

# SURGING TOWARD 2026

A STRATEGIC PLAN



**Blackstone  
Heritage  
Corridor, Inc.**

# One valley... One history... One environment...

All powered by the Blackstone River watershed and so remarkably intact it became the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.





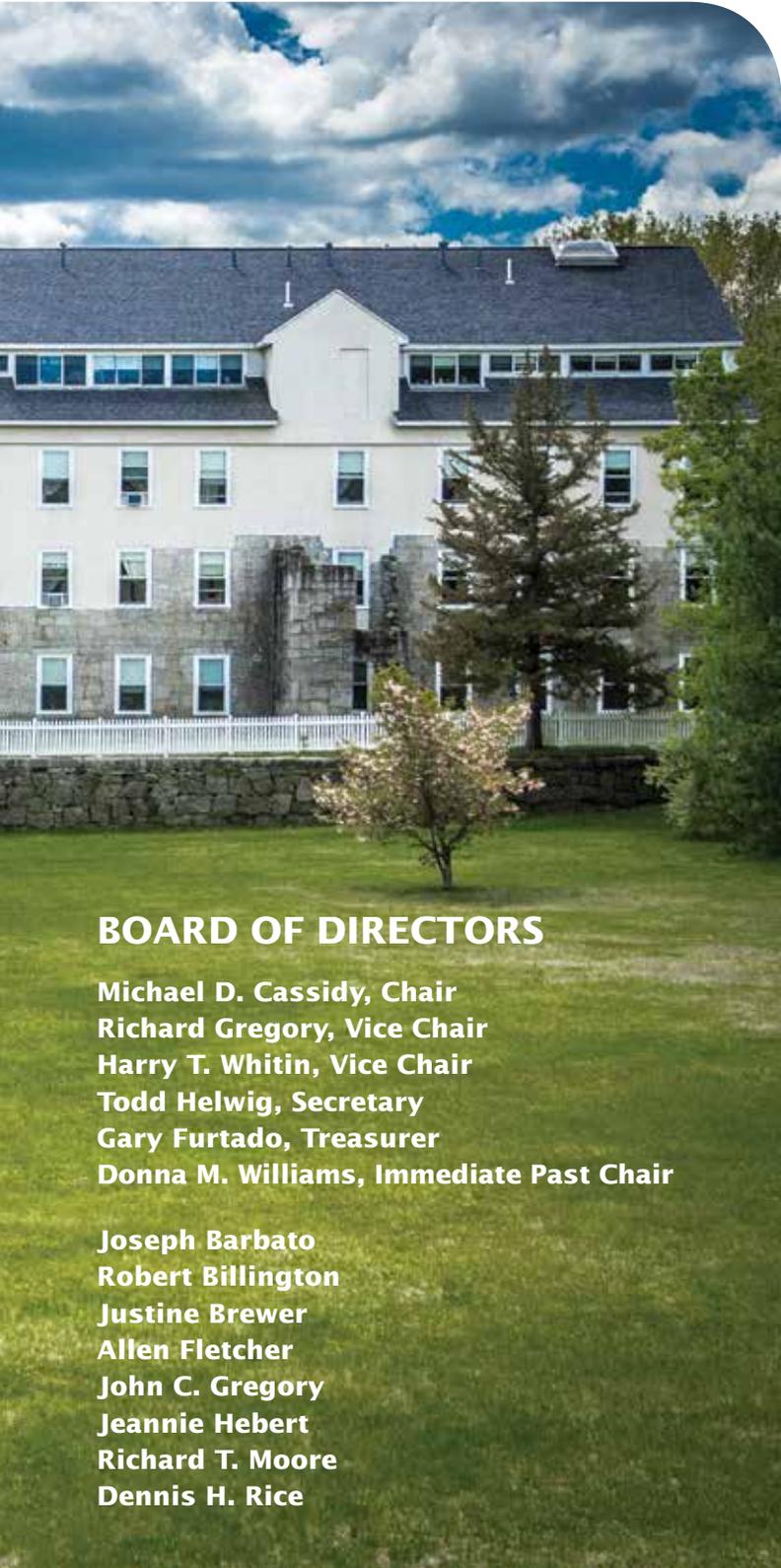
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# **SURGING TOWARD 2026**

## **A STRATEGIC PLAN**

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**670 Linwood Ave., Whitinsville, MA 01588**  
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The Corridor includes all or some of the following cities and towns in Massachusetts and Rhode Island:

Auburn

Blackstone

Burrillville

Central Falls

Cumberland

Douglas

East Providence

Glocester

Grafton

Hopedale

Leicester

Lincoln

Mendon

Millbury

Millville

North Smithfield

Northbridge

Pawtucket

Providence

Smithfield

Sutton

Upton

Uxbridge

Woonsocket

Worcester

## Introduction

In 1986 Congress established the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (the “Corridor”) in recognition of the important historical, cultural and natural resources found in the Blackstone River Valley that showcase the Birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution. Later named after Rhode Island Senator John H. Chafee, the Corridor is defined by “lines on a map” which generally outline the watershed of the Blackstone River.

As part of the legislation that created the Corridor, Congress also established the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission (the “Commission”). The Commission quickly became the Corridor’s principal advocate and champion. Its thoughtful stewardship of the Corridor’s resources has built a sturdy foundation for the Valley’s future. The various planning documents the Commission prepared as part of its program of work (see documents listed in Appendix B) have become a sturdy foundation for the Valley’s future we are building on today.

In 2014, Congress took the long-awaited and historic step of creating the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park as the 402nd unit of the National Park Service (the “Park”). The new Park as authorized by Congress will include six nodes throughout the Blackstone River Valley in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts: Slater Mill in Pawtucket, RI, Kelly House in Lincoln, RI, Ashton Village in Cumberland, RI, Slatersville in North Smithfield, RI, Whitinsville, MA, and Hopedale, MA. And of course the Park will make use of the Blackstone River and the Blackstone Canal.

Also in 2014 and as part of the legislation that created the Park, Congress provided for an orderly termination of the Commission. The Commission was never intended to continue in perpetuity, and thus it was with a view toward continuing the Commission’s important work that the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, Inc. (“BHC”) was incorporated in 2010 as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. In 2012, the Commission delegated its authority to BHC and the 2014 legislation confirmed the transfer of the Commission’s authority to BHC as the “local coordinating entity.”



# BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR, INC. (BHC)

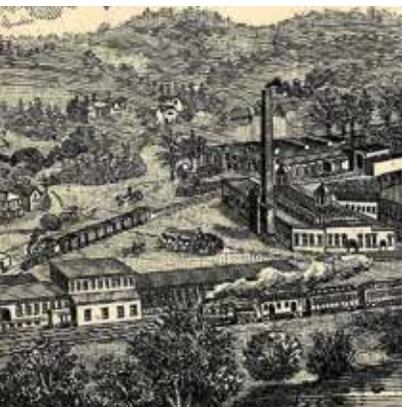


## Our Portfolio is The Corridor

The Corridor is large. It extends over parts of two states and includes all or part of 25 separate cities and towns (14 in Massachusetts; 11 in Rhode Island). The Corridor's boundary defines an area of 556.4 square miles following in rough outline the watershed of the Blackstone River and its tributaries. It is home to over 800,000 people from all walks of life.

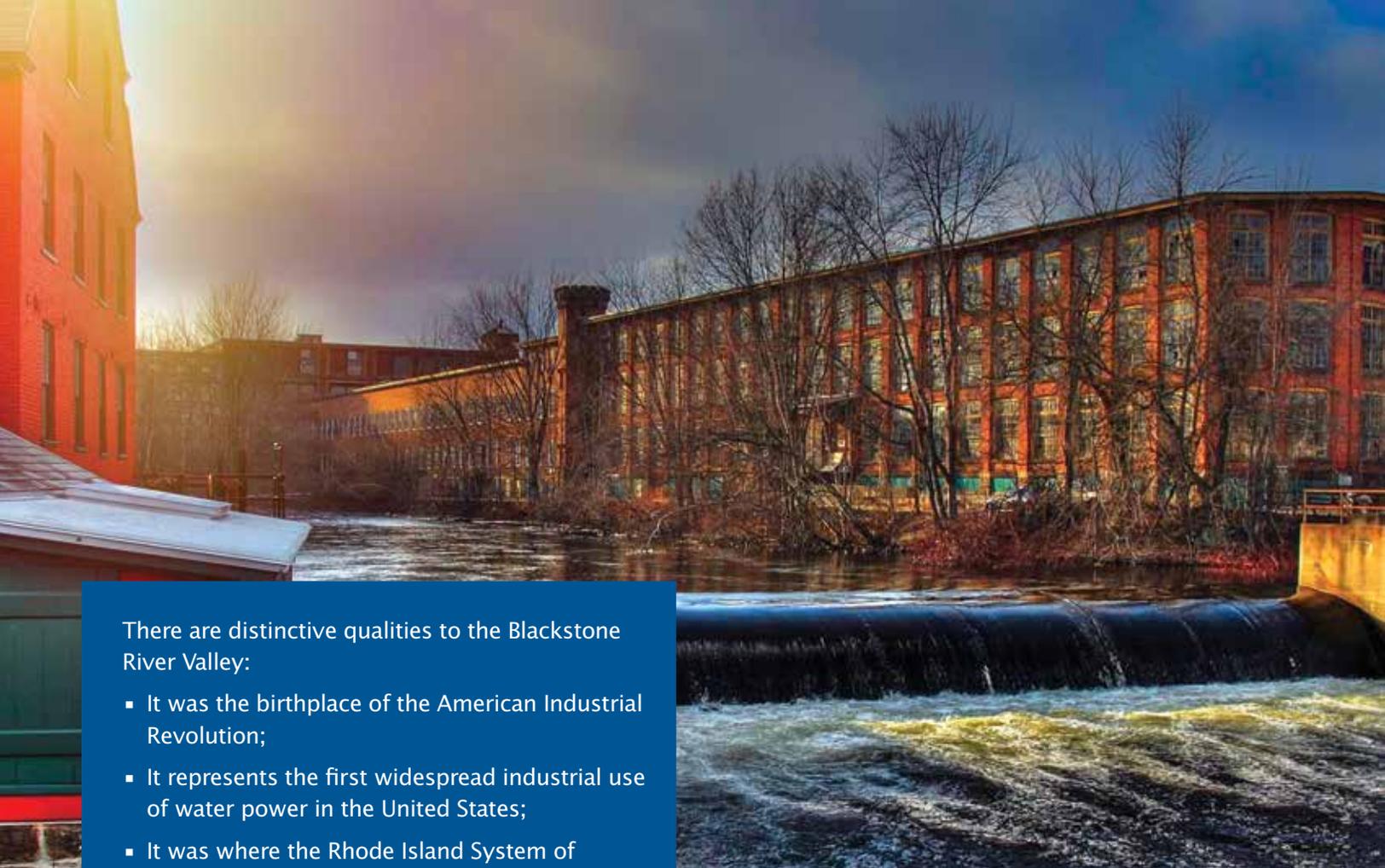
Numbers alone do not tell the Corridor's story. The American Industrial Revolution began at Slater Mill in Pawtucket, RI. The first widespread industrial use of water power occurred along the Blackstone, and the Rhode Island System of Manufacturing was developed in the mills which sprang up along the River and its tributaries. Opportunities for employment offered by these mills attracted hard-working families who built the first ethnically and religiously diverse communities in New England. The Blackstone River, the Blackstone Canal and railroads throughout the Valley created a transportation infrastructure which was instrumental in the growth of Worcester and Providence, the second and third largest cities in New England.

We believe that the Blackstone River Valley is much more than the sum of its parts. It is a rough diamond which must be cut and polished before it can be appreciated in full. No single organization acting on its own can accomplish the task, but we know that much can be accomplished when partners share a common vision and work together toward a common goal.



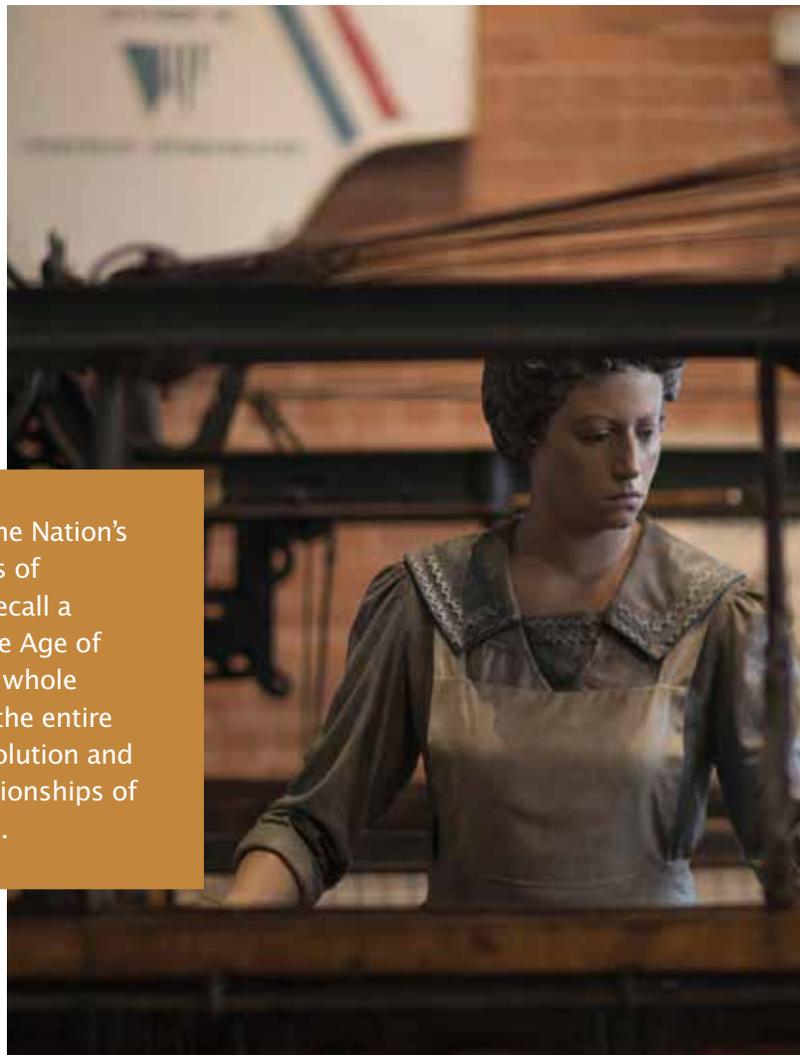
## MISSION

**The Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc. works with community partners to preserve and promote the Valley's historical, cultural, natural and recreational resources for current and future generations.**

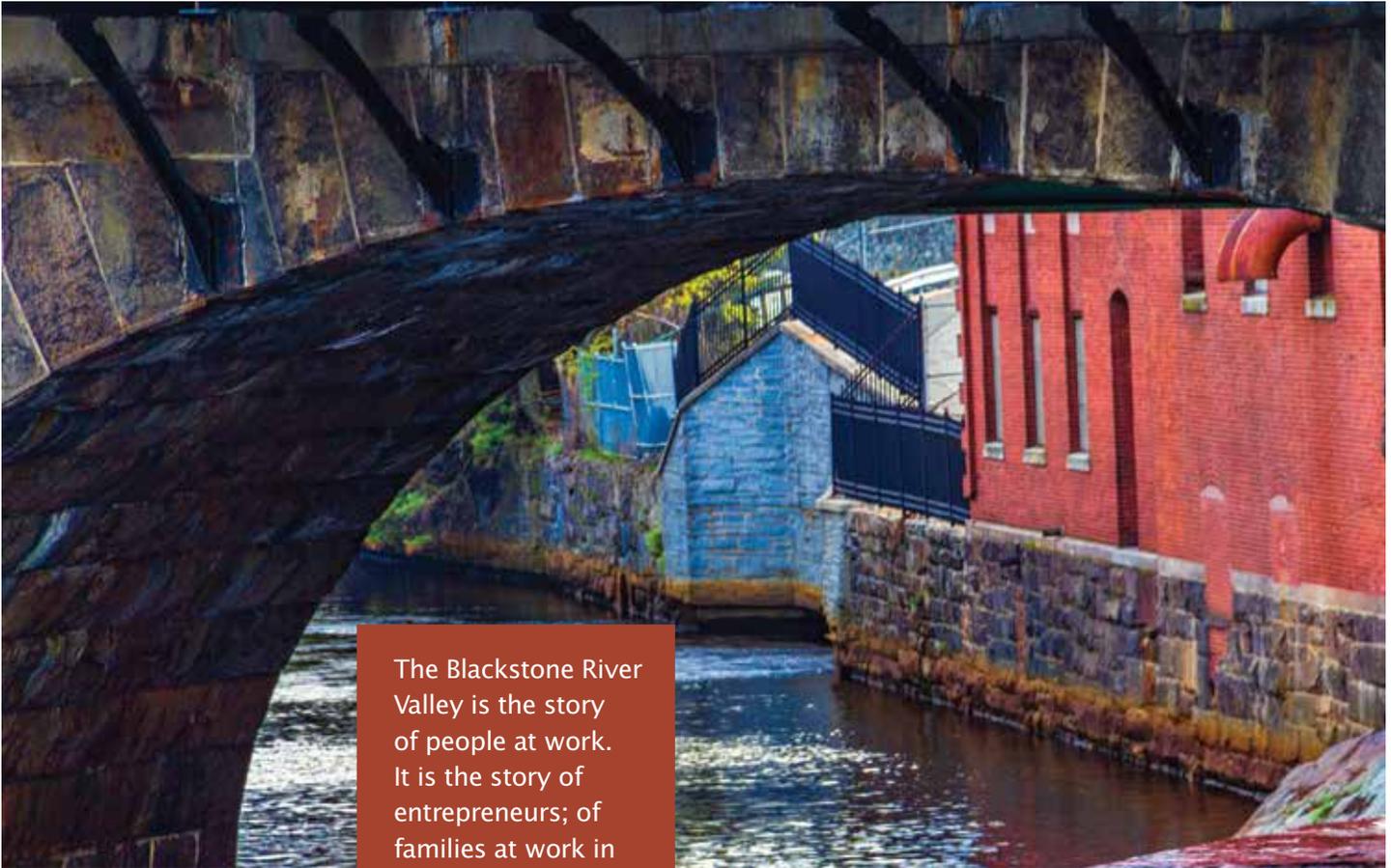


There are distinctive qualities to the Blackstone River Valley:

- It was the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution;
- It represents the first widespread industrial use of water power in the United States;
- It was where the Rhode Island System of Manufacturing was developed;
- It was the first ethnically and religiously diverse area of New England; and
- Its industrial and transportation systems were crucial to the development of the second and third largest cities in New England.



The Blackstone River Valley is one of the Nation's richest and best preserved repositories of landscapes, structures and sites that recall a neglected era of the American past: the Age of Industry. Thousands of structures and whole landscapes still exist which represent the entire history of the American Industrial Revolution and the complex economic and social relationships of the people who lived and worked here.



The Blackstone River Valley is the story of people at work. It is the story of entrepreneurs; of families at work in factories or on farms; of social utopians and labor organizers; of builders of roads, canals, and railroads; of industrial boom, collapse, and recovery. In particular, it tells a dynamic, graphic story of Man and Nature: how natural and human resources can be wisely harnessed and cherished; how costly is their thoughtless abuse; and how essential is their rehabilitation.



People still live and work in and around the nationally-significant historic communities and buildings. The Blackstone Heritage Corridor is the real thing, not a fanciful display behind a red velvet rope. Although it includes magnificent structures and graceful natural and scenic areas, its heart and soul is the story of the genius of the American story of industrial ingenuity. This is an important story to tell. There is no better place to tell it. *[Excerpt from Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, p. iv., 1989]*



## We Work With and Through Partners

BHC believes in partnerships. In authorizing the new Park, Congress recognized that the National Park Service would need the assistance and perspective of a local coordinating partner. In this regard, BHC and the new Park (symbolized by the Corridor Waterwheel and the National Park Service Arrowhead, respectively) are partners in full. At present, BHC is assisting the National Park Service in planning for the new Park as well as how the Park will relate to the resources of the larger Corridor in which it exists.



Although BHC's partnership with the National Park Service is important, BHC plays a much broader role in the Corridor as a whole. BHC was formed to continue the important work begun by the Commission in knowing, assisting and promoting all of the wonderful sites and resources throughout the Corridor.



## 30 Years of Investment & Impacts

Over the past 30 years, the Commission/BHC has facilitated meaningful investments in the Blackstone Valley and amassed significant impacts through its work with and through partners. Note that the methods of accurately capturing match are more sophisticated now than they were in previous decades. Therefore, the match and total impacts below are greatly understated.

**\$10 million** invested

**\$22 million** matched by state and local governments, nonprofits

**\$32 million** in total impacts

**84 partners** engaged in significant projects



# WE IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES



Although the Park is limited in area and scope, BHC's portfolio is broad and comprehensive. Over the years, our partners have told us and our predecessor organization again and again that the Valley as a whole is much more than the sum of its parts, and that a holistic and integrated vision of what the Valley might become is of the utmost importance (e.g., "Because the vision is so important to sustaining success, partners have stressed the value of the "keeper of the vision" role played by the [Commission]." *Reflecting on the Past, Looking to the Future*, p. 66, 2005).

BHC relishes its role as "keeper of the vision." We take a holistic and integrated approach to the Corridor, and we know that such an approach is of paramount importance if we are to develop a bright and compelling vision for what the Valley might become in the future.



Every great work is created first in the imagination. We imagine a future which will retain and enhance the Blackstone River Valley's history and culture for residents and visitors alike. We imagine a future in which people from all walks of life will want to work, play and raise their families in the valley. We imagine a future where thoughtful, sustainable economic development is the rule. We imagine a future of clean air and water for the use and enjoyment of all.

We invite you to join us in planning a bright future for the Blackstone Valley.



# SURGING TOWARD 2026

## BHC's Integrated Approach

Bringing a vision to life requires determination, patience and hard work over many years. Success comes best when many turn their attention to a common task. We are committed to working with and through our partner organizations to make our vision and their respective visions a reality.

- BHC promotes partnerships at local, regional, state and federal levels to fulfill its mission and use limited resources wisely.
- BHC acts as an educator and/or facilitator to motivate independent actions that will fulfill the mission of BHC and use limited resources wisely.
- BHC takes action through specific projects or programs when BHC is the only or most logical leader to bring about initiation or successful completion of critical work. This is especially true when those programs or projects require region-wide focus.

## Assessment: Strengths & Weaknesses, Challenges & Opportunities

At the outset of the strategic planning process, the Board of Directors, its subcommittees, NPS staff, partners and colleagues were asked to provide their assessment of BHC, as well as to consider what the future holds for BHC.

*Three critical factors are essential for sustaining the network into the future...time, sustainable funding, and sophistication. First, the work of building an integrated, stable network of partners takes a great deal of time. Organizations need time to form partnerships and adjust to working across areas of interest. Second, securing sustainable sources of funding is a critical factor because this affects an organization's ability to make long-term project commitments and investments. Finally, the notion of sophistication surfaced as a critical factor. Because the Commission (now BHC) plays a multitude of roles in a complex network system, this requires a high degree of sophistication. Failure to play the right role at the right time with the right partner can greatly reduce the overall effectiveness of the Commission's (now BHC's) initiatives and activities. [Reflecting on the Past...p. 53, 2005].*



## STRENGTHS

*Reflecting on the critical ingredients and how they interact as a complex partnership system has informed... understanding of the Commission (now BHC's) success to date. ...the Commission (now BHC) clearly has been a critical driver behind the partner network's accomplishments, supported by the excellent partnership-building skills of both the Commission (now BHC) and staff, a clear vision and the ability to articulate that vision, a sincere commitment to public engagement, and funding that leverages other investments [Reflecting on the Past..., p. 74, 2005].*

## INHERITANCE –

**BHC has inherited the legacies and responsibilities of the Commission, both of which have important implications for the Strategic Plan.**

- BHC is the heir to the former federal Commission and the designated local coordinating entity for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and primary partner of the new Park.
- The heritage landscape of the Blackstone Valley and its people, past and present, create a compelling story important to the nation.
- BHC has inherited collaborations and partnerships from the former Commission.
- There are strong connections with partners, including state officials in both states, many local jurisdictions and volunteers.
- BHC's leadership convenes a diverse group of public, for-profit and non-profit organizations for collaboration and promotion.
- BHC has a history of catalytic involvement and support for a wide range of organizations and projects.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

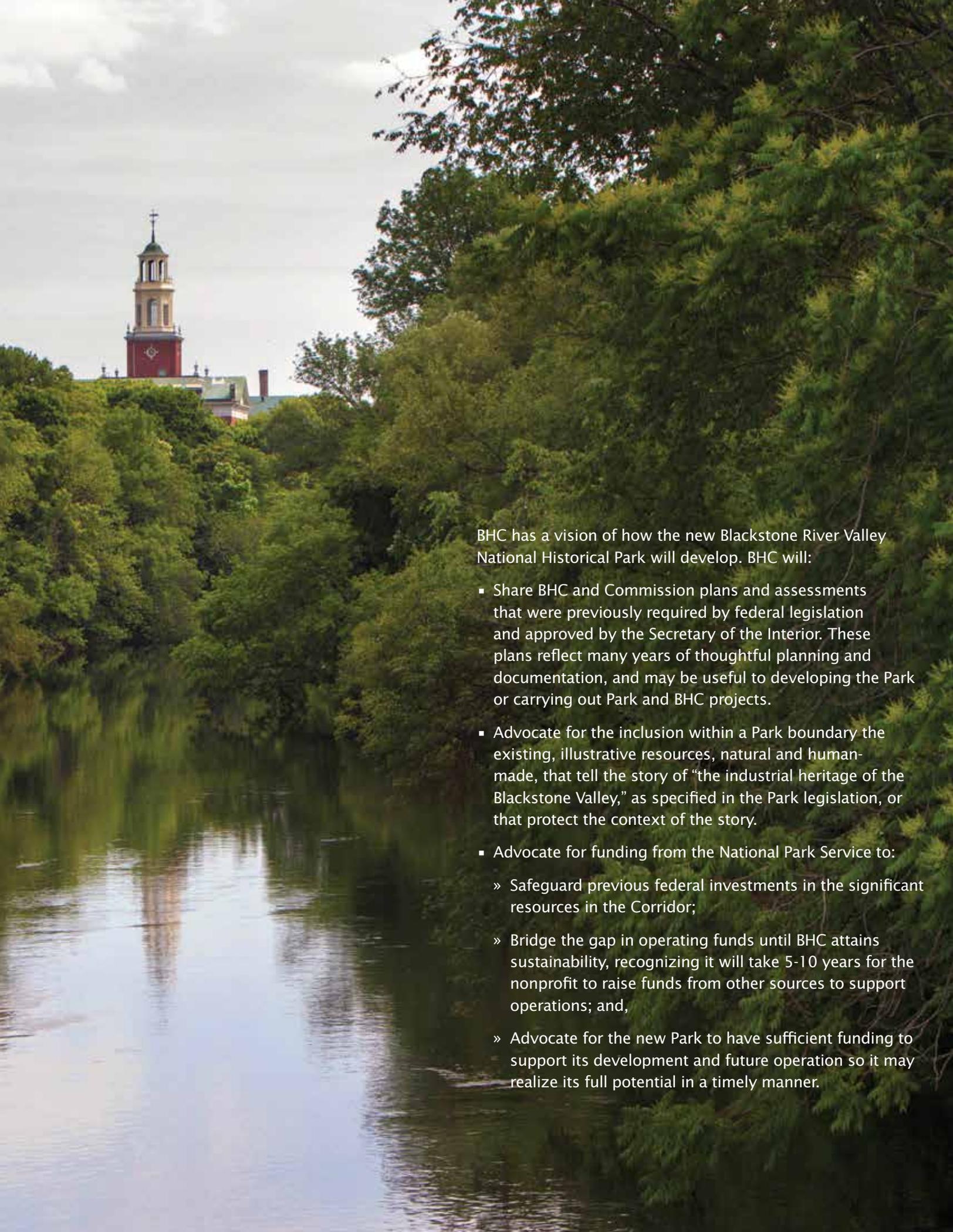
- There is a strong historical connection between BHC and NPS.
- There is renewed visibility because of the new Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park.
- Federal investment in the region continues, although at reduced levels.
- Continued partnership with NPS and the new Park will be beneficial for the Corridor and the watershed in the years to come.

## REGIONAL RESOURCES

- BHC is putting the Corridor on the map.
- Over the past decades, the Commission and BHC have created branding and identity for the region, including a regional signage program.
- BHC has and continues to sponsor a wide range of public programs.
- There are visible visitor centers throughout the region and, in partnership with others, BHC has historically and now continues development of a northern gateway to the Corridor in Worcester.

## NON-PROFIT STRUCTURE

- BHC's non-profit status allows for fundraising, hiring flexibility, and opportunistic action in real time.
- It has a dedicated staff with solid ideas and personal connections.
- Its centrally-located office better serves the Corridor.
- BHC has a great partnership with the NPS leadership.
- Representative of that NPS partnership, BHC has resurrected and operates the Volunteers-in-Parks program which is a major strength for partners.



BHC has a vision of how the new Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park will develop. BHC will:

- Share BHC and Commission plans and assessments that were previously required by federal legislation and approved by the Secretary of the Interior. These plans reflect many years of thoughtful planning and documentation, and may be useful to developing the Park or carrying out Park and BHC projects.
- Advocate for the inclusion within a Park boundary the existing, illustrative resources, natural and human-made, that tell the story of “the industrial heritage of the Blackstone Valley,” as specified in the Park legislation, or that protect the context of the story.
- Advocate for funding from the National Park Service to:
  - » Safeguard previous federal investments in the significant resources in the Corridor;
  - » Bridge the gap in operating funds until BHC attains sustainability, recognizing it will take 5-10 years for the nonprofit to raise funds from other sources to support operations; and,
  - » Advocate for the new Park to have sufficient funding to support its development and future operation so it may realize its full potential in a timely manner.

## WEAKNESSES

*One issue that surfaced during the study is the uncertainty of annual fund allocations. Although the Commission (now BHC) has been successful over the years in receiving funds for operations and implementing its management plan, these funds fluctuate and are not considered “base-funded,” meaning that the Commission (now BHC) begins each fiscal year with an uncertain funding amount. This hampers the Commission (now BHC)’s ability to plan for and commit to longer-term programs and projects. [Reflecting on the Past..., p. 33, 2005.]*

## INHERITANCE

- BHC is widely albeit erroneously perceived to be adequately funded by the federal government and, therefore, not in need of other sources of funding.
- BHC is disproportionately dependent on federal funding.
- Project-specific federal/state funding (including funding for high priority projects, such as the Blackstone River Bikeway, riverway access and wayfinding, and visitor center development) has been eliminated.
- The federal funding stream has been inconsistent and reduced in recent years, creating a challenging and unreliable financial situation.
- Federal funding decreased in FY2016 and further decreases are anticipated.
- BHC has gone through a challenging cycle over the past decades during which the authorization and funding for the Corridor underwent several sunsets and rebirths.
- BHC has been historically viewed as the go-to organization for funding, a perspective grown out of the days when the former Commission had significant funds to underwrite partner projects; that view persists today.

## PARTNERSHIPS

- As a result of earlier success in developing and spinning off locally-based stewardships, BHC is another non-profit in a context of many other non-profits, all competing for public and private funds to sustain themselves.
- Many non-profits in Massachusetts and Rhode Island have missions that intersect with BHC’s.

## MESSAGE AND BRANDING

- BHC has a diverse mission, therefore making it difficult to create a single and direct vision statement to satisfy all audiences.
- The Corridor lacks a flagship building or site to visually capture audiences.
- There continues to be confusion about the identity of BHC and NPS and their respective programs.

## CHALLENGES

### FUNDING

- Develop a more reliable funding stream to provide continuity in programs and operations.
- Identify and secure sources of non-federal funding, particularly that which is ongoing and renewable.
- Develop high-quality, relevant and consistent programming to advance BHC’s ability to secure funding.

### AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT/PARTICIPATION

- Reach new audiences, especially those who are younger, more culturally-diverse, and have special interests.
- Identify the region as a tourism destination in a highly competitive field.
- Engage the visitor and make outdoor resources (maps, trash receptacles, picnic areas) friendly and eco-friendly to inspire greater stewardship of the Corridor resources.

### PARTNERSHIPS

- Support partners to increase their capacity rather than to fund their projects.
- Strengthen and revitalize existing partnerships, and develop new partnerships.
- Convene diverse organizations in a common focus on BHC’s mission, including state and federal agencies, large nonprofits and municipalities.
- Encourage state agencies to work with each other across state lines.

## OPPORTUNITIES

*Having an effective, sophisticated central hub is very important for the growth and maturation of the partner network. This has emerged as one of the most important roles played to date by the Commission (now BHC) and its staff. Perhaps one of the most critical aspects of being an effective central network hub is the collective ability of the Commission (now BHC) and staff to play a multitude of roles in their interactions with partners. Every partnership is unique, and part of the sophistication needed to sustain the Commission's (now BHC's) partnership system is the ability to provide different types of assistance and levels of support to different partners. [Reflecting on the Past...p. 74, 2005].*

## SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES

- Tell the complete story of American innovation and economic development that occurred within the Valley.
- Promote the Corridor's recreational opportunities as they appeal to both residents and visitors who want to discover the history of the area while enjoying outdoor recreation.
- Integrate the pastoral and forested landscape into regional history to demonstrate the historic and contemporary connections.
- Create the image of the Corridor as a "one stop" destination to pursue outdoor opportunities, the name and the place people think about when they want some unplugged, outdoor time.
- Advocate for the watershed.
- Continue BHC's broad programs including events, education and outreach, conservation, restoration of natural resources, economic development and community revitalization, history and cultural interpretation.

## AUDIENCE

- Establish connections among residents, businesses, government agencies and non-governmental organizations within the large geographic area that constitutes the Corridor.
- Promote the Corridor to a large geographic market (southern New England, New York) that includes a population of 26 million with a three-hour drive.

## ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Solicit a variety of federal and state funding, foundation grants and corporate support, warranted due to the size of the region, the relevance of BHC's work, and the reliability of its organization.
- Incorporate elements of the strategic plan in all of BHC's work and relationships.
- Provide context for fundraising/grant writing and support of partner projects.
- Solidify BHC's relationship with the new Park and NPS to provide an ongoing federal presence and focus on the Corridor and its resources.
- Link development and branding of the new Park in a manner that will benefit the entire Corridor.



## THE VISION

The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (Corridor) is recognized and valued as one of the nation's richest and best-preserved repositories of landscapes, structures and sites pertinent to the development of American industry. The vitality of the Corridor with its unique community characteristics and healthy environment inspires creativity and promotes economic development and community revitalization. Stewards of the Corridor make conscientious and environmentally-sound decisions while celebrating their shared heritage of innovation. Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc. (BHC) is a unifying force that has created a dynamic regional identity and linked interdependent historical, cultural, natural and recreational resources. BHC inspires stewardship by connecting people of all ages and abilities to places, programs and projects. BHC is valued and sustained by those stewards.

# Prioritized Strategies to Achieve the Vision

[For a comprehensive list of strategies developed by committees, see Appendix C.]

## STEWARDSHIP

- Support the stewardship of historical, cultural, natural, scenic and recreational resources of the Corridor.
- Educate the region about the value of historical, cultural, natural, scenic and recreational resources of the Corridor.
- Develop the BHC Board of Directors into a stronger fundraising unit to grow a dynamic and sustainable funding stream.

## HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

### PRESERVATION & STEWARDSHIP

- Encourage the revitalization of communities and landscape by preserving and repurposing historic structures and spaces.
- Expand BHC affiliations and create advocacy through peer-to-peer relationships and teamwork.

## INTERPRETATION & EDUCATION

- Creatively engage new or non-traditional partners in telling the stories of the Corridor.
- Work with local, state, and regional tourism partners to promote the historical and cultural resources of the Corridor.

## MARKETING & PROMOTION

- Create a strong regional identity for historical and cultural resources through preservation, communication and connections.
- Facilitate partner efforts to create goals and marketing strategies for region-wide tourism.

## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP:

- Share information and data (maps, information, calendars of events, water quality data).
- Promote the development and implementation of a bi-state watershed management action plan.

- Coordinate the implementation of the Massachusetts Heritage Areas Legislation, as defined by MA Chapter 272 of 2010, with all state agencies, boards, committees and commissions for planning and projects.
- Pursue comparable legislation in Rhode Island.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### LAND USE

- Educate communities about land use planning, design, and controls such as zoning and design standards that promote sustainable development compatible with the region's natural and cultural resources.
- Promote and facilitate open space planning and implementation to preserve important natural and cultural resources, working lands, and recreational opportunities.





## WATER

- Facilitate informed decisions regarding alterations of the natural flow of water across the landscape to safeguard surface water flows and ground water recharge.
- Promote watershed-wide low impact development practices, appropriate revision of bylaws and regulations, and enforcement of regulatory tools for improved stormwater management and water quality protection.



## WILDLIFE

- Protect wildlife habitats capable of supporting native wildlife species, including unfragmented forest, grasslands, successional habitats, freshwater wetlands, streams, ponds, lakes, rivers and estuarine habitats.
- Protect and promote corridors that link critical habitats and minimize habitat fragmentation.

## AIR

- Protect forest resources which absorb and filter air pollutants, generate oxygen, store great quantities of carbon, and help maintain the necessary balance of air components.
- Promote scientifically-based green technologies and low-impact development techniques to reduce energy use and minimize harmful emissions from residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial operations.

## RECREATION

- Develop trail linkages to form an easily-accessible, inter-regional and inter-state network that can be used for many activities, including biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, walking, bird-watching, photography, horseback riding, fishing and hunting.
- Complete development and promote the future maintenance of the Blackstone River Bikeway and other regional trail systems; establish bikeways or bike routes along tributaries.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

### COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

- Assist communities to retain and promote their traditional character, recognize their historical resources as essential elements for growth and revitalization, and celebrate their cultural diversity.
- Promote healthy communities through access to recreation.
- Advocate for completion of the Blackstone River Bikeway.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Promote the Valley's resources outside the region to maximize economic/tourism impacts.
- Encourage the development of new/improved visitor infrastructure, particularly accommodations.
- Encourage investments in intermodal transportation systems to support economic growth.

### AGRICULTURE

- Encourage protection of land that is currently farmed.
- Protect large blocks of unfragmented forestland and implement appropriate forest management.

## Action Steps to Implement the Strategic Plan

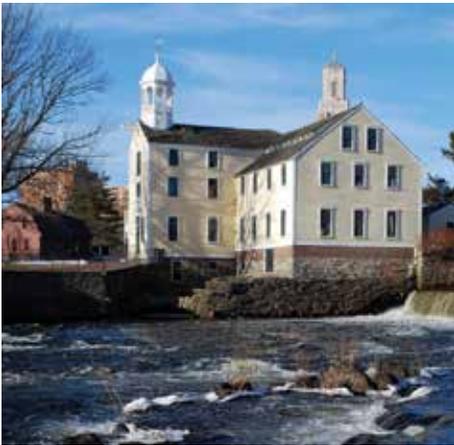
Since the designation of the Corridor in 1986, the Commission has created and BHC carries forward an extraordinary foundation of partnerships and accomplishments on which to build over the next decade. The Action Steps delineated below provide BHC with the direction for continued success.

1. BHC will use the mission-area strategies listed on the previous pages and in Appendix C to develop future work plans, budgets, partner support, and funding requests, paying particular attention to the priorities in underlined.
2. BHC will inspire a diverse audience of all ages and abilities to embrace the mission of BHC and actively participate and invest in its fulfillment by:
  - Offering more and constantly changing programming;
  - Increasing public relations efforts;
  - Developing closer ties with cities and towns; and,
  - Expanding branding/identity. (Update/refresh Corridor signage, riverway access and wayfinding).
3. BHC will expand the relevance of its mission to a larger audience, reaching beyond the geographic boundaries of the Corridor when necessary. For example, the upper reaches of the Blackstone River watershed, while not included in the Corridor, have reasons to participate in certain environmental initiatives, as does a group like Save the Bay. From expanding the relevance, new advocates for BHC can emerge.
4. BHC will expand existing partnerships and cultivate new ones by:
  - Expanding its unprecedented partnership with NPS;
  - Expanding its partner network through ongoing public engagement;
  - Building partner and network capacity;
  - Encouraging new leaders; and
  - Fostering stewardship by promoting the BHC's broad vision.
5. BHC will transition from giving partners funding to do projects to giving partners funding to increase their capacity, especially small, under staffed and under resourced groups.
6. BHC will advocate for the inclusion of existing, illustrative resources, natural and human-made, within the Park boundary that tell the story of American industrial heritage, as specified in the Park legislation, or that protect the context of the story.
7. BHC will focus on its other important story: the Blackstone Valley was the first ethnically and religiously diverse area of New England, and perhaps the country, according to the *Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan*. The Corridor includes an important resource in Roger Williams National Memorial, located in Providence, as well as other underutilized sites. BHC will expand this interpretation throughout the region and reach out to an audience that reflects the ethnicity and diversity of the Valley.
8. BHC will create and execute non-binding and non-controversial Community Compacts:
  - Reiterating each city or town's participation in the Corridor;
  - Documenting their acceptance of the goals and strategies of the new strategic plan; and,
  - Demonstrating their willingness to balance resource conservation and growth.



9. BHC will advocate for funding from the National Park Service to:

- Safeguard previous federal investments in significant resources in the Valley;
- Bridge the gap in operating funds until the nonprofit attains sustainability, recognizing it will take 5-10 years to raise funds from other sources to support operations; and,
- Advocate for the new Park to have sufficient funding to support its development and future operation so it can realize its full potential in a timely manner.



10. BHC will become a self-sustaining nonprofit by:

- a. Becoming a membership organization.
- b. Selecting members for the Board of Directors who will:
  - Value BHC's mission;
  - Commit to raising funds for the organization;
  - Adhere to appropriate ethical standards; and,
  - Be willing to commit the necessary time for Board activities.
- c. Create permanent working committees that meet regularly to continue the work of the strategic plan subcommittees, and recommend work plans for BHC's annual budget process.
- d. Adopt a five-prong approach to sustainability by generating support from:
  - Foundations
  - Corporations
  - Federal and state agencies
  - Fundraising
  - Program income
- e. Establish endowment fund accounts in Massachusetts and Rhode Island to provide sufficient annual operating capital. Begin funding the endowment with a multi-year capital/special purpose campaign.
- f. Increase staff to expand programming that will attract and inspire a greater audience; increase staff to improve fundraising efforts.



# APPENDICES

## A. TIMELINE

### Public Law 99-647

- Created the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor including 20 cities and towns in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.
- Created and defined the composition of a federal commission to operate the National Heritage Corridor.
- Required the Commission to prepare a management plan within one year.
- Provided authorization of \$250,000 for the subsequent five years to implement the management plan.
- Stated the purpose of the designation of the Corridor: “That for the purpose of preserving and interpreting for the educational and inspirational benefit of present and future generations the unique and significant contributions to our national heritage of certain historic and cultural lands, waterways and structures within the Blackstone River Valley in the States of Massachusetts and Rhode Island there is hereby established the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. It is the purpose of the Act to provide a management network to assist the States of Massachusetts and Rhode Island and their units of local government in the development and implementation of integrated cultural, historical, and land resource management programs in order to retain, enhance and interpret the significant values of the lands, waters, and structures of the Corridor.”

**1986, November 10**

**1989, October**

### Cultural Heritage & Land Management Plan for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor

- Management plan prepared, submitted to the Governors of both states, and approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

**1990, October 18**

### Public Law 101-441

- Authorized additional financial investments in the National Heritage Corridor of \$350,000 “each year in which the Commission is in existence.”
- Authorized “\$1 million in demonstration funds for years 1991, 1992, and 1993, to remain available until expended.”

**1993, April**

### Revision to the Cultural Heritage & Land Management Plan

**1996, November 12**

### Public Law 104-333

- Expanded the Corridor by adding the towns of Burrillville, Glocester, Leicester and Smithfield.
- Extended the authorization for funding to 2006.
- Increased funding to \$650,000 per year.
- Authorized development funds for a total of \$5 million for the years 1996, 1997, and 1998.
- Required the Commission to prepare a natural resources inventory and to update the present management plan to include the expanded geography.

**1997, October**

### Natural Resources Inventory and Assessment

*The Next Ten Years, An Amendment to the Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan*

- Prepared by the Commission and approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

*Reflecting on the Past, Looking to the Future*

- Sustainability Study Report by the National Park Service Conservation Study Institute.

**Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, Inc. , a nonprofit corporation, was created as a successor to the Commission.**

**FEBRUARY**  
*Boundary Study Final Report*

- Recommended expansion of the Corridor to include Auburn and a larger portion of Providence.

**SEPTEMBER**  
The Commission voted to transfer its activities and resources to the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, Inc., (BHC).

**BHC develops a new Strategic Plan - *Surging Toward 2026.***

**1998, February 12**

**2005**

**2010**

**2012**

**2016**

**1999, November 29**

**Public Law 106-113**

- Renamed the Corridor to honor Senator John H. Chafee of Rhode Island, a staunch advocate for the environment and historic preservation: The John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

**2006, October 12**

**Public Law 109-338**

- Increased the size of the Commission and quorum required.
- Required an update of the management plan.
- Extended the authorization for funding to 2011.
- Required a Special Resource Study.
- Increased funding to \$1 million.
- Provided development funds of \$10 million for the years 2006 to 2016.

**2011**

***Blackstone River Valley Special Resource Study***

- Prepared by the Commission and the National Park Service (Northeast Region/Boston Office, Park Planning and Special Studies).

**2014**

BHC receives its first federal funding since 2012 and hires its Executive Director and staff.

**DECEMBER 14 - Public Law 113-291**

- Transferred the authority of the Commission to the "local coordinating entity."
- Extended the authorization for funding to 2021.
- Expanded the Corridor boundaries to a total of 25 cities and towns.
- Created the new Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park, with purposes that include "to support and enhance the network of partners in the protection, improvement, management, and operation of related resources and facilities throughout the ... National Heritage Corridor."

## B. List of Planning Documents Completed to Date

*Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor*, 1989, approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

*Natural Resources Inventory and Assessment*, 1997.

*The Next Ten Years, An Amendment to the Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan*, 1998, approved by the Secretary of the Interior, identified with specificity the theme to be interpreted in telling the story of American industrialization.

*Reflecting on the Past, Looking to the Future, a Technical Assistance Report to the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission*, 2005.

*Blackstone River Valley Special Resource Study*, 2011, recommended the designation of a new National Historical Park.

## C. Comprehensive List of Strategies From Committees

More than fifty people participated in the development of the strategies that follow, each with expertise in one or more of the BHC mission areas. While it is recognized that the number of strategies is sizable, it must also be noted that the subcommittee members felt strongly that each was important and should become part of the BHC Strategic Plan. Each subcommittee also voted on the most important strategies in each area, and those are listed at the beginning of each section and are underlined.

### Stewardship

- Support the stewardship of the historical, cultural, natural, scenic and recreational resources of the Corridor.
- Educate the region about the value of historical, cultural, natural, scenic and recreational resources of the Corridor.
- Develop the BHC Board of Directors into a stronger fundraising unit to grow a dynamic and sustainable funding stream.
- Share information and data regarding the significant resources in the Corridor.
- Expand BHC's relevance and programming to a wide, diverse audience of all ages and abilities.
- Promote a culture of sustainable choices and an ethic of long-term care for our valley. Inspire residents to care about where they live.
- Promote recycling and repurposing instead of trashing waste.
- Kindle stewardship - Inspire young people to become stewards of the Corridor.
- Increase the understanding of BHC's mission and work through optimized brand identification to reach audiences.
- Advocate for the inclusion within a Park boundary the existing, illustrative resources, natural and human-made, that tell the story of American Industrial Heritage, as specified in the Park legislation, or that protect the context of the story.
- Encourage new and active stewards to assist BHC as members and donors.
- Coordinate the implementation of the Massachusetts Heritage Areas Legislation, as defined by MA Chapter 272 of 2010,

with all state agencies, boards, committees and commissions for planning and projects.

- Pursue comparable legislation in Rhode Island.

### Historic & Cultural Resources

#### PRESERVATION & STEWARDSHIP

- Encourage the revitalization of communities and landscape by preserving and repurposing historic structures and spaces.
- Expand BHC affiliations and create advocacy through peer-to-peer relationships and teamwork.
- Assist in the planning, documentation, research and restoration of historical and cultural resources (including archival and museum collections, oral traditions), and encourage a region-wide database of such resources.
- Expand the skill sets of partners and build capacity to optimize resources.



## INTERPRETATION & EDUCATION

- Creatively engage new or non-traditional partners in telling the stories of the Corridor.
- Work with local, state, and regional tourism partners to promote the historical and cultural resources of the Corridor.
- Expand storytelling and traditions throughout the Corridor using curricula and other creative programs.
- Introduce new innovative methods and technologies.
- Develop interpretive and educational strategies to engage a broader audience.
- Increase universal accessibility to the Corridor's historical and cultural sites by encouraging physical improvements and more open hours.

## MARKETING & PROMOTION

- Create a strong regional identity for historical and cultural resources through preservation, communication and connections.
- Facilitate partner efforts to create goals and marketing strategies for region-wide tourism.
- Support and promote cultural institutions.
- Invest in diverse communication strategies that reach the widest audience possible.
- Identify strategic events and collaborate with partners to promote historical and cultural resources.

## Environmental Stewardship

- Share information and data (maps, information, calendars of events, water quality data).
- Promote the development and implementation of a bi-state watershed management action plan.

- Coordinate the implementation of the Massachusetts Heritage Areas Legislation, as defined by MA Chapter 272 of 2010, with all state agencies, boards, committees and commissions for planning and projects.
- Pursue comparable legislation in Rhode Island.
- Promote stewardship, including a culture and ethic of long term care for our natural resources.
- Educate the region about the value of the natural resources – educational, economic, public health, historical, etc.
- Make outdoor resources (maps, trash receptacles, picnic areas, boat launches, solar chargers, solar-powered trash compactors, etc.) user-friendly and eco-friendly to inspire stewards of the resources.

## Natural Resources

### LAND USE

- Educate communities about land use planning, design, and controls such as zoning and design standards that promote sustainable development compatible with the region's natural and cultural resources.
- Promote and facilitate open space planning and implementation to preserve important natural and cultural resources, working lands, and recreational opportunities.
- Promote new development that is compatible with the traditions and character of the region, does not adversely impact natural and cultural resources, avoids fragmentation of resource and animal corridors, provides a variety of residential housing options, and minimizes sprawl.
- Support adaptive reuse of existing infrastructure and developed sites.
- Identify and protect important natural and cultural resources from adverse development impacts
- Identify, reuse and revitalize historic districts, village centers and buildings, including mills, civic buildings and residences.
- Promote the designation, enhancement and protection of scenic roads and viewsheds, greenways and blueways.
- Promote conservation and development techniques and policies that protect water quality and supply.
- Minimize pollution of all types through site design and technology.

- Educate landowners and the general public about the value of and the need for responsible stewardship.
- Encourage regional planning to protect shared natural and cultural resources and promote intercommunity cooperation.

### WATER

- Facilitate informed decisions regarding alterations of the natural flow of water across the landscape to safeguard surface water flows and ground water recharge.
- Promote watershed-wide low impact development practices, appropriate revision of bylaws and regulations, and enforcement of regulatory tools for improved stormwater management and water quality protection.
- Reduce and eliminate point and non-point source pollution to preserve and enhance the quality of the region's surface and ground waters.
- Support opportunities to remediate legacy sediment contamination within the watershed.
- Support resiliency efforts to protect against the effects of climate change.
- Ensure adequate supplies of water that will balance the needs of human, wildlife and plant life populations.
- Encourage residents to understand the interrelationships of human activities and water quality and quantity through education and outreach.
- Promote community resiliency by minimizing development within the 100-year flood plain.

- Engage community volunteers in water quality monitoring and assessment activities in the region and work to ensure the information is accessible, shared and used by local officials and the general public.
- Advocate for invasive species control measures.
- Promote stream and river protection Corridors in the Blackstone River watershed.

### WILDLIFE

- Protect wildlife habitats capable of supporting native wildlife species, including unfragmented forest, grasslands, successional habitats, freshwater wetlands, streams, ponds, lakes, rivers and estuarine habitats.
- Protect and promote corridors that link critical habitats and minimize habitat fragmentation.
- Encourage municipal and regional planning for the protection of wildlife habitats.
- Improve and restore degraded aquatic and terrestrial habitats.
- Prioritize the protection of state and federally-listed wildlife species and habitats that have been identified as having the greatest conservation needs.
- Support efforts to protect cold water fisheries.
- Encourage public education and outreach efforts focused on the Corridor's wildlife and wildlife habitats.

### AIR

- Protect forest resources, which absorb and filter air pollutants, generate oxygen, store great quantities of carbon, and help

maintain the necessary balance of air components.

- Promote scientifically-based green technologies and low-impact development techniques to reduce energy use and minimize harmful emissions from residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial operations.
- Encourage land use planning and design that will lower harmful emissions and prevent air quality degradation.
- Reduce dependence on private automobiles and foster alternative means of transportation, such as walking, bicycling, and use of public transportation.
- Protect fish and wildlife habitats from air pollutants.
- Encourage the development and use of renewable energy.

## RECREATION

- Develop trail linkages to form an easily-accessible, inter-regional and inter-state network that can be used for many activities, including biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, walking, bird-watching, photography, horseback riding, fishing and hunting.

- Complete development and promote the future maintenance of the Blackstone River Bikeway and other regional trail systems; establish bikeways or bike routes along tributaries.
- Maintain, improve, and expand outdoor recreational activities
- Educate all generations on the value of outdoor, nature-based recreation and encourage a conservation ethic that leads to promotion and protection of these resources.
- Work to designate National Recreation Trails within the Corridor.
- Maximize access to recreational opportunities for all residents of the Corridor through thoughtful land use planning and design.
- Promote safe and convenient water access and water trails for boating, paddling, fishing, swimming, skating, and simply enjoying the natural beauty of the region's lakes, streams, and rivers.
- Advocate for invasive species control measures such as water craft washing stations.

- Connect the Corridor's communities with recreation Corridors.
- Foster economic development activities that promote outdoor, nature-based recreation.
- Ensure that information about recreational opportunities is easy to find, up to date and comprehensive, including information about restrooms and accessibility.
- Advocate for use and establishment of recreational opportunities without negatively impacting the integrity of the resources.
- Combine environmental and recreational access with opportunities to interpret the resources including the current surrounding and historical landscape.

## Economic Development & Community Revitalization

### COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

- Assist communities to retain and promote their traditional character, recognize their historical resources as essential elements for growth and revitalization, and celebrate their cultural diversity.
- Promote healthy communities through access to recreation.
- Advocate for completion of the Blackstone River Bikeway.
- Encourage community pride and volunteerism.
- Encourage and promote the restoration of historic sites; support preservation and reuse of existing resources.
- Encourage Walkable Communities through the development of connected networks of sidewalks, trails and greenways.



## Economic Development

- Promote the Valley's resources outside the region to maximize economic/tourism impacts.
- Encourage the development of new/improved visitor infrastructure, particularly accommodations.
- Encourage investments in intermodal transportation systems to support economic growth.
- Communicate and coordinate current news regarding economic activities in the region.
- Promote seasonal events.
- Encourage niche economies.
- Support locally-grown and locally-produced products, and locally-provided services by engaging communities in local agriculture, advocating for

sustainable and non-traditional agriculture, and promoting agritourism through Farm-to-Table and farmers' markets.

## AGRICULTURE

- Encourage protection of land that is currently farmed.
- Protect large blocks of unfragmented forestland and implement appropriate forest management.
- Advocate the use of local foods by local restaurants, grocery stores and institutions, including schools and hospitals.
- Educate residents of the Blackstone River Valley and the surrounding region about the value of local foods and their production. Facilitate easy access to those foods.

- Encourage the adoption and enforcement of state and regional food safety policies.
- Encourage support of agricultural operations through fiscal and land use policies.
- Promote scientifically-based green and renewable energy sources and energy conservation as an integral part of agricultural operations.
- Encourage the start of new agriculture operations and the continuation of existing farms by new generations.
- Promote agritourism and agritainment activities.



## LIST OF BLACKSTONE HERITAGE CORRIDOR, INC. PARTNERS

### CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

Senator Ed Markey, MA  
Senator Jack Reed, RI  
Senator Elizabeth Warren, MA  
Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, RI  
Congressman David Cicilline, RI  
Congressman Joseph Kennedy, III, MA  
Congressman Jim Langevin, RI  
Congressman Jim McGovern, MA

### FEDERAL AGENCIES

US Army Corps of Engineers  
US Dept. of Agriculture  
US Dept. of Housing and Urban  
Development  
US Environmental Protection Agency  
US Geological Survey  
US National Park Service

### STATE AND REGIONAL AGENCIES

Governor Charlie Baker, MA  
Central MA Regional Planning  
Commission  
MA Cultural Council  
MA Dept. of Transportation  
MA Executive Office of Energy &  
Environmental Affairs  
MA Historical Commission  
Governor Gina Raimondo, RI  
RI Dept. of Environmental  
Management  
RI Dept. of Transportation  
RI Division of Planning  
RI Economic Development  
Corporation  
RI Historical Preservation & Heritage  
Commission

### CITIES, TOWNS AND NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

Auburn, MA  
Blackstone, MA  
Burrillville, RI  
Central Falls, RI  
Cumberland, RI  
Douglas, MA  
East Providence, RI  
Glocester, RI  
Grafton, MA  
Hopedale, MA  
Leicester, MA  
Lincoln, RI  
Mendon, MA  
Millbury, MA  
Millville, MA  
North Smithfield, RI

Northbridge, MA  
Pawtucket, RI  
Providence, RI  
Smithfield, RI  
Sutton, MA  
Upton, MA  
Uxbridge, MA  
Woonsocket, RI  
Worcester, MA  
Canal District Association  
Quinsigamond Village  
Association

### NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

American Antiquarian  
Society  
American-French  
Genealogical Society  
Appalachian Mountain Club,  
Worcester Chapter  
Arnold House  
Asa Waters Mansion  
Audubon Society of RI  
Blackstone Bikeway Patrol  
Blackstone Headwaters  
Coalition  
Blackstone River Coalition  
Blackstone River Theatre  
Blackstone River  
Watershed Assoc.  
Blackstone River Watershed  
Council/Friends of the  
Blackstone  
Blackstone Valley  
Chamber of Commerce  
Blackstone Valley  
Cemetery Network  
Blackstone Valley  
Historical Society  
Blackstone Valley  
Paddle Club  
Blackstone Valley  
Sugaring Assn.  
Blackstone Valley  
Tourism Council  
Burrillville Historical &  
Preservation Society  
Burrillville Land Trust  
Chase Farm  
Chestnut Street  
Meetinghouse and  
Cemetery Assn.  
Cumberland Land Trust  
Daniels Farmstead  
Foundation, Inc.  
Discover Central Mass.  
Douglas Historical Society &  
E. N. Jenckes Store

East Providence Historical  
Society  
East Coast Greenway  
Environmental Council of RI  
Family Resources  
Community Action  
Friends of Upton State Forest  
Glocester Heritage Society  
Glocester Land Trust  
Grafton Historical Society  
Grafton Land Trust  
Greater Worcester Land Trust  
Grow Smart RI  
Hanaway Blacksmith Shop  
Hearthside House  
Historic New England  
Hopedale Historical Society  
Leicester Historical Society  
Lincoln Land Trust  
Little Red Shop Museum  
Mass Audubon Society,  
Broad Meadow Brook  
Massachusetts Bicycle  
Coalition  
Metacomet Land Trust  
Millbury Historical Society  
Moffett Mill  
Museum of Work & Culture  
Neighborworks Blackstone  
River Valley  
Northbridge Historical  
Society  
Northern RI Chamber  
of Commerce  
Northern RI Chapter of  
Trout Unlimited  
Old Slater Mill Assn.  
Pawtucket Foundation  
Preservation Massachusetts  
Preservation Society of  
Pawtucket  
Preservation Worcester  
Preserve Rhode Island  
Providence Preservation  
Society  
Quaker Meeting House  
RI Canoe/Kayaking Assn.  
RI Coalition for  
Transportation Choices  
RI Historical Society  
RI Labor History Society  
RI Rivers Council  
Riverzedge Arts Project  
Save the Bay  
Sierra Club, RI Chapter  
Smith-Appleby House  
Museum/ Historical  
Society of Smithfield

Smithfield Land Trust  
Stadium Theatre  
Sustainable Tourism  
Planning & Development  
Laboratory  
Sutton Historical Society  
Tower Hill Botanical Garden  
The Trustees of Reservations,  
Cormier Woods  
Upton Historical Society  
Uxbridge Historical Society  
Valentine Whitman House  
Walk Bike Worcester  
Waters Farm  
Willard House & Clock  
Museum  
Woonasquatucket River  
Watershed Council  
Worcester Chamber of  
Commerce  
Worcester Cultural Coalition  
Worcester Historical Museum  
& Salisbury Mansion  
Worcester Tree Initiative

### EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Anna Maria College  
Assumption College  
Becker College  
Brown University  
Bryant University  
Clark University  
College of the Holy Cross  
Community College of RI,  
Lincoln  
Higher Education Consortium  
of Central MA  
Johnson & Wales University  
MCPHS University  
Providence College  
Quinsigamond Community  
College  
Rhode Island College  
Rhode Island School  
of Design  
Tufts University, Cumming  
School of Veterinary  
Medicine  
University of Massachusetts  
Medical School  
Worcester Polytechnic  
Institute  
Worcester State University



## The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor

- |                     |                      |                |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Auburn, MA          | Hopedale, MA         | Providence RI  |
| Blackstone, MA      | Leicester, MA        | Smithfield, RI |
| Burrillville, RI    | Lincoln, RI          | Sutton, MA     |
| Central Falls, RI   | Mendon, MA           | Upton, MA      |
| Cumberland, RI      | Millbury, MA         | Uxbridge, MA   |
| Douglas, MA         | Millville, MA        | Woonsocket, RI |
| East Providence, RI | North Smithfield, RI | Worcester, MA  |
| Glocester, RI       | Northbridge, MA      |                |
| Grafton, MA         | Pawtucket, RI        |                |



**Blackstone  
Heritage  
Corridor, Inc.**

**WATER POWERED!**  
[BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org](http://BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org)

