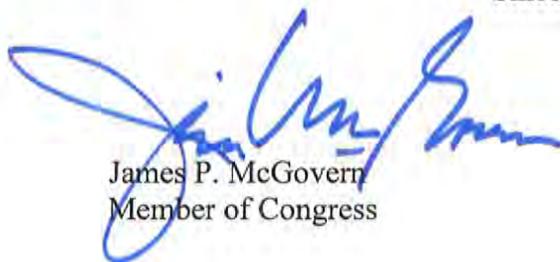
Dear Mr. Rhodes,

We are writing to extend our full support for the joint application by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Franklin County Council of Governments (FRCOG), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), and the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance (MWA) to act as the facilitating entity in developing a sustainable, statewide Strategic Food System Plan for Massachusetts.

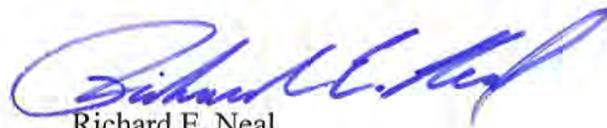
PVPC and FRCOG's collaborative regional planning efforts are exemplary and are the direct result of their strong leadership, knowledgeable staff and outstanding resources. The PVPC, FRCOG and MAPC's multidisciplinary team of professional planners, analysts, and researchers are uniquely qualified to carry out this work. Their broad understanding of the issues and challenges in the food system on local and regional levels is exemplified by their recent work facilitating the development of regional food security plans.

We are confident that the project team will deliver a well-planned vision for the Commonwealth to stimulate its agricultural economy, as well as address issues that are critical in ensuring a thriving, sustainable, and resilient food system. We respectfully request your full and fair consideration of this application.

Sincerely,



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

James B. Eldridge
STATE SENATOR
MIDDLESEX & WORCESTER DISTRICT
STATE HOUSE, ROOM 213A
BOSTON, 02133-1054
TEL. (617) 722-1120
FAX (617) 722-1089
James.Eldridge@state.ma.us

September 9, 2013

Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street
Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Rhodes,

I am writing on behalf of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to express my full support for the joint application by the MAPC, Franklin County Council of Governments (FRCOG), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), and the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance (MWA) to serve as the facilitating entity in developing a sustainable, statewide Strategic Food System Plan for Massachusetts.

As state Senator for the Middlesex & Worcester district, I am deeply familiar with the work of the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC), a subregion of the MAPC. The group is a collaborative of 13 communities, including a number of towns in my Senate district, and provides leadership on planning issues such as transportation, the environment, open space, economic and community development, and legislative issues.

MAGIC is currently working on a Comprehensive Agricultural Planning Project, which aims to increase the economic viability of farming and protect sustainable foodsheds within the MAGIC Subregion by identifying the barriers and challenges faced by farmers and land owners, developing agricultural management tools, and providing solutions to promote increased food production and marketing to areas inside and outside the Subregion.

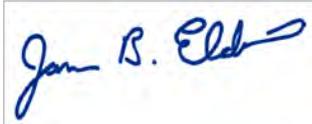
In March of this year, I attended the MAGIC Subregional Agricultural Forum, and was impressed by their ability to engage and collaborate with a broad base of stakeholders, including local agricultural commissions and agricultural practitioners, the Sudbury Valley Trustees, Conservation Law Foundation, the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, and the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture. Their work with these constituencies has given them a thorough understanding of food and agriculture issues, and has helped them develop an established network of stakeholders on the local, regional and statewide levels, which would make them well-suited to facilitate the creation of a comprehensive Food Systems Plan for the Commonwealth.

Because of MAGIC's broad understanding of the issues and challenges in the food system on local and regional levels, and the MAPC's leadership and experience in regional planning initiatives, I believe that this

multidisciplinary team of experienced professional planners, analysts, and researchers are uniquely qualified to carry out this work. I am confident that the project team will deliver a well-planned vision for the Commonwealth to stimulate its agricultural economy, as well as address issues that are critical in ensuring a thriving, sustainable, and resilient food system.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James B. Eldridge". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

James B. Eldridge

State Senator

Middlesex & Worcester District

September 9, 2013



Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street, Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Rhodes,

On behalf of MACDC, I am writing to extend our full support for the joint application by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Franklin County Council of Governments (FRCOG), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), and the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance (MWA) to serve as the facilitating entity in developing a sustainable, statewide Strategic Food System Plan for Massachusetts.

MACDC is a membership organization with 91 community development non-profits as members. Our vision and values frame our work. We believe that effective and sustainable community development is achieved only when residents of all incomes and backgrounds play an instrumental role in community-based problem solving and revitalization. We provide services to our members to build their capacity as effective and sustainable mission-driven community-led developers; we facilitate partnerships and collaborations within and throughout the community development "eco-system"; and we lead advocacy campaigns to secure resources and sound public policies to support equitable community-based work.

The Mel King Institute for Community Building, a program of MACDC, has collaborated with MAPC through HUD's Sustainable Communities program. We worked in partnership with MAPC, Action! and local organizations to develop and deliver three community-based trainings. The training demystifies regional equity and prepares residents for the community planning process. MAPC staff also facilitated a King Institute training on *Facilitating Community Meetings*, which was well received and is offered on our training calendar again this fall. I find the MAPC staff highly skilled, committed, and outcome-oriented.

I believe that MAPC's multidisciplinary team of professional planners, analysts, and researchers are uniquely qualified to carry out this work because of their broad understanding of the issues and challenges in the food system on local and regional levels. We are confident that the project team will deliver a well-planned vision for the Commonwealth to stimulate its agricultural economy, as well as address issues that are critical in ensuring a thriving, sustainable, and resilient food system.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,

Shirronda Almeida Chandler
Director of Membership/ MKI Director
MACDC/ Mel King Institute

MASSACHUSETTS SMART GROWTH ALLIANCE

September 9, 2013

Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
251 Causeway Street, Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Rhodes,

On behalf of the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance, I am writing to extend our full support for the joint application by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Franklin County Council of Governments (FRCOG), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), and the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance (MWA) and their proposal to develop a statewide Strategic Food System Plan for Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance (MSGA) was formed in 2003 by seven leading organizations with expertise in affordable housing, community development, the environment, planning and design. Together with our allies we work to promote healthy and diverse communities, protect critical environmental resources and working landscapes, and support equitable community development and urban reinvestment. Through our Great Neighborhoods program, we partner with dozens of local groups around the state to support and accelerate the positive transformation of their communities.

We have collaborated with MAPC since our founding in 2003 and are familiar with their capacity to effectively manage complex projects, their commitment to engaging a broad range of stakeholders ensuring the representation of low-income people and communities of color, and their mastery of cutting edge technology, data analysis, and policy matters. Just to name a few of the collaborative smart growth projects where MAPC teams have excelled:

- Managing our EPA Building Blocks grant to provide technical assistance to five communities in Greater Boston as well as the complicated and thankless task of federal grant management involving multiple partners across the country and regional sub-grantees;
- Obtaining and leading a \$4 million Sustainable Communities grant from HUD that spanned dozens of local and regional projects and hundreds of partners across three years from community-based organizations to state agency partners;
- Serving as the data partner for the Ford Foundation's Metropolitan Opportunity work in Greater Boston, for which we are the lead grantee;
- Playing key roles as part of multi-disciplinary teams working in our Great Neighborhoods sites in Roxbury, Somerville, the Fairmount Corridor, and Winchester; and
- Leading or supporting integrated corridor planning efforts for South Coast Rail, the Orange Line, Route 9/MetroWest, and others.

I lend my strongest support to MAPC's proposal, and please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,



André C. Leroux
Executive Director



UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
AMHERST

Architecture + Design Program
Department of Art, Architecture, and Art History
455 Fine Arts Center
151 Presidents Drive, Office 1
Amherst, MA 01003-9330

voice: 413.577.0943
fax: 413.545.3929

September 9, 2013

Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street
Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Rhodes,

On behalf of the Architecture + Design Program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, I am writing to extend our full support for the joint application by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Franklin County Council of Governments (FRCOG), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), and the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance (MWA) to serve as the facilitating entity in developing a sustainable, statewide Strategic Food System Plan for Massachusetts.

The Architecture + Design Program at UMass Amherst is New England's first and only public architecture program offering a Master of Architecture degree. Our program embraces socially aware and environmentally responsive design that is developed through interdisciplinary and collaborative partnerships. Many of our most successful projects have involved the PVPC—and we have collaborated with PVPC planners Catherine Ratté and David Elvin on several initiatives in the past, most recently the civic engagement plan for the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor.

We believe that the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and their multidisciplinary team of professional planners, analysts, and researchers are well qualified to carry out the Strategic Food System Plan for Massachusetts because of their broad understanding of the issues and challenges in the food system on local and regional levels. We offer our enthusiastic support for their proposal and are confident that the project team will deliver a well-planned vision for the Commonwealth to stimulate its agricultural economy and to address the critical issues that will ensure a thriving, sustainable, and resilient statewide food system.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JK", written over a horizontal line.

Joseph Krupczynski / Associate Professor
Architecture + Design Program / Department of Art, Architecture and Art History
University of Massachusetts / Amherst

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
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Executive Director

September 9, 2013

Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street
Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Rhodes,

On behalf of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), I am writing to extend our full support for the joint application by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Franklin County Council of Governments (FRCOG), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), and the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance (MWA) to serve as the facilitating entity in developing a sustainable, statewide Strategic Food System Plan for Massachusetts. BRPC serves the 32 municipalities in Berkshire County. As part of our HUD Sustainable Communities work, BRPC has led the Keep Berkshires Farming initiative. Keep Berkshires Farming is a community-based initiative working to strengthen local agriculture and foster a thriving and vibrant food system in the Berkshires. We want to increase the amount of food is both produced and consumed in the county by supporting the right market conditions. This means overcoming potential barriers to market such as a lack of aggregation and distribution, value-added processing, meat processing, marketing or other factors that can render the economics of small-scale farming commercially unviable. BRPC would readily share what we learned with the applicants to be incorporated into Statewide Strategic Food System Plan

BRPC has collaborated with FRCOG and PVPC numerous times, most recently on the development of a Western Mass Scenic Byways Marketing campaign. This program would help market the unique assets of the region's scenic byways for the benefit of the regional economy.

The multidisciplinary team of professional planners, analysts, and researchers available at the Regional Planning Agencies are uniquely qualified to carry out this work because of their broad understanding of the issues and challenges in the food system on local and regional levels. We are confident that the project team will deliver a well-planned vision for the Commonwealth to stimulate its agricultural economy, as well as address issues that are critical in ensuring a thriving, sustainable, and resilient food system.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,



Nathaniel W. Karns
Executive Director



September 9, 2013

Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street
Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Rhodes,

On behalf of the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC), I am writing to extend our full support for the joint application by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Franklin County Council of Governments (FRCOG), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), and the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance (MWA) to serve as the facilitating entity in developing a sustainable, statewide Strategic Food System Plan for Massachusetts.

MAGIC is a subregional entity organized and managed by MAPC, the regional planning agency for the 101 cities and towns in Metropolitan Boston. MAGIC is comprised of representatives from thirteen municipalities: Acton, Bedford, Bolton, Boxborough, Carlisle, Concord, Hudson, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, Maynard, Stow, and Sudbury. We are the most rural of all the subregions within MAPC and currently face all of the challenges that will be addressed through the course of the developing the Massachusetts Sustainable Food Systems and Security Plan.

The last farms in Developing Suburbs are among the areas most at risk for development. Increasing the economic viability of farming and protecting agricultural land is critical to discouraging low density development and associated environmental and transportation impacts, and to protect local food production capacity. Agricultural production within the MAGIC Subregion is strong, consisting of approximately 7,870 acres of existing farmland and it is anticipated that there are thousands of acres of available farmland not in use and potentially not protected. MAGIC communities have expressed an enthusiastic desire not only to protect existing agricultural lands, but also to promote and increase agricultural production.

In March 2013, I attended a forum held by MAPC in Stow; the first of its kind in Eastern Massachusetts, where farmers and ranchers, municipal officials, and agricultural-based nonprofits had the unique opportunity to discuss issues of great importance amongst each other, many for the first time. As evidenced by this event, and others we are aware of in Franklin County and the Pioneer Valley, we are certain that MAPC and its colleagues have the skills needed to ensure that all critical stakeholders are involved and are effectively communicating in order to build a Sustainable Food System Plan for Massachusetts. It is clear to MAGIC that the RPA's have a vested interest in this planning processes to

ensure that the wide-range of food system issues are addressed, as well as to guarantee that all regional constituents are heard.

As other regions across the state, we have a considerable interest in the outcome of the Food Systems Plan, and MAGIC feels confident that MAPC and its talented partnership team is the best entity prepared to provide neutral, expert level planning, facilitation and coordination services. We are confident that the project team will deliver a well-planned vision for the Commonwealth to stimulate its agricultural economy, as well as address issues that are critical in ensuring a thriving, sustainable, and resilient food system.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,



Keith Bergman
MAGIC Chairman
Town of Littleton Administrator
(978) 540-2460
bergman@littletonma.org



September 9, 2013

Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street, Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Letter of Support from ELM on Behalf of Mass Workforce Alliance

Dear Mr. Rhodes,

On behalf of the Environmental League of Massachusetts (ELM), I am writing to extend our full support for the joint application by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Franklin County Council of Governments (FRCOG), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), and the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance (MWA) to serve as the facilitating entity in developing a sustainable, statewide Strategic Food System Plan for Massachusetts.

The Environmental League of Massachusetts is dedicated to protecting the health of our environment and citizenry by safeguarding the land, water and air of our Commonwealth. Our nonprofit organization is focused on environmental advocacy and strengthening the voice and effectiveness of the environmental community. ELM advocates for strong environmental laws and regulations on a broad range of environmental issues, voices the concerns of citizens, ensures that laws are properly implemented and enforced, and educates the public.

Most recently, ELM collaborated with and supported the Mass Workforce Alliance as part of MWA's Down to Earth Initiative. ELM was one of 50 organizations convened by MWA to identify opportunities for job growth potential in the sustainable economy, particularly jobs suitable for low-skill individuals. MWA has built upon the work of the Down to Earth Initiative in both the storm water and food system arenas, including further research (Local Food, Local Jobs report), convening (Storm Water Sector development in partnership with many organizations, including the EPA) and collaboration to advance findings (within the food arena, for example, to identify possible models for collaborative employment to address part-time and seasonal work challenges for workers).

In addition to the great work that came out of Down To Earth, our participation in the initiative was also instrumental in initiating important new partnerships and strategic advocacy alliances that would not have come about if not for MWA having played the role of convener.

We value the work of MWA because of their capacity and ability to

- work within the complex system of workforce development across the state, and the diversity of workforce development organizations, including those at the grassroots level, and
- create and convene successful partnerships both within and external to workforce development.

I believe that MWA's professional team is uniquely qualified to contribute to this work because of their broad understanding of the issues and challenges in food system job creation and training on local and regional levels.

ELM and MAPC also have a longstanding relationship. Both ELM and MAPC are members of the MA Smart Growth Alliance (MSGA). Together with other members of MSGA, we work to improve development patterns, to preserve our natural resources, expand choices in housing and transportation for residents of all incomes, and to seek ways to make urban living healthier and more attractive. MAPC also participates in ELM's climate initiative, the Global Warming Solutions Project and we worked jointly with them as members of Transportation for MA, a statewide coalition working to create safe, convenient, and affordable transportation choices for everyone in Massachusetts.

We are confident that the inclusion of MWA and MAPC in the project team will help to deliver a well-planned vision for the Commonwealth to stimulate its agricultural economy, as well as address issues that are critical in ensuring a thriving, sustainable, and resilient food system.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information. You may reach me by phone, 617-742-2553 or by email, egibbons@environmentalleague.org.

Sincerely,
Eugenia T. Gibbons
Program Director, Environmental League of Massachusetts

Executive Director
Andrew Morehouse

Executive Committee
Nancy Sherman, President
Community volunteer

Frank Robinson, Ph.D., Vice President
Partners for a Healthier Community

Brandon Braxton, Vice President
First Niagara

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Christel Harju, C.P.A.
Meyers Brothers Kalicka, PC

Timothy Paul, Archbishop
Greater Springfield Council of Churches

Sarah Pease
Northampton Survival Center

David Pinsky
Tighe & Bond

Cynthia Simison
The Republican

James Wallace
C&S Wholesale Grocers



97 North Hatfield Road
PO Box 160
Hatfield, MA 01038
Tel. 413-247-9738, Fax: 413-247-9577
www.foodbankwma.org

September 6, 2013

Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street
Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Rhodes,

On behalf of The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, I am writing to extend our full support for the joint application by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Franklin County Council of Governments (FRCOG), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), and the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance (MWA) to serve as the facilitating entity in developing a sustainable, statewide Strategic Food System Plan for Massachusetts.

The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts provides individuals facing hunger with the food they need to survive and leads communities towards long-term solutions to the problems of hunger. Serving the four counties of Western Massachusetts, The Food Bank is the leading provider of emergency food that reaches individuals and families with lower incomes in our region. We are committed to working with our community to reduce hunger and increase food security. The Food Bank seeks to make nutritious food affordable and accessible to all residents in our region.

The Food Bank of Western Mass. has collaborated with Catherine Ratté and David Elvin on several initiatives in the past, including the Pioneer Valley Food Security plan, and I believe that [the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and their multidisciplinary team of professional planners, analysts, and researchers are well qualified to carry out this work because of their broad understanding of the issues and challenges in the food system on local and regional levels. We are confident that the project team will deliver a well-planned vision for the Commonwealth to

stimulate its agricultural economy, as well as address issues that are critical in ensuring a thriving, sustainable, and resilient food system.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Martens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Executive Director
The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts



Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street
Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Rhodes,

I am writing to express support of Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission's joint proposal to serve as the facilitating entity for the Massachusetts Food Plan.

The leadership of regional planning agencies to develop a strong vision for farmland conservation is essential to our work in promoting investments in farmland conservation. Their proposed focus on key food system issues including farmland preservation, access, and affordability, is particularly important given the continued development of farmland and the increasing issues of access facing new-entry farmers. The partnership will help make the plan truly statewide, reaching from Boston to Western Massachusetts, with emphasis on both rural and urban. Connecting permanent farmland conservation to the broader vision of food security will enable us all to cooperate to build an even stronger and resilient agricultural movement in the Connecticut River Valley and state wide.

Kestrel Land Trust is a regional land trust serving the heart of the Connecticut River Valley in 19-towns surrounding Amherst, Northampton, and Holyoke. One of our primary areas of focus is Valley Farmland. Kestrel is also the coordinator of the Forever Farmland Initiative, which is a collaboration of six land trusts working to accelerate the pace of permanent farmland conservation throughout the Valley.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristin DeBoer
Executive Director

COMMUNITY *Action!*

of the Franklin, Hampshire, and North Quabbin Regions

BUILDING ON THE STRENGTH
OF OUR COMMUNITY
SINCE 1965

September 3, 2013

COMMUNITY SERVICES & ASSET DEVELOPMENT

Center for Self-Reliance Food Pantries
CommonCents
Community Resources & Advocacy
GoodCents Financial Counseling
Free Tax Assistance
Franklin County Resource Network
Homelessness Prevention

ENERGY PROGRAMS

Electric Efficiency Audits
Fuel Assistance
Heating System Repair
Weatherization

FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Family Center Programs
Healthy Families
The Parent-Child Home Program
Family Learning Center

HARMON PERSONNEL

Staffing Services
Employment Skills Training

THE MEDIATION & TRAINING COLLABORATIVE

Community Crisis Response Team
Divorce Mediation
Family Mediation
Housing Mediation
School Mediation
Small Claims Mediation
Workplace Mediation
Mediation Training

PARENT-CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Center-Based Care
Family Child Care
Home Visiting
Head Start/Early Head Start

WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC)

Breastfeeding Support
Nutrition Screening and Education
Supplemental Food

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Leadership Development
Employment Readiness
Community Service and Engagement
Diversity Support
Communities That Care Coalition

Daniel Rhodes, Procurement Officer
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
251 Causeway Street, Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Rhodes;

Community Action strongly supports the joint application by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to provide support and leadership in the formation of a comprehensive Massachusetts Strategic Food System Security Plan. As the Community Action Agency for Hampshire and Franklin Counties, we are very familiar with the work of both the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. We have served with them in many joint projects and seen the quality of their work. We feel confident in their ability to generate and ensure stakeholder engagement from among many sectors of the population, from farmers and producers, to food pantries, to public officials, to key players in economic development and policy-making. They are well aware of local challenges, needs, and strengths. One of our biggest needs is living wage jobs and training for people who would then fill these jobs. We are therefore especially pleased to learn of their plan to partner with the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance to provide workforce development services.

Community Action sponsors a food pantry as well as the Franklin County Resource Network, which has done substantial work on food security, including food drives, summer meals programs, and interfaith hosting of winter weekend community meals. In addition, *Community Action's* youth development programming includes an intensive youth employment readiness track funded by the Workforce Investment Act through the Regional Employment Board. This program uses a career pathway approach, exposing our young people to high-demand, living wage careers to spark their interest and start them on their way. We would welcome collaborating in the development of the Food Plan.

Thank you for MDAR's and the Food Policy Council's leadership in moving the Commonwealth toward sustainable food security for all.

Sincerely,



Clare Higgins
Executive Director

Community Action is a non-profit organization that helps the entire community by promoting economic justice and improving the quality of life for people with lower income.



Partner Agency

Franklin County main office: 393 Main Street, Greenfield, Massachusetts 01301
Phone/TTY: 413.774.2318 ♦ Fax: 413.773.3834

Hampshire County main office: 56 Vernon Street, Northampton, Massachusetts 01060
Phone/TTY: 413.582.4230 ♦ Fax: 413.582.4248

North Quabbin main office: 167 South Main Street, Orange, Massachusetts 01364
Phone: 978.544.5423 ♦ Fax: 978.544.2805

info@communityaction.us ♦ www.communityaction.us ♦ www.facebook.com/communityaction.us

3 September 2013

Paul Cawood Hellmund
Director

Mollie Babize
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Associate Director

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Director, 1992-2005

Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street, Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Rhodes:

It is my pleasure to write in support of the proposed collaboration between Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to oversee the development of the Massachusetts Food Plan.

The proposed work will make a significant contribution to food security in our region and the entire state and also provide a useful case example of innovative planning for other states. It would build on successful efforts already completed in our state, including some by Conway School graduate students.

The team's proposed focus on hunger and food security, farmland preservation, access, and affordability, workforce development, food system infrastructure, climate disruptions, over-reliance on the global food system and state and federal regulatory barriers show their awareness of some of the most critical issues facing our state food system.

Furthermore we believe the team's composition, with both urban and rural collaborators, will serve well in crafting a plan that is inclusive of the whole state and that makes connections between supply and demand.

These three planning agencies have recently completed food systems plans under HUD Sustainable Communities Grants and have helped to articulate visions, goals, and strategies to strengthen our food system. In addition, they are in the strategically important position of being able to incorporate recommendations made at the state level into a variety of regional planning initiatives, such as master plans, open space plans, and economic development plans.

Thank you for considering their innovative proposal.

Sincerely,



Paul Cawood Hellmund
hellmund@csl.edu



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Shelburne Falls, MA 01370
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www.franklinlandtrust.org

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Stewardship Assistant
Joshua Morse
Stewardship Assistant

September 3, 2013

Daniel Rhodes
MA Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street
Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Rhodes:

I am writing to voice the Franklin Land Trust's support for the joint proposal of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, and Metropolitan Area Planning Commission to serve as the facilitating entities for the Massachusetts Food Plan.

The issues that come into play when planning for a viable, sustainable food system are multi-dimensional, and they cut across town and regional boundaries as well as urban/rural concerns. The regional planning agencies are, therefore, uniquely suited to facilitate this conversation and planning effort. This is especially true given the fact that the future viability of agriculture in this state, a primary concern of the Franklin Land Trust and critical component of any food plan, depends upon a comprehensive, state-wide approach.

FLT encourages the Massachusetts Food Policy Council and its Advisory Group to accept this joint proposal.

Sincerely,

Richard K. Hubbard
Executive Director

FRANKLIN COUNTY CDC

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Growing Sustainable Businesses and Communities Since 1979

August 29, 2013

Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street, Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Daniel:

I am writing to express our support of the joint proposal from **Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission's** to serve as the facilitating entity for the **Massachusetts Food Plan**. The Franklin County Community Development Corporation (FCCDC) encourages the Massachusetts Food Policy Council and its Advisory Group to select this partnership to undertake this important activity.

We believe their proposed focus on hunger and food security, farmland preservation, access and affordability, workforce development, food system infrastructure, climate disruptions, over-reliance on the global food system and state and federal regulatory barriers demonstrated their understanding of some of the most pressing issues facing the state and the region around food system planning.

In addition, we believe their partnership will be particularly effective at linking urban and rural areas and linking markets with growers. Members of the team have served as delegates to the New England Food Summit and have created relationships with neighboring states and the individuals in those states focused on farms and food systems.

The FCCDC has worked closely with both the FRCOG and PVPC on Food System work over the past several years and we know they have formed valuable connections with other stakeholders working on food system related projects. They are well-positioned to incorporate the statewide food system plan recommendations into regional and local planning initiatives.

The Western MA Food Processing Center is involved with supply, processing and distribution of local foods and we have a deep desire for this MA Food Plan to be thorough and well done so implementation will have a major positive impact on the people of the commonwealth. We believe this collaboration of Planning Agencies can do it well.

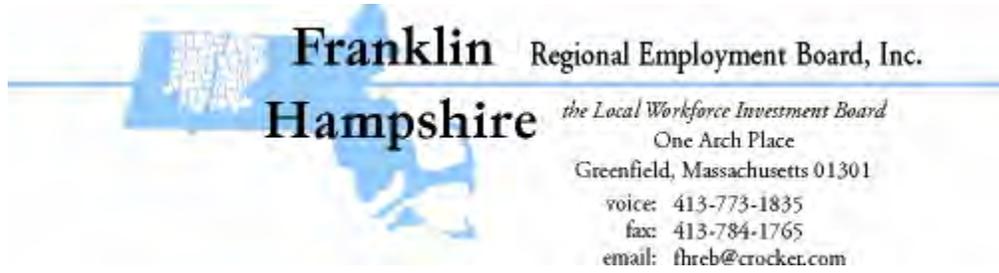
Please feel free to contact me for more information regarding is proposal.

Sincerely,



John Waite
Executive Director
Franklin County CDC and the Western MA Food Processing Center

The FCCDC is an Equal Opportunity Provider
324 Wells Street Greenfield MA 01301 413-774-7204 FAX 413-773-3562 www.fccdc.org



September 9, 2013

Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street, Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Rhodes,

On behalf of the Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board (FHREB), I am writing to extend our full support for the joint application by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Franklin County Council of Governments (FRCOG), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), and the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance (MWA) to serve as the facilitating entity in developing a sustainable, statewide Strategic Food System Plan for Massachusetts.

The Franklin Hampshire REB is the community board of business, education, labor and government organizations that oversees workforce development policy, funding and programs for the 50 communities of the Franklin, Hampshire, and North Quabbin region. As the oversight Board for federal Workforce Investment Act activities, we guide implementation of Franklin Hampshire Career Center employment services and programs, serving over seven thousand job seekers and one thousand employers each year.

The Franklin Hampshire REB has most recently collaborated with and supported the Mass Workforce Alliance to conduct research on food system jobs in the Pioneer Valley. This research has already been fruitful for the REB, allowing us to hone our strategic objectives in this industry area, engage REB members from diverse industries in exploring how enhanced regional food systems strengthen the economy for all, and yielding successful workforce development initiatives such as the youth food systems worker component of the current USDA partnership grant with our area Community Development Corporation.

In addition, we value the work of MWA because of their capacity and ability to:

- work within the complex system of workforce development across the state, and the diversity of organizations, including those at the grassroots level, and
- create and convene successful partnerships both within and external to workforce development.

I believe that MWA's professional team is uniquely qualified to contribute to this work because of their broad understanding of the issues and challenges in food system job creation and training on local and regional levels. We are confident that the inclusion of MWA in the project team will help to deliver a well-planned vision for the Commonwealth to stimulate its agricultural economy, as well as address issues that are critical in ensuring a thriving, sustainable, and resilient food system.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert H. Hurley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "R".

Executive Director

September 9, 2013

Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street
Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114



Dear Mr. Rhodes,

On behalf of Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness, I am writing to extend our full support for the joint application by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Franklin County Council of Governments (FRCOG), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), and the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance (MWA) to serve as the facilitating entity in developing a sustainable, statewide Strategic Food System Plan for Massachusetts.

Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness (BCFF) is a Boston based organization dedicated to improve community health through a comprehensive initiative addressing issues related to food and fitness. BCFF's commitment to racial equity is the foundation for our core strategies. Our work continues to intersect with MAPC as BCFF focuses upon improving conditions and supporting the presence of healthy food options in neighborhoods that includes increasing access and affordability of community food through farmers markets. This proposed work aligns with our active participation and leadership in the Massachusetts Food Policy Alliance that was formed several years ago.

BCFF has collaborated with Lola Omolodun on several initiatives in the past. As MAPC is an organizational partner of BCFF, Lola has served as an active member of our Food Committee for over two years. We are beginning a new collaboration, providing farmers market technical across several Massachusetts towns.

I believe that MAPC's multidisciplinary team of professional planners, analysts, and researchers are uniquely qualified to carry out this work because of their broad understanding of the issues and challenges in the food system on local and regional levels. We are confident that the project team will deliver a well-planned vision for the Commonwealth to stimulate its agricultural economy, as well as address issues in public health including food access and equity, which is critical in ensuring a thriving, sustainable, and resilient food system.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,

Karen A. Spiller
Director

Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness
P.O. Box 52055 | Boston, Massachusetts 02205
P: 617.203.2073 | www.bostonfodandfitness.org

Highstead

127 Lonetown Road 203 938 8809
P.O. Box 1097 203 938 0343 fax
Redding, CT 06875-1097



September 4, 2013

Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street
Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Rhodes:

I am writing to express to the Massachusetts Food Policy Council and its Advisory Group Highstead's support of Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission's joint proposal to serve as the facilitating entity for the Massachusetts Food Plan.

As a conservation organization that helps others implement bold visions through on-the-ground action coordinated by regional partnerships in Massachusetts and across New England (see [Wildlands and Woodlands Initiative](#) and the [RCP Network](#)), we understand and value the role of collaborative planning processes in advancing social change in ways that are tied to the land. Agriculture, public health, and regional economies are complex, intertwined systems. In order to have an impact, activities need to be integrated and coordinated.

I believe that the regional planning agency team's proposed initiative for a Statewide Strategic Food System Plan has the potential for positive and lasting impacts to agricultural production, processing and distribution. Their approach will provide leaders from agricultural and conservation organizations and agencies, municipalities, farming families and neighborhoods across the Commonwealth with a framework for coordinated action to support a more resilient food system. Individually, and collectively, their organizations provide ongoing forums for collaborative learning and coordinated action for community members, other stakeholders, as well as experts in various fields that would help increase food security. There is also a particular strength in their representation of both rural and urban populations with diverse economic and social backgrounds. Finally, by its very nature, this team's efforts and the recommendations of the statewide food system plan will be fully integrated into regional comprehensive planning.

For these reasons, I encourage the Massachusetts Food Policy Council and its Advisory Group to look favorably upon the regional planning agency team's proposal for a Statewide Strategic Food System Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily Bateson".

Emily Bateson
Conservation Director



Janet Rodriguez Denney

Executive Director

Department of Elder Affairs

1600 E. Columbus Ave
Springfield, MA 01103
Telephone: (413) 787-6785
Fax: (413) 750-2694
TTY: (413) 787-6154

Divisions:

Computer Learning Center

(413) 750-2090

Council on Aging

(413) 787-6124

Golden Age Club

(413) 787-6486

Mature Workers

Employment Program

(413) 787-6126

1-877-244-1012

Fax: (413) 750-2694

S.H.I.N.E.

(413) 750-2893

Senior Centers:

Hungry Hill Center

P.O. Box 353, 01101

(413) 733-9411

Mason Square Center

439 Union St. 01105

(413) 733-3917

Mayflower Center

1516 Sumner Ave, 01118

(413) 782-4536

Pine Point Center

335 Berkshire Avenue, 01109

(413) 732-1072

Riverview Center

120 Clyde Street, 01107

(413) 732-7275

Greenleaf Community Ctr.

1187 1/2 Parker Street, 01129

(413) 750-2873

THE CITY OF
SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

September 9, 2013

Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street
Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Rhodes,

On behalf of the City of Springfield's Department of Elder affairs, I am writing to extend our full support for the joint application by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Franklin County Council of Governments (FRCOG), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), and the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance (MWA) to serve as the facilitating entity in developing a sustainable, statewide Strategic Food System Plan for Massachusetts. The city of Springfield has over 24,000 elders. We have 9 program sites across the city that administers the congregate meals for elders along with partnering with community partners to provide fresh fruits and vegetables through our mobile market and community gardens.

Department of Elder Affairs has collaborated with Catherine Ratté and David Elvin on several initiatives in the past, including the Pioneer Valley Food Security plan, and I believe that the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and their multidisciplinary team of professional planners, analysts, and researchers are well qualified to carry out this work because of their broad understanding of the issues and challenges in the food system on local and regional levels. We are confident that the project team will deliver a well-planned vision for the Commonwealth to stimulate its agricultural economy, as well as address issues that are critical in ensuring a thriving, sustainable, and resilient food system.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,

Janet Rodriguez Denney
Director of Elder Affairs
City of Springfield, Massachusetts

Planning & Economic Development

70 Tapley Street Springfield, MA 01104 413.787.6020 Fax: 413.787.6524
www.springfieldplanning.org

September 9, 2013

Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street
Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

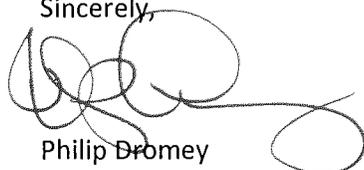
Dear Mr. Rhodes:

On behalf of City of Springfield's Office of Planning & Economic Development and as a member of the Springfield Food Policy Council, I am writing to extend my full support for the joint application by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Franklin County Council of Governments (FRCOG), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), and the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance (MWA) to serve as the facilitating entity in developing a sustainable, statewide Strategic Food System Plan for Massachusetts.

The Office of Planning & Economic Development has collaborated with Catherine Ratté and David Elvin on several initiatives in the past, including the Pioneer Valley Food Security plan, and I believe that the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and their multidisciplinary team of professional planners, analysts, and researchers are well qualified to carry out this work because of their broad understanding of the issues and challenges in the food system on the local and regional levels. I am confident that the project team will deliver a well-planned vision for the Commonwealth to stimulate its agricultural economy, as well as address issues that are critical in ensuring a thriving, sustainable, and resilient food system.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,



Philip Dromey
Deputy Director of Planning
Office of Planning & Economic Development



**United Way
of Hampshire County**

Post Office Box 123
71 King Street
Northampton, MA 01061-0123
P: 413-584-3962
F: 413-584-5114
unitedwayhampshirecounty.org

September 5, 2013

Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street
Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

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Executive Director

James Ayres

Dear Mr. Rhodes,

I am writing on behalf of the United Way of Hampshire County to share our enthusiastic support for the joint application by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), Franklin County Council of Governments (FRCOG), Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), and the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance (MWA) to serve as the facilitating entity in developing a sustainable, statewide Strategic Food System Plan for Massachusetts. The United Way of Hampshire County (UWHC) promotes positive, lasting change in Hampshire County by investing in programs and initiatives focused on children and youth, health and safety, and economic security.

Our United Way has partnered extensively with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission on various community initiatives including the State of the People Report and Sustainable Knowledge Corridor initiative. As UWHC collaborated with Catherine Ratté and David Elvin on the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor, we were consistently impressed with the PVPC's multidisciplinary team of professional planners, analysts, and researchers – individuals who are well qualified to carry out this work because of their broad understanding of the issues and challenges in the food system on local and regional levels. We are confident that the project team will deliver a well-planned vision for the Commonwealth to stimulate its agricultural economy, as well as address issues that are critical in ensuring a thriving, sustainable, and resilient food system.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,

James Ayres
Executive Director

SPRINGFIELD FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

Commissioner Greg Watson
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
251 Causeway Street, Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Commissioner Watson,

The Springfield Food Policy Council is pleased that there is momentum and funding to support a robust planning process for a more sustainable and strategic food plan for the Commonwealth of MA.

SFPC was constituted in 2010 and has over 200 community members with a steering committee of twenty-three. One of our committees is our Urban Agriculture committee, which successfully passed a Community Gardening Ordinance last year. Our community is very interested in how we can make more land available to residents to grow their own food. We also have a lot of work going on in Springfield about how to get regional food grown in the Pioneer Valley into Springfield businesses, schools and residencies.

The Springfield Food Policy Council looks forward to supporting the efforts of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to make certain that the City of Springfield is part of this State-wide plan. We can provide support in their efforts to network and communicate with our members, facilitate stakeholder involvement, help them to understand community data, and connect them to local and regional networks.

We know that it is crucial to develop this type of State-wide plan, to make sure that our communities have nutritious, affordable, and locally grown food, that will create sustainable food security. We anticipate the day when most farmers will come to Springfield with their local produce and agricultural products as part of a viable state plan.

Thank you,



Springfield Food Policy Council Steering Committee, Co-Chair



Town of Stow
PLANNING BOARD

**380 Great Road
Stow, Massachusetts 01775**

Phone: (978) 897-5098

Fax: (978) 897-2321

Web: www.stow-ma.gov

September 9, 2013

Mr. Daniel Rhodes
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Procurement Officer
251 Causeway Street
Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Rhodes,

On behalf of the Town of Stow Planning Department I am writing to extend our full support for the joint application by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Franklin County Council of Governments (FRCOG), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), and the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance (MWA) to serve as the facilitating entity in developing a sustainable, statewide Strategic Food System Plan for Massachusetts.

The Stow Planning Department has collaborated with MAPC on several initiatives in the past, including the MAGIC Subregion's Comprehensive Agricultural Planning Project. MAPC displayed a commitment and aptitude for engaging diverse stakeholders and building a collaborative working group atmosphere that is helping regional organizations and municipalities rethink the local approach to supporting agriculture.

I believe that MAPC's multidisciplinary team of professional planners, analysts, and researchers are uniquely qualified to carry out this work because of their broad understanding of the issues and challenges in the food system on local and regional levels. We are confident that the project team will deliver a well-planned vision for the Commonwealth to stimulate its agricultural economy, as well as address issues that are critical in ensuring a thriving, sustainable, and resilient food system.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,



Karen Kelleher
MAGIC Representative
Town Planner
Stow, Massachusetts

RELEVANT REPORT SUMMARIES

MAGIC Comprehensive Agricultural Planning Program



Project Background

The Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC) Subregion is comprised of thirteen municipalities that include the least densely populated areas of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) region. These communities are particularly susceptible to encroaching development on lands that are suitable for agricultural production. With funding provided through the Sustainable Communities Program, MAPC is working with project partners and stakeholders to establish a Comprehensive Agricultural Planning Program for the Subregion.

The goal of the Planning Program is to increase the economic viability of farming and protect sustainable foodsheds within the MAGIC Subregion. The project will provide solutions to promote increased food production and marketing to areas inside and outside the Subregion. Numerous farm service organizations and municipalities are involved in the project.

Partners:

There are numerous stakeholders involved in the project. Those receiving grant funding for their direct service include: Sudbury Valley Trustees, Land for Good, Conservation Law Foundation, and Tufts New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Partners providing leveraged resources include the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, the Municipal Association of Agricultural Commission (including all local Agricultural Commissions), Massachusetts Department of Agriculture, and the Towns of Bolton, Boxborough, Concord, Lincoln, Littleton, and Stow.



Updates:

Project partners are currently examining issues raised by practitioners at the Agricultural Forum held in March (with over 80 farmers and ranchers present!), as well as the development of new tools and guidance for both practitioners and municipal officials engaged in agriculture or agricultural planning. Working with stakeholders, project partners will then prepare action items for future implementation of recommendations and guidance at the local and state level. A workshop devoted towards a discussion of project results and development of action items will be scheduled after the growing season (likely October 2013). Questions: Please contact Julie Conroy, Senior Environmental Planner/Project Manager at jconroy@mapc.org or (617) 933-0749.

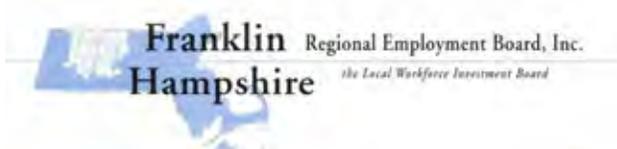


Local Food, Local Jobs: Job Growth and Creation in the Pioneer Valley Food System

**A Report by
Alex Risley Schroeder**

Massachusetts Workforce Alliance
In partnership with CISA, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission,
Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board, and PVGrows

Funded with support from
The Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts
and the Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board



Author

Alex Risley Schroeder
Massachusetts Workforce Alliance
alex@massworkforcealliance.org

Editor

Deborah Mutschler
Massachusetts Workforce Alliance
deborah@massworkforcealliance.org

February 2013

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Photo of farm workers courtesy of Mountain View Farm, Easthampton, Ma.



I. Executive Summary

Overview

In 2011, the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance developed its **Down to Earth Initiative** to recognize areas in the growing sustainable economy that offer the potential to create jobs and career paths suitable to lower-income, lower-skill adults. The D2E work identified sturdy regional food systems as a promising area for job creation. With support from the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, the Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board, and an anonymous foundation, this report examines the job creation potential in the Pioneer Valley regional food system. An area of fertile soil and an expanding local food movement, the Pioneer Valley of Massachusetts extends along the Connecticut River and includes Franklin and Hampshire and Hampden Counties.

Essential questions underlie this research:

If more of what people ate in the Pioneer Valley came from the Pioneer Valley, would it create jobs? And, if so, what would those jobs be?

This research describes current work in the Pioneer Valley food system, with an emphasis on jobs that are within reach of lower-skill workers, identifies promising segments of the food system that are currently generating these jobs, and looks at ways job creation and growth in this system can be fostered.

MWA Mission

The mission of the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance (MWA) is to create true economic opportunity for low-income people by uniting individuals, organizations and coalitions to advance sensible workforce development policy. MWA's Down to Earth Initiative focuses on the ways in which an economy increasingly focused on sustainability, particularly in light of the impact of climate change, will create jobs. MWA's orientation, as an alliance of workforce development coalitions, is to understand the ways an increasingly sustainable economy will shift, and to forecast these economic shifts in order to benefit lower-skill, lower income individuals. Such forecasting enables the education and training organizations that serve low-income communities to be informed, knowledgeable, and ready to provide relevant services, and also to develop the partnerships with employers and industry organizations that are required for success.

Food System Concerns

The impact of climate change is only one of several dynamics currently affecting



MWA's Down to Earth initiative developed the Sustainable Economy Tree highlighting the ways in which workforce development can contribute to the development of a sustainable economy.

the food supply. Food systems in the Pioneer Valley, across the Commonwealth and the nation, are facing natural and man-made challenges and volatility. Concerns include:

- Food security: Is there enough food for all of us?
- Food safety: Is our food free from toxins and contaminants?
- Food access: Is there healthy, nutritious food available to everyone?

Many local, statewide, regional and national initiatives are tackling these concerns. The overarching framework of security, safety, access, and economics informs our research.

Food System Sector Interdependence

The regional food system within this Valley is nested within the larger global food system: much of the produce in our local grocery stores daily arrives from other parts of our country as well as from other countries. Food manufacturing occurs largely outside the three county area. There is, however, a long history of agriculture in the Pioneer Valley, as well as a decades old and nationally recognized effort to support local farmers. Local produce, meats and dairy products are grown or raised, sold and eaten here. The local system of farms, food processors, restaurants, stores and food service operations, distributors and food waste management operations employs Valley residents. And, while agriculture is not the largest employer in the three Pioneer Valley counties, the movement to develop sturdy regional food systems involves related sectors, including food manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, transportation and warehousing, administrative and support, food service and waste management.

The interconnected nature of a regional food system provides promising potential for job creation. If we are able to grow, manufacture, serve, sell and compost food locally, to intentionally connect these activities robustly, will that spur job creation, and if so, in what occupations?

Audience and Objectives

This research engaged over 50 individuals and organizations and strategically targeted representation from the different constituents/members of the Pioneer Valley food system to obtain answers to the central questions mentioned above. Our goal has been to highlight areas worthy of further investigation and analysis by workforce development, economic development, and food system experts and organiza-



tions. We anticipate these findings will be useful to four key audiences: workforce development providers, job seekers, food system businesses, organizations and advocates and policy makers.

Overview of findings

This research showed that the Pioneer Valley food system is already creating jobs. Job growth is evident on farms; business growth and development is evident in food manufacturing; innovation and business development is happening in food distribution; and, food waste management is poised to change in ways that hold possibility for business expansion and job creation.

These findings are relevant in that they:

- Indicate **where the jobs are and where they will be created.**
- Provide information about **the type of work available, and the qualifications, wages and certifications** required for these jobs.

Significant findings summary:

- **Job creation and food system development is already happening.** There are many factors already combining to grow the food system and these jobs. There is an opportunity for strategic engagement with workforce development to have workers ready, knowledgeable, discerning and trained to fill food system jobs.
- **While food system advocates are fully engaged, workforce development professionals are not yet.** Food system advocates are actively figuring out ways to strengthen their systems and are working to support cross-sector efforts. Workforce development is not yet aware of the work opportunities inherent in an interconnected regional food system.
- **It is vital to broadly educate the public about the value of regional food systems.** This educational effort can serve to highlight current and potential new jobs as well as other critical issues.
- **Overlapping functions and segments in the food system create opportunities for job cross training and interwoven career pathways** that may begin at entry level. Now is the time to articulate these areas more clearly.



Recommendations

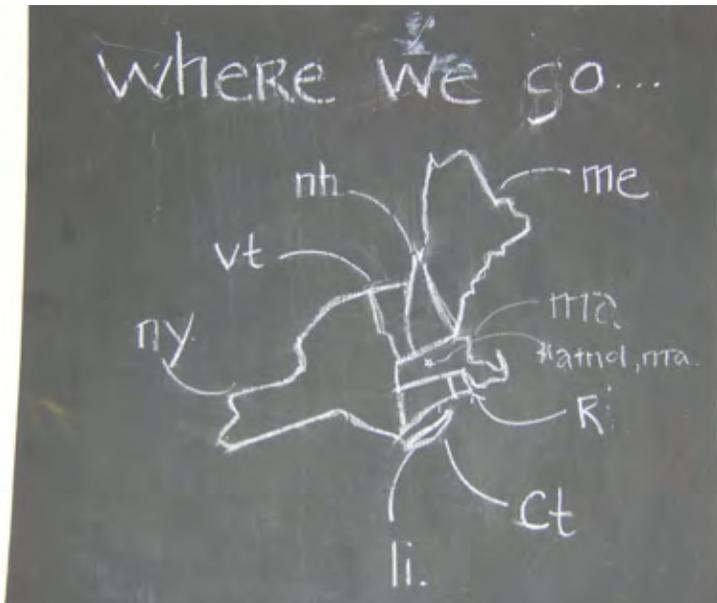
Increasing job creation in the Pioneer Valley regional food system, and targeting it to best meet the needs of employers and workers, particularly lower-skill workers, requires a varying mix of technical assistance, regulatory change, vision, partnership development and strengthening and, finally and critically, a commitment to system building. Understanding these efforts in the largest view — inclusive of food access, food safety, food security and good job creation is essential.

Because of the interdependence of the different segments, it is imperative to take a systems view. Without this perspective, the capacity of different parts of the food system to grow jobs, to further develop the necessary relationships and to make action possible will be compromised.

This research has used a small lens to look at a very large landscape. The recommendations are shaped by the array of conversations and while the interviewees were strategically chosen, the Pioneer Valley food system is a complex system and warrants continued and deeper examination. Interestingly, this small lens brings into focus a picture that has potential applicability in other parts of Massachusetts as those regions consider the ways in which local food sourcing is a means to strengthen the linkages between parts of the food system and as a tool for job creation.



Produce department staff. Courtesy River Valley Market



MWA has five key recommendations to spur job creation in the Pioneer Valley food system and elsewhere in the Commonwealth.

1. **Develop a Massachusetts food system plan.** A complete assessment of the strengths and gaps in the Massachusetts food system, including its capacity to grow business and employ residents, benefits the Pioneer Valley's food system. A good plan with appropriate buy-in and commitments, will allow for substantial progress.
2. **Continue to build consumer demand for locally produced food.** The Pioneer Valley food industry is driven by increased demand. In recognition of the interdependent drivers of the growing local food movement, it is critical to continue to partner with health efforts that bring produce to different stores as a way of increasing consumer awareness of the benefits of local produce, as well as their comfort in purchasing, preparing and consuming produce. Local food policy councils, CISA and food security organizations are well suited to foster and spur the kinds of education needed on a store-by-store, neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis. For this to be maximally effective, it must be paired with a comprehensive education effort.
3. **Develop a comprehensive education effort on the value of sturdy local food systems.** Develop and disseminate the message of the multiple values of high functioning local food systems, not only to diverse stakeholders, but also to groups who don't yet see their work or agenda as related to food systems, food

security, or a food economy. This message campaign should articulate and educate about the value of linking food system parts. Similar to the “Let’s Make Smoking History” campaign, or the more recent push to build consumer understanding of the value of energy efficiency, this campaign would make clear the connections between health, security, and economics — painting the picture that local food sustains us in more ways than just nutrition.

4. **Take a systems view.** Local food systems are being affected by multiple drivers that encourage both increased production and consumption of local food. An anticipatory stance that is informed by a thoughtful systems perspective that considers the whole seed to soil continuum allows and supports a strategic approach to infrastructure development and increasing resiliency. Prioritizing system integrity as an aspect of any actions taken in a part of the Pioneer Valley food system will ensure interconnectivity and potentially allow for economics of scale at a variety of levels, including recruiting and training employees.
5. **Engage in targeted research** in the areas this investigation has identified as having the most significant and immediate job creation potential including:
 - **system infrastructure**, including large-scale improvements (e.g. dairy processing plant, meat processing facilities) and smaller scale improvements on farms and for distribution
 - **on-farm season extending, processing and food waste management facilities**
 - **infrastructure and systems relating to upcoming changes to Massachusetts food waste management regulations.**

In addition to the above recommendations, the report points to

- strategies to address food system labor challenges and to prepare workers for new work.
- specific recommendations to spur job creation in all parts of the Pioneer Valley food system.

Next Steps

- **A sturdy Pioneer Valley food system (as well as one that spans the Commonwealth) needs intervention** like the support the Massachusetts clean energy economy has experienced. Such support will spur growth and new business development and existing business expansion. Done with workforce development partners, support will help to ready qualified workers while building businesses.

- **Building regional food systems requires partnerships** among businesses, education and training, food system advocates, and health advocates to shape policy, regulation and develop public awareness. This is already in motion. **Workforce development needs to be part of these partnerships at the state and regional level.**
- **Complement these partnerships with clear and directed education** for workforce development professionals about
 - the jobs in regional food systems. This must be reality-based but also framed in the context of the value of food systems for health, economic well-being and security.
 - the ways the workforce development system can support food business and food industry growth.
- **Develop worker training and education that values cross-training. Augment existing food system workforce development programming with food system training.** To build the interconnectivity of the system and enhance the value of workers, infuse training with a food systems perspective that supports workers to see themselves, and be seen by employers, as food systems workers, rather than distribution workers, farmworkers, or processors.

Around the world food-localization initiatives are gaining momentum. This movement seeks three interrelated goals:

- shortening the [distances] that food travels between farm and the table;
- capturing more of the value-adding activity associated with the growing, sorting, processing, packaging, distribution, selling, and serving of food; and
- maximizing the local ownership of all the enterprises involved [in] these value chains.

If achieved, these goals would produce four distinct benefits: strong community economies, ecological sustainability, better nutrition and health, and more civic engagement.

Shuman, Michael. "The 25% Shift — The Economic Benefits of Food Localization For The Pioneer Valley & The Capital Required to Realize Them," June 2012

Pioneer Valley Food Security Plan (Summary)

No one goes hungry.
We grow our own food.

1. OUR PURPOSE AND GOALS

1.1 OUR PURPOSE

The Pioneer Valley is blessed with a robust, highly functioning and well integrated regional food system.

STRENGTHS: Compared to many other similarly sized regions, the Pioneer Valley’s local food system is relatively mature. The key entities and organizations involved in local food production and anti-hunger programs cooperate effectively, communicate well and share many goals.

Our regional food system includes dozens of successful small and medium sized farms run by farmers who cultivate some of the most fertile agricultural soils in the world. Our many grocery stores and co-ops stock as many local products as possible, and residents can take advantage of an ever expanding number (over 50 in 2013) of seasonal farmers markets and an increasing number of winter markets—many of which now accept Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. There is good access to major transportation routes that allow growers and manufacturers to move products to market efficiently. Local food advocates and anti-hunger organizations have a history of success providing food to hungry residents, helping them take advantage of food assistance programs, and facilitating the adoption of progressive food security-related policies at the state and local levels,



The Holyoke Farmers Market, one of many seasonal farmers markets in the Pioneer Valley. Photo courtesy Girls Inc. of Holyoke.

including urban farming ordinances, municipal “right-to-farm” bylaws, as well as regulations that prohibit unhealthy foods in schools. There is a well-established commitment among institutional food providers, particularly schools, to supporting local farmers and producers. And a variety of organizations are active in efforts to develop and expand organic waste composting programs as well as developing waste to energy programs on farms.

WEAKNESSES: And yet, our region continues to lose farmland to development and farmers to other careers. We import the vast majority of the food we consume and have only just begun developing regional food processing facilities. We have increasing numbers of food insecure households due to poor access to healthy food, economic injustice and poverty. And we compost or recover energy from only a tiny percentage of our food waste. While there have been productive ad-hoc collaborations among the food security advocates and organizations in the past, to date there has not been a regional food security plan that provides strategic coordination and direction to make our food system a model of sustainable practices.

Today, we have a unique opportunity to catalyze existing food planning efforts so that we can do more, and do it faster, to improve food security at both the household and regional scales.

Therefore, this Pioneer Valley Food Security Plan has been created to help the region’s food producers, consumers, anti-hunger organizations and others articulate and advance their shared goals for our sustainable food system.

Goal: No one goes hungry	Goal: We grow our own food.
<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Objectives</i>
Further integrate emergency food systems and programs into the overall regional food system.	Collaborate with organizations across New England and within our region to work toward the goal of producing 50% of all food that is consumed in the region. ¹
Expand consumer outreach, education and advocacy to enhance use of healthy, local and culturally appropriate food.	Preserve farmland and work to convert available land that may not currently be used as farmland to agricultural purposes.
Increase access to healthy food.	Invest in food system infrastructure.
Make sure that as many people as possible who are eligible for food assistance, receive it.	Increase the capacity of people involved in the regional food system.

¹ This 50% goal is drawn from the *New England Good Food Vision 2060 for the six New England states* produced by Food Solutions New England, most recently updated in April 2012. <<http://www.foodsolutionsne.org>> See Section 3.2.2.

PROCESS: This plan was produced by the Pioneer Valley Food Security Advisory Committee, which is staffed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission in partnership with Community Involved Sustaining Agriculture (CISA), the region’s leading local food business organization, and The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, the region’s primary anti-hunger agency. The planning process included both qualitative and a quantitative assessments of food security issues in the Pioneer Valley. This included extensive interviews with farmers, advocates, planners, and others working in the various components of the food system, and the analysis of extensive data. The process also included research on best practices in regional food security across the United States to identify potential solutions to local needs. The process also involved engaging members of the general public, as well as the community of people and organizations associated with PVGrows, a collaborative network dedicated to enhancing the ecological and economic sustainability and vitality of the Pioneer Valley food system, to assist in the identification of issues and prioritization of solutions.

2. OUR FINDINGS

2.1 HUNGER IS A WIDESPREAD AND PERSISTENT PROBLEM

According to the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, 1 in every 8 residents in the agency’s service area (which includes Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin and Berkshire Counties), or about 110,000 people, go hungry each year—including 22,000 children.

At the household level, food security is generally understood to mean that people cannot regularly obtain a sufficiently diverse selection of foods for a healthy diet because food is not accessible or affordable. “Food insecurity” describes households that do not have enough money to make sure there is enough food for every meal. In the Pioneer Valley, the rate of food insecurity is 14.3% in Hampden County and 10.2% in Hampshire County. This means there are approximately 90,900 people in the region—of which nearly 35,000 are children—who cannot regularly buy the food they need for a healthy diet (Feeding America 2011).

Food Insecurity in the Pioneer Valley

	Hampden County	Hampshire County	Franklin County ²	Region	Mass. statewide
Food insecurity rate	14.3%	10.2%	11.5%	12.0%	11.2%
Food insecure population	66,880	15,780	8,240	90,900	727,530
Child food insecurity rate	24.3%	16.3%	20.2%	20.3%	18.1%
Child food insecure population	27,530	4,470	2,910	34,910	262,650

Feeding America 2011

² Franklin County data is also included, as it is part of the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts’ service area and considered by many residents to be part of the Pioneer Valley.

2.1.1 MORE THAN 16,000 PEOPLE LIVE IN URBAN “FOOD DESERTS”

“Food desert” describes specific geographic areas where healthy food is not regularly available, typically from a full-line grocery store. The U.S. Department of Agriculture finds that a person’s ability to access and purchase healthy, affordable food is substantially reduced in low-income and racial and ethnic minority neighborhoods that do not have a full-line grocery store, as well as rural areas where people may live more than 10 miles from a full-line grocery store and not have the means to travel there.³ According to USDA and the Centers for Disease Control, 3,515 people (2.2%) living in the urban areas of Hampden County and 12,580 people (2.7%) in urban Hampshire County do not have access to a car and live more than 1 mile from the nearest full-line grocery store. PVPC’s 2012 analysis found that a total of 24,627 residents in the rural areas of these counties live more than 10 miles from a full-line grocery store. Compounding the lack of accessible nutritious and healthy foods is the high quantity of *unhealthy* food choices, especially low-priced fast food. Lower-income food desert areas often have substantially higher concentrations of fast food establishments.⁴ Areas such as this where there are few, if any, alternatives to high-calorie food with low nutritional value are sometimes known as “food swamps.”

2.1.2 NUTRITION ASSISTANCE IS NOT FULLY UTILIZED IN THE REGION

In the Pioneer Valley, the USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps) is an important source of help for low-income residents fighting food insecurity. There are 54 providers of SNAP and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) child and adult food programs in the region: 40 in Hampden County, 8 in Hampshire County, and 6 in Franklin County.⁵ The number of people participating in SNAP alone in these counties rose from 37,436 to 137,464 from 2000 to 2011—a 367% increase—while the population grew less than 5%. The value of SNAP benefits disbursed in the region rose from \$25 million in 2000 to \$143 million in 2009.

SNAP is designed to expand the number of people who receive benefits during tough economic times. Like the rest of the nation, the Pioneer Valley continues to experience the effects of the economic downturn that began in late 2008, and so the number of SNAP participants remains high. However, many families who are eligible for SNAP benefits do not use them for a variety of reasons, including stigma about accepting government assistance and a lack of awareness of available benefits. In recent years, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts and other anti-hunger advocates have worked to increase awareness of eligibility for SNAP to increase the number of people who receive food. This includes outreach to local farmers and food businesses about accepting SNAP benefits from their customers.

³ <<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx>>

⁴ Story, Kaphingst, et. al. 2008.

⁵ Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 2011.



Caption: The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts provides community training about SNAP eligibility to improve consumer use of this and other nutrition assistance benefits.

2.2 LOCAL FARMS AND FOOD PRODUCERS MAKE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

In many respects, regional food systems function as a loop, like the one shown at right.

This plan finds that within the food system of the Pioneer Valley, there are several points along this loop where new opportunities and potential exist for greater economic growth and improved sustainability.



2.2.1 FARMS ARE INTEGRAL TO THE ECONOMY AND CULTURE OF THE REGION

Pioneer Valley farms sell \$181 million dollars worth of agricultural products and employ 2,260 people annually.⁶ This represents 0.4% of all economic activity in the region and approximately 7.4%, of all agriculture sales.⁷

There are approximately 1,960 farms in the Pioneer Valley, which is one-fourth of all farms in Massachusetts. The region contains about 169,000 acres of farmland, which is 14% of the total land area of the region and one-third of all agricultural land statewide. The region’s farms produce 13% of all Massachusetts agricultural products by value (see below).

⁶ McHale, 2011.

⁷ 2007 Census of Agriculture

Pioneer Valley Agricultural Product Sales 2007

Product(s)	Amount
Vegetables	\$16,185,000
Dairy	\$8,955,000
Fruits	\$3,597,000
Meats	\$2,640,000
Grains and beans	\$779,000
TOTAL:	\$32,156,000

Source: 2007 Economic Census

Nearly 500 farms sell their products directly to individuals, with total sales of \$8.9 million annually (as of 2007). This includes sales at farm stands and the region's 58 community supported agriculture, or "CSA" share farms. A total of 86 farms produce certified organic products, with sales of \$4.4 million, or about 4% of total agricultural sales in the region—even though total farmland in organic production is less than 2,000 acres.

In 2007, there were 470 farms that employed workers, with total employment of about 3,800 workers earning a total \$27 million. This total includes paid family members but excludes contract laborers. In 2007, a total of 86 farms hired migrant farm workers.

Since 1972, about 23,000 acres of cropland and pastureland in the region have been lost to development.⁸ In 1997, American Farmland Trust listed the Connecticut River Valley in Massachusetts and Connecticut as one of the 20 "most threatened agricultural regions in the United States."



The soils of the region are considered among the most fertile in North America and provide nearly ideal conditions for a variety of agricultural production. Photo: CISA, Sanhga Farm, Middlefield

⁸ MassGIS Land Use data, 1972-2005

2.2.2 THERE IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL IN MORE LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING

A 2008 study estimated that current Pioneer Valley farms and food production could satisfy about 16% of the demand for food consumed in the region.⁹ Current estimates suggest that Massachusetts as a whole is producing enough agricultural products to meet 4.0% to 5.6% of its food needs. CISA estimates that our region could produce 5.6% of all of Massachusetts' total food need.¹⁰ In Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire counties, approximately 13% of household food budgets are spent on local food (not including purchases made by restaurants, retailers, and institutions). Therefore, the total value of agricultural products produced and consumed within our region is actually likely to be slightly higher

There are at least 62 food processing facilities in the region (approximately half are commercial and retail bakeries), and sales from food manufacturing totaled \$2.13 million in 2009.¹¹ However, Western Massachusetts today lacks sufficient food processing facilities to meet demand for local consumption and exports. This shortcoming limits the amount and variety of processed foods created from local ingredients available in local markets—and economic growth.

One of the region's greatest production facility needs is for additional value-added processing facilities to where locally grown food can be processed and packed for distribution and sales. Many local food businesses have used the Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center (FPC), a business incubator and shared-use commercial kitchen operated since 2001 by the Franklin County Community Development Corporation. In some cases, the center provides co-packing services, allowing farmers to supply ingredients and obtain a finished product for sale without providing the labor or recipe development. Also, additional slaughtering facilities, both mobile and fixed, are needed for animal products; currently, many farmers in the region must transport their animals long distances for slaughter, reducing the financial return.



John Waite, executive director of the Franklin County Community Development Corporation, displays frozen vegetables packaged at the Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center in Greenfield. Other products made there include pickles, hot sauce, jams and salsa. Photos: Cori Urban, Masslive 2012.

⁹ Timmons, Wang, et. al. 2008

¹⁰ CISA 2010

¹¹ U.S. Census

2.2.3 THERE IS STRONG CONSUMER DEMAND FOR LOCAL FOOD

Another major strength of the Pioneer Valley food system is the strong consumer demand for locally grown and produced foods—both for cooking at home and dining out. Community-based organizations, including CISA, and businesses have developed a strong local food culture. They have also created a local food infrastructure that supports economic growth, as well as addressing the need to combat hunger. There are now approximately 300 businesses in the region that sell and market local food, including new food cooperatives and restaurants that emphasize their use of local produce, and direct farm sales through farm stands. The number of farmers markets continues to increase—now 45 with some selling during the winter months—and member share-supported farms now total 58.¹² Throughout the region, there is recognition of the value of local farmers and encouragement for new value-added food businesses.



Caption: Easthampton Farmers Market. Photo: CISA



CAPTION: It's a farmers' market on wheels! Enterprise Farm in Whately bought a 1995 Chevy Bluebird RV that was once used by a military traveling band. The bus brings organic produce to urban areas without access to fresh food; it is outfitted with a SNAP machine to accept food assistance benefit cards. Source and photos: <http://bostonlocalfoodfestival.com>

¹² CISA

2.2.4 PURCHASES OF LOCAL FOOD FOR SCHOOLS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS BENEFIT LOCAL PRODUCERS AND BRING FRESH FOOD TO CHILDREN

New opportunities for local food sales are on the way, thanks in part to the Massachusetts School Nutrition Law enacted in 2010, which makes it easier for school districts to buy fresh produce directly from local farmers. The law also requires the establishment of a School Wellness Advisory Committee for school districts. The intent is that the committee will encourage development of a program that actively promotes wellness in schools and to maximize the school district's opportunities for grant awards. Also, the recently formed Massachusetts State Food Policy Council supports agriculture and local food consumption in Massachusetts through increased production and sales, including to institutional buyers.

2.2.5 MUCH MORE FOOD WASTE COULD BE RECOVERED FOR COMPOSTING AND CLEAN ENERGY GENERATION

Food disposal is a critical part of the regional food system. As more landfills in the region reach their capacity and must close, new solutions are needed for disposing of food. A 2010 study by PVPC estimated that Hampshire County alone (which has roughly one-third of the region's population) produces more than 51 tons of organic food waste a day—and of this, nearly 36 tons per day (70%) can be recovered for compost. However, the capacity of existing composting facilities in the county is just 15 tons per day, which means an additional 21 tons per day of organic food waste is available for composting. Applying similar assumptions in Hampden County, another 40 to 45 tons per day of compostable food is likely available, resulting in a regional total of 60 to 65 tons of waste food generated per day that is available to be composted. This compost could be available for farms, home gardens and commercial landscaping—and play a much greater role in the regional food cycle.

3. OUR PLAN

A total of 31 strategies for improving food security in the Pioneer Valley have been developed and refined through ongoing work with the Pioneer Valley Food Security Advisory Committee and many other stakeholders.

NO ONE GOES HUNGRY: ANTI-HUNGER STRATEGIES

STRATEGY	LEAD ROLE	CROSS CUTTING STRATEGIES
<p>1. SEEK Inter-organizational Collaboration Continue and expand ongoing communication and collaboration between anti-hunger organizations, such as the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, with Buy Local food organizations, such as CISA, via the regional food system network in the Pioneer Valley, PVGrows.</p>	<p>Food Bank of W. Mass., CISA, PV Grows, PVPC</p>	<p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, EQUITY</p>
<p>2. SUPPORT Emergency Food Systems Programs Facilitate wider acceptance of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP-formerly food stamps), WIC coupons and other programs at farmers’ markets and CSA farms to assist more people in accessing healthy food.</p>	<p>Anti-hunger organizations, state agencies, farmers market organizers</p>	<p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p>
<p>3. SEEK Consumer Education Continue to educate consumers about proper nutrition and food safety through community outreach, education and advocacy. Focus on healthy, local and culturally appropriate foods.</p>	<p>Anti-hunger and food community organizations, local food policy councils</p>	<p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, EQUITY</p>
<p>4. ACCESS Information About Where to Buy Healthy Food Address food access issues by creating "feedability guides" that connect consumers with healthy food resource locations and availability information.</p>	<p>Local food policy councils</p>	<p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p>
<p>5. SEEK New Retail Outlets for Healthy Food Support, expand and replicate initiatives that increase the number or neighborhood retail outlets selling healthy food, such as the healthy bodega program in Springfield.</p>	<p>Local food policy councils</p>	<p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p>

<p>6. START Increase Neighborhood Access to Fresh Food Work to bring full-line grocery stores with a full line of fresh produce and meats to neighborhoods that do not have one.</p>	Community-based organizations, local food policy councils	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, EQUITY
<p>7. PROVIDE Access to Sources of Healthy Food Provide free or reduced-fare bus passes to low-income riders for trips to garden plots, farmers' markets and other community food sources.</p>	Community-based organizations	TRANSPORTATION
<p>8. PROVIDE Training and Technical Assistance Provide ongoing technical assistance and training to community based organizations working to feed hungry people, such as volunteer recruitment/retention, management training, organizational development, strategic planning and fund-raising.</p>	Anti-hunger organizations	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
<p>9. EXPAND Access to Healthy Food for Low-income Residents Expand the number of low-income Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) models to increase access to fresh food in low-income areas by improving access for seniors, increasing the use of SNAP for CSA membership payment, and similar efforts.</p>	Anti-hunger organizations and agencies, CISA	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
<p>10. PROVIDE Zoning and Regulatory Assistance Work with member municipalities to assess how local zoning and other regulations may help or hinder residents' access to healthy food, and develop solutions to fix problems that are identified. This may include easing restrictions on vegetable gardens and livestock in residential districts, facilitating adoption of right to farm bylaws and similar actions.</p>	PVPC, local planning officials	LAND USE
<p>11. SUPPORT Retail Best Practices for Healthy Food Support retail policies and practices, such as in-store displays requirements and signage that promote healthy food. Work to implement these at all levels of government and community, such as healthy locally grown snacks at public meetings.</p>	Municipalities	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
<p>12. ENCOURAGE More Local Food Purchases by Schools and other Institutional Meal Providers Support, incentivize and facilitate purchases of local food for lunches by schools, as well as elder care facilities, senior meals programs (i.e., Meals on Wheels). Includes developing contract requirements and incentives to increase private contractor purchases of local foods and</p>	School boards and districts, senior centers, care facilities	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

services.

<p>13. ASSURE Food Assistance Benefits are Fully Used Work to assure that all people eligible for SNAP, WIC and similar program benefits are enrolled in the program.</p>	<p>Anti-hunger organizations, social service agencies</p>	
<p>14. OVERCOME Assumptions and Stereotypes Work to de-stigmatize poverty in general and the use of hunger assistance benefits. Provide information about the nutritional needs of low-income residents of the region and the public health benefits of a healthy population, especially to growing children.</p>	<p>PVPC, anti-hunger organizations, public officials</p>	<p>EQUITY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p>

WE GROW OUR OWN FOOD: LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY STRATEGIES

STRATEGY	LEAD ROLE	CROSS CUTTING STRATEGIES
<p>15. ASPIRE To Produce 50% of Food Consumed in the Region Collaborate with organizations across New England and within the Pioneer Valley to work toward the goal of producing 50% of the food that is consumed in the region.</p>	<p>CISA, PVPC, Food producers and distributors</p>	<p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p>
<p>16. SHARE Information About Food Production Create an online electronic platform for food-related data to enable food organizations to share existing data and describe future needs. This service could also provide training and education about food data collection and use, and technical assistance for farm business operators, food distributors and retailers.</p>	<p>CISA, Food Bank of W. Mass., PVPC</p>	<p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p>
<p>17. PROMOTE Local Food Businesses Support local policies and regulations that address food insecurity and promote local agriculture, such as "Right-to-Farm" bylaws, local agriculture commissions, and municipal laws to regulate fast food establishments.</p>	<p>PVPC, municipalities</p>	<p>LAND USE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p>

<p>18. PROTECT Productive Agricultural Land</p> <p>Continue incentives and programs to keep agricultural land in production. Support regulations that direct new development to urban and suburban infill areas with the existing infrastructure to support it. Use Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs) and other regulatory/policy means to preserve prime farmland and convert available land that may not currently be used as farmland to agricultural purposes. Work with land owners and land protection organizations to develop new, innovative strategies for protecting agricultural lands. Utilize local funds from Community Preservation Act (CPA) and transfer of development (TDR) rights to leverage and match state APR funds. Actively outreach to farmers to encourage APR applications. Produce a brochure about the benefits of the APR program.</p>	<p>Land owners, Mass. Dept of Agriculture, PVPC, municipalities</p>	<p>LAND USE</p>
<p>19. CONNECT Farmers With Land Owners</p> <p>Connect land owners with farmers to facilitate agricultural production. Actively participate in Hampden county pilot project collaboration with the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project and its partners.</p>	<p>PVPC</p>	<p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p>
<p>20. ENCOURAGE Urban Agriculture</p> <p>Support urban agriculture, including livestock ordinances, GIS mapping of available parcels, and foster partnerships among property owners and businesses to develop and expand community gardens and commercial urban agriculture projects.</p>	<p>Municipalities, PVPC</p>	<p>GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE</p>
<p>21. GROW School Gardens</p> <p>Support on-site vegetable gardens at schools, day care facilities, adult care facilities and other similar entities.</p>	<p>School districts, care facility operators</p>	<p>GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE</p>
<p>22. CREATE Renewable Energy and Efficiency</p> <p>Support development of on-farm clean and renewable energy sources and systems. Help improve the efficiency of existing energy systems. Includes participation in Massachusetts Clean Energy Center municipal pilot program for community renewable energy development.</p>	<p>MA Farm Energy Program (MFEP), PVPC, municipalities</p>	<p>CLIMATE ACTION/CLEAN ENERGY</p>

<p>23. GROW</p> <p>Year-round Food Production</p> <p>Facilitate and expand year-round food production capacity in the region, including hydroponic greenhouses.</p>	<p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p>
<p>24. INVEST</p> <p>Financial Resources in Local Food Businesses</p> <p>Provide flexible capital for innovative local farm and food businesses, particularly those to improve food system infrastructure.</p>	<p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p>
<p>25. GROW</p> <p>Large-scale Composting Business Opportunities</p> <p>Expand large-scale composting of food waste generated by retail food stores, businesses, institutions. And homes. Support and/or establish waste source separation programs and hauling routes. Help strengthen the composting market with greater incentives (i.e., landfill tipping fees) to divert organic wastes to composting and developing stronger consumer demand for finished compost products.</p> <p>26. CREATE</p> <p>More Home Composting</p> <p>Expand home-scale composting by encouraging sales of in-home and outdoor bins by municipalities and local businesses. Widely distribute easy-to-understand information about how to compost at home.</p>	<p>PVPC, municipalities, food businesses and institutional meals providers</p> <p>Municipalities, retail stores</p> <p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>ENVIRONMENT</p>
<p>27. CONNECT</p> <p>Farmers and Institutional Meal Providers</p> <p>Help develop and expand the capacity of farmers to sell produce directly to institutional meal providers, such as colleges, universities, schools, hospitals, day-care, senior meals programs and nursing homes.</p>	<p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p>

28. SCALE UP

Local Food Production

Facilitate implementation of recommendations from CISA food system infrastructure report, **Scaling Up Local Food**. Key steps include a regional slaughter house; improving the capacity of dairy processing in the region; establishing a temperature-controlled regionally shared root cellar facility; expanding capacity for local value-added processing, freezing and co-packing; logistical support for ordering; and grain processing.

CISA, state agencies, municipalities, food businesses

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

29. SUPPORT

Business Needs of Local Food Producers

Provide technical assistance and business development support to local farms and food businesses, including compliance with food safety requirements. This may include enterprise development, marketing and financial management. Initiatives could include creation and staffing of a Valley-focused agricultural business support center, and greater collaboration with new Greenfield Community College's Farm and Food Systems degree and certificate program. A designated municipal point person could serve as liaison between local farmers and these services.

CISA, financial institutions, municipalities

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

30. CREATE

More Jobs Throughout the Local Food System

Work to fill gaps in all sectors of the local food system with local jobs, especially in the food production and waste/compost sectors. Provide education and training to increase the skills and capacities of food system workers through formal programs, such as the GCC Farm and Food Systems degree and certificate programs, as well as apprenticeships and internships at local farms and food businesses.

Community college academic and training programs, regional employment agencies, CISA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2013-14 FOOD SECURITY IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

PROJECT NAME	LEAD ROLE	COMPLETION
<p>1. Healthy Food Conformance Analysis Develop a "Best Practices" library for the region of municipal regulations for healthy and local food promotion. Work with at least two communities to undertake reviews of existing municipal zoning, subdivision and other regulations to determine conformance with best practices that support both household and regional food security. Provide a technical assistance program to help at least two communities adopt zoning for food security.</p>	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, in collaboration with municipalities	December 2014
<p>2. Connecting Farmers with Farmland Establish at least one model "New Entry Sustainable Farmers" initiative by matching land owners with available farm land with farmers who have no land through meetings, GIS mapping and facilitating legal and/or informal agreements.</p>	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, in collaboration with Mass. DAR, New Entry Sustainable Farmers and municipalities-AG commissions, Planning Boards	January 2014
<p>3. Assure Comprehensive Use of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Research and promote best practices for facilitating CSA acceptance of SNAP for at least two CSAs. Improve the administration of the free lunch program that children in SNAP households are supposed to be receiving in at least one local school. Work with the Massachusetts Division of Transitional Assistance to publicize recommendations of the USDA Healthy Incentives pilot. Work with at least one grocery store to adopt a key recommendation.</p>	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, MA Division of Transitional Assistance, Elected officials, Food Bank of W MA, CISA, Schools, and School Boards, grocery store, residents	December 2014
<p>4. Facilitate Region's Food Hub Initiatives Collaborate with area Mass in Motion coordinators to provide technical assistance to participating small stores for marketing and display of healthy food purchased through planned cooperative food hubs in Holyoke and possibly other municipalities in the region.</p>	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Holyoke Food and Fitness Policy Council	February 2014
<p>5. Facilitate schools purchase of healthy and local food Organize a regional workshop on the topic of how local school districts, charter schools, private schools can incorporate healthy food and/or local purchase requirements into procurement of their contracts with commercial food service providers. If possible, address the issue of how to get more food cooked on site. Provide model contract language and best practice examples from other regions.</p>	PVPC, Massachusetts Farm the School initiative, City Fresh, School committees and School staff	December 2014

6. U.S. EPA and Project Bread Massachusetts Food Map

Support joint effort of U.S. EPA Region 1 and Project Bread to identify and map food system resources statewide. This project is intended to support strategic investments in anti-hunger initiatives, strengthen farm and food businesses within the Commonwealth, and reduce food waste in landfills to help mitigate methane emissions.

Pioneer Valley Planning
Commission, U.S. EPA Region 1,
Project Bread

3-5 year project

SUSTAINABLE Franklin County

Focus on farms and food

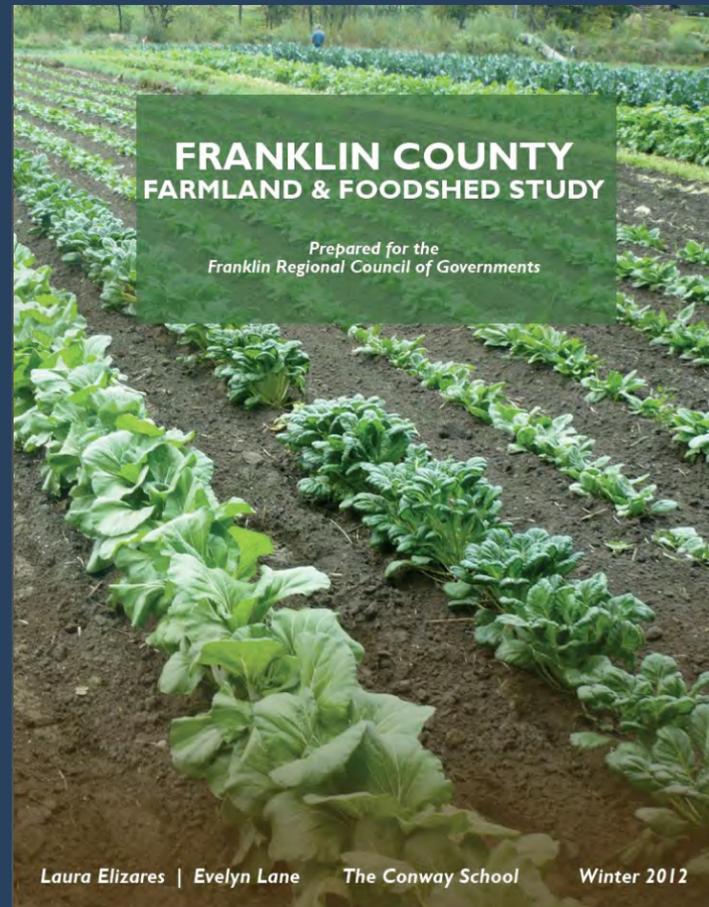
The Natural Resources chapter of Sustainable Franklin County includes a focus on farms and food. Through public input, goals were identified, including the number one natural resource goal: protect farmland and local food supplies. To delve into the question of whether Franklin County has enough land to grow its own food, the FRCOG hired the Conway School to examine the region's foodshed. Some of the methodology and assumptions of the New England Food Vision were utilized and the Vision was scaled to the regional level.

Farm and Food Related Recommendations

- * Support town, regional, and state policies that help make farms and farming economically viable.
- * Promote locally produced farm products and assist farmers in successful farming ventures.
- * Support the expansion of food and farming related infrastructure and services.
- * Support efforts that increase food security for Franklin County and the region.
- * Support additional research, studies and plans to help develop a successful regional food system.

"To achieve self-sufficiency, Franklin County needs additional agriculture infrastructure – the businesses, services, buildings, and skilled workforce to process, store, and distribute local foods."

Franklin County Farmland and Foodshed Study



Top Three Natural Resources Goals

1. Protect farmland and local food supplies
2. Protect forests
3. Protect drinking water supplies and reduce water usage.

Constraints Relating to Farming and Protecting Farmland

1. High costs of farmland and equipment
2. Development pressures on farmland
3. Economic challenges to farmers to meet market demands



The FRCOG received funding from the Henry P. Kendall Foundation in 2013 to conduct further work in the region focused on food access and food system infrastructure, processing, and distribution.

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For more information: http://frcog.org/services/landuse/landuse_HUD.php