



North Adams Comprehensive Plan

Part I of III

2014





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mayor

Richard J. Alcombright

City Council (2014)

Lisa M. Blackmer, Council President

Nancy Bullett, Council Vice President

Keith Bona

Jennifer M. Breen

Eric Buddington

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Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

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Consultant Team: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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MA Department of Housing and Community Development

This plan was funded through MA Department of Housing and Community Development's FY 2011 and FY 2012 CDBG Mini-Entitlement Program.

David Newton, Program Representative

Acknowledgements

Community Partners

Initiative Partnership and Support

Hoosic River Revival

Northern Berkshire Community Coalition

Partnership for North Adams

Meeting Space

All Saints Church

First Baptist Church of North Adams

Gallery 51

North Adams School District- Brayton
Elementary

North Adams Public Library

Salvation Army

VFW Post 996

Public Meeting and Plan Promotion

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1 INTRODUCTION: A STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR THE FUTURE OF NORTH ADAMS

The city of North Adams is a small city with all of the ingredients a community could ask for:

- *A world-renowned arts venue in MASS MoCA, a first rate college in MCLA, and hospital, together offering jobs and urban-level arts, culture and health care services;*
- *A scenic setting with open space amenities on all sides and a city with tons of character thanks in part to its historic downtown and surrounding historic districts, including a number of mill reuse projects;*
- *A community of people who love the city and are deeply committed to making sure it succeeds, with a number of active groups investing their own time, money and resources in urban improvement and economic catalyst projects along the river and in downtown;*
- *Leadership with a commitment to hearing and championing fresh ideas and with the energy to make it all happen.*

Yet the city has faced, and currently grapples with, a number of challenges. This process, and resulting document, reflects the combined input and ideas from a wide array of stakeholders, best practice research, and community dialogue about how to move the city forward to make all these pieces gel and achieve their potential.

AN INITIATIVE BEGINS

In 2010, the city of North Adams, under the new leadership of Mayor Richard Alcombright, then in his first term and the first new Mayor the city had had in nearly 30 years, began a process to think critically about where the city was, where residents and businesses wanted it to go in the future, and what it would take to get there. In other words: a plan. The city's last comprehensive plan had been adopted in 1971 and, as a document with a 10-year shelf life, was woefully out of date.

The Mayor, Office of Community Development, and the City's Community and Economic Development Advisory Board (CEDAB), which advises the City's annual Community Development Block Grant process and investments, applied for a grant from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to assess the role a plan could play in charting a fresh course for the city's future. This process led the group to conclude that a plan would be a valuable tool to help organize and align investments and activities by the City but also private and non-profit partners, to maximize benefits to the community.

In 2010, the City hired Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to continue their work and develop a new comprehensive plan. The BRPC had, at that same time, been awarded a HUD Sustainable Communities Planning Grant to create a new long-range plan for the region. The City decided to align their process with that of the new regional plan to enable them to maximize the benefits of analysis and mapping that would be done through that effort for the City's plan and to also ensure that there was consistency between the two plans. This means the city will be well positioned to capture benefits from initiatives done regionally because they already understand what is called for and how those regional ideas or priorities apply locally.



Related Maps

Map 1: Location and Context

Located in Appendix C



Windsor Lake, and surrounding parkland, is a popular recreation destination right next to some of the city's core neighborhoods and just a few miles from downtown. The park is the site for an outdoor concert series in summer as well as outdoor yoga classes.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A PLAN

Just as any well-run business has a business plan, so must a city. A city is a business with a multi-million dollar budget, hundreds of employees, and “shareholders” in each and every resident. Having a plan in place accomplishes a number of things:

- Provides a vehicle through which the city can step back and take an inventory of its assets and challenges to then chart a smart strategy for how to achieve its goals.
- Engages the citizenry in setting those goals through an open and inclusive process where all voices are heard and considered rather than closed-door decision-making by a few.
- Expresses a vision and strategies in a document that is available for all, which serves as a communication tool to current and future residents and businesses as well as potential funders and investors.
- Catalyzes and supports community initiatives to bring more people, organizations and resources together to help accomplish the shared vision for the city as expressed in the plan.
- Ensures accountability to residents and businesses in its pursuit of plan strategies and reporting progress over time.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

THE STEERING COMMITTEE

A steering committee of 16 people met every 1-2 months throughout the planning process to guide and shape the plan. This group included current and retired educators, the Planning Board, City Council, municipal staff, and local business, economic development, outdoor, river restoration, health and neighborhood representatives. Their meetings involved a mix of group exercises, detailed data presentations, and careful review and thoughtful discussion of draft plan content.



(Back row, from left) Amanda Chilson, Mike Nuwallie, Donald Pecor, Mayor Alcombright, Joanne DeRose, Steve Green (front row, from left) Alan Marden, Mackenzie Greer, and Judith Grinnell. Absent from photo: John Greenbush, Paul Hopkins, Glenn Maloney, Brian Miksic, Jonathan Secor, Jay Walsh, and David Willette.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

At the start of the process, BRPC worked with City staff to identify a list of stakeholders representing different agencies, businesses, services, and interests in the region. This included the senior center, hospital, airport, industrial park Commission, building inspector, North Adams Housing Authority, River Revival, Partnership for North Adams, MCLA, MASS MoCA, and more. This input helped to quickly focus the planning effort and identify a set of draft plan priorities which were then taken to the public and the vision workshop for review and discussion.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS AND OPEN HOUSES

Broad public involvement was a fundamental underpinning of the whole plan. Given that the community had not engaged in this type of civic dialogue on this scale in anyone's memory, it took a while to gain the trust and momentum for more and more new faces to join the conversation. We did, however, get there by using a variety of tools and allowing people to see their ideas appear in the plan as a result. They are summarized, below, in the order they occurred.

Vision

Youth Visioning Exercise

BRPC worked with the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition and the Mayor's Youth Council to conduct a photo visioning exercise with the teens taking pictures of what they like, would like to see change, and would like to see added to their community. Staff then met with the youth to discuss their findings and capture their input in writing as well. The same exercise was also completed by the steering committee.

Visioning Workshop

The first workshop that was held provided an overview of the plan and initiated discussions on people's visions for the future of the city. This was a three-part event. First, an open house with posters of data and maps on the topics to be covered in the plan displayed at the edges of the room. Second, there was a formal presentation with a question and answer period. Finally, attendees broke into small groups and discussed their vision for the city and priorities for the plan to address.

Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation Workshop

A historic preservation workshop was held at the public library where there was a brief presentation before attendees broke into four small groups to discuss historic districts, landscapes, and neighborhoods, and cultural assets. This input was then used to help identify goals and policies in the plan.

Economic Development

Local Business Forums

High-volume, condensed input sessions were facilitated over a continental breakfast at both The Porches Inn (all of northern Berkshire) and Gallery 51 (North Adams only) to hear from local businesses what they need to thrive. This included labor, commercial space, business support services, municipal permitting and regulations, financial tools and services, and more. The results of these forums are contained in the appendix to this plan.

Economy Workshop and Open House

A public workshop was held on the economy of the city, including an overview of small business input received at the forums. The discussion and exercises were broken down into four basic categories: the city overall, and what should happen in downtown, Route 8 Corridor, and Route 2 Corridor. Draft goals were presented for reaction as well as specific map-based questions about priority development sites, desired future uses, and needed tools or regulatory changes.

Downtown Walkability Study

BRPC teamed with a Williams College Center for Environmental Studies community planning class to conduct a walkability audit of the downtown and three surrounding neighborhoods. The students were trained in how to conduct a walkability audit to learn what to look for and document in the pedestrian environment that may impede safe pedestrian travel such as cars parked on sidewalks or faded crosswalks. They then marked issues on maps and conducted pedestrian street surveys to gather user input from residents. These findings and recommendations were presented at a meeting in the public library and are now with the City to guide specific strategy development. Some are also incorporated in the downtown and infrastructure and services recommendations.

Open Space and Recreation

Park Level of Service Study

BRPC teamed with a Williams College Center for Environmental Studies community planning class to conduct an assessment of how well all parts of the city were served by current parks. The goal was to better understand the geography of current parks to see if there were in essence “gaps” in service where neighborhoods or sections of neighborhoods have no park within a certain distance of them. The distances used varied by the type of park – a small playground, sometimes called a “tot lot” having the smallest draw area and major recreation amenities like the skating rink or Alcombright Athletic Complex, having much larger draw areas. The students made some recommendations on potential new parks to fill service gaps as well as some potential improvements that could enhance amenities and use of current parks. These recommendations informed policy but are also intended to help inform the City’s updated Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Open Space and Recreation Workshop

An open house style workshop was held on Main Street to allow people to come through the display as their schedule allowed and the storefront space made it easy to capture street traffic and people who might not come to a formal two-hour workshop. There were multiple displays including a set seeking detailed input on desired improvements to existing parks as well as new parks. River Revival was there with their river greenway concept diagrams to gather input. Northern Berkshire Community Coalition (nbCC) was on hand via their Mass In Motion program to present draft urban walking loop ideas. A skate park survey and information poster was on display with the goal of gathering votes on a preferred site. Finally, maps and goals for parks and recreation, including bike path extension and connections to current trails were available for review and interactive comment.



The use of a Main Street storefront space allowed for a comfortable, casual space for people to interact with the posters and each other, spending as little or as much time as they liked during the 2-hour window.

Local Food and Health

Keep Farming Surveys

A regional Keep Berkshires Farming initiative was part of the regional planning process, but broke down the county into groupings of communities with northern Berkshire as one group. There was strong participation from North Adams residents on that volunteer working group and much of the work and meetings were conducted in the city. This included a number of surveys of farms, restaurants, schools and institutions, food banks and community meal sites. The findings helped inform the goals and strategies in this plan.

Food Fest Outdoor Open House

The draft goals and strategies for local food and health were displayed at Food Fest in summer 2013 for attendees to review and comment as they worked their way through the different food booths. Comments received helped refine the draft goals.

Neighborhood Meetings

Neighborhood Surveys

At the start of the planning process, the city did not have a map of any neighborhoods. A principal goal was therefore to try to define boundaries against which we could organize strategies and outreach. The first step was to work with the nbCC and a long time city resident and community advocate to drive around the city with maps and try to delineate where one neighborhood stopped and another began. This resulted in 13 neighborhoods, which were then displayed at events over the summer (e.g., Windsor Lake Concert, Steeplecats baseball game) to gain public reaction and input. A survey was also conducted to gain input on neighborhood priorities.

Four Neighborhood Meetings

Once we felt comfortable with the neighborhood boundaries, BRPC worked with the nbCC neighborhood program coordinator to promote and co-host four neighborhood meetings, organizing the 13 neighborhoods into four groups. These open house pizza party meetings were intentionally social but also gathered input from residents on what they liked best about their neighborhoods, ideas for how to see to make the neighborhood even better, and any trouble spots that they'd like to see addressed.

Citywide Meeting

The cumulative input from the four neighborhood meetings was compiled and turned into draft goals and strategies for the plan. A citywide meeting was then held to display this content for reaction.



The final citywide workshop on housing and neighborhoods included a presentation followed by an open house where people could view the policies that emerged from the four prior neighborhood meetings.

Land Use, Infrastructure and Services

Land Use, Infrastructure and Services Workshop

A public open house was held at the public library to provide a venue for people to review and comment on draft goals and policies for land use and infrastructure and services. A separate display and worksheet were also available for people to consider land use plan choices for crafting a future land use plan.

Public Hearing

A public open house and public hearing was held at North Adams City Hall. Attendees were able to review key elements of the plan, and identify implementation priorities. In the public hearing, attendees were invited to comment on the plan, or ask questions. Over fifty members of the community attended.

FROM KEY PRIORITIES TO STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

As described in the section above, community visioning exercises and stakeholder interviews were where the plan began. From those early conversations, combined with a comprehensive review of data, trends, and conditions in the city, there emerged a set of 10 key priorities – what the city hopes the plan will address. While the full planning priorities summary is in the appendix, the key thoughts are summarized below.

OVERARCHING THEMES OR VALUES

Retain Core Community Values in The Face of Change

North Adams, like many Berkshire communities, has a long history of residents with strong ties to and pride in their city. While the pace of change in the county as a whole has been slow, the city has experienced a steady population decline over the past decades. This population decline, however, does not mean that the population hasn't seen new residents move to the area. Recent years have seen an influx of new residents from outside of the area with new ideas and perspectives on the city. The city wants to ensure that old-timers and transplants each have a place at the table to successfully build a new future without losing the rich history and community character valued by residents.

Rebrand The City

The city is in a period of rebirth but faces an uphill battle against a decades-old image as a “run-down mill town.” The vision developed through the plan will serve as the basis for communicating this new identity. As the vision is a first step in the planning process, rebranding actions will be set out and move towards implementation in the next several months.



The downtown is very much the heart of the city. Recent streetscape, lighting and signage have helped beautify the downtown. While many storefronts once sat vacant, the city has seen vacancy rates drop and new businesses come in, including on the side streets on the north side of Main Street.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development chapter of the plan contains the goals and actions for building a strong economy in the city. This includes actions addressing the planning priorities raised at the start of the planning process:

Address Conditions That Make Employer and Employee Recruitment and Retention Challenging

Major employers and attractions in the city, including MASS MoCA and MCLA note that blighted conditions throughout the city are a major obstacle to student, visitor, and employee attraction and retention. The visual impact of blighted and condemned buildings upon entry to the city, concrete flood chutes and chain link fencing blocking off the river, vacant storefronts in the Downtown, and the lack of aesthetic and other pedestrian and bike amenities present marketing challenges. Housing conditions and school quality were also discussed as other conditions that influence prospective student, business, and employee decision-making. The plan identifies numerous strategies for combating these conditions and creating attractive gateways, corridors and spaces throughout the city.

Facilitate Economic Growth and Transition

A common storyline in discussing North Adams is one of economic decline tied to the loss of major manufacturing employers. The addition of MASS MoCA in 1999 drew a mark on that timeline and signaled brighter days ahead linked to new tourism and creative economy activity. The next big wave of positive change occurred when North Adams State College, rebranded in 1997 as Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, began to gain momentum and recognition as a top public liberal arts college in the country. The City is now working to generate the third wave by investing public dollars to leverage private investment in projects like the Greylock Market, collaborative relationships with local and regional business and economic development groups, targeting investments in prioritized economic corridors and the downtown, and a comprehensive economic strategy as contained in this plan.



North Adams is a compact city built in a river valley surrounded on all sides by state lands and mountains, including Mount Greylock, the state's highest peak and the largest recreation draw in the region.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

The Open Space and Recreation policy chapter contains the goals and action steps the City plans to take to maintain and add recreation amenities for residents and visitors to enjoy. The actions focus on how open space and recreation assets support a high quality of life in the city, healthy lifestyles, and economic development. This includes actions addressing the planning priorities raised at the start of the planning process:

Maintain High Quality Recreation Options

The city has many park and open space offerings including regional recreation destinations like Noel Field, the Alcombright Athletic Complex and the Peter W. Foote Vietnam Veterans Memorial Skating Rink as well as smaller neighborhood and pocket parks. In addition, the city has been working to plan for and implement a skateboard park to provide another option for northern Berkshire youth. Maintaining the equipment and grounds at facilities, however, is a challenge given limited fiscal resources.

Leverage Presence of Open Space and Wild Lands

In addition to in-city parks, there are also open lands on all sides for residents and visitors to enjoy. The high quality of life amenities offered in the city – livable scale, interesting historic architecture, nearby colleges, and traditional downtown – are all further enhanced by the fact that the city is surrounded by vast areas of open space with two significant long-distance trail routes running through. There is a great opportunity to further enhance and “package” these assets as a year-round draw for visitors and residents. Beyond marketing, this also entails structural ways of highlighting the city’s natural assets through river enhancements, trail connections, and maps and signage. The rerouting of traffic from Mount Greylock into the downtown is a key opportunity for which the downtown can start now to prepare.

Offer Recreation Options for All Ages

Seniors today enjoy active retirements and the city needs to be prepared to offer enough recreation options to meet the needs of different ages and abilities. On the other side of the spectrum, youth are the future of the city and having quality and diverse options for them is important to kids and their parents.



Events, such as the Eagle Street Beach Party, are great examples of the strong community spirit of the city.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

The Housing and Neighborhoods policy chapter contains a number of strategies for improving neighborhood conditions and fostering connected communities of people engaged with making their own neighborhood and the city a fun, attractive, safe, and social place to be. This includes actions addressing the planning priorities raised at the start of the planning process:

Address Widespread Neighborhood Blight

There are few neighborhoods in the city not impacted to some degree by vacancies and blight. While the pervasiveness of blight appears on the surface to be a negative and daunting condition, in reality there are few areas where blight has completely taken over. What this means is that many neighborhoods can be stabilized with targeted actions to a smaller number of properties. This is much easier than addressing consolidated areas of blight.

Foster Residential (re)Investment

A major contributing factor to the decline of neighborhoods is the lack of investment in residential properties. This is particularly pronounced in rental properties throughout the city where landlords and slumlords do not always reinvest in their properties. Disinvestment is blamed on the relatively low rents. Blight and unsafe conditions in low-income rental units is a serious concern. While recent inspection and enforcement changes will help address some concerns, the plan identifies additional tools and strategies to promote investment and upkeep of properties.

Integrate Public Housing Developments With their Larger Neighborhoods and Community

The historical and current approach to affordable housing development in the city is to develop specific housing developments for affordable housing. Initially begun in the 1960s in the US, this approach has fallen out of favor as the detrimental outcomes of “projects” became clear. Current affordable housing redevelopment best practices have shifted now toward a mixed-income neighborhood approach where affordable units are interspersed among market rate housing. This eliminates challenges that can develop in segregated areas of poverty, such as blight, crime, and general disinvestment.



The Berkshire Food Project, operated out of the First Congregational Church, has ramped up its programming to meet growing food insecurity in the city, including growing some of their own food in a community garden plot.

LOCAL FOOD AND HEALTH

The Local Food and Health policy chapter builds on work in northern Berkshire around health and food planning and initiatives and commits the City to new roles as an active partner in community health and wellness. This includes actions addressing the planning priorities raised at the start of the planning process:

Ensure Access to Local Healthy Food

Poverty rates are high in the city and hunger has increased because of the national economic crisis. Hunger particularly impacts those on limited or fixed incomes including the disabled, elderly, and low-income workers. Some initiatives have arisen to help address food insecurity – including community gardens, feeding sites, and fresh food subsidies – but more is needed to address hunger in the community.

Retain Local Health Care Service

The closing of North Adams Regional Hospital was a real shock to the northern Berkshire community and highlights the immediate and long-term need to retain local health care services in the city. While the pace of change in post-closure negotiations is too quick and variable to capture or react to in this long-range planning document, it does not change the need and priority of retaining right-sized health care services in northern Berkshire. Even before the closure, a number of health care issues and service gaps emerged in stakeholder discussions including what the future of the hospital will look like, a shortage of primary care providers, a need for urgent care clinic as an alternative to an ER visit, critical health challenges like mental health and substance abuse, and responding to growing language needs in health care provision. Any new health care service system in the future will still need to address these needs.

Support Healthy, Active Lifestyles

Obesity and obesity-related illnesses are a primary health challenge facing the community. The obesity epidemic is the result of the culmination of various factors including diet, lifestyle, socio-economic status, culture, and genetics. Between public, private, and non-profit actions, there is a broad range of opportunities and initiatives that can be undertaken to combat obesity. Schools can also play a key role in providing prevention programming on nutrition, alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.



The Silvio O. Conte Middle School renovation will bring more activity to the downtown while also enacting a forward-thinking practice of having schools located within the community core rather than at the outskirts as was common for schools constructed in the last 50 years. This is “green” in that it brings the school closer to the city’s core neighborhoods and reuses an existing building and grounds.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Improve Mobility Through Viable Multi-Modal Options

While the city itself has a compact footprint, there are a number of multi-modal system challenges posed by poor street and sidewalk connectivity, narrow roadways, and limited parking space in certain neighborhoods or streets. There are also areas difficult for non-natives to navigate. Pedestrian connections within the downtown and between the downtown and local neighborhoods are a critical component to improving mobility both for those without a car and those who would prefer to walk or bike. Simple amenities like bike racks, benches, signage, and safe sidewalks can go a long way in improving the pedestrian environment. These have the added benefits of increased exercise, reduced energy use and emissions, and making a more lively and interactive community setting.

Rectify Issues Resulting From Past Deferred Maintenance and Investment in Infrastructure and Services

Over the past several years, the City has been working to proactively inventory and quantify the backlog of capital investment projects which will require significant resources to address. After years of deferred maintenance and “duct tape” solutions rather than true fixes, this price tag is likely significant. However, the City intends to take a methodical and strategic approach to gradually address needs in a fiscally responsible manner.

Reduce Dependence on Energy from Non-Renewable Sources

The City has taken major strides in the last two years to improve its renewable energy portfolio, including solar PV projects at the high school, airport, and landfill. This will provide immediate and long-term energy savings for the City and school district. In addition, the City is working towards its Green Communities designation which will enable the City to apply annually to a restricted grant pool to fund additional energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

LAND USE

Comprehensive Update of Zoning Code

The City's zoning code was originally drafted and adopted in 1956. There has been no comprehensive rewrite of zoning ordinances since that time. Modifications to the zoning code have been reactionary in nature – targeted edits to respond to some project-specific need. Over time this has had the cumulative impact of creating internal inconsistencies within the code. It also means that the tools the City has to shape and direct development have not kept pace with changing market trends and best practices. There are many opportunities to improve the code to be more user-friendly for property-owners and developers, such as clear rules, guidance for City officials, and streamlined, clear approval procedures. The plan identifies new tools to be included in a revised zoning ordinance and sets the basis for a comprehensive rewrite of the City's zoning ordinances. In the meantime, development will proceed under the existing code and zoning amendments will continue to be made to address issues as they emerge, in order to ensure projects can continue to move forward.

2 VISION

The vision conveys what residents want the city to be like; our desired future. The following vision was developed in collaboration with the Steering Committee, a youth leadership group, and the public at workshops. Together, these vision statements form the basis for the rest of the goals and policies contained in the plan. It is the cumulative picture of what the City, non-profits, residents, businesses, and others will be working towards now and in the years to come.

IN 2030, THE CITY OF NORTH ADAMS IS A PLACE WHERE...

- The city is regarded throughout the northeast, country, and world as the high-energy center for creative entrepreneurs, contemporary and digital arts and artists, higher learning, and outdoor enthusiasts in the Berkshires – a destination that juxtaposes innovative edge with a distinct natural and historic fabric.
- Residents and visitors of all ages enjoy the natural scenery through a connected parks and recreation system with strong links to the downtown along the river and to the vast open spaces, including Mount Greylock, that surround the city in all directions.
- The built environment reflects the community’s pride and identity as a richly creative and diverse community, where that artistic sense is woven into the fabric of the physical environment – its homes, gardens, parks, signs, businesses, and community spaces.
- The city is a local food and healthy living hub for northwestern Massachusetts, southern Vermont and eastern New York where farms and community gardens thrive, locally-made products are available year-round, active lifestyles make use of the vast outdoor recreation options, high quality health care is readily accessible, and healthy food is attainable by all residents.
- City government, residents and businesses emphasize the importance of education from early childhood to advanced degrees or training as a cornerstone for economic stability and opportunity for the city and its residents.
- The city cultivates its relationship and proximity to institutions of higher learning and professional training – starting with MCLA and other colleges in the region – to build and grow a strong and diverse workforce to support economic development and enhanced opportunity for current and new residents now and in the future.
- Renewable energy and energy efficiency options have been integrated into the landscape and built environment in a way that maximizes local benefit, enhances financial stability in the community, and balances energy and ecological interests against a myriad of other needs and interests.

- The city will continue to address its long-term infrastructure needs in a manner that considers potential climate-related impacts, uses innovative practices, and is both fiscally and environmentally responsible.
- City government has employed a range of financial management and service delivery approaches to achieve high quality government services and public infrastructure and still allow the city to adapt to changes in state and federal budget transitions with stability.
- The City, all community residents, and stakeholders openly collaborate and engage new ideas, pursue initiatives that further achieve the city's vision, and draw new investment in an open and community-focused manner that respects and seeks the input of those who may be impacted.
- The city, as it has attracted new residents, has successfully melded the old with the new. The city remains a close community that respects and welcomes new residents and celebrates diversity and differences as important assets.

3

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The city of North Adams has three primary economic activity areas: the downtown, the Route 2 corridor west of downtown and the Route 8 corridor south of downtown. Each area has its own character in terms of business mix and development style. The downtown character, while somewhat compromised by the lingering impact of urban renewal, has a historic fabric with traditional mixed-use main street style and businesses. The Route 2 corridor businesses tend to be more focused on essential goods and services like supermarkets, veterinary, and auto repair. Route 8, on the other hand, is defined by the presence of Robert Hardman Industrial Park and surrounding vacant land as current and potential future space for major employers to locate. The following chapter presents the goals, policies and actions for the city and its partners to implement to advance economic development in the city. This includes general economic development tools and practices as well as more targeted actions specific to each of the three activity areas.

GENERAL ECONOMIC GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL E 1: EFFECTIVELY REBRAND AND MARKET THE CITY

Policy E 1.1: Develop a rebranding package to effectively communicate the city to residents and visitors.

Action A: Rebrand and Market the City

Hire a marketing consultant to create a rebranding package for North Adams to guide a unified approach to communicating about the city to effectively reach the right audiences. Once the strategy is complete, implement recommendations, which may include launching a local, regional, and national marketing campaign to promote attractions and happenings in North Adams.

Action B: Offer a Central Platform for North Adams and Northern Berkshire Tourism and Events

Create a website for the North Adams Tourism office to take the lead in implementing the city's marketing strategy. This should highlight the full range of attractions locally, including historic, arts, cultural, and outdoor activities and destinations.

Policy E 1.2: Work with local, northern Berkshire and regional entities to market the city.

Action A: Increase Local Use of Northern Berkshire Events and Attractions

Enhance local appreciation and use of sites and destinations through enhanced promotion of destinations, trails, and activities. This could include special rates or days for locals and students to encourage use.

Action B: Coordinate Unified Messaging and Reciprocity

Foster strong linkages between the North Adams Tourism Office and the newly formed North Adams Chamber of Commerce to offer a unified and coordinated planning and promotion platform for the city. The North Berkshire Industrial Park & Development Corporation can also provide assistance.

Action C: Cultivate Local Business Referral Practices

Work with local inns and businesses, as well as information booths, to support customer referral to city restaurants, inns, and attractions. This should be done within the city itself, but can also be pursued with other northern and southern Berkshire sites to help drive increased day trips to the city from elsewhere in the region.

Action D: Maximize Benefit to City of Regional Marketing and Business Development Efforts

Work to strengthen representation of the city and its attractions within the regional marketing platforms in collaboration with Berkshire Visitors Bureau, Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, and

Berkshire Creative, as well as regional media such as the Berkshire Eagle's In the Berkshires and events pages.



The Center for Science and Innovation at MCLA opened its doors for the 2013-2014 school year.

GOAL E 2: LEVERAGE THE CITY'S MANY ASSETS INTO ECONOMIC CATALYSTS

Policy E 2.1: Capitalize on the proximity of local colleges to grow new business and link graduates into the workforce.

Action A: Grow Innovation Challenge Events

MCLA recently began an innovation challenge event, an event that has the potential to grow as the new Center for Science and Innovation opens and becomes established. Work with the College to support the continuation and expansion of innovation challenges at MCLA and between MCLA and other colleges and universities in adjacent regions.

Action B: Offer Local Start-up Financing to Grow or Support Clusters

Create a seed capital fund for research and development related to programming at Berkshire Community College, Greenfield Community College, MCLA, and McCann to support local entrepreneurship and new business start-ups that directly link to courses of study and economic clusters in the region.

Action C: Continue to Partner with MCLA On Mutually Supportive Projects and Investments

Support MCLA investment in the downtown, potentially including the Mohawk Theater, to enhance the city's arts and cultural offerings.

Action D: Maximize Economic Impact of New Center for Science and Innovation

Develop an Ashland Street Corridor study to explore ways for the city to enhance this corridor as a main gateway between MCLA and the downtown with significant potential for housing and economic activity.

Action E: Expand Degree Programming to Meet Economic Development Goals

Explore the potential for place-based economic activity that could be supported through new programming at McCann, BCC (at McCann or other North Adams location) and MCLA such as historical preservation trades, sustainable agriculture, and high-tech manufacturing.

Action F: Alumni Business Recruitment Events

Develop a program to target MCLA and Williams College alumni to build or relocate businesses locally by marketing the city to them through targeted events and providing incentives.

Policy E 2.2: Grow the region as a premier active outdoor recreation destination in the northeast.

Action A: Increase Visitor Capture From Mount Greylock

Capitalize on the high volume visitation to Mount Greylock to draw people into the city through marketing, gateway redevelopment and signage, particularly in light of planned investments into Furnace Street and Heritage State Park, to draw people into the downtown. Ensure Furnace Street and Reservoir Road improvements provide a safe and attractive route to Mount Greylock.

Action B: Promote Active Outdoor Recreation Business Development

Leverage the proximity to Mount Greylock and other state forests to grow economic activity related to active outdoor recreation options including equipment design and manufacturing, outdoor adventure tours, river recreation, and rentals.

Action C: Increase Number of Outdoor Race Events

Cultivate a range of outdoor race events throughout the year to highlight the outdoor opportunities of the city, make healthy lifestyles more visible, and draw in new visitors.

Action D: Create Better Connections Between City and Surrounding Trails Systems

Improve connectivity and access to trails on Mount Greylock and other parks from the downtown and local neighborhoods, creating new trails as appropriate to ensure connections and improving wayfinding for residents and visitors through signs and maps. See also Parks and Open Space Chapter.

Action E: Achieve Appalachian Trail Community Designation

Designate North Adams as an Appalachian Trail Community to enhance marketing opportunities via that national platform.

Policy E 2.3: Strengthen health services in the city to support the economic vitality of the northern Berkshire region.

Action A: Restore and Enhance Health Care Delivery to Fit Community Needs

As the northern Berkshire community demographics shift over time, the City and region should work to ensure that health services are in place at the right scale and mix of services to meet community needs in collaboration with other regional health services in southern Vermont and Pittsfield.

Action B: Enhance Preventative Health Programming

Promote community wellness through supportive programming regarding insurance, preventive medicine, and healthy lifestyle options.

Action C: Highlight Local Health Care Services as an Important City Asset

Increase the visibility of health care services within the city through signage, advertising, and wellness messaging to highlight its importance and assist in the seamless transition from North Adams Regional Hospital to new health care delivery options.

Action D: Support Medical Workforce Needs

Work with medical service providers to identify employee retention factors related to community-based needs and develop a process for addressing them.

Action E: Evaluate Potential and Desire for Health Industry Cluster

Support continued exploration of a health cluster in the city as one component to a larger multi-faceted economic strategy. Such a cluster could include medical R&D and/or a diversification of health to include holistic medicine approaches. The former would capitalize on the relatively low costs of doing business in the city and proximity to MCLA. The latter would link local educational offerings for healing arts curricula and build on the region's role for wellness as exhibited through Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health, Canyon Ranch and others.

GOAL E 3: WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH BUSINESS, THE COMMUNITY AND INVESTORS TO ACHIEVE A CONTINUAL CYCLE OF INVESTMENT AND IMPROVEMENT IN THE CITY

Policy E 3.1: Make permitting and city processes a model of business-friendly best practice.

Action A: Streamline and Modernize Development Permitting and Review

Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the development services offered through the city to evaluate ways in which departments, staff, and processes can be co-located and integrated to offer streamlined, customer-focused services. At a minimum, the city should work immediately to:

- Update the permitting guide to include flowcharts, timelines, contacts and other features to improve the clarity and transparency for developers.
- Increase the number of forms and city services available on-line.

Action B: Advance Ways to Quickly Connect Small Businesses to Appropriate Resources to Improve Success Rate

Facilitate one-stop process for small-business development to ensure the right connections are made from the start. The city should encourage owners to take advantage of available business counseling services from outside support agencies, such as the Small Business Development Center.

Policy E 3.2: Make optimal use of tools and incentives to attract and leverage investment.

Action A: Pursue New Market Tax Credits to Leverage Investment

Actively pursue New Market Tax Credits to make financially marginal projects feasible and spur investment in the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.

Action B: Designate Key Sites for Financing Tools and Incentives

Facilitate the navigation of Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits and Tax Increment Financing on commercial reinvestment projects by ensuring designations are in place for key sites. (See also historic preservation chapter.)

Action C: Work With North Adams Chamber of Commerce on Business Improvement District

Explore the potential for establishing a Business Improvement District in the downtown through the North Adams Chamber of Commerce.

Action D: Develop Package of Small Business Programs

Work with small business community to identify and then develop small business incentive programs to help advance business success. This could include a small business ownership class to cover the basic steps of business planning, importance of savings, and making realistic growth forecasts. Participation in the class could be required in order to access other programs, such as a façade program or specific loan pools (see Action E, below), to incentivize participation. The city

could also explore the creation of a small business tax increment financing (TIF) program linked to the addition of employees and/or increase or relocation of business square footage to support business growth.

Action E: Explore Ways to Meet Full Range of Small Business Financing Needs Locally

Explore creative solutions to small business financing needs, such as a bank pool-funded revolving loan fund for small business start-ups, a city or northern Berkshire angel network, and community-based funding pools. Select and implement the right tool or package of tools in collaboration with the business community.

Action F: Leverage Investment Through Public-Private-Non-Profit Partnerships

Maximize the use of public-private-non-profit partnerships to leverage investment into the city. This could include working with groups such as the Partnership for North Adams or other parties interested in investing in new development or redevelopment projects in the city offering a public benefit.

GOAL E 4: ENCOURAGE JOB GROWTH AND BUSINESS RELOCATION IN THE CITY

Policy E 4.1: Actively recruit new businesses to the city.

Action A: Offer a Clear and Coordinated Business and Resident Recruitment Platform

Develop a web-based platform to communicate about the city, including sites, cost of living, available incentives, market connections, and community amenities to potential future businesses looking to relocate. This could either be through the city's website, North Adams Chamber of Commerce website, or other suitable entity.

Action B: Designate Single Point of Contact for Business Recruitment

Designate a single point of contact for potential businesses looking to relocate, to help answer questions and arrange a tour. This point of contact should be clearly identified in any applicable media or materials for the city, tourism office, North Adams Chamber of Commerce, Northern Berkshire Industrial Park and Development Corporation, and other entities as appropriate.

Action C: Expand and Improve Technology Infrastructure

In order to capitalize on opportunities for business development and resident attraction, continue to support broadband and other supporting technology infrastructure improvements.

GOAL E 5: GROW A SKILLED WORKFORCE TO MEET ECONOMIC NEEDS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

Policy E 5.1: Offer a diverse range of internship, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training opportunities in the city.

Action A: Strengthen Internship Network

Work with local businesses to identify potential internships for high school and college students in the area to provide support to local businesses, provide learning opportunities for youth, and help forge professional linkages between graduates and area employers. Identify methods to encourage businesses to transition internships to jobs.

Action B: Utilize Technical High School for Emerging Workforce Training Opportunities

Leverage the presence of McCann as a key workforce development component in the region through enhanced programming, apprenticeship programs and other venues. Consider emerging vocational interests and opportunities, such as an agricultural training program (utilize neighboring farm land) and historic preservation construction techniques (given the existing building stock needs in the city).

Action C: Enable Additional Higher Education Opportunities

Pursue a stronger BCC presence in the city to make technology and professional classes more accessible to north county and local residents in a way that complements and expands, rather than duplicates or competes with, those opportunities already available at MCLA.

Work with MCLA’s Graduate Dean as the department identifies growth opportunities in the area of continuing education. Encourage the creation of additional evening degree programs, as needed.

Policy E 5.2: Ensure that the City’s Pre-K-12 education system is one of the best in the region.

Action A: Focus on Early Childhood to Improve Kindergarten Readiness

Engage the entire community, including businesses, to promote early childhood education experience. Glean lessons learned from the Pittsfield Promise initiative and the Berkshire Compact on Education to make positive educational change in the city.

Action B: Set Targets for School Performance and Then Meet or Exceed Them

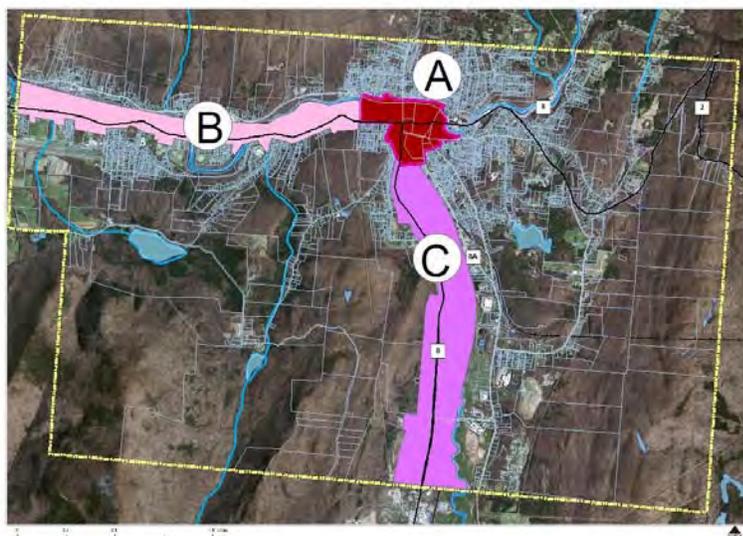
Develop performance based targets for each school in the district to drive improvement and accountability to the taxpayers. This could be as simple as a standardized test score improvement or 4-year graduation rate, but should be accompanied by a realistic strategy for achieving progress in collaboration with the city, community groups and or social service providers.

Action C: Offer a Multi-faceted Curriculum that Maximizes Benefit of Context

Encourage the public schools to offer innovative and attractive programs of study such as music, theater, science, and place-based learning. This should include enhanced use of the city’s natural and cultural assets for field trips.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AREA GOALS AND POLICIES

The following goals and policies highlight three economic activity areas in the city:



- A. Downtown
- B. Route 2 Corridor
- C. Route 8 Corridor

A. Downtown

GOAL E 6: IMPLEMENT A STRATEGIC REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY TO RECONNECT AND REBUILD THE DOWNTOWN TO SUCCESSFULLY ELIMINATE THE SCARS LEFT BY URBAN RENEWAL

Policy E 6.1: Build upon strong anchor points within the downtown, expanding and connecting destinations until the cycle of reinvestment impacts the entire downtown.

Action A: Develop Zoning to Better Support Redevelopment

Revise downtown zoning to remove barriers for site reuse or expansion. This could include creating a mixed-use district within the downtown to encourage flexible and lively reuse of historic and underutilized buildings.

Action B: Ensure Future Development Improves Downtown Fabric

Develop downtown design guidelines to ensure that future reinvestment helps recreate the historic community fabric and that new development makes a positive contribution to the physical attractiveness of Main Street.

Action C: Assess Parking Needs and Distribution

Conduct or commission a parking utilization study to determine how well the existing parking supply meets the current and projected demands. Identify sites where parking may be excessive and redevelopment potential is high. Include key information such as the type of ownership (public or private).

Action D: Create a Tool to Market Downtown Spaces for Rent

Develop an inventory of downtown (and overall city) spaces available for lease, including details about cost and amenities available. Make the inventory centrally available and market downtown spaces as a priority.



Traditional storefronts along Eagle Street add to the commercial space and historic character of Main Street and the Downtown.

Action E: Plan for Future Needs of Downtown Commercial Occupants

Develop a plan for lower-rent occupants as storefront vacancy is reduced. These spaces may currently be filled by galleries, artists, or non-profit organizations. Ensure that displacement due to positive market forces does not eliminate opportunities entirely. These individuals, businesses or

organizations may be well-suited to some second floor office-type spaces, or non-traditional spaces still available. Alternatively, redevelop downtown space and dedicate it to artists and creative entities.

Action F: Develop Key Partnerships to Advance Private Investment Efforts

Systematically work with the Partnership for North Adams and private business and investment entities to achieve the successful redevelopment and reuse of critical priority development sites within the downtown. (See downtown Priority Redevelopment Sites map.)

Action G: Utilize New Cultural District Designation

Designate a Cultural District in the downtown to recognize and support the role of arts, culture and artists in the city's revitalization. Consider developing an arts council to facilitate projects and initiatives.

Policy E 6.2: Target key pedestrian and bicycle improvements to foster safe and easy movement throughout the downtown and between the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.

Action A: Plan for Long-Range Municipal Improvements to Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure

Build bike/pedestrian improvements into the annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) of the city to ensure that incremental progress is made. Begin with priorities and improvements identified in the walkability audits of the downtown and adjacent areas, as well as trail plans to connect sites within the downtown. Monitor or assess needs regularly thereafter to maintain a safe and connected pedestrian system.

Action B: Utilize Best Practices to Make Streets Safe for All Modes of Travel

Enhance the sense of bike/pedestrian safety through the use of speed control mechanisms, enhanced lighting, and police patrol routes to ensure that residents and visitors are comfortable traveling by foot by day or night.

Action C: Reduce Excessive Pavement in the Downtown

Reduce excessive pavement in downtown, especially where parking is underutilized. Large areas of parking lot are a detriment to pedestrian activity and can prove dangerous for crossing.

Action D: Develop Bike Routes in Key Locations

Capitalize on the shared use path development, and interest in alternatives to vehicular transportation, by planning multi-modal road design throughout and adjacent to downtown. Include bike lanes between MCLA and downtown. Take a Complete Streets approach to accommodate three modes of transportation (car, pedestrian, bicycle) on every street, whenever possible. Green the roadway corridors as much as possible to make travel appealing for all modes.

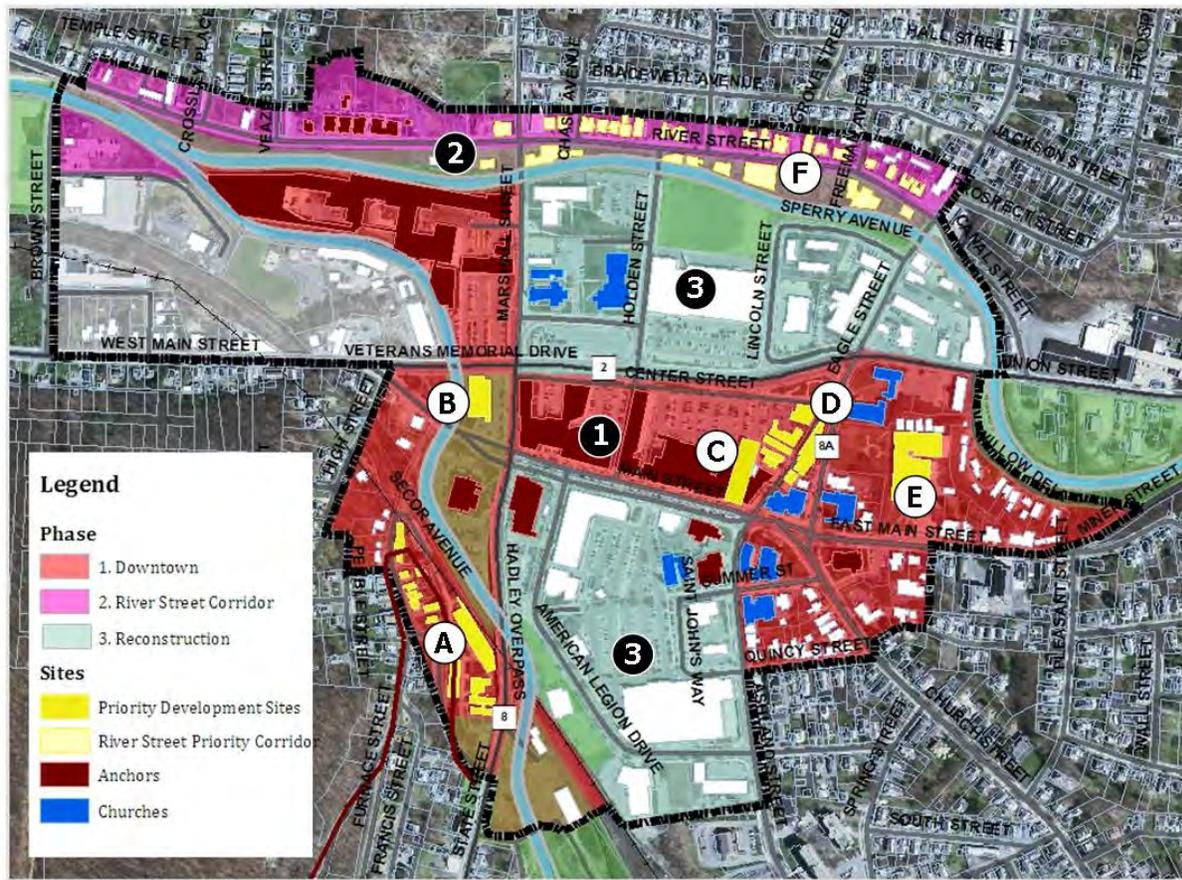
Action E: Address Problem Intersections for Pedestrians and Cyclists

Address key problem intersections for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles by reducing crosswalk length, number of crosswalks to cross one street, modernizing pedestrian signals to include count-downs and audible beeps, and offering a refuge island in the case that road width cannot be reduced. Consider prohibiting turning right at a red light where pedestrian visibility is an issue, or there is a perpetual conflict between vehicles and pedestrians. Enact mechanisms for the ongoing identification of problem intersections so they can be addressed.

Action F: Support Multi-modal Culture in the City

Gradually build a multi-modal culture in the city by launching a public education and awareness campaign on the rules and safety practices for all modes of users to employ to safely share roads.

Figure 1: Downtown Investment Phases and Priority Development Sites



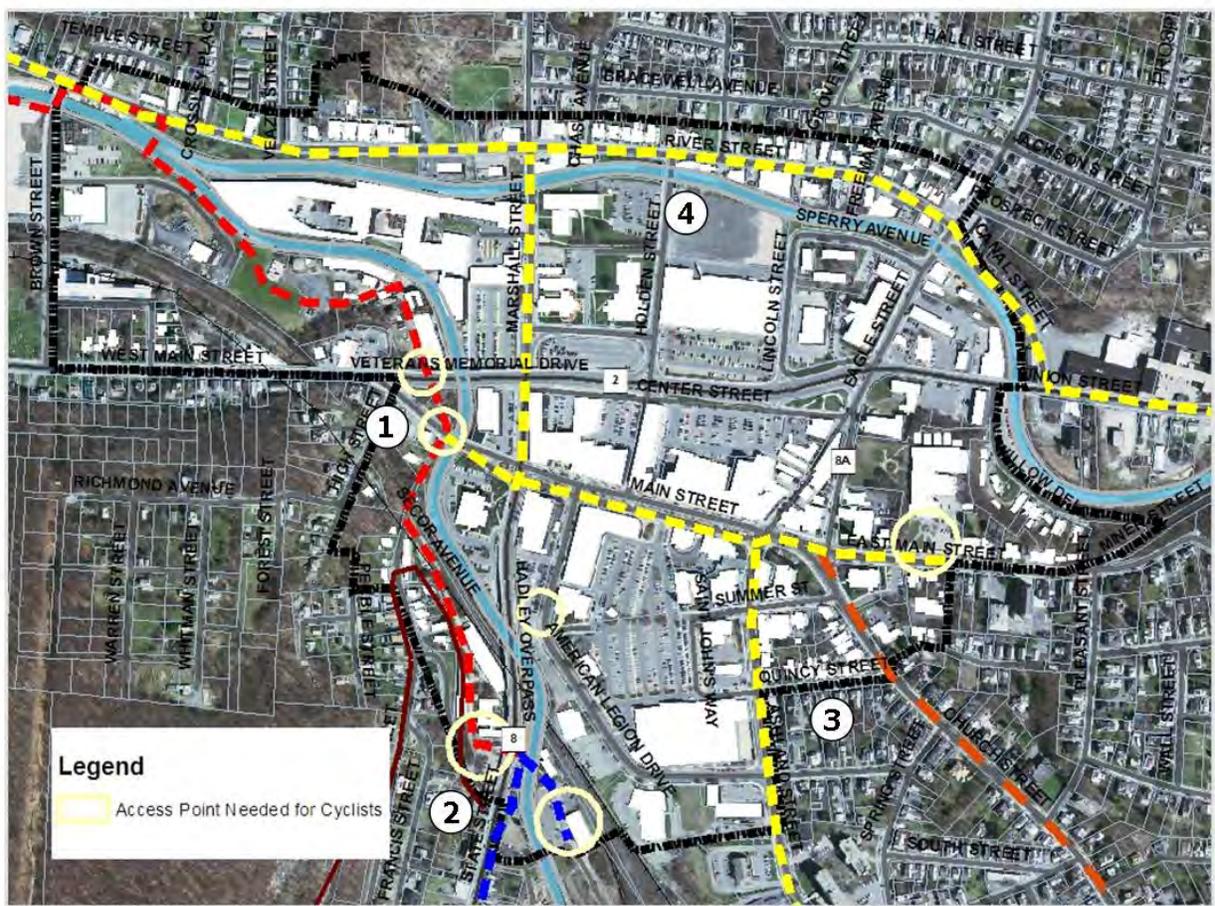
A Phased Approach

- 1 Strengthen and Connect the Downtown Core** — Build on current downtown core activity areas by focusing early reuse or redevelopment projects in this target area. This will help drive the critical mass for additional projects while supporting existing downtown businesses.
- 2 River Street Revitalization** — The River Street Corridor is an opportunity area for local businesses to locate along a bike route and potential future river greenway across the river from downtown proper. It is also an important connection between MASS MoCA and Route 2 east travel to the Scenic Byway and mixed use artist developments or west to Williamstown.
- 3 Urban Renewal Reconstruction** — These two portions of the downtown were demolished by urban renewal activities decades ago and are now predominantly big box retail with large parking lots. Redevelopment of these areas to reconstruct the historic block pattern with pedestrian-oriented mixed use development is a priority as the real estate market strengthens over time.

Priority Development Sites

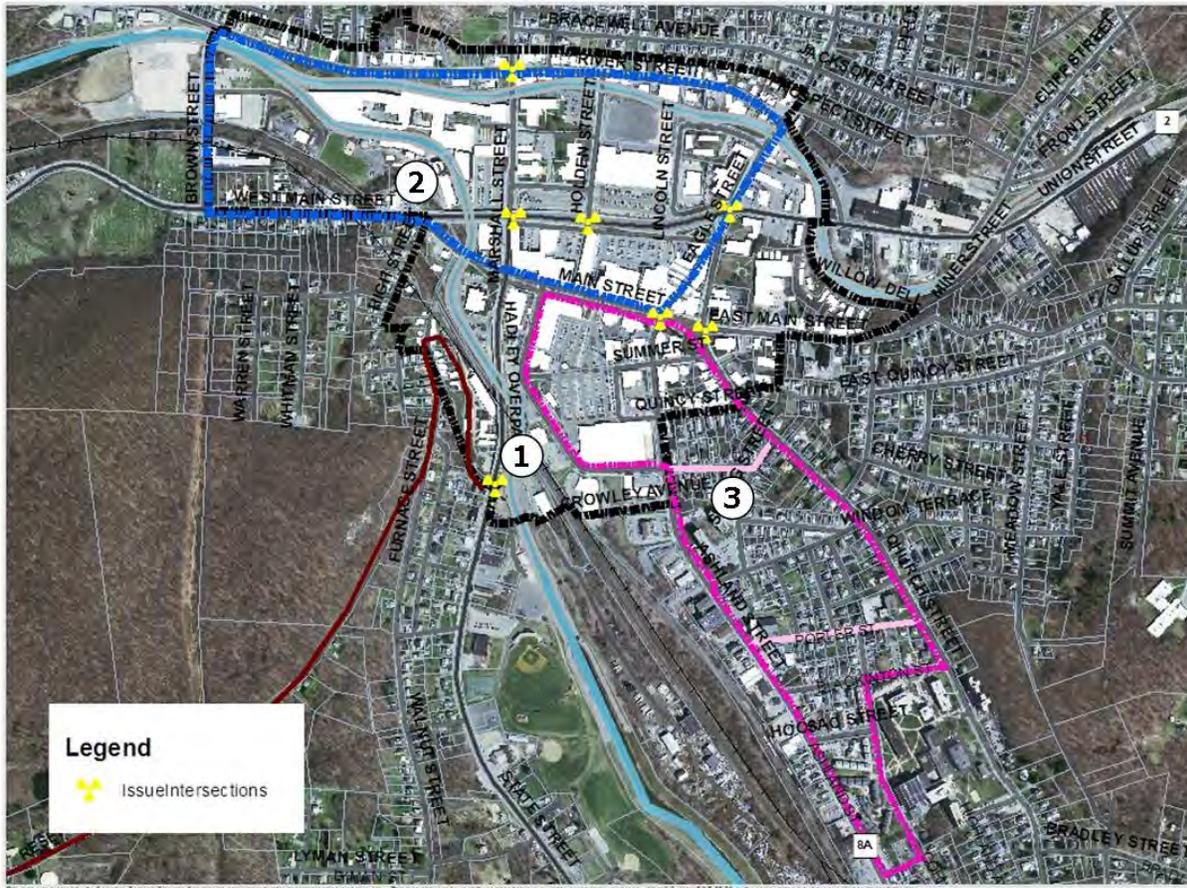
- A Western Gateway Heritage Park**—The city-owned site should be positioned to be developed by the private sector to best take advantage of its location and context as the gateway to Mount Greylock State Park.
- B Marshall and Main** — The recently vacated property on Marshall street between City Hall and MASS MoCA and with frontage along the river.
- C Mohawk Theater** — This historic theater has been discussed as a redevelopment project to add a performance venue with strong ties to MCLA.
- D Eagle Street**— This historic street is rich with character but in need of restoration investment and addressing vacancies.
- E School Reuse Project** — The planned establishment of an elementary school will add significant activity to the downtown once completed.
- F River Street Corridor**— The 30+ structures along this corridor are a mix of residential and commercial uses with a number of vacant parcels. This is a key reuse and redevelopment opportunity to add local business space.

Figure 2: Bike Framework for Downtown



- 1 Mohawk Trail Bike Path**—Connects downtown North Adams with Williamstown to the west. With some bike access improvements, this route will provide strong connections into Main Street and on-road bike routes in the city. The route will also connect to the north-south Ashuwillticook Rail Trail.
- 2 Mount Greylock and Heritage State Park**—The two bike paths will connect at Heritage State Park, right near the North Adams entrance to the Mount Greylock Scenic Byway. This area is a key connection point for the bike and pedestrian traffic on all three of these routes. Some safety improvements and wayfinding within this area will help facilitate safe enjoyment of the whole system and nearby attractions.
- 3 MCLA Connections**— the MCLA– downtown connection is a high priority for the college and downtown businesses. The students tend to use Ashland Street (yellow) but Church Street is an alternate route (orange). Improvements to both, including lighting, will make it easier and safer for students to travel during day or night.
- 4 On-Road Bike Movement**—Recent street improvements on Main Street and Route 8 made bike travel much safer. Continued improvements to River Street and Massachusetts Avenue can provide a nice alternative to Route 2 for cyclists west of downtown. East of downtown, improvements along Route 2/Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway can facilitate safer travel of this narrow, challenging route.

Figure 3: Pedestrian Circulation and Designated Walking Loops



- 1 Connecting to Mount Greylock**—Planned improvements on bike paths, Heritage State Park, and at the entrance to the Mount Greylock Scenic Byway could help make walking to and from this route from downtown a more viable option that it feels today. This will be an important connection between the community core and adjacent open space and trails.
- 2 Downtown Walking Loop** &
- 3 Southern Walking Loop** —these short, and relatively flat walking loops were recently designated to help promote healthy lifestyles in the city. The southern loop is also a frequent student route between downtown and campus.

GOAL E 7: IMPROVE THE LIVABILITY AND LIVELINESS OF DOWNTOWN

Policy E 7.1: Increase the number and variety of people living and working in the downtown.

Action A: Diversify Housing Options in Downtown

Encourage a diversity of housing options in the downtown to meet a wide range of residents, and their preferences and needs. Ensure that there remain affordable housing opportunities. Offer tax incentives for private interests to develop appropriate housing, i.e. reinvesting in existing structures. Reduce municipal barriers to private residential investment in the downtown (i.e. incompatible zoning regulations or ordinances) to encourage growth.

Action B: Coordinate Development of Artist Housing

Develop an arts district in or adjacent to downtown to encourage the redevelopment of underutilized structures for affordable artist housing and arts-related businesses (from which art can be sold), through a mixed-use, housing and commercial space model.

Action C: Encourage Student Housing in Downtown

Develop student housing opportunities in the downtown in collaboration with MCLA and other educational and cultural institutions.

Action D: Provide Transit Options to Connect Students to Downtown

Encourage transit to better connect local students with downtown. Support continued enhanced bus service between Williamstown and North Adams. Work with MCLA to increase shuttle service between their campus and downtown.

Note: See also the Housing and Neighborhoods chapter.

Policy E 7.2: Develop attractive gateways and critical capture points to draw people into the downtown.

Action A: Utilize Signage to Market Key Destinations

Identify key points along major roadways into the city where additional signage or gateway enhancements could help direct traffic into the downtown, such as from Route 2 to Main Street or directing north from Furnace Street. Examine the potential to designate Route 2 in the downtown for truck traffic only.

Action B: Support Transit to Better Connect Local Communities

Support the continuation of enhanced bus service between Williams College and the downtown.

Policy E 7.3: Diversify and expand the range of activities and attractions in downtown.

Action A: Connect Key Anchor Points in the Downtown

Encourage programmatic connections between MASS MoCA, MCLA and downtown. Grow and support existing efforts such as MCLA's Cultural Resource Center.

Action B: Link Special Events to the City Core

Link special events in the city with those at the colleges, MASS MoCA and city anchors such as homecoming, parents' weekend, and music festivals to draw people into the downtown. This could include special store hours on those select weekends to ensure stores and restaurants will be open later.

Action C: Streamline Permitting for Special Events

Ensure permitting and regulations are user-friendly and supportive of continued Main Street-based events. Use regularly held events to attract people into the central core. For example, the Saturday Farmer's Market is a popular event, but is held on the edge of downtown, rather than in the center. The city should facilitate street closures and collaborations between private and public entities. In addition, offer education and streamlined permits for food vendors and facilitate the process as much as possible.

Action D: Encourage Visitation of Downtown Through Food-Related Events

Encourage and support agricultural- and food-based activities such as events using the community pizza oven, farmer's markets, nearby community gardens and food-related festivals which happen in the downtown.

Action E: Leverage Downtown Proximity to Mount Greylock

Develop recreational opportunities stemming from the heart of downtown, such as a gateway to Mount Greylock and other natural attractions, and an urban walking trail system appropriate for all levels of mobility, and encourage supporting business development.

Policy E 7.4: Integrate accessible and interactive community spaces for all ages throughout the downtown.

Action A: Increase New Green and Public Spaces in the Downtown

Encourage new green and open public spaces in the downtown, whether individual sites (i.e. a park), or linear (i.e. shared use path).

Action B: Improve Existing Community Spaces

Enhance the usability and attractiveness of existing downtown community spaces, such as Veteran's Park and Colgrove Park.

Action C: Reconnect the Community to the Hoosic River

Work with the Hoosic River Revival and other community stakeholders to make physical and programmatic connections to the Hoosic River to elevate it to a signature feature and destination in the downtown. Develop green spaces and activity centers along its length to reconnect residents and visitors to the river, while maintaining or improving the same levels of flood protection. Wherever feasible, reduce or eliminate the physical barriers created by the concrete flood chutes and their surrounding land treatments.

Action D: Continue Art Displays

Integrate interactive art throughout the downtown to make the pedestrian experience more compelling and encourage more street activity.

Action E: Utilize Bike Path Development for the Benefit of Downtown

Support the implementation of bike path extension through the downtown to connect the existing Ashuwillticook Rail Trail in Adams to the bike path under construction in Williamstown.

GOAL E 8: ENHANCE BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN THE CITY CORE

Policy E 8.1: Coordinate and promote existing businesses in the downtown.

Action A: Enhance Retail and Business Options for Residents and Visitors

Work with business membership organizations to encourage extended business hours and use city marketing vehicles to promote them. Provide marketing support and encourage a more robust evening and nightlife in downtown.

Action B: Develop an Internal Scheduling Process

Refine a central scheduling process and calendar in order to encourage event clustering while avoiding significant overlap among events both for city and larger region.

Action C: Continue to Encourage Buy Local Campaign

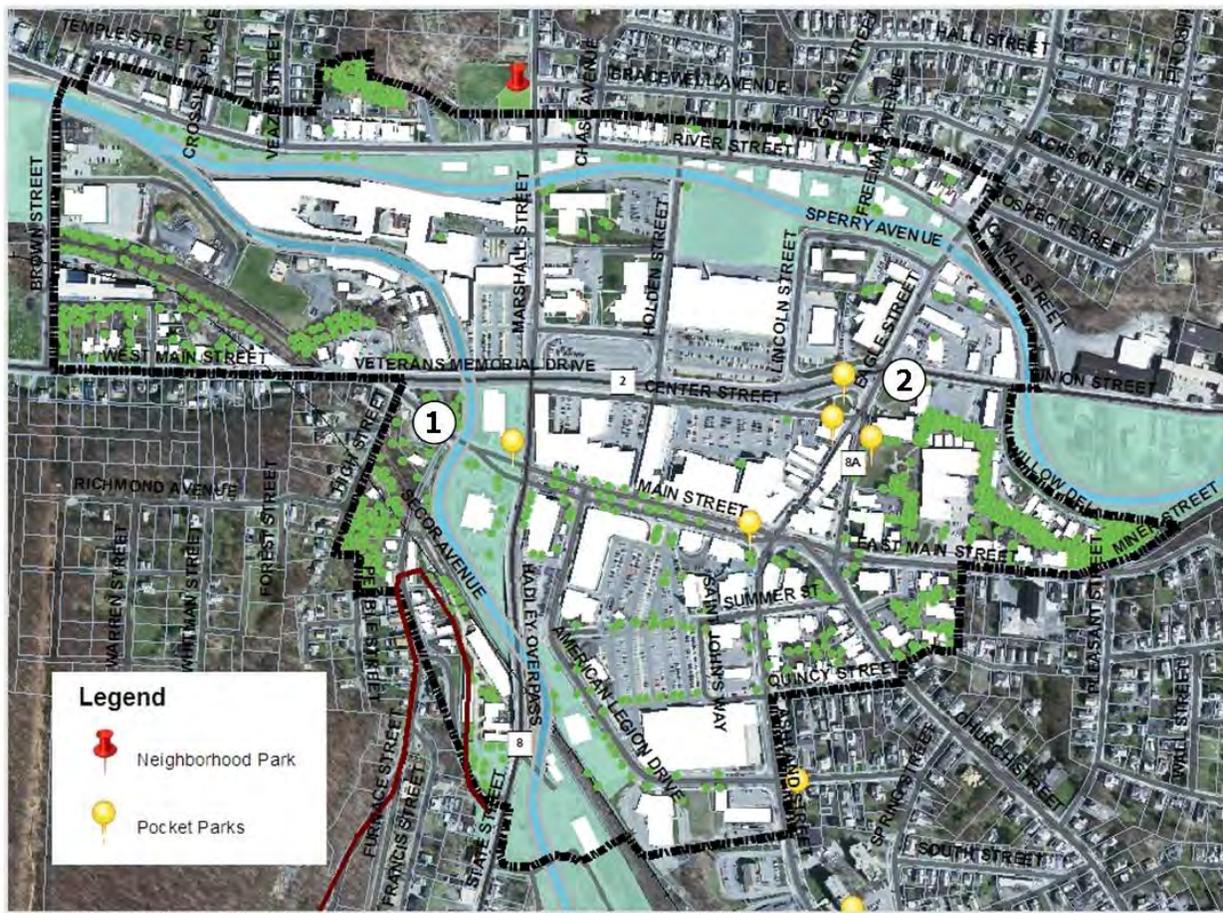
Establish a buy local campaign with supporting promotion. Include a focus on resident education about the economic impacts of buying local. Work with retailers to ensure there are local options with a range of price points.

Policy E 8.2: Support programmatic connections between downtown and anchor attractions such as MCLA and MASS MoCA.

Action A: Strengthen Programmatic Connections from MCLA to Downtown

Focus on developing programmatic connections from MCLA to downtown. While the distance between is walkable, it is far enough to require some incentive for students. For example, cultivate and promote downtown jobs and internships appropriate for MCLA students. Encourage and support location of MCLA's fine and performing arts and arts management program to the Mohawk Theater.

Figure 4: Riverway and Downtown Greenspace



1 Greening the Riverway— Hoosic River Revival has championed an effort to make the river an accessible focal point within the downtown. Recommendations include adding green space along the riverway with options for active (walkway) and passive (benches) enjoyment along the river.

2 Adding and Retaining Park Space Within Downtown — The lack of a City Green, prominent green space within the downtown, was noted in the planning process. Finding some site within the downtown, as well as adding smaller pocket parks interspersed within the denser mixed-use setting will provide community spaces for people to linger and interact.

Action B: Make North Adams More of a College Town

Work with an MCLA focus group to determine ways to make North Adams a “college town,” with the ideal range of retail offerings, locations, and business hours appealing to college students, staff and faculty.

Action C: Address Physical Barriers Around Anchor Institutions

Work with MASS MoCA to reduce and eliminate the isolating effects on their visitors, and particularly on-campus businesses and their customers, which prevent or discourage many from leaving the site to go downtown, such as the fencing which surrounds their parking lot. Seek municipal infrastructure improvements to facilitate improved physical connections from the downtown to the MASS MoCA campus.



Hardman Industrial Park on Route 8 defines the southern entryway into the city and is important land base for current and future job creation.

B. Area Focus: Route 8

GOAL E 9: DEVELOP SOUTH ROUTE 8 AS A KEY EMPLOYMENT AREA AND STRENGTHEN ITS CONNECTION TO THE REST OF THE CITY

Policy E 9.1: Target specific priority sites along the Route 8 corridor for redevelopment and supporting infrastructure improvements.

Action A: Route 8 Corridor Study

The city will pursue the creation of a corridor study for Route 8 focused on land use patterns and infrastructure improvements. A number of variables to be considered in this study and resolved through its recommendations include:

- Safe routes to work for employees at Wal-Mart and other businesses in the Industrial Park or elsewhere in the corridor from downtown and neighborhoods in south North Adams.
- Ashuwillticook Rail Trail route north from Adams to and through downtown, given the complexities of wetlands and the scenic railway along the existing rail bed.
- Land use strategy and needed infrastructure improvements and financing options for the western side of Route 8 across from the current industrial park.
- Connections from businesses and attractions just south of downtown to the downtown, including some re-envisioning of land uses adjacent to Noel Field.

Action B: Safeguard Southern Route 8 Corridor as an Employment Hub

The Hardman Industrial Park on the eastern side of Route 8 provides industrial/business park space that is rare in the region. Designated industrial park sites in the city, formerly operated by the Northern Berkshire Industrial Park and Development Corporation, are now all in private ownership.

The recent addition of Wal-Mart across the street and speculation of additional big box or chain franchise development elsewhere in that section of the corridor would spell a gradual shift from employment to retail as the primary land use pattern. The city will work to safeguard this land, currently zoned industrial, for living-wage job creating employment opportunities. This can be achieved by ensuring future zoning decisions consider this intent if or when requests for special permits emerge.

Action C: Support Key Investments at Noel Field

Support and coordinate improvements at Noel Field between the current site master planning and the City's Vision 2030 Plan. Encourage reorientation and improvements to pedestrian access points. Identify ways the Hoosic River access can be enhanced at this site, and how Noel Field will be a key node along a future greenway. Consider holding more events at Noel Field, beyond sports.

Action D: Reposition Heritage State Park as a City Attraction

Encourage redevelopment and reinvestment in Heritage State Park buildings and site infrastructure. Support appropriate private investment strategies to enhance the site's viability. Reposition the park as a physical and programmatic connection to the Mount Greylock State Reservation. Identify ways to improve physical connections between Heritage Park and downtown.

Policy E 9.2: Cultivate and connect Route 8 gateway district to serve as an attractive gateway and extension to the downtown.

Action A: Business Façade and Streetscape Beautification

Target investment or program tools to improve façade appearance for businesses in the vicinity of Noel Field and Western Gateway Heritage State Park to offer an attractive gateway to the downtown. This could include a façade program through the city, a business improvement district for that area, or a combination of the two.

Action B: Traffic Calming and Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

There is considerable foot traffic across Route 8, where Child Care of the Berkshires and Noel Field are on one side and businesses and neighborhoods on the other. This section of the corridor, immediately before the bridge to downtown, also serves as a gateway to the downtown. Slow traffic as it approaches this section of road and then work to make safety improvements for bike and pedestrian traffic. (Reference call-out on traffic calming and pedestrian improvement options/photos).

Action C: Gateway Signage and Treatments

Extend signage improvements needed in the downtown to the northern section of Route 8, particularly to strengthen the connections between Noel Field, Mount Greylock, future expansion of the Ashuwillticook Trail, Western Gateway Heritage State Park and the downtown.



The Harriman-West Airport is a major economic asset for the city. Route 2 improvements such as the cultivation of related use activities around the airport and enhanced signage can help establish an attractive and productive gateway corridor for the city.

C. Area Focus: Route 2

GOAL E 10: BUILD AN ATTRACTIVE GOODS AND SERVICES CORRIDOR ALONG ROUTE 2 BETWEEN WILLIAMSTOWN AND NORTH ADAMS

Policy E 10.1: Make physical improvements to improve appeal and usability of the Route 2 Corridor.

Action A: Reduce Unnecessary Signage Along Route 2

Identify and seek ways to reduce and remove visual clutter throughout the corridor, including billboards, excessive signage and potential consolidation or underground placement of utility lines.

Action B: Target Pedestrian Improvements at Key Locations

Implement physical improvements in the area around the Price Chopper shopping area to provide safe and appealing pedestrian access while improving the overall appearance of the area.

Policy E 10.2: Target specific priority sites along the Route 2 corridor for redevelopment and supporting infrastructure improvements.

Action A: Continue to Support Airport Improvements

Maintain communication with and support of Harriman-West Airport as they continue implementing a multi-year expansion and improvement strategy. This will likely include airport renaming, enhanced special events, addition of a flight school, and a new terminal building – all of which can hold significant benefits for North Adams.

Action B: Determine Potential Future Uses of Fairground Site

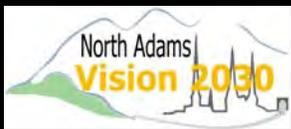
Conduct a reuse plan for the former Fairground site; explore potential future uses in the Conservation & Recreation chapter. It has been noted as a good site for a dog park and for its ability to provide a physical linkage to MASS MoCA.

Action C: Address Needs for Redevelopment of Mills

Conduct a mill reuse plan in collaboration with current owners of the Cariddi Mill and other mills along the corridor. Encourage mixed-use in redeveloped mills wherever possible. Identify municipal infrastructure improvements, zoning changes, and complementary funding sources to facilitate their robust reuse.

Action D: Reuse Remediated Sites

Identify future low-impact uses of the remediated site at Avon and Alton Streets. This site has the potential to provide access to viewing the Hoosic River.



North Adams Comprehensive Plan

Part II of III

2014



4

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

The city is fortunate to have a scenic setting surrounded by open space with many outdoor recreation opportunities while also having many recreation facilities and parks in the downtown and neighborhoods. The goals and policies in this chapter focus on how the city can maximize economic and health benefits from these many assets through maintenance, connections, and marketing to improve access and use rates of city parks and recreation amenities and surrounding open space areas.

GOALS, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

GOAL OSR1: OFFER A HIGH-QUALITY AND DIVERSE RECREATION SYSTEM TO SUPPORT THE HEALTH, ENJOYMENT, AND ECONOMIC NEEDS OF THE CITY.

Policy OSR 1.1: Make the parks and recreation offerings of the city more visible to residents and visitors.

Action A: Develop Comprehensive North Adams Recreation Guide

While the city currently has a number of park and recreation amenities, some are less visible and therefore underused by residents as well as visitors. The City will work to develop a comprehensive guide of amenities and programs to facilitate access and use of these resources. This guide should be flexible to allow use in website, smart phone application, and other applicable technologies as well as paper hard copies. A trail map and guidance kiosk located in downtown will provide access to this information and help market it.

Action B: Improve Recreation Amenity Wayfinding Signage

There is a high degree of variation in the type and quality of recreation resource wayfinding signage, both to find resources and trail markers or other signage once on site. In order to promote increased use of the city's many recreation assets, a consistent system of signage should be developed to make use opportunities clear and inviting. Also, high volume recreation attractions like the Appalachian Trail should have clear guidance to local businesses and the downtown to promote visitation.

Action C: Coordinate and Maintain Comprehensive Trail Map Data

In addition to the City of North Adams, trails within the city's boundaries are managed by a number of different entities, including the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Berkshire Natural Resources Council, and state Department of Conservation and Recreation. There is not a comprehensive and accurate map of trails in the city and surrounding lands. While upgrading this data is a regional priority, the city can work to help coordinate the data sharing and management for those players within its bounds to ensure we have the best quality information available.

Policy OSR 1.2: Maintain a high level of service for different user groups across the city.

Action A: Maintain an Up-to-date Open Space and Recreation Plan

The Open Space and Recreation Plan, which has been continuously updated since 1980, is a plan document defined and required by the state to be eligible to apply for certain state grants. Important components of this plan include a recreational demand survey to determine if all groups' recreation needs are being adequately met. It also conducts a facility assessment to identify a list of specific improvements needed at park sites. This makes the document very useful as a blueprint the city can use to plot and track maintenance and enhancement schedules for park and recreation assets. In order to be deemed current, this plan must be updated every five years. The city will ensure it



Related Maps

Map 2: Parks and Recreation Facilities

Map 3: Open Space and Outdoor Recreation

Map 4: Trails and Bike Paths

Map 5: Natural Resources

Map 6: Conservation Framework

Located in Appendix C

maintains a current document and employ it to drive incremental improvements to the park and recreation system, including regular pursuit of funding through the state to facilitate these improvements.

Action B: Centralize the Organization of Recreation Facilities, Programs, and Outreach

At present, the aspects of the city's recreational system – field maintenance, scheduling, anchor facility management, etc. – are managed by different departments and commissions. In order to increase efficiency and equity, enhance and promote programming, and develop strategic planning for future needs, these functions should be brought under one central recreation department or office. Many similar models in Berkshire County are non-profit organizations which work collaboratively with municipalities, such as Berkshire South, the Dalton CRA, and the Lenox Community Center.

Action C: Prioritize Existing Facility Maintenance and Enhancement

The City should use the comprehensive inventory of the needs at its existing recreational facilities contained in the Open Space and Recreation Plan, to establish a prioritized work plan for maintenance and improvements. To the best of the City's ability, it should dedicate municipal funding to reduce or eliminate significant maintenance backlogs before making new capital investments. The City should also look to improve and expand options at existing sites, such as diversifying equipment to increase users, and reinvesting in lesser-used neighborhood parks.

Action D: Provide Safe Routes to Recreation

Safe routes to recreation assets are an important component of a healthy parks and recreation system. The city will build on preliminary accessibility assessments conducted in the fall of 2012 and create a list of improvements and timetable for achieving them. Recommendations from this assessment can include physical improvements such as ensuring that there are well-maintained crosswalks and sidewalks around parks and facilities, or the addition of lighting or pedestrian crossing signs to foster a safer environment.

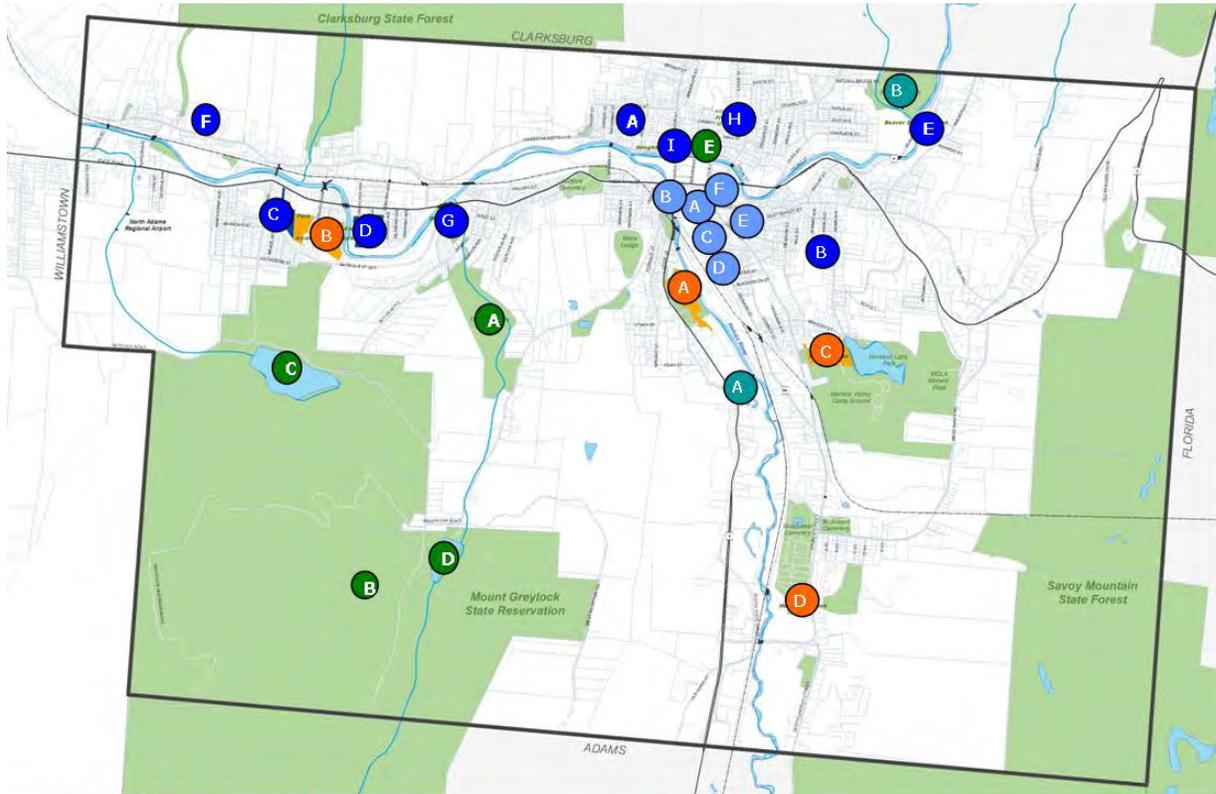
Action E: Expand Use of Existing Recreational Facilities

- **Joint Use Agreements:** Support and facilitate efforts of Mass in Motion to explore use of all school recreation facilities by local residents outside of school hours. Where possible, enter into joint use agreements to enable use of indoor and outdoor facilities to the public while still maintaining priority and safety for the school operations.
- **Streamlined Special Event Permitting:** Encourage use of park facilities for art and entertainment by providing necessary spaces, streamlined permitting processes, and low fees. Expanding the use of facilities in this way will encourage additional use and experience of these community assets by more people.
- **Seasonal Use Changes:** Consider using the Peter W. Foote Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Skating Rink for non-ice uses during the warmest-weather months. Given the high cost of energy to cool the facility for continued skating, and a reduction in the use, the facility could be better utilized for indoor court games.

Action F: Catalyze and Coordinate Development or Protection of Priority Sites

During the Open Space and Recreation outreach process a number of sites have been identified as high priorities or where an initiative is currently taking place, (see list, below). Creating connections between existing facilities has been noted as important to the overall future of the North Adams Open Space and Recreational system. There are areas where multiple initiatives have begun or are pending, indicating a need for the City to actively coordinate and plan these projects. Priority should be given to open space projects contiguous to already conserved land or contain high value resources, and projects which connect to other downtown assets or benefit underserved persons or areas.

Figure 5: North Adams Park and Recreation Facilities



Athletic & Community Facilities

- A** Noel Field Athletic Complex
- B** Alcombright Athletic Complex
- C** Windsor Lake
- D** Peter W Foote Vietnam Veterans Skating Rink

Neighborhood Parks

- A** Johnson School Playground
- B** Kemp Park
- C** Greylock School Playground
- D** West End Apartments Play Area
- E** Beaver Street Playground
- F** Blackinton Playground
- G** Brayton Field
- H** Freeman Playground
- I** Houghton Playground

Pocket Parks

- A** Colgrove Park
- B** Elderly Housing Recreation Area
- C** Senior Center Park
- D** Veteran's Park
- E** Monitor Park
- F** Downtown Pocket Parks: Eagle Street & Main Street

Natural Parks & Facilities

- A** The Cascades
- B** Mount Greylock
- C** Mt. Williams Reservoir
- D** Notch Reservoir
- E** Hoosic River, River Street Riverside Park and Girardi Park

Historic Park Facilities

- A** Western Gateway Heritage State Park
- B** Natural Bridge State Park

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PRIORITY SITES		
<i>Linear and Connected Networks</i>	<i>Connections Desired</i>	<i>Individual Sites or Projects</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appalachian Trail • Ashuwillticook Rail Trail extension along Route 8, in particular between Hodges Cross Road and downtown North Adams • Shared use path development between downtown North Adams and Williamstown • Revitalization of the Hoosic River • Urban walking route in downtown • Avon/Alton Street river path to downtown • Bellow’s Pipe Trail conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Bridge State Park to downtown • Bellow’s Pipe, Cascades, downtown • Windsor Lake to MCLA Forest, recreational fields, MCLA towers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown green spaces, pocket parks • Natural Bridge State Park to downtown • Trail Information kiosk in downtown • Windsor Lake trail development • Mohican-Mohawk trail • Armory site amenities • Skateboard park (no site selected)

Policy OSR 1.3: Leverage local park and recreation amenities to support business development, tourism, and resident attraction and retention efforts.

Action A: Cultivate System of Mountain Biking Trails

The Berkshire Chapter of the New England Mountain Biking Association (NEMBA) has great interest in creating a large network of trails throughout northern Berkshire County to serve as a location for races and a draw for avid mountain bikers. This is comparable to efforts in Vermont which served as the group’s inspiration. With current trail systems on Mount Greylock and in Savoy State Forest, the city could become a centerpiece surrounded on all sides with trails in Clarksburg State Forest, Florida Mountain State Forest. Berkshire NEMBA currently partners with the Department of Conservation on trail creation and maintenance.

Action B: Increase and Leverage Presence of Winter Outdoor Recreation

The Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts (SAM) has three active chapters in Northern Berkshire County – the Florida Mountaineers, Savoy CanaryKats, and the Adams Snowdrifters. The activity from these individuals and groups can make a positive impact on economic development in the City of North Adams. Marketing of existing amenities and exploration of expanding offerings (such as Bascom Lodge in limited capacity during the winter) will be facilitated by working directly with the three local groups and the state-wide organization. Other winter activities include hunting, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and ice fishing. Each offers an opportunity to capture visits and customers to local lodging, restaurant and other businesses.

Action C: Market North Adams Businesses to Outside Racing Events and Attractions

Each year there are competitive races held locally and regionally which attract hundreds of visitors to or near North Adams. Take an inventory of such events and work with race organizers to market accommodations in North Adams to competitors and guests. One example is a cycling race up Mt. Greylock each year organized by the Northampton Cycling Club which boasts about 180 racers plus guests. Work with local businesses to incentivize visits by participants (i.e. % off a meal with race number).

NOTE: Also see the Economic Development chapter for additional actions related to marketing outdoor recreation in the city.

Action D: Make North Adams a Trail-Friendly Community

Working closely with entities such as the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s AT Communities Program, make it easy for hikers to find and travel to local business and services.

- Informational kiosks, maps and signage for both “Thru-hikers” and hikers starting or ending their hikes in North Adams should be provided at Trail entry points to town and at parking areas.
- Provide and maintain an updated list of local volunteer “Trail Angels” who can provide information and transportation to out of town foot travelers.
- Provide and maintain appropriate and safe parking areas for trail visitors’ vehicles. At present there is a need for safe parking for 1-3 day overnight visits. At present, a local business (Greylock Community Club) provides long term parking (several weeks or more). Should this generous policy change, other parking should be available for long term hikers. It should be noted that in addition to hikers on the AT, North Adams serves as the southern terminus for Vermont’s Long Trail, stretching the length of Vermont to Canada.

GOAL OSR 2: IMPLEMENT WESTERN NEW ENGLAND GREENWAY COURSE THROUGH THE CITY

Policy OSR 2.1: Implement bike path as part of Western New England Greenway vision.

The Ashuwillticook Rail Trail has been incorporated into a large-scale vision for the northeastern US and Canada that would link bikepaths from New York City to Montreal into a continuous bikepath greenway. The city’s planned scenic rail and adjacent bike path course up from the Town of Adams will achieve a significant step forward. The city will now need to continue to coordinate with regional and city partners to devise a course through downtown and east to the section of bikepath currently under construction in Williamstown. This project has the potential to be further enhanced by the incorporation of scenic rail travel along the corridor between Adams and North Adams.

Policy OSR 2.2: Cultivate riverway multi-use path as asset for recreation and enjoyment.

Action A: Focus on River Greening and Increased Access within Community Core

The majority of the outdoor recreation assets of North Adams are located in the open space lands surrounding the community core in the larger scale park and recreation facilities to the south and west of downtown. The river creates a central focal point and is a unique opportunity to integrate recreation space within the community core and downtown, while also connecting to the other assets west and south. The city will collaborate with Hoosic River Revival and other partners to continue implementing greenspace creation, community access, and improvement projects along the flood chutes in the city’s core. Such projects should range from small, incremental improvements to provide access (such as fence locations) to larger, park-like developments in priority areas.

NOTE: Also see the Downtown section in Economic Development chapter for additional goals related to the Hoosic River.



Action B: Secure or Create River Access Points for Recreational Use

As bike path implementation moves forward, the city should ensure that the design incorporates the retention or creation of access points to the river for both boating and fishing. Trout Unlimited has been an active group locally due to the presence of cold water fisheries. The Hoosic River Watershed Association and Audubon Society both have been active in highlighting canoe/kayak routes for paddling and wildlife viewing. These partners can help inform designers about key spots on the river and then help highlight these assets after construction to various sport and wildlife groups.

Action C: Recreation-Supporting Infrastructure

Implement, as part of the blueway and bikepath design, a system of pockets for alternate activities such as:

- Educational kiosks highlighting natural species, habitat types, or other stories from the surrounding landscape.
- Performance spaces.
- Picnic spots with tables, garbage and possibly bathroom facilities.
- Benches placed in scenic locations for passive enjoyment of the river.
- Periodic garbage stations with dog bags to facilitate individual behaviors to maintain quality of trail environment.
- A born learning trail¹ segment for a family-friendly experience for young children.
- Outdoor exercise stations for using the path as a workout space (below).



Greenways along bike paths can be transformed into outdoor gyms with the inclusion of exercise guides (left) and equipment (right).

Policy OSR 2.3: Employ the river corridor greenway as wildlife habitat and movement corridor.

Action A: Employ Wildlife-Friendly Landscaping

The rivers and surrounding wetlands offer important habitat areas, including some for rare and endangered species. A greenway along the river can help keep these corridors open for shared use by humans and other species. This can be facilitated by ensuring that landscaping placed in these corridors as they are modified features context-appropriate native landscaping and the removal of any invasive species that may currently be present.

¹ Born Learning Trails provide young children with an opportunity to get active, have fun and boost language and literacy skills. The "trails" feature age-appropriate, simple-to-construct activities that can be set up outdoors or in, <http://www.unitedway.org/pages/kids-get-fit-cac-bornlearning>.

Action B: Ensure Conservation Commission Involved In Development Review Process

The Conservation Commission of the city, as with all municipalities, is in place to review development proposals that are within specified distances from protected natural features and habitats such as floodplains, wetlands, and waterways. The city will work to ensure that all proposals that should come before the Conservation Commission do so. Supporting activities could include better GIS capacity to map parcels and natural features for reference, flow-charts and process sheets to help volunteer board members, and periodic all boards meetings to improve communications flows and identify and address issues or challenges in a gradual and timely manner.

GOAL OSR 3: PROMOTE YEAR-ROUND HEALTHY LIVING AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLES FOR ALL AGES

Policy OSR 3.1: Promote healthy active living within the community.

Action A: Increase Healthy Activity in City's School System

Support Northern Berkshire Community Coalition's Mass in Motion program efforts to incorporate outdoor activity into the school day in North Adams schools.

Action B: Establish Network of Walking Routes and Trails

Walking and running are two of the most popular recreational activities of local residents. The city will work to establish varied, safe and accessible options for all residents and abilities. A strong urban walking network, in collaboration with the Mass in Motion program will have positive implications for community health and wellness as well as local economic development. In order to create a culture of year-round outside activity, these routes will need to be a high-priority for snow clearing and regular street cleaning.

Action C: Make More Healthy Heart Trails Locally

The Healthy Heart Trails Program of the Department of Conservation and Recreation designated 70 trails across the state with the aim of promoting increased daily exercise. These trails are identified by a green heart symbol (see example, below), measure approximately 1.5 miles or less in length, and are easy to moderate in activity level. Currently the only designated Heart Healthy trail in the city is the Elder Trail in Natural Bridge State Park, although Ashuwillticook Rail Trail is also designated and so will count as a second trail as it is extended north from Adams. While the state may not designate any further trails, the city could develop a more local system using the same concept and similar signs.

Action D: Mayor's Fitness Challenge

Consider instituting an annual Mayor's Fitness Challenge. This type of program should tie into the existing recreational system, utilizing different sites and facilities. See the call-out box, right, for information about Mayor's Challenges in other communities.

MAYOR'S FITNESS CHALLENGE

Communities across the country have created a Mayor's Fitness Challenge, an event centering around healthy eating, improving cardiovascular and muscular health, and identifying healthy options in the community.

Program features include a length of 2-3 months, pre- and post-challenge health screenings, free exercise and lifestyle classes, and prizes at the event's end. Entrance fees range in cost, and there are usually special programs for youth and seniors. Program partners may include the YMCA, private gyms, news outlets, medical service providers, insurance companies, health care plans and local restaurants. Gardening can be an additional focus, promoting it as an activity combining healthy exercise and eating; one program held a gardening demonstration in the kick-off week and culminated the challenge event at the first Farmer's Market of the season.

Most Mayors initiate the challenge by making their own pledge to exercise a certain number of times in a week and make healthy eating choices.

GOAL OSR 4: RESPECT THE CITY'S PLACE WITHIN IMPORTANT HABITAT AREAS BY PROVIDING WILDLIFE CORRIDORS AND CONNECTIONS TO SUPPORT BIODIVERSITY

Policy 4.1: Work with local conservation partners to implement the regional Conservation Framework within the city.

Action A: Refine and Adopt Conservation Framework

The conservation framework of the regional plan was intentionally general with the intent that local communities would each determine a more detailed approach to achieving the overarching intent of the framework. To achieve this, North Adams will convene a 'Conservation and Recreation Roundtable' comprised of local boards and commissions involved in aspects of conservation and recreation. This should include representatives from the Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, Planning Board, Community Development Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Redevelopment Authority, and the Parks and Recreation Commission. This group should take part in reviewing the proposed framework making recommendations on its final form and implementation steps.

Action B: Educate Landowners on Conservation Options

Work with conservation partners active in the North Adams area, such as Berkshire Natural Resources Council and the Hoosic River Watershed Association, to communicate potential conservation options to landowners. This could include land donation or conservation easements, prioritizing those lands identified as important to wildlife, water quality, and community aesthetics.

Policy OSR 4.2: Develop appropriate tools and practices to support wildlife-friendly development, prioritizing important habitat areas as identified within the Conservation Framework.

Action A: Facilitate Safe Wildlife Movement Across Route 2

The Route 2 corridor west of downtown represents a strip of developed land between two large expanses of open lands offering important habitats. The river runs parallel to Route 2, providing an east-west movement channel, but north-south movement is more challenging due to the road and adjacent development. The city should work with Mass DOT to employ wildlife crossing best practices. The local organization Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT) may be a strong partner in these efforts.

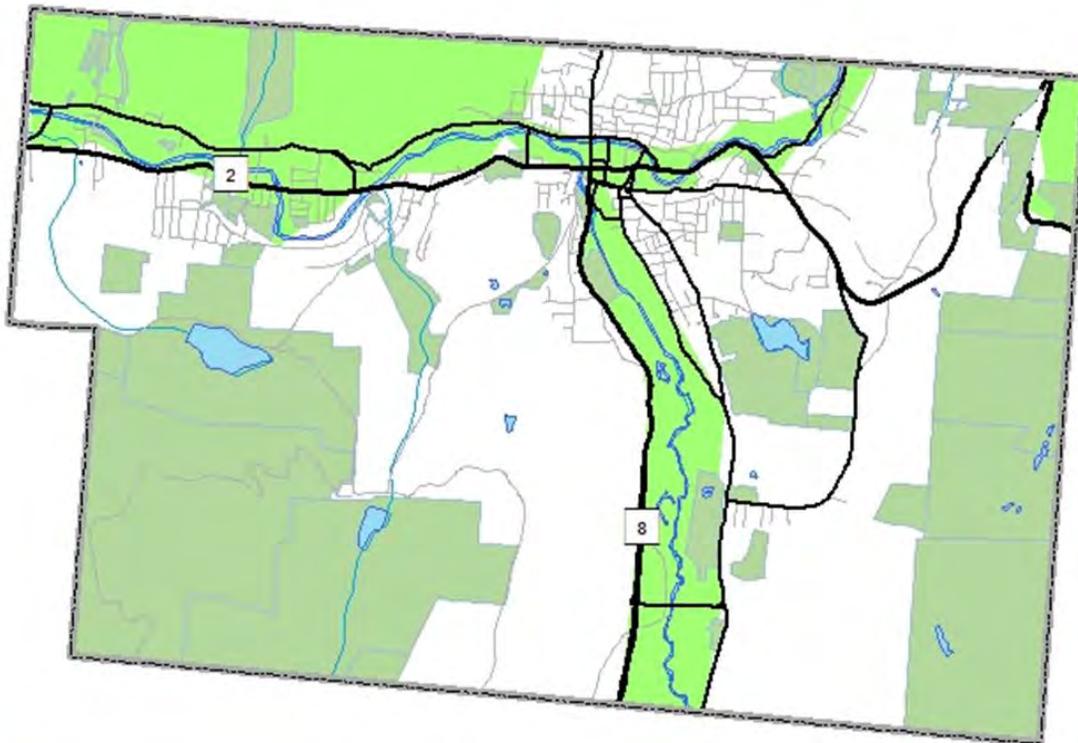
GOAL OSR 5: CONTINUOUSLY WORK TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND INTEGRITY OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN AND AROUND THE CITY

Policy OSR 5.1: Improve the data environment to inform decision-making around environmental quality and natural resources.

Action A: Advocate for and Support a Hoosic Watershed Rare Species Survey

A detailed survey of rare species in the Housatonic River watershed was recently completed through collaboration between the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) and the state Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program. The City should work with surrounding municipalities and the Hoosic River Watershed Association (HoorWA) to solicit the state for a more detailed study for the northern portions of the county. Such survey work is critical to having a better understanding of what species are present where to inform conservation and maintenance activities to support biodiversity.

Figure 6: Conservation Framework



- Conservation Framework:** The Conservation Framework was developed as part of the new regional plan, Sustainable Berkshires, using BioMap, CAPS map data, and local knowledge and input. The areas shown in bright green on the Conservation Framework reflect lands that have significant value as natural habitat. In the city, upland habitats are predominantly protected by Clarksburg State Forest, Savoy Mountain State Forest and Mount Greylock State Reservation. Lowland habitats, including the river and its floodway, are not as well protected. This map therefore expresses the city's interest in seeing the lands in bright green either protected or developed in an environmentally sensitive manner. This could include measures to reduce runoff, nativescaping, and maintaining connections for wildlife movement. A complete description of the conservation framework and the data that informed its creation is included in the Conservation and Recreation Element of the regional plan.

See Map 6 in Appendix C for a full size map of the conservation framework with parcels.

Action B: Develop Comprehensive Understanding of Municipal Conservation Issues

Explore ways the city's public works department can improve their procedures and facilities to ensure a high level of protection for resource areas. This might include upgrading culverts for improved stream crossings, ensuring safe removal of snow away from water sources, and properly managing hazardous materials.

Action C: Continue Water Quality Analysis and Pollution Reduction Strategies

Recent efforts of MCLA and the Hoosic River Watershed Association to track bacteria and other pollutants in the river helped to identify sources of pollution in the waterway. The city supports the continuation of these data gathering efforts and will facilitate efforts to address contamination sources as they are determined.

Action D: Create and Maintain Comprehensive Brownfield Site Inventory

The City sits on the committee for the Berkshire Brownfields Program operated out of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. In 2013, the program will develop its first comprehensive brownfield site inventory to better access and direct appropriate funds to address brownfield concerns. This includes determining if contamination is present and remediating any environmental concerns if found. The city can support this inventory creation, and then work to keep a current list of properties within its boundaries to continue advocating for its sites to access brownfield program resources.

Policy OSR 5.2: Protect and enhance the water quality of rivers and lakes throughout the city.

Action A: Work with Army Corps of Engineers and other River Partners to Improve Water and Habitat Conditions in Chutes

The southern, northern and main branches of the Hoosic River within North Adams currently provide or have historically provided cold water habitat, which has significant ecological as well as social and economic implications for the community and region. The City of North Adams should partner with the Army Corps of Engineers (who have jurisdiction over the chutes), the Hoosic River Revival organization, the Hoosic River Watershed Association, and other habitat supporting organizations to establish methods for mitigating in these water and habitat quality issues.

Action B: Implement Urban Tree Program along River

Shading provided to rivers from trees is one important tool for controlling water temperatures and thermal pollution impacts. The City should work with, or provide incentive for, community-based groups to plant appropriate tree species along the river to begin greening the river way and creating shade. Consideration should be given to the requirements for planting as required by the Army Corps of Engineers. If possible, collaborate with the Corps to determine the most advantageous locations for tree planting and redefine agreements as necessary.

Action C: Address Dams and Other Sources of Stream Fragmentation

Preserve and recreate coldwater habitats for Eastern Brook Trout and other species. The greatest disturbance to brook trout habitat in the region is stream fragmentation caused by dams, which prohibit movement of fish and other aquatic organisms. The city will work to inventory its dams and determine which ones can and should be removed, and which should be reengineered to reduce impacts on water flow and habitat while maintaining flood control.

Action D: Engage in Local Education About Non-point Source Pollution

Engage in local and regional efforts to educate residents and businesses about sources and mitigation methods of non-point source pollution. Such sources may include fertilizer and other agricultural and lawn treatments, urban pollution runoff such as oil and gas, bacteria and nutrients from septic and treatment facilities, and sediment from improper protections during construction and other disturbances.



Rain gardens (far left) are attractive ways to help capture runoff and absorb it on site, reducing the flow volumes infrastructure like the flood chutes need to be able to manage in a storm event. Another homeowner option is to use a rain barrel (near left) to capture water from downspouts and use for use later watering plants.

Action E: Offer Programs and Incentives for Property-Owner Runoff Reduction

The single largest problem for surface water quality in the city and region is the impact of stormwater runoff into waterways. This flushes pollutants into the water from yards, farms, and pavement. The topography of the city means that runoff can be particularly fast-moving, the reason the flood chutes were constructed in the first place. Runoff can be reduced or slowed through a number of easy tools and techniques such as rain gardens (left) and rain barrels (right). Programs such as rain garden workshops in partnership with local greenhouses or MCLA can help expand their use in local neighborhoods. Rain barrels, which capture water from roofs that would otherwise flow into the streets from downspouts, can be sold to residents at a discounted cost as a means of increasing use. In addition, municipal programs to improve water quality include oil recycling to offer an alternative to allowing it into the sewer system, composting to reduce and reuse waste materials, and encouraging use of porous pavement to help water infiltrate on site.

GOAL OSR 6: BROADEN RANGE OF TOOLS AND PARTNERS TO ACHIEVE EFFICIENT RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT.

Policy OSR 6.1: Diversify funding and stewardship resources to benefit open space and recreation amenities.

Action A: Adopt Community Preservation Act

Engage in a community discussion, with comprehensive education, about adopting the Community Preservation Act locally. This adoption can provide a consistent funding stream for acquisition and improvement of open space in addition to historic preservation and affordable housing.

Action B: Pursue Corporate Sponsorship Arrangements

While they remain the City's responsibility, private organizations are taking on a renewed role of corporate community stewardship. Local banks, large employers, and major corporate entities with sites in the city are all potential partners to help sponsor parks and recreation improvements. This can include financial contributions as well as day-of-service events where corporate employees volunteer their labor for a day on a specific project.

Action C: Gradually and Consistently Pursue Grants to Implement Improvements

There are a number of state and other grants to help municipalities maintain and improve their recreation facilities. The City will work to consistently apply each year to successfully implement improvements as outlined in the OSRP.

Action D: Encourage Community Members to Adopt a Park or Trail

Encourage community groups, area businesses, and general residents to adopt a park or trail to perform general maintenance and monitoring. Connect this effort to the community volunteer day.

Action E: Engage Local Youth to Care for their Recreation Facilities

Provide opportunities specifically for youth to take ownership and greater use of their local recreational facilities. Work with the Youth Commission, Berkshire Natural Resource Council, Mass in Motion, the school system's service learning program and other groups to develop youth-oriented service programs. A model program may be "Greenagers" in Great Barrington. Such programs should include opportunities to care for the park and recreation system, experience more of the recreation options in North Adams, and provide opportunity for greater input about the future of parks, recreational facilities and natural sites.

Policy OSR 6.2: Coordinate maintenance to maximize impact of scarce resources.

Action A: Coordinated Recreational Resource Management

Combine priorities across disciplines and jurisdictions wherever possible. For example, preservation and conservation concerns are combined in heritage landscape conservation. Also consider incorporation of needed community facilities. Pooling resources and priorities will enable greater funding potential and encourage better engagement of the community in these efforts.

Action B: Identify and Promote Financial Benefits for Private Owners

Develop a toolkit for all types of owners and users providing clear information about funding sources and resources to enable conservation efforts, such as tax benefits for conservation restrictions.

5 HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

The city's neighborhoods range from quiet wooded spots to bustling downtown environments, all within a relatively small geographic area. Overall, topography has helped the city keep a very condensed development footprint, offering many walkable areas. The following chapter contains the goals, policies and actions the city will take to grow and strengthen its neighborhoods to meet the future vision for the city and needs of its current and future residents.

GOALS, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

GOAL HN 1: PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY HOUSING OPTIONS THAT MEET A VARIETY OF NEEDS AND LIFESTYLES

Policy HN 1.1: Monitor housing supply and demand to proactively plan to meet needs.

Action A: Maintain Up-to-Date Housing Needs Assessment

The housing needs assessment works to anticipate housing demand now and in the future as demographics change or previously unmet needs are identified to ensure the city's housing is best meeting the current and future needs of its population.

Action B: Create a Municipal Affordable Housing Committee

While the city has a housing authority, it does not have an affordable housing committee to track needs and work with a variety of public and private partners to facilitate the addition or improvement of housing units to better meet needs. They can also take a lead role in fundraising and doing some of the ground work to identify and secure sites (e.g., land banking) for future housing needs.

Policy HN 1.2: Support public, private and individual reinvestment into housing and neighborhood conditions.

Action A: Support Non-profit Housing Renovation Program Activity

Non-profits can accept properties for renovation and either renting or resale. One program in Raleigh, NC called *Builders of Hope* accepts, or purchases for a low cost, older homes and performs a green gut rehabilitation of the interior to remove high costs to new owners for system repairs and upgrades while also removing potential health hazards like lead and asbestos. This model can help get market rate stock back up to quality after years of deferred maintenance and decay, while still keeping the exterior historic integrity in place and avoiding unnecessary demolition.

Action B: Update the Mill Revitalization District to Increase Flexibility

The city has added mill revitalization district language into its existing industrial districts as a special permit activity. The uses listed are fairly narrow in focus and should be revisited to add other uses such as retail, agriculture, or other options to meet a wider range of mill sites and reuse potential.



(Left) Three examples of mixed-income residential developments, more attractive and inclusive housing model than traditional all low-income housing developments (like the "high rise" on Ashland Street, below). Some of the more modern designs build on the precedent set by the MCLA Science and Innovation building (above).



Policy HN 1.3: Transition affordable housing stock to a mixed-income model.***Action A: Prioritize Sites for New Mixed-Income Construction or Renovation***

New sites, either through demolition or reuse (such as a vacant mill site) offer opportunities to add new housing units that meet the needs of specific demographics. This could include young professionals, artists, or seniors. Either way, while the city has a relatively high supply of affordable housing both individually and within the region, there is still unmet need and specific quality concerns related to needing more units. New developments should be mixed income to offer a more integrated community.

Action B: As Housing Authority Complexes Age, Rethink Their Shape, Location, and Function

Much of the affordable housing in the city is developed as “projects” concentrated areas of subsidized units physically removed from surrounding neighborhoods and lacking transportation connections and socially isolated through stigma. These environments dampen opportunities offered to residents and can result in higher incidence of crime. Modern practice has gotten away from the “project” concept in favor of mixed-income developments that de-concentrate poverty, remove stigma, and yield better outcomes for low-income residents. As public housing ages and requires significant investment and upgrades, the city and Housing Authority should explore options to demolish and rebuild units in a more modern, energy efficient, and mixed income format.

GOAL HN 2: ADDRESS BLIGHT AND IMPROVE PROPERTY VALUES**Policy HN 2.1: Empower neighborhoods and individuals to combat blight and disrepair conditions.*****Action A: Offer Creative Programs to Support Owner Action***

Create programs such as free “rent-a-tool” programs, paint drop-off pick up sites, volunteer project teams or help-a-neighbor programs to help elderly or lower-income property owners access the resources they need to bring their property into compliance or otherwise maintain their properties.

Action B: Continue City Cleanup Days

Continue city cleanup days to target larger issues of trash buildup on vacant lots and open space areas.

See also: Local Food and Health chapter.

Policy HN 2.2: Improve identification and enforcement procedures for problem properties.***Action A: Neighborhood Code Violation Monitors***

Neighborhood volunteers are trained to identify code violations and report them to city personnel. This helps keep more eyes on the street to find and report issues to free up some staff time.

Action B: Strengthen and Enhance Vacant or Foreclosed Property Ordinance

The goal of the ordinance is to achieve compliance so that the City is better able to manage and respond to concerns about vacant or foreclosed properties. Similar ordinances have been adopted in Springfield, Boston, Lawrence, Lowell, Methuen, and Albany, New York.

Under the ordinance, the maintenance of vacant or foreclosed residential properties would require the owners to:

- Register their property with the City at a cost (e.g.\$100 per year);
- Provide the owner’s name and mailing address (which cannot be a P.O. Box) so that the City has a good address for service of legal notices;
- Identify as part of the registration (and post on the property) the 24-hour contact name, number, and address for a local property manager (either a person or company) who is located within 30 miles of the property; and
- Maintain the property on a weekly basis including keeping it secured.

The ordinance also requires that a property be registered as soon as a foreclosing process commences (with the delivery of a mortgagee's notice of intent to foreclose). The ordinance defines a vacant property as one that has not been legally occupied for 60 days or more and/or a property that is not occupied and not properly maintained or secured. Failure to comply with the registration requirement, or failure to maintain a registered property, can result in fines (e.g., up to \$300 per week) for non-compliance.

Action C: Use GIS to Track Geography of Code Violations and Police Calls

As the City grows its GIS capability, efforts should be made to use addresses to track patterns of code violations and police calls to help identify and refine target areas. The use of police calls in addition to the code violation information can help draw the link between vacant and blighted properties and squatting or illegal activities that may gravitate to problem areas and vacancies. This can further help prioritize interventions where there is a social/safety and service impact as well as physical/aesthetic.

Policy HN 2.3: Create progressive system to bring tax lien and delinquent properties back into productive use.

Action A: Maintain Property Inventory

The City should work to be proactive about identifying and tracking its tax lien properties to understand and be able to communicate the economic impact of those properties, view them on a map in relation to other criteria or target areas to help set priorities for intervention activities, and to generally help guide a comprehensive strategy to dealing with them.

Action B: Streamline Receivership

The city has several options for receivership; the preferred option should be evaluated, selected, and communicated so that there is an organized method for pulling tax lien properties back into use.

Action C: Develop Reuse Strategy to Help Target Efforts

The city can build on the work of the plan and, with ongoing input from residents and other stakeholders, identify reuse options for specific areas. This could include preservation of single-family units, rental units, and transition of buildings to another use or demolition to allow for redevelopment or the creation of supportive spaces (e.g., parking) for adjacent properties.

Policy HN 2.4: Work with landlords to maintain their properties.

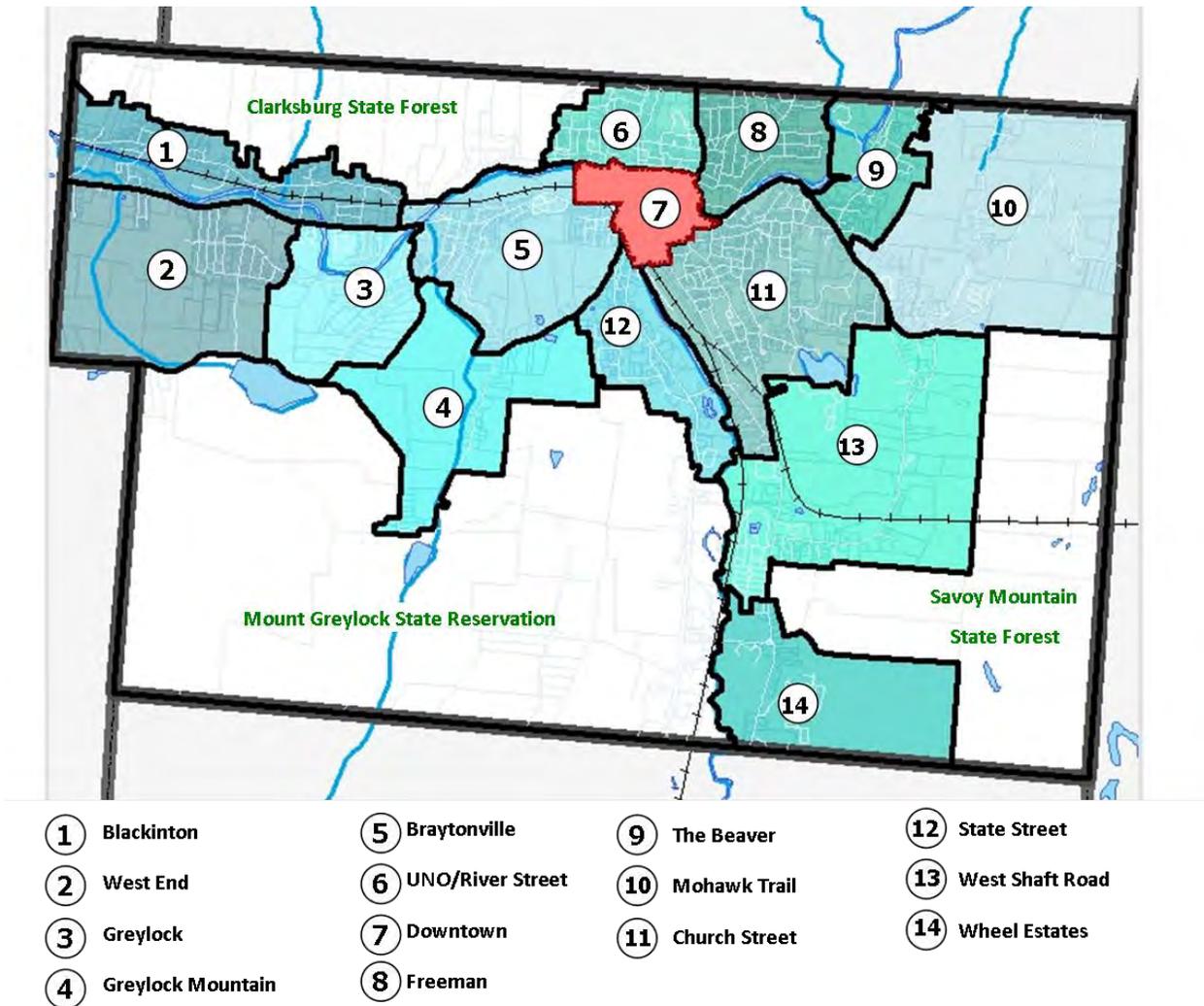
Action A: Rental Property Registration and Inspection

Require landlords to register all rental units with the City. The City can inspect units prior to occupancy to ensure they are up to building and health code standards. The City can also offer incentives for landlords who have a track record of no findings such as reduced inspection fees and more time between inspections. In the case of landlords with repeated violations, the timeframe can be shortened. Once notified a unit is not up to code, landlords have a timeframe to bring the unit back into compliance before fines are issued.

Action B: Create Meaningful Incentives and Penalties to Support Action

Review and revise code enforcement penalties, with a focus on compounded penalties for inaction.

Figure 7: North Adams Neighborhoods



GOAL HN 3: SUPPORT STRONG COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS WITHIN NEIGHBORHOODS

Policy HN3.1: Collaborate to reduce crime in neighborhoods.

Action A: Neighborhood Watch

Work with interested neighborhoods to start a neighborhood watch program and install street signs to help make crime awareness more visible.

Action B: Property Security Trainings

Partner with private business to create a grant-based community safety program that can educate owners and renters about how to make their homes more secure and less attractive to thieves. This could include a short class or demo and then free or reduced cost items such as safety lights, locks, window locks, etc.

Action C: Neighborhood Beat Officers

Work to create stronger alignment between patrol officers and neighborhoods. In urban neighborhoods, this could include some bike or walking patrol. In more dispersed neighborhoods, this could simply be making sure all areas are patrolled with a certain frequency.

Action D: Prioritize Safety Lighting Needs

Work with neighbors to identify areas where dark spots create a sense of insecurity or potential danger from poor visibility.

Policy HN 3.2: Support neighborhood groups and neighborhood activities.

Action A: Create a Standing Neighborhoods Committee

Create a city neighborhoods committee with representatives from each neighborhood and relevant city department staff to have a clear and ongoing means of communication between neighborhoods and the city.

Action B: Provide Annual Support for Community-Driven Neighborhood Initiatives

Ensure that annual city grants include competitive grants for neighborhoods to support special projects or community events such as a neighborhood block party.

Policy HN 3.3: Work to create stronger physical and social connections between affordable housing projects and surrounding neighborhoods.

Action A: Bike Path and Walking Connections

Prioritize safe routes between current affordable housing developments and jobs and essential services. This could include building the planned bike path through the Barbour Street connection, sidewalk improvements along Route 2, and maintenance enforcement to ensure those routes stay open year-round.

Action B: Continue to Support Programs and Efforts to Create Broader Concept of Neighborhood

For several years, “neighborhoods” in the city referred to affordable housing developments. The new boundaries delineate neighborhoods, of which the developments are one part. This will be supported by creating opportunities for interaction between neighbors of these larger areas, including clean-ups, neighborhood watch, and block parties.

Policy HN 3.4: Ensure each neighborhood has quality local recreation options and easy connections to city or regional amenities.

Action A: Focus Project Priorities on Increasing Variety and Balancing Supply of Recreation Options Across Neighborhoods

Develop a framework for monitoring and prioritizing community recreation options across neighborhoods. This could include classifying types (trails, bike path, pocket parks, community parks, etc.) and inventorying for each neighborhood. Condition issues and new projects could then be considered against this list to focus on adding options and ensuring that those options are improving level of service to each neighborhood in a way that is context and population appropriate (supply versus demand but also age demographics of different portions of the city).

See also: Open Space and Recreation chapter and the City’s Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP).

6

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The city of North Adams has many historic structures and neighborhoods which tell the story of our community's heritage. The city's historic fabric is laced with church steeples, industrial buildings, and compact neighborhoods. While significant aspects of North Adams' physical history were lost to Urban Renewal and disinvestment, many layers of history remain which will benefit from community stewardship.

In many instances, historic structures and cultural features of the community have been shown to have economic benefit. During the past two decades, the city has supported and encouraged the adaptive reuse of historic mills for artist lofts and galleries, a museum, business incubator space, and a community youth center. The City aims to continue working with property owners and partners in the community, to be mindful of preserving the structures, landscapes and other aspects of the city's historic fabric.



Related Maps

Map 7: Historic and Cultural Resources

Located in Appendix C

GOALS, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

GOAL HP 1: PROVIDE THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION WITH THE SUPPORT AND RESOURCES NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THE CITY'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOALS

The North Adams Historical Commission is the group of residents who work on behalf of the city to identify, protect, and highlight important historic resources. They do this through the historic survey and nomination process, providing comments about certain development projects, and by helping with broad engagement of residents and visitors in appreciating historic sites or districts. This group, however, sometimes works in relative isolation from other city processes and with little to no resources to support their volunteer work. Moving forward, the city will work to integrate historic preservation and the Historical Commission into the work, trainings, and awareness of related boards and departments such as the tourism office, public works department, and planning and zoning boards. It will also better support the work of the Historical Commission as it relates to the successful implementation of the goals and policies of this comprehensive plan.

Policy HP 1.1: Maintain and expand historic inventory and listing activity.

Historic resource inventories are the foundation of preservation planning for any community. Only after resources have been identified can they be prioritized, listed, and protected through a variety of means. The city will work to update, expand and make widely available inventory and survey information by pursuing the following actions.

Action A: Bring All Existing Surveys Up-to-Date

The city has numerous surveys completed for historic sites, most of which were completed in the mid-1980s. While there is no exact expiration, thirty years is almost certainly too far out-of-date. It is considered good practice to update the inventories to capture changing conditions such as modifications, demolitions, or additional properties that would have become age-eligible for surveys. The North Adams Historical Commission has is conducting survey updates. This work should continue to be supported.

Action B: Identify and Prioritize Additional Survey Areas or Resource Types

The city has many areas that likely have historic properties which have never been surveyed. This includes many neighborhoods or sites from the turn of the last century as well as post-WWII era construction which may now be eligible for historic listing.



Natural bridge State Park (left) and MASS MoCA (right) are both great examples of how historic resources can become quality of life amenities and tourism draws to increase economic activity.

Action C: Identify Ongoing Revenue Sources to Fund Survey Work

Identify and pursue resources to support new and updated survey work on an annual or biennial basis. This should include pursuing grants such as the Mass Historical Commission matching grant for survey work, among others, to defray the cost. In the recent past it has been challenging to provide required matching funds for state grants to conduct inventories; a consistent funding source for this activity will ensure it proceeds on a regular basis.

Action D: Make Historic Inventories Available Online

Support the North Adams Historical Commission's efforts to make inventories available electronically. This will make information readily accessible to property owners and community members. A lack of understanding about the significance of a property may lead to the loss of its integrity and value.

Action E: Map Historic Resources

Incorporate inventory information into city Geographic Information Systems (GIS) as that capability is developed. Mapping available information can help plan for historic resources in a comprehensive manner, by providing tools to identify under-recognized neighborhoods or types of buildings, or areas which are most in need of updated inventories.

Action F: Pursue Regional Survey Partnerships

Collaborate with other local historical commissions or historical societies to identify multi-jurisdictional or regional survey needs and jointly pursue survey applications. Such efforts can help streamline the process to hire consultants, reduce cost, and allow the city to link and discuss resources by type across municipal boundaries. This broader thinking can help support the area's heritage tourism development.

Policy HP 1.2: Integrate the Historical Commission into larger city government functions and decision-making.

The reuse, modification, and maintenance of historic properties and landscapes in the city involves and impacts the work of numerous agencies, departments, boards, and commissions. The city will work to strengthen channels of communication across all impacted parties and cultivate a common preservation ethic in the city.

Action A: Increase the Capacity of the North Adams Historical Commission

Ensure that commission appointments include persons with appropriate skills and professional experiences including architects, restoration contractors, historians, archivists, and also overlapping membership with the North Adams Historical Society, Inc. The commission's most important goal is the preservation of the community's historic places. The purpose of a local historical commission is to work toward this goal by planning and implementing programs for the identification, evaluation, and protection of its community's historical resources.

Allocate municipal staff time to support appropriate efforts of the North Adams Historical Commission. Depending on the specific needs of the Commission, the Office of Community Development or the Building Department can provide support. Professional assistance and internal coordination, and information sharing among municipal departments can help advance the work of the Commission in an efficient manner. This may require in-house education on linking and supporting efforts.

Action B: Historic Preservation Tools and Techniques Education and Outreach

Develop targeted education for the public and municipal leaders about measures for protection of historic resources. Introduction of demolition delay, local historic districts and other protective measures will certainly require multiple levels of education. Any efforts should underscore the broad historic resources and the benefits of preservation.

GOAL HP 2: RETAIN AND MAINTAIN THE HISTORIC FABRIC OF THE CITY TO THE GREATEST EXTENT FEASIBLE

The protection, promotion and enhancement of the physical historic and cultural resources throughout the city require a coordinated effort. The following are policies and actions which address the needs and opportunities to maintain the city's existing historic fabric.

Policy HP 2.1: Implement municipal bylaws and policies to protect historic resources from irrevocable harm.

There are a number of historic preservation bylaws and municipal practices which can be employed to help retain the historic fabric over time. A number of these should be considered as the city moves forward to revise its zoning ordinances.

Action A: Adopt a Demolition Delay Bylaw

Adopt a strong demolition delay bylaw for historically-significant structures in order to investigate and promote options for reuse prior to removal. The elimination of significant properties can cause irrevocable harm, as was evidenced during the period of Urban Renewal. Instituting a review process will provide opportunity to more comprehensively understand a building's contributions to the city and neighborhood and investigate alternatives to demolition. *Note: During the course of this plan's development, the City of North Adams enacted a 12 month Demolition Delay bylaw as an early implementation step. The City will need to continue education about Demolition Delay and its significance in historic preservation.*

Action B: Adopt an Affirmative Maintenance Bylaw

Reduce loss through demolition by neglect. When owners fail to maintain their property, the neighborhood, residents, and property values suffer. Support the city's current efforts to establish a type of affirmative maintenance bylaw to provide local regulatory authority over threatened buildings, including historically-significant ones, and mandate that owners take necessary actions toward stabilization. An affirmative maintenance bylaw provides local regulatory authorities with the ability to identify threatened buildings and have owners take necessary actions to stabilize and secure a building. Lowell, Massachusetts has an active affirmative maintenance bylaw. These can be tailored to specific districts or neighborhoods.

Action C: Identify Buildings with Maintenance Concerns Early

Encourage the North Adams Historical Commission to work with the Building Department to facilitate identification of early code violations in historic properties, and particularly in historic districts. Flagging sites of concern as early as possible may slow or stop the harmful process of neglect. Education and financing may be necessary to incentivize improvements.

Action D: Identify Priority Areas to be Protected through a Local Historic District

The strongest tool for preserving historic properties and districts is a local historic district. Local historic districts can protect the character of important areas through the use of design guidelines that seek to foster preservation and ensure compatible infill development projects. These can be applied to both residential and commercial areas, such as traditional Main Street downtowns.

Action E: Identify Priority Areas to be Protected through Architectural Preservation Districts, aka Neighborhood Conservation Districts

Less rigorous than a local historic district, a Neighborhood Conservation District establishes project review on additions, major alterations, demolition and new construction, for properties within a designated district. The ultimate goal of such a district is to ensure that defining characteristics of the neighborhood remain while allowing for sensitive change and development. A neighborhood conservation district offers greater range and flexibility than a locally designated historic district. They can be administered not just by historic preservation officials, but also planning or zoning personnel.

Policy HP 2.2: Develop and make available financial incentives supporting historic property reinvestment in the city.

Developing financial assistance mechanisms, particularly for private landowners, has been noted as a strong desire and need in the community. Though some private owners may recognize the significance of their historic properties, attaining the financial resources for their maintenance is challenging for many.

Action A: Establish a Revolving Loan Fund

Support current regional efforts to establish a Revolving Loan Fund for privately owned historic properties. Investigate the potential to establish a North Adams specific fund and consider expanding to cultural institutions and locally-owned commercial properties. Such an option would provide a direct funding source at low- or no-interest to encourage historic building reinvestment projects, facilitate their financing, and reduce the overall project cost.

Key Tools and Techniques

Two key tools municipalities can pursue are Demolition Delay and Local Historic Districts. The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) is the State Historic Preservation Office, which recommends that at a minimum, municipalities have a Demolition Delay ordinance to protect the most vulnerable historic assets. A local historic district is probably the strongest tool a community can enact for historic preservation; often local historic districts are confused with National Register Districts. The differences are described below.

Demolition Delay – *The Details*

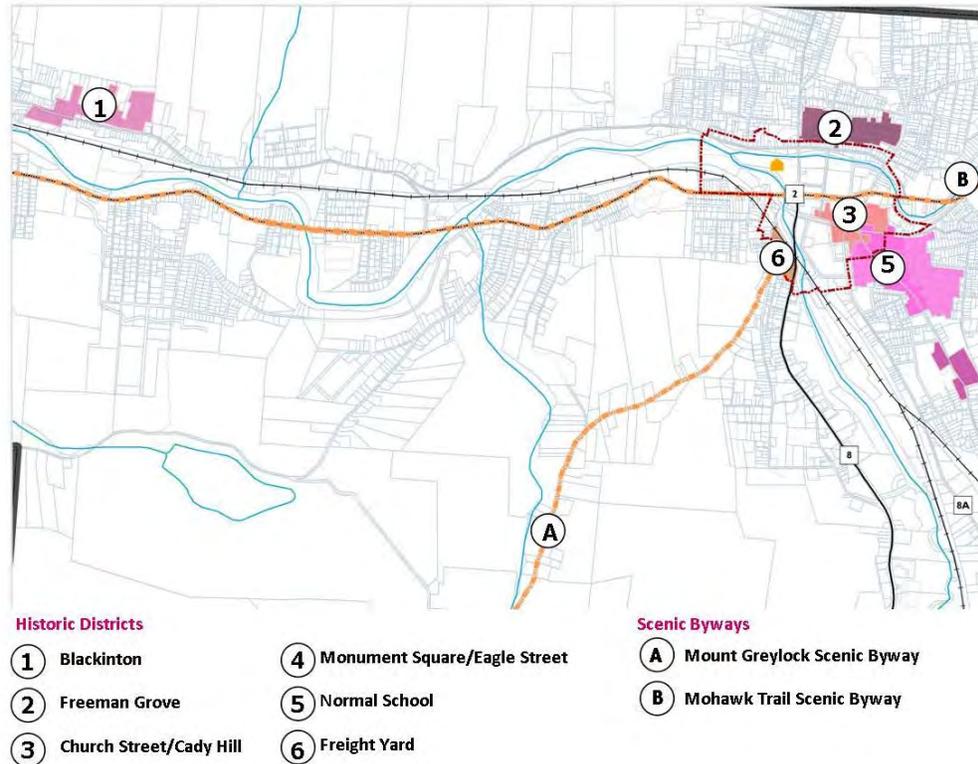
North Adams has a demolition delay bylaw, with a delay of twelve months. When a municipality has a Demolition Delay ordinance in place, it creates an opportunity to find alternative solutions to demolition. For example, in some places where Demolition Delay exists, property owners did not understand the building’s historical significance and importance to the community until their plans for demolition were publicly reviewed. During the delay period, the building owner, historical commission members, and appropriate municipal officials can explore opportunities to preserve or move the threatened building. A Demolition Delay ordinance should be specially tailored to the community. Established as a general ordinance requiring a simple majority vote of the City Council, it can be tailor-made to suit the municipality’s specific needs and wishes. The length of delay typically ranges from 6-12 months. The ordinance may apply to buildings of a certain age, those that are listed on the state or national historic register, or a combination of requirements. The delay is enacted if the Local Historical Commission determines that the building is preferably preserved. The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) recommends an age-based requirement, in order to ensure comprehensive application, and a delay of at least 12 months.

Local Historic Districts and National Register Districts – *What’s the Difference?*

In general, local historic districts are more effective at preventing inappropriate changes than National Register Districts. Local historic districts can protect the character of important areas through the use of design guidelines that seek to foster preservation and ensure compatible infill development projects. These can be applied to both residential and commercial areas, such as traditional Main Street downtowns.

National Register District		Local Historic District
900+ (North Adams has 6)	# in Massachusetts	200+ (North Adams has 0)
Federal designation process through the MHC. Won't pass if majority of property owners object.	Establishment	Specific steps outlined in MGL Ch. 40C; require 2/3 majority of City Council vote.
Massachusetts Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)	Oversight	Local Historic District Commission
No state or federal involvement in the project (\$ or permitting) = no protections or limitations changes.	Property rights	Reviews exterior architectural changes visible from a public way for respect to historic character of district.
Promotion and appreciation of architectural heritage; minimal protections. Potential tax benefits for income-producing properties.	Benefits	LHD's have saved historic structures, neighborhoods and villages from inappropriate alterations and demolition.

Figure 8: Historic Districts and Scenic Byways in and Around Downtown



See also, Map 7 for a complete citywide map of historic and cultural resources.

GOAL HP 3: MAXIMIZE THE BENEFITS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION TO THE CITY'S ECONOMY

The protection, reuse, and promotion of the city's historic resources can positively contribute to the local economy. Zoning and tourism strategies which acknowledge and enhance historic resources should contribute to economic development. These efforts will rely on partnerships with the North Adams Historical Society, Inc., Office of Tourism, Office of Community Development, the North Adams Historical Commission, Berkshire Cultural Resource Center, and organizations and non-profits.

Policy HP 3.1: Promote and facilitate the sensitive and robust reuse of historic residential, commercial and industrial properties throughout the city.

The city's zoning code is in need of a comprehensive reiteration. Amendments have been made regularly to address immediate needs without the opportunity to holistically evaluate how effective or appropriate the zoning bylaws are. Conflicts exist where there is a mismatch between current zoning and development which occurred prior to that zoning. Ensure that historic preservation is a consideration in the development of updated zoning.

Action A: Include Up Zoning and Down Zoning in a Comprehensive Zoning Rewrite

A comprehensive zoning rewrite should consider the uses and required parcel dimensions of each zoning district in order to protect historic patterns and properties, as well as to allow for uses which contribute to more vibrant and active neighborhoods. The zoning processes are called up zoning and down zoning. See the call-out box, right, for more information on this process.

Policy HP 3.2: Integrate historic tourism into the city's overall culture and tourism strategy.

Tourism can be for both the out-of-towner and the local resident – tourism activities in North Adams should support both user groups. There are many diverse offerings and organizations in the city that are engaged in cultural activities attractive to tourists. However, there is a lack of coordination and support which makes it difficult to sustain these efforts.

Action A: Make the Historic Fabric of North Adams Part of a Wayfinding Campaign

Develop a wayfinding campaign throughout the city, incorporating attractions such as MASS MoCA which helps to tell the story of North Adams' industrial heritage to its present-day cultural development. Underscoring the important roles historic properties play in defining the character of North Adams is vital in this effort to help visitors navigate the city in a meaningful way and to encourage residents to experience their community more profoundly.

Action B: Maintain and Enhance a Historical Museum

The North Adams Historical Society, Inc. currently maintains the North Adams Museum of History and Science at the Western Gateway Heritage State Park. The city will ensure that a venue for local history remain, and explore ways to expand and enhance its reach. Expansions should include multi-media options such as video stations, digital tour companions, and virtual tours. Continue to promote current and future activities, including Berkshire Scenic Railway's train rides.

Action C: Support Efforts to Designate Downtown North Adams as a Cultural District

Through an act of the State legislature in 2010, the Mass Cultural Council established a process for designating Cultural Districts. The intent of this designation is to strengthen the sense of place, stimulate local economic activity, and improve the personal experience of visitors and residents. The

UP ZONING & DOWN ZONING

These modifications are best implemented following a comprehensive planning process.

Up Zoning: Intensifying uses, decreasing dimensional requirements, allowing-mixed use (i.e. a building with retail, offices and housing) is called up zoning. This can help preserve historic resources if the new zoning requirements more closely align to the historic pattern of the area. Up zoning should permit positive adaptive reuse of buildings (i.e. conversions of large homes to Bed and Breakfasts), and provide for sensitive infill development.

Down Zoning: Modification of a zoning district to encourage less intense use and increasing the dimensional requirements of a parcel are part of down zoning. This approach can be used to protect historically sensitive areas from detracting development.

Implementing Zoning Changes:

Any change to zoning, including increasing or decreasing intensity requires a 2/3 affirmative vote of the City Council, following a report of the planning board and a public hearing.

historic fabric of North Adams contributes significantly to its potential as a Massachusetts Cultural District. This designation will bring attention to the City of North Adams as a tourist destination, rather than one or two individual sites. It will also build a case for applying to grant programs and focusing investment.



The North Adams Public Library, a LEED Silver building, is a shining example of how historic buildings, including civic buildings, can be retrofitted to be energy efficient while retaining the historic integrity of the structure,

Policy HP 3.3: Support preservation and robust use of local landmarks and institutional uses.

The city has a rich inventory of historic landmarks which create interesting spaces. These sites provide settings for local events, and when linked together (i.e. through tours), they can tell the larger story of the city or the region. The city should work to maximize the benefits of having these notable places.

Action A: Develop Zoning to Protect Landmarks and Civic Uses

Develop overlay districts where landmarks are clustered to protect their character-defining attributes and promote active uses in the surrounding areas. Areas such as the juncture of Church, Ashland, Eagle and Main Streets, offer a cluster of historic buildings, landmarks and vistas, which should be protected and enhanced where appropriate.

Action B: Locate Cultural Activities within and around Historic Properties

Encourage the location of cultural activities and events at historic properties (i.e. existing Eagle Street Beach Party); consider relocating popular events to such locations (i.e. Saturday Farmer’s Market). Bringing as much foot traffic to these sites and encouraging residents and visitors to have a positive experience there will help build appreciation and stewardship.

Action C: Call Attention to Lost or Hidden Historically Significant Sites

There are a number of historic sites in North Adams which have been lost to time or development, or are obscured by existing conditions. Calling attention to these sites, such as Monitor Monument, where iron for parts of the Civil War ship, The Monitor, were made, or former Fort Massachusetts, offers additional opportunity to identify what makes North Adams distinctive. In particular, Monitor Park could serve as a linkage between MASS MoCA, downtown, and the Western Gateway Heritage State Park. Directly across the West Main Street from Monitor Park is the Scenic Byway kiosk which could be enhanced and used as a linkage between the sites.

GOAL HP 4: SET HISTORIC PRESERVATION PRACTICE AS A CORNERSTONE FOR AN OVERALL HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS STRATEGY

North Adams has ample historic resources within its boundaries, including homes, commercial buildings, monuments and public spaces. But the city was built for a much larger community, nearly twice its current population. There is an excess of housing, contributing to a high vacancy rate, and more infrastructure to maintain. Economic constraints of the population over recent decades have led to blighted buildings which are now difficult, if not impossible, to bring up to state building code. Residents and city administrators acknowledge these conditions require a balance of reinvestment and relinquishment (ex. demolition) of residential and institutional resources. Engaging in a deliberate process of prioritizing preservation and reinvestment will best utilize funding and protect valuable physical resources.

Policy HP 4.1: Facilitate Homeowner Access to Information on Historic Properties and Preservation Options

Owners of historic homes may be unaware that their property is listed, particularly as ownership changes over time. Additionally, property owners may not be aware of sources of information on how to appropriately care for their home to maintain or even enhance its historic significance. This is especially challenging as new materials for historic renovations are constantly being developed to offer better appearance and performance.

Action A: Promote Publicly Available Information on Historic Properties

Work with the North Adams Historical Commission and the North Adams Historical Society to make information available about historic properties throughout the city. Distributing existing inventory forms and promoting expanded, electronic versions when available will help owners understand, and hopefully protect, the historic value of their properties.

Policy HP 4.2: Promote and facilitate the purchase of and investment in historic properties in foreclosure or owned by the city.

The city has a number of vacant and foreclosed properties within its neighborhoods that contribute to blight or are slated for eventual demolition. In some cases, these properties were seized for tax delinquency and are now the responsibility of the city. The city will work to highlight the historic merits of and promote private investment into these properties, where appropriate.

Action A: Create a Catalogue of Historic Homeownership Opportunities with a Financial Incentive

Develop a catalog of vacant historic buildings available for renovation into homes. Feature pictures, critical information, and historic attributes. By utilizing marketing tools, the city can promote the redevelopment potential of these priority properties to local banks, real estate agents, and individuals. A financial incentive per unit (i.e. \$5-10,000) can further entice the purchase of these buildings.

Action B: Offer a Guide to Historic Housing Rehabilitation

Develop and distribute a guide to the intricacies of historic home rehabilitation. This guide should address issues of maintaining key historic details, lead paint, energy efficiency, and specialty contractors. If North Adams designates one or more local historic districts, an additional guide should be developed to help owners understand the designation and make appropriate choices about their renovations.

GOAL HP 5: MAXIMIZE SOCIAL BENEFITS OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCE BENEFITS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Policy HP 5.1: Build community awareness and support for historic preservation.

Because so much of the built environment in slow growing New England communities is historic, residents often take for granted the historic and architectural values that surround them. These can serve as a resource for education of all ages, job creation, and rebranding the city. The city will work to highlight and build community awareness and pride for its history and the great potential preservation offers the future of its built environment.

Action A: Encourage Local History in Elementary and Secondary Schools

Expand and support efforts to teach local history in elementary and secondary schools. Continue to Provide a combination of bringing students to sites and providing materials and support for teachers to bring into the classroom. This will serve a two-fold purpose: it will enhance existing lessons (creating a ‘tangible’ history), and cultivate an appreciation of North Adams at an early age.

Action B: Support Local History at Institutions of Higher Learning

Encourage continued and additional public history classes taught through MCLA, Berkshire Community College, and Williams College. There has been positive response to classes including local history taught at MCLA, and programs are expanding to offer education for teachers through these institutions. These are important opportunities to maintain for residents interested in developing a deep understanding of their local history and its connections to historic events and time periods.

Offer continuing education credits for professionals utilizing local architecture and other aspects of the built environment. Work with area educational institutions such as MCLA and Berkshire Community College to offer professional requirements locally in order to educate architects, planners and others about North Adams.

Action C: Offer Glimpses of City History on a Daily Basis

Create opportunities for residents to learn about local history and culture through modest efforts such as signage and newspaper articles, historic building and home visits, and lectures. Integrating the history of North Adams into the daily lives of residents can help enrich lives and experiences. Utilizing many types of media and outlets will allow the message to reach a broader audience.

Action D: Continue and Enhance Historic Tours

Continue to offer historic tours (walking and trolley) and support their enhancement. As part of a broader city branding and marketing strategy, enhancement and variation of the tours should be considered. A tour linking the historical resources, cultural developments, and natural resources of the community may be a model to consider. Incorporation of technology to supplement and expand existing tour options should be utilized.

Action E: Develop a Clearinghouse of Information about North Adams History

There have been numerous projects developed (many at the college level) studying the history of North Adams. Often students or groups recreate past work because there is no central location for projects specific to the city. Developing a site where such information or links to it can be accessed would benefit future study and reduce the burden on residents or people acting as information resources.

Action F: Promote the Connection of Historic and Cultural Resources

Connect historic and cultural resources within promotional materials and tours wherever possible; harness the broader audience for cultural attractions to provide information about the historic resources of the area. Making explicit the connections between cultural developments and the historic fabric of a place will enhance the visitor’s and resident’s experience and deepen their appreciation for North Adams.

GOAL HP 6: SUPPORT REGIONAL PRESERVATION INITIATIVES AND ENSURE CITY IS WELL REPRESENTED

Policy HP 6.1: Support efforts to coordinate historic preservation initiatives and programs at the regional-scale.

Regional-scale historic preservation planning initiatives have begun to gain momentum over the past decade. The city has already benefited greatly from programs such as the federal Scenic Byways program which highlight Route 2 and the tour over Mount Greylock. The recently designated Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, while stopping just south of the city, provides a regional resource and partner (Housatonic Heritage) to help link the city to regional historic tours and trails, such as the paper trail.

Action A: Encourage a Revolving Loan Fund for Private Homeowners

Participate in and support current regional efforts to establish a Revolving Loan Fund for private owners investing in historic properties. Research along the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway showed that private homeowners hold responsibility for a majority of its historic resources, yet they have the fewest available financial resources. A feasibility study is underway for the development of a Revolving Loan Fund to offer low- or no-interest loans to these owners to support reinvestment along the byway. Route 2 in North Adams is one of the areas included in this pilot project.

Action B: Participate in Scenic Byway Planning

Continue and enhance involvement in scenic byway planning to make best use of this tourist activity and draw. The Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway and the Mount Greylock State Reservation Scenic Byway both have segments traveling through North Adams. The development of the Mount Greylock access trail from downtown North Adams will help capture these visitors.

Action C: Support a Regional Historic Preservation Organization

Participate in efforts to establish a regional organization dedicated to historic preservation in Berkshire County. Local Historical Commissions and local history organizations across the county support the creation of a group which would represent the regional interests of historic preservation organizations, providing technical assistance and coordination efforts. North Adams representatives should participate in this process to the extent possible.

7

FOOD AND HEALTH

While the Berkshires as a region have a long tradition of agriculture, there is very limited agricultural activity remaining in North Adams. Some of this is due to the terrain, which affords limited opportunities; agricultural producing lands occupy only three percent of the total land area. This limited agricultural land supply has resulted in two trends in local food production: a strong relationship between farms in surrounding communities as the foodshed for the city through the farmers market and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares and a keen interest in urban gardening within city neighborhoods. The existing urban fabric of North Adams offers opportunities for creative reuse of old mill, church or school buildings and related infrastructure for the production, processing and distribution of food. Institutions and local non-profits have been active in identifying and promoting spaces for community gardens. North Adams is working as a community to actively address food access and equity through such efforts as the community garden program, Berkshire Food Project, Hoosac Harvest, and Northern Berkshire Community Coalition's Mass in Motion program. This section establishes goals for building a strong local food system in the city that facilitates access to healthy food for all residents.



Related Maps

Map 8: Urban Agriculture

Located in Appendix C

FOOD AND HEALTH GOALS, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

GOAL FH 1: STRIVE TO INTEGRATE A ROBUST, LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM (PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION AND ACCESS) INTO EXISTING URBAN FABRIC

Policy FH 1.1: Promote urban farming and community gardening as a way to produce and distribute local, healthy foods in North Adams.

Action A: Identify Viable Spaces for Urban Farming or Community Gardens

Use existing property databases and develop additional site criteria to identify vacant or underused parcels suitable for urban agriculture or community gardens. Water access, for example, is very important for a community garden or urban farm to be productive and successful. Identify city-owned vacant lots that are viable spaces for community gardens or farmers without farms. Create an inventory of available parcels or lots accessible and searchable to the public. These spaces could be listed on match-making farmers websites to help highlight their availability and suitability for food production.

Action B: Facilitate Use of City-Owned Vacant Parcels for Garden Spaces

Use land holding techniques (e.g., land bank, land trust) to make city-owned vacant spaces affordable for food production. Cities such as Detroit have found success in land banking as a way to take ownership of vacant properties and encourage uses that offer community benefits, including community gardening and urban agriculture.

Create a process to proactively identify spaces owned by the city and suitable for community gardening and manage use, lease or purchase agreements between the City and community gardeners. Formulate standards of use (i.e., requiring raised beds, soil tests and organic maintenance) and use or lease agreements for these city-owned parcels. The Detroit Food Policy Council has helped identify best practices in terms of what such a process should look and feel like to community members. Other cities and towns have developed programs that encourage gardening and farming activities on city owned properties, including: The purchase of a lot; the purchase for nominal price of

vacant lots adjacent to an interested party's property; bid sales; or through a garden permit/Adopt-A-Lot Program. (See also Housing and Neighborhoods Chapter.)

Action C: Align Regulations with Local Food Goals

Ensure city regulations support neighborhood food production, such as front yard gardening, rooftop gardening or farming and beekeeping. Sometimes, existing zoning regulations make agricultural production challenging or impossible within town or city limits. Current zoning regulations in North Adams are relatively flexible in terms of food production—livestock, for example, is permissible with a lot size of two acres or larger and enclosure for the animals. The two acre lot size could be a challenge for neighborhoods with higher density and less space and residents who would like to keep a few chickens.

Action D: Link Gardens to Education to Empower More People to Grow and Eat Fresh

Identify partnerships between health and wellness organizations, community gardens, schools and institutions and food sites. Pursue ongoing and pilot projects that partner institutions with gardening and healthy food programs to North Adams food sites to ensure that all North Adams residents have access to healthy and local food from a variety of sources. Consider reuse of old mill or church buildings as a community kitchen to provide processing and cooking capacity to community partners.

Action E: Incorporate Food Production in Affordable Housing Site Plans

Incorporate productive food spaces into affordable housing opportunities as they are proposed and potentially developed in or around North Adams. Food Works at Two Rivers Center, in Montpelier, Vermont, helps to manage and maintain gardening programs at affordable housing communities in Central Vermont, providing residents with educational programs focused on food production and nutrition education. A similar concept applied locally could increase access to healthy, local food in some of North Adams' lower-income neighborhoods and increase access to food education throughout the year. Potential sites include Clark Biscuit, Mohawk Forest, Brayton Hill and Greylock Valley.

GOAL FH 2: STRENGTHEN THE NORTH ADAMS ECONOMY THROUGH ITS FOOD SYSTEM

Policy FH 2.1: Encourage the growth of businesses that grow, distribute, process and sell local and healthy foods—especially those that offer healthy food access to low-income neighborhoods or areas designated as USDA Food Desert.¹

Action A: Market and Site Analysis to Understand Business Development Options

Value-added processing is a key way farmers can raise their profit margins, but the county currently lacks the infrastructure to support commercial-scale processing. The city and its partners should conduct a market study for local/regional food processing facility and community kitchen, cold storage and other food related infrastructure in northern Berkshire and southern Vermont area. Explore mill buildings and old church reuse as potential sites for these types of businesses, and promote these types of businesses as opportunities to promote North Adams as a great place to open and maintain a local business.

Action B: Consider Growing and Recruiting Food Related Anchor Businesses

Continue partnering with 1Berkshire to identify and offer North Adams building stock as potential homes for business, specifically food and agriculture related businesses such as value added food

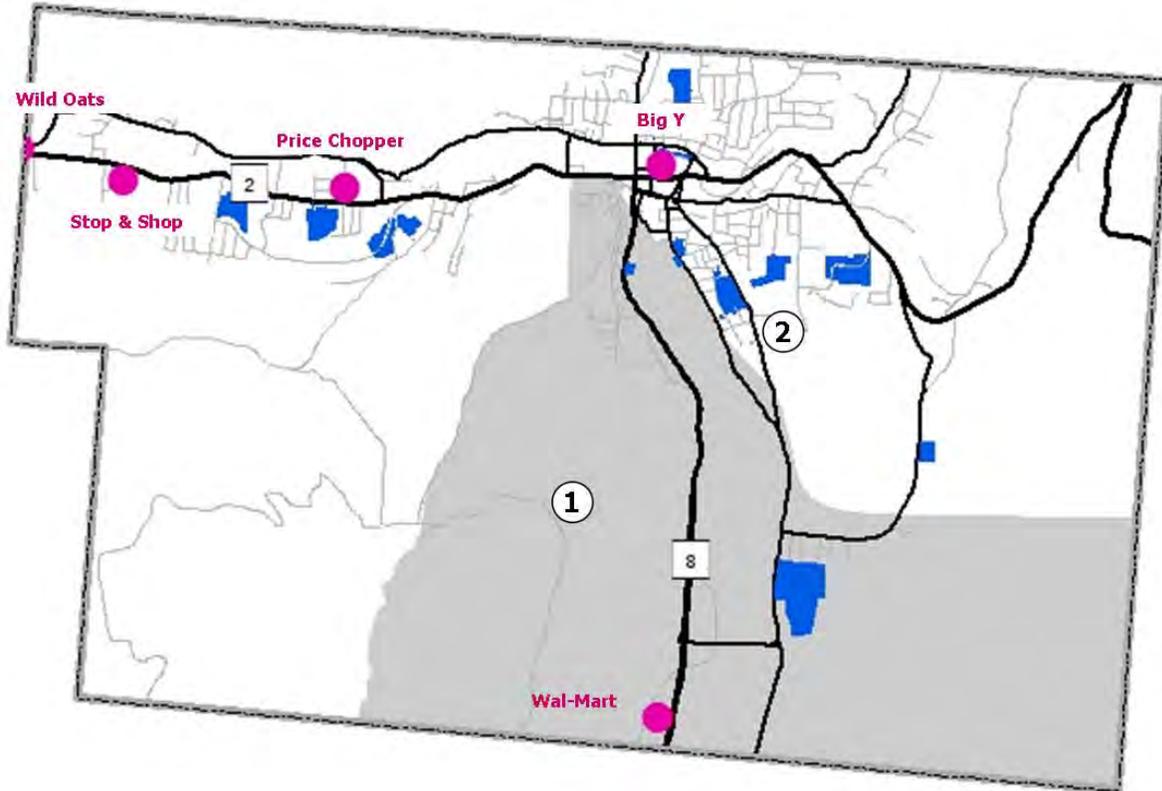
¹USDA defines a "food desert" as an area where at least 500 people and/or 33% of the census tract population reside more than one mile from a supermarket or grocery store.

processing, production and distribution and composting. A food hub business that aggregates and distributes local produce, is one business identified as a missing piece in the food system.

Action C: Encourage the Location of a Local Foods Market in North Adams

Locating a health food store or a coop like Wild Oats Market in Williamstown or Berkshire Organics in Dalton would increase access to healthy, local foods. A pedestrian-friendly location would further enhance access. Potential locations already exist, identified as the area surrounding Heritage Park.

Figure 9: Food Desert and Community Garden Sites



1 Food Desert— A food desert, as defined by the USDA, is a low-income census tract in which a large number or share of residents have low access to a supermarket or large grocery store. At least 500 people, and/or 33% of the census tract population must reside more than one mile from a supermarket or grocery store. This low access can have negative health implications, as it can impede the purchase and consumption of fresh fruits, vegetables and whole, healthy foods. The North Adams neighborhoods of South Church Street, West Shaft Road, Church Street, State Street and Braytonville are shaded as a food desert. However, the recent location of a Super Wal-Mart may have resolved the food desert status by providing grocery access to that area of the city.

2 Community Gardens—there are a number of community gardens across the city. Some are tied to community kitchens to support meals, others are linked to a neighborhood to provide grow-your-own options for residents. These programs can be very valuable to enhancing nutrition and hunger, as well as providing space for hobby recreation and social interaction.

GOAL FH 3: PROVIDE ACCESS TO HEALTHY, LOCAL FOOD FOR ALL NORTH ADAMS RESIDENTS

Policy FH 3.1: Promote pedestrian friendly locations for food outlets, including healthy food retail, farmers markets and community gardens within easy walking or cycling distance of low-income neighborhoods, work places and other gathering points.

Action A: Safe Routes to Food

Work with regional and local entities to include proximity to food access points as a priority evaluation criterion in transportation planning considerations, including pedestrian improvement planning. Regional and local planners could either consider the potential to increase food access on a case-by-case basis, or create a toolkit or criteria matrix to help guide the inclusion of food access into transportation plans and projects, planning transportation for health. The Nashville, Tennessee Metropolitan Planning Organization, for example, prioritizes project investments with a 100 point criteria system. Sustainable Development, Multi-Modal Options and Health and Environment are 10 and 15 point categories, with food access falling into the health and environment category. They award points based on the proximity and number of food outlets in the area surrounding the proposed transportation system investment.

Action B: Eliminate Food Desert

Use incentives for businesses to site healthy food access points in neighborhoods identified as Food Deserts. Incentives can include expedited permitting or gap funding opportunities for businesses committed to increasing food access and promoting community health and wellness through their enterprise. This kind of effort could be in conjunction with economic development efforts.

Action C: Relocate North Adams Farmers Market

Identify a site for the North Adams farmers market that promotes pedestrian access for all North Adams residents, but especially low-income neighborhoods or areas identified as Food Deserts. Incorporate food and nutrition education into the new Farmers Market site through training workshops and food demos.

Action D: Encourage Healthy Options in all Food Retail Sites

Support Mass in Motion's Healthy Market initiative to make available and promote healthy options in "convenience stores" throughout North Adams.

Policy FH 3.2: Enhance affordability and access of local, healthy food options for all North Adams residents.

Action A: Expand Retailer Options for Food Subsidy Program Recipients

Enable and encourage use of Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)/Women, Infants and Children (WIC) use at North Adams Farmers Market. While some vendors already accept EBT/WIC resources, not all do. It is also important that everybody with EBT/WIC benefits know that the North Adams Farmers Market does accept EBT/WIC, so marketing and outreach is a key element in further promoting healthy, local food access through outreach and communication. Work with the North Adams WIC office to encourage the use of these benefits at the Farmers Market when consulting with users.

Action B: Continue to Offer and Promote Healthy Food Purchase Incentives

Investigate dollar stretching programs to incentivize the purchase of local, healthy food products at farmers markets and other food outlets (i.e., Double value coupon program or 'Fresh Bucks' – multiplies value of federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits). Wholesome Wave is one example of a doubling program for farmers markets.

Action C: Offer 'Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program'

With health care shifting increasing focus to preventative health programs, the city and hospital should look for opportunities to forge a collaboration to promote healthy eating as a health care step. Local health care providers could encourage the purchase of fresh fruit and vegetables through coupons, cost-sharing or subsidizing and partnerships between health clinics and food outlets.

Action D: Continue to Support Subsidized CSA Share Programs

There are good examples of subsidized or donated community supported agriculture (CSA) shares in the region, such as Berkshire Grown's 'Share the Bounty' program and its north Berkshire presence Hoosac Harvest. Community service groups could partner to support this program and expand its ability to provide shares to city residents.

Action E: Create Mobile Food Options

Explore mobile food access opportunities, such as a Veggie Mobile, a Farm-to-Family drop-off system, or a work-place delivery system such as that piloted through Berkshire Organics and North Adams Regional Hospital before its closure. The Capital District Community Garden Veggie Mobile brings fresh and local (as available) produce to neighborhoods throughout the Albany, NY region. They offer food and cooking demos using ingredients available from the veggie mobile. Each of these should accept SNAP/WIC benefits in North Adams, and should be sure to address need and demand in all neighborhoods.

Action F: Healthy Cooking Training for Food Service Employees

Increase food and nutrition education and training opportunities at pantries, schools, and in elder service programs such as Meals on Wheels and senior meal program at All Saints Church. There are many resources for cooking locally and seasonally, including a Mass Farm to School cookbook that helps take the guesswork out of meeting food requirements in a school setting. Vermont FEED also has existing resources that could be of use and value in North Adams Public Schools. Trainings could be an activity in a processing and/or community kitchen facility.

Action G: City-MCLA Garden Partnership

Pursue collaboration with MCLA to integrate larger North Adams community into its garden program through work shares or other agreements. Cultivate a partnership that benefits MCLA staff and students as well as North Adams residents through the sharing of a community garden. Identifying a "summer care" agency to transition gardens through vacation months will enhance sustainability and capacity.

Action H: Promote Food Education to Facilitate Healthy Eating Behaviors

Education is a critical element in promoting healthy, local eating behaviors. Incorporating activities and projects into school curriculum is a way to introduce it; parallel efforts in the cafeteria and at home reinforce healthy food behaviors. Vermont FEED (Farm to School Education Every Day!) is a good example of how federal agencies, non-profits and schools can collaborate to integrate farm to school and food education into the classroom and cafeteria.

Policy FH 3.3: Support food assistance sites, such as pantries and meal locations, in providing local, healthy foods.

Action A: Increase Presence of Local Food in Emergency Food Options

Coordinate gleaning partnerships between area farms and local pantries and meal sites and the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. Gleaning is the collection of left over product from agricultural fields after harvest.

- Partner with Hoosac Harvest to strengthen existing program with colleges and churches and identify new opportunities.
- Promote 'grow an extra row' partnerships – identify new opportunities for such programs.
- Partner with Mass in Motion and Hoosac Harvest to recruit volunteers for a 'grow an extra row' program.

- Consider school gardens as sources for pantry or meal site foods.
- Assist food pantries and kitchens with the sourcing of local food products, emphasizing fresh vegetables or fruit.
- Encourage pantries or food sites to purchase a CSA share, or enter into a purchasing contract with a farmer, or accept donations by individuals and businesses.
- Facilitate subsidized shares or direct contracts between farms and food assistance sites.

Action B: Increase Exposure to Healthy Food

Promote food and nutrition education at food assistance sites: Provide tasting samples and recipes to those waiting for food at pantries and meal sites, or food demos. Coordinate efforts with food pantries to encourage and raise awareness for healthy donation options during Postal Food drive as well as other food drives.

Action D: Season Extension

Promote seasonal extension methods to ensure year-long access to fresh fruit and vegetables—i.e., mobile fruit and vegetable processing unit for flash freezing bulk items for institutions and food pantries or kitchens. This can be done in bulk at the food processing facility in Greenfield. Also, consider partnerships that provide storage opportunities to enhance capacity for keeping and serving fresh, local foods at food assistance sites in North Adams.

Policy FH 3.4: Enhance existing opportunities for healthy and local foods at local restaurants, stores and other market outlets.

Action A: Partner with Northern Berkshire Community Coalition’s Mass in Motion Program to Assist Local or Neighborhood Stores in Stocking Fresh, Healthy Foods

Identify ongoing programs and funding opportunities to assist smaller stores in stocking healthy foods, and promoting the purchase and consumption of healthier foods through signs, coupons and in-store promotions. Capital District Community Gardens, in Albany, New York, has a program called the Healthy Convenience Store Initiatives, in which they install refrigerator units in neighborhood stores, and stock with healthy food options twice a week, and work with owners to limit price mark-up. Partner with Northern Berkshire Community Coalition and Mass in Motion (MiM) to enroll convenient stores in MiM activities, including the provision and promotion of healthier foods and consumer food and nutrition education. This should be prioritized in low-income or food desert areas.

Action B: Augment Awareness of and Use of SNAP or WIC Benefits at the North Adams Farmers Market

Partner with Northern Berkshire Community Coalition’s Mass in Motion (MiM) Program to increase benefits utilized and spent at the North Adams Farmers Market by increasing awareness and resources. Encourage outreach and information campaigns, and provide assistance where applicable.

Action C: Encourage Healthy and Fresh Food Options in Local Restaurants—from the local pizza shop to higher end or specialty restaurants.

Work with local restaurants to offer and promote healthy dining out options. In the central Berkshires, Tri-Town Health is responsible for the Healthy Dining Program. This program includes 60 eateries and institutions that create menus focused on encouraging healthy eating habits. Through this program, restaurants commit to designating nutritional information for each menu item, making salt shakers available by customer request, banning trans fat,, reducing portion size, offering gluten free substitutions and providing low fat or non-dairy options when milk is offered as a beverage.

GOAL FH 4: INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN NORTH ADAMS SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTIONS

Policy FH 4.1: Promote health and nutrition through better eating and other wellness activities in and around North Adams schools and institutions.

Action A: Promote Partnerships for Healthful Eating in City Institutions

Collaborate with dietitians and local health care providers to design healthier menus in the hospital cafeteria, as well as in other institutional cafeterias, including day care sites and senior centers.

Action B: Support Education and Career Development Focused on Agriculture and Food Systems, including Food Preparation, Value-added Processing, Nutrition and Hospitality

Explore partnership or collaboration potential with McCann Technical School, specifically its Culinary Arts program. Find out whether they use local food, emphasize healthy cooking and if a pilot program in which Culinary Art students teach community members how to cook with local, healthy food could be a viable pilot project. Other potential partners include Louison House, Turner House, and correctional community service.

Action C: Encourage Opportunities for Youth Training and Participation with Local Partners

Identify opportunities for ‘Guest Chefs’, ‘Guest Farmers’ or Junior Iron Chef Competition at institution cafeterias, including MCLA and North Adams schools. Identify fundraising and other resource opportunities.

Action D: Encourage Healthy and Local Foods in Cafeteria Settings

Create a ‘Veggie or Fruit of the Month’ program to introduce healthy and local food products in cafeteria settings – highlight the product, distribute recipes.

Action E: Explore Municipal Purchasing Arrangements between City Programs and Local Food Suppliers

Expanding food options and enhancing local economic relationships between the City and food suppliers.

Action F: Provide Municipal Support for School Wellness Programs

Assist the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition’s Mass in Motion program with coordinating school wellness programs, including nutrition, with the school wellness committee.

Policy FH 4.2: Promote local foods in the North Adams education system, and reduce non-healthy food options.

Action A: Provide Municipal Support where Possible for School Gardens

Promote school gardens as opportunities for education and food production. Make school gardens a dedicated budget line. Consider ways to ensure that the garden programming remains active even in summer months, like Project Sprout at Monument Mountain High School. Consider low-cost tools for weather

From Farm to School

Two organizations in Massachusetts assist in bringing food and agriculture into the cafeteria and classroom.

[The Massachusetts Farm to School Project](#) facilitates sustainable purchasing relationships between local institutions and local farms. It offers trainings to institutional food services and farm-to-institution matchmaking. The organization already works with the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition Mass in Motion program to help connect community to healthy food and bring more local foods to North Adams schools. Through a USDA grant, the organization was able to work with Crosby Elementary School in Pittsfield to launch a school garden program, and work with the food services director to purchase and provide local foods in the cafeteria. This grant was targeted to assist low-income school districts.

[Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom](#) is a non-profit organization that provides agricultural education training for teachers and other educators, helping students identify the connections between foods, fibers and other agricultural products they use. Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom connects these lessons to state curriculum frameworks. The organization provides mini-grants, skills workshops and demonstrations for teachers and other educators to bring new lessons and skills into their classrooms and schools.

protection and season extension, such as hoop houses.

Action B: Encourage Healthy Local Food Options in Schools through Both Cafeteria Service and Curriculum Development

Increase in-class and at-lunch food education in North Adams schools, and encourage in-school curriculum that promotes the value of horticulture and nutritional value of fruit and vegetables. Work with the school district and independent or charter schools to integrate activities and lessons into curriculum that emphasize healthy eating and food production.

Action C: Continue Provide Technical Assistance for North Adams Schools Interested in School Gardens

Identify schools with an active interest and suitable site for a school garden. Develop a toolkit for schools interested in hosting a school garden: what is needed to start and maintain a successful school garden? What are good site characteristics? Explore partnership opportunities so that the space remains maintained during vacation periods, and the fruit or vegetables not wasted. Potential partners include the Massachusetts Farm to School Project, Northern Berkshire Community Coalition's Mass in Motion program, the Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom group, and the North Adams School District.

Action D: Encourage Schools to Identify Funding Opportunities for School Gardens from a Variety of Funding Sources, including Public and Private Entities

Identify funding opportunities for school gardens within North Adams. Actively seek opportunities to fund school gardens, in the form of grants as well as technical assistance or in-kind donations.

Action E: Promote Healthy Vending Opportunities in North Adams Schools and MCLA

Identify opportunities for fresh and healthy vending opportunities, including vegetables, fruit, and dairy products around the MCLA campus.

Action F: Help Connect North Adams with Partners to Increase the Range of Snacks Available within City Schools

Encourage North Adams schools to offer healthy food options along with or instead of conventional vending machine snacks. Potential partners include Massachusetts Farm to School.

Action G: Encourage Sharing and Promotion of Nutrition and Physical Activity Best Practices at North Adams Schools

Partner with local health care providers and experts to bring best practices into schools through class room visits, field trips and integration into curriculum.

Action H: Establish a Working Group of Food Service Directors, Superintendents and other School Stakeholders to Address Farm to School Opportunities and Challenges

Coordinate working meetings with food service directors to share ideas, challenges and solutions to getting more local food in schools, in partnership with Massachusetts Farm-to-School.

Action I: Implement a Pilot Farm to Cafeteria Project: Identify a Grower and Institution Interested in Testing out Contractual Growing

Assist school system in reviewing options and testing priority 'local first' sourcing for cafeteria food. Work with Massachusetts Farm to School to develop a pilot farm to cafeteria program at a North Adams school to encourage other schools to participate.

Action J: Include Garden Mosaics Service Learning Program as a Fixed Item in the School Budget to Encourage Sustained Capacity

Garden Mosaics

A collaboration between North Adams Public Schools, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, and the Growing Healthy Gardening program, Garden Mosaics has coordinated curriculum, teachers and students to build community gardens through North Adams: Drury, Brayton, Sullivan and Greylock. There are also community sites at Sperry Avenue, River Street and the Berkshire Food Project. Students use skills learned in class to design raised beds, plant, maintain and harvest the gardens. Other activities include rainwater harvesting and composting. They also have helped prepare and serve food from the gardens at community meal sites

Dedicate school budget item for Garden Mosaics service learning gardening program.

Action K: Promote Healthy Eating and Living through a Variety of Media

Use public resources, like Channel 22 (public access television) to promote healthy food behaviors. Offer information about healthy eating behaviors, and how to prepare local, healthy foods as part of Channel 22 programming. Support initiatives such as the Mayor’s Fitness Challenge.



Community gardens are a great way to make productive use of otherwise vacant parcels in the city while also contributing more local food into the food system.

Policy FH 4.3: Integrate food and agriculture planning efforts into broader policy and governance conversations.

Action A: Be an Active Advocate in Ongoing Work of the Massachusetts Food Policy Council

Participate in the upcoming statewide food and agriculture plan to be led by the Food Policy Council. The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs is leading efforts, through the Massachusetts Food Policy Council, to develop a statewide strategic food systems plan. North Adams should explore opportunities for participation and eventual implementation items that develop from the planning process.

Action B: Develop Working Group, such as a North Adams Food Policy Council or North Adams Health and Wellness Council, Representing a Full Cross-section of Local and Regional Government

The council could include members of the planning department, health department, community and economic development departments, recreation, school districts, and institutions or organizations working with food or agriculture related projects to continue and prioritize food and agriculture action items and implementation.

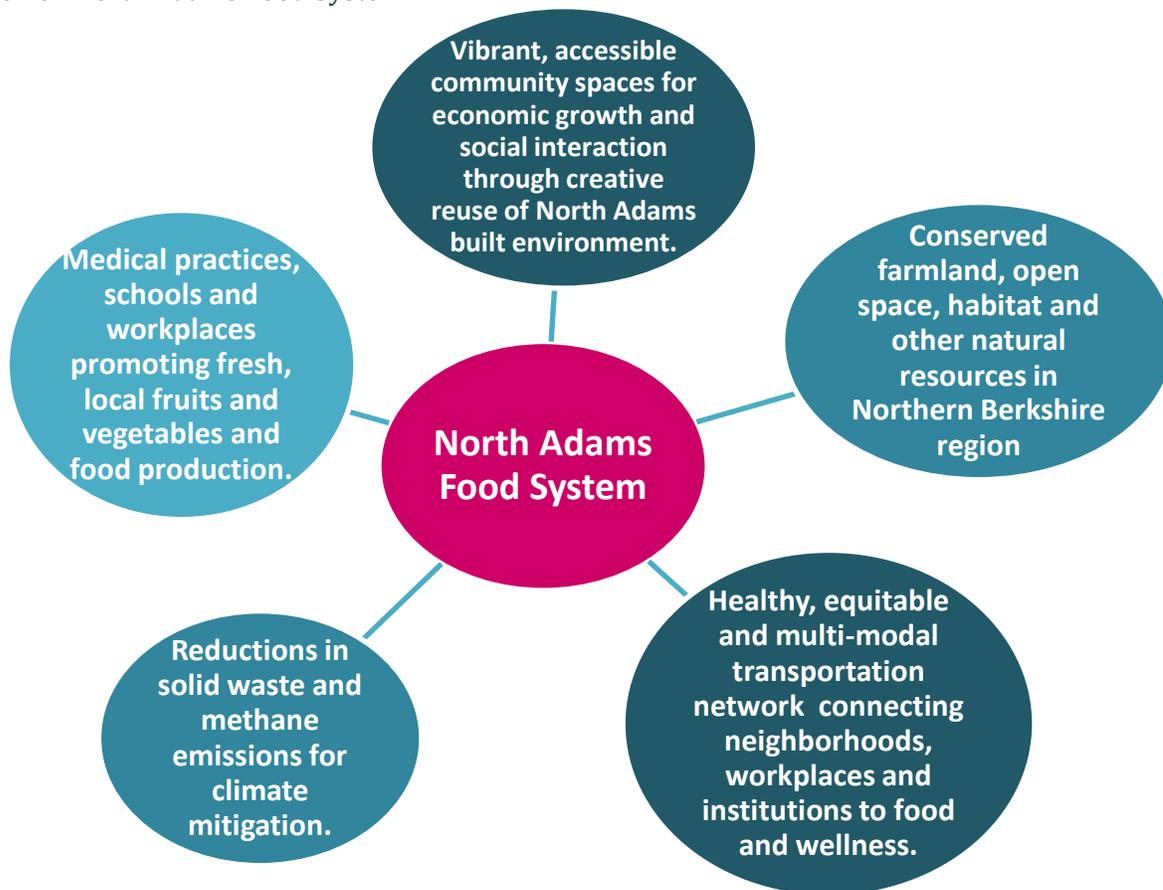
Action C: Leverage Local and Regional Assets to Grow and Sustain Community Food System Initiatives

Actively collaborate with local foundations to support community engagement, evaluation activities and longer-term coordination of food system strategies. Actively seek funding opportunities and partnership opportunities through State agencies and regional foundations and non-profit organizations.

Action D: Use Food System-related Actions to Help Achieve Open Space, Transportation, Land Use, Community and Economic Development, Housing, Natural Resource and Solid Waste Goals of Comprehensive Plan, and Vice Versa

When implementing strategies from other comprehensive plan elements, consider how these actions will enhance or detract from the North Adams food system. When implementing food related strategies consider how impacts could extend beyond the food system and offer cross-cutting solutions. For example: a pedestrian and bike path between North Adams and Williamstown slated for 2014 will increase safe food access for low income residents in North Adams lacking independent transportation while also increasing access to recreation and transportation.

Figure 10: North Adams Food System



GOAL FH 5: PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE METHODS OF FOOD PRODUCTION AND FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT

Policy FH 5.1: Encourage sustainable gardening and agriculture practices through community education opportunities and outreach.

Action A: Partner with Local and State Institutions and Organizations to Provide Gardening Workshops

Many organizations and institutions within Berkshire County provide training and education related to sustainable gardening and agriculture. Partnering with interested groups provides opportunity for broad community exposure to workshops, seminars and other valuable resources. Local colleges, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), Berkshire Grown, Berkshire Botanical Garden, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), UMass Extension, 4-H, etc. offer such resources.

Action B: Consider Possible Partnership with Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

Ongoing efforts continue to promote community engagement through food producing gardens. A partnership with MCLA could provide opportunities for community outreach and education, and student opportunities for service learning and wider integration into the city and community of North Adams.

Policy FH 5.2: Reduce food waste.

Action A: Synchronize Local Efforts to Address and Meet State Regulations Regarding Food Waste

Work to implement regulations such as the proposed Department of Environmental Protection policy requiring hotels, food waste processors and large institutions generating large volumes of food waste to compost – proposed regulations targets diverting at least 35% of source separated organics from disposal by 2020. Identify largest producers of food waste, and facilitate the siting and regulation of composting facilities where suitable. Look to other cities that have implemented composting programs, including curbside compost pick up. Conduct education and outreach so that residents understand the benefits of composting and best composting practice. Consider a city-wide, public and private pick-up enterprise.

Action B: Work with Schools and Institutions to Implement Composting Program

Publicize existing projects and build on past efforts of local institutions who are trying to implement sustainable practices. North Adams Regional Hospital, for example, and its 'Green Team' provided positive and realistic examples of institutions implementing sustainable practices. Berkshire Health Systems has made similar strides with Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield.

Action C: Consider Food Waste as a Potential Energy Resource within the City of North Adams

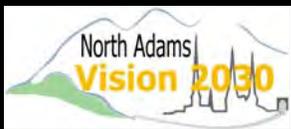
Work to identify other uses of food waste besides composting: Energy generation via anaerobic digestion is one example of an alternative use for food waste, and feasible at facilities such as the waste water treatment plants like the one in North Adams.

Action D: Support Investment in Organics Infrastructure—for the Collection and Hauling of Organic Materials.

The city of North Adams can look for and pursue funding or technical assistance opportunities to implement an organics infrastructure throughout the city, and partner with organizations already committed to food waste reduction and recycling, such as MCLA. A start-up business in Pownal, Vermont, TAM Waste Management could also provide capacity.

Action E: Support Targeted Business Development to Create New and Green Jobs in Food Waste Reduction and Recycling

Promoting entrepreneurial opportunity in food waste reduction and recycling (like the Pedal People in the Pioneer Valley, or the Vermont Composting Company) could lead to employment opportunity and job development for residents interested in organic, sustainable horticulture and agriculture practice.



North Adams Comprehensive Plan

Part III of III

2014



8

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

The city of North Adams is responsible for a network of built infrastructure which includes roads, streets and bridges, wastewater, water, and stormwater. The City is also responsible for a number of services, including schools and education, law enforcement, fire and emergency, and solid waste. Aged infrastructure has been noted to be an issue, as has the condition of some public facilities. As the population of North Adams has declined over time, so has its tax base and municipal revenue. This creates a challenging scenario in the city – it faces needed infrastructural repair or replacement but faces limited fiscal resources. Long term planning for adaptive planning and investment in city infrastructure will ensure that the needs of existing residents, businesses and institutions are met while continuing to promote North Adams as a great place to be. North Adams is in a position to adapt practices to further its fiscal and environmental sustainability: it has expressed interest in an enterprise fund for infrastructure and services, and is pursuing municipal solar projects, while also possessing potential for wind and hydro power within the city. Through public workshops, increased investment in traffic calming, street and sidewalk maintenance/repair, snow removal and residential solar programs were identified as infrastructure and service priorities. It is important for the city of North Adams to consider the impacts of climate change when planning new or enhancing existing infrastructure, and to plan city services to address predicted trends such as more high heat days. Goals, policies and strategies are categorized in the following groups:

- General Infrastructure and Services Recommendations
- Energy
- Water and Sewer
- Roads and Bridges
- Schools and Education
- Public Safety
- Technology



Related Maps

Map 9: Slope and Drainage

Map 10: Solar Energy Potential

Map 11: Wind and Hydroelectric Potential

Map 12: Water Resources

Map 13: Infrastructure

Map 14: Transportation

Map 15: Community Facilities

Located in Appendix C

GENERAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE GOALS, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

GOAL IS 1: ENSURE THAT LONG-TERM PLANNING INITIATIVES INCLUDE THE MAINTENANCE, OPERATION AND EVENTUAL REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Policy IS 1.1: Engage in proactive asset management programs in all aspects of infrastructure planning including both new development and routine maintenance.

Action A: Adopt a Capital Improvement Plan and Community Facilities Plan

In 2011, Tighe and Bond prepared a Capital Improvement Plan for the drinking water system in North Adams. The City should build upon this effort to incorporate other departments and services. By engaging multiple departments, the City will be able to identify tandem efforts, such as street or road improvements that could incorporate water or sewer line improvements or replacement. The City has identified a Capital Improvement Plan in their 2014 CDBG grant, and would hire an outside consultant to assist in drafting the plan and ensuring its correspondence with the North Adams Vision 2030 Plan.

Action B: Encourage a Proactive Asset Management Regime in All City Departments

Encourage all departments to conduct annual updates of facilities, vehicles or properties within their jurisdiction and link to potential funding sources.

Action C: Expand Use of User Fees

Understand the true cost of services and adjust user fees to more fully cover true costs of services to support long-term fiscal health of the City. The City already has water and sewer fees, but could explore expanding this model to other services.

Action D: Track Infrastructure in GIS

Continue to pursue the City's capacity and use of GIS tools in the collection, visualization and analysis of data. This would be helpful in the Capital Improvement Plan, and was also noted as a specific need for the drinking water system.

Action E: Municipal Services Efficiency

Seek to consolidate and digitize municipal services and functions where practical – such as online permitting.

Action F: Plan to Maintain and Develop Services to Enhance North Adams' Competitiveness

Ensure that areas of the city identified as priority locations for new businesses are well served in terms of infrastructure, including high-speed internet, as well as water and sewer connection to the industrial park.

Capital Improvement Plan

1. Draft and adopt a CIP bylaw
2. Form a CIP committee or advisory council
3. Conduct an inventory of current facilities and conditions
4. Survey status of previously approved projects
5. Prepare financial analysis
6. Receive departmental requests
7. Review and rank projects in committee or advisory council
8. Draft long term schedule and funding mechanisms
9. Review in-house: with City Council and Finance Committee and Mayor
10. Incorporate priority projects into budget
11. Public notification
12. City approval

Enterprise Funds

Enterprise funds allow departmental services to fund themselves by identifying a total service cost and revenue to fund these costs. It also retains investment income and surplus for specific use. An enterprise fund adopted by a governing entity can be used for a public utility, healthcare, recreation or transportation facilities. North Adams has identified interest in setting up a water system enterprise fund. Revenue includes user charges and fees, state funding or grants, as well as bond anticipation and investment income. These funds are only usable by the enterprise fund. The City can terminate the fund after three years. Communities such as Pittsfield and Ware have adopted enterprise funds.

Policy IS 1.2: Prioritize economic self sufficiency at the department level – where feasible, encourage the adoption of an enterprise fund and departments to engage in revenue generating strategies.

Action A: Establish Dedicated Maintenance and Replacement Accounts for Infrastructure Projects

Create dedicated accounts for infrastructure projects to make accounting more transparent and organized.

Action B: Consider Enterprise Funds for Public Utilities, Recreation or Transportation

The 2011 Tighe and Bond Drinking Water Capital Improvement Plan, in conjunction with external audits and a report by the MA Department of Revenue, note that an enterprise fund accounting system should be used to support maintenance and repairs of the North Adams water system. Other areas where enterprise funding has been considered includes the sewer system, Windsor Lake, and Harriman West Airport.

Policy IS 1.3: Explore new opportunities for shared services and/or regionalization to reduce costs and create efficiencies.

Action A: Group Purchasing

Continue to lead or participate in the regional group purchasing program with a focus on cost savings but also greening city operations through non-toxic cleaning alternatives and recycled content paper products.

Action B: On-line Permitting

Continue to engage in the multi-town online permitting program. This includes online application for building permits, burn permits and health inspections. Communities which have participated have reported cost savings.

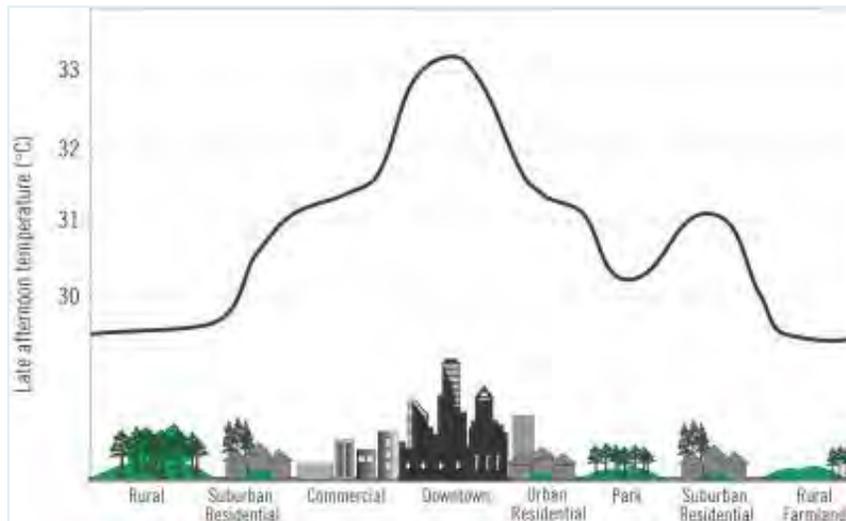
Action C: Continuously Pursue Service Delivery Efficiency

Conduct feasibility studies to share or consolidate other services. The City has identified interest in sharing or regionalizing a recycling facility, an animal control officer, lock-up, dispatch, information technology and IT disaster recovery, and tourism and marketing director.

GOAL IS 2: BUILD CLIMATE RESILIENCE INTO THE PLANNING AND MAINTENANCE OF MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SPACES

Policy IS 2.1: Integrate planning for increased temperatures into North Adams planning practice

Figure 11: Urban Heat Island Effect by Development Type



All communities are likely to be impacted by increased temperatures, but urban areas more so due to the Urban Heat Island (UHI) Effect. With less vegetation and more impervious surface, urban areas retain captured heat, cooling less in the evening. A study in Springfield indicated cooler day-time temperatures in areas with shade trees, while areas impacted by the 2011 tornado, with no shade trees, had higher day-time temperatures.

Source: US EPA, Urban Natural Resource Institute

Action A: Offer Shade and Drinking Water in Public Spaces

An anticipated climate impact in the Northeast is warmer weather, specifically an increase in the number of high heat days. Developed areas with ample impervious surface such as asphalt and concrete are hotter than non-urban places, and retain heat longer, an effect referred to as Urban Heat Island. Populations with existing health concerns are more vulnerable to these conditions, but all residents will benefit from increased shade and access to drinking water in public spaces. Trees in urban settings help mitigate the urban heat island effect, and also offer aesthetic and environmental benefits along with shade.

Replacing concrete or asphalt with permeable pavement can also help cool urban areas, as can increasing an area's albedo. Light-colored rooftops and light colored pavement can help to cool urban spaces and buildings.

Action B: Encourage Shade Tree Planting in Public Works and in Commercial or Residential Plans or Areas

As described above, urban tree planting is a cross-cutting strategy: it helps to mitigate the urban heat island effect, provides environmental benefits and services, including wildlife habitat and carbon sequestration, and aesthetic benefits. Encouraging edible tree plantings would further food access goals. Attention should be paid to what sort of trees and other plantings are selected: are they drought tolerant? Are they susceptible to pests? Selecting species today that will tolerate tomorrow's potential climate will help North Adams continue to reap benefits of urban trees and plantings. When redeveloping or developing building sites, consider placing trees in areas that will provide shade through most of the day, reducing energy use and costs. Also, consider not just planting for shade but also for edibility, and promote edible landscaping where appropriate.

Action C: Develop a Cooling Center Network

An increased number of high heat days, and hotter, drier summers overall will be a challenge faced by all New England residents, but for those living in urban settings the issue will be exacerbated. The elderly, very young, and residents with heart or respiratory conditions are especially vulnerable to increased heat. Developing a heat shelter network ensures that all residents have access to space with air conditioning during periods of extreme heat. This could be implemented at the city scale, or through neighborhood groups. In the greater Boston region, communities advertise cooling centers through the news, and some, like Worcester, offer free rides to cooling centers for residents without transportation. A cooling center can be an existing community space, like a library or senior center, or can be a space specifically created or adapted to meet need, like a gym/auditorium or tented area.

Action D: Develop a Vulnerable Populations Phone Tree

As the population grows older, there will be more residents living alone in older homes or apartment settings. Checking in on vulnerable residents can help build community while also identifying issues before a resident is too hurt or sick to seek help. This could be implemented at the city scale, or through neighborhood groups.

Policy IS 2.2: Work to reduce impacts caused by hydrologic extremes from increased intensity and frequency of storm events to periods of drought.**Action A: Green Roofs**

Support assessment and implementation of green roofs in the commercial areas of North Adams. Green roofs provide cross-cutting benefits in urban areas, and can be as straightforward as a few inch groundcover, or as complex as a designed park. Benefits of green roofs include: reduced energy use, as the vegetation insulates the roof during cold periods and cools it during hot periods; reduced and slowed stormwater runoff, and water filtration. Green roofs are good for the environment and good for human health, and can be encouraged or incentivized through zoning and development regulation.



Two examples of green roofs in Massachusetts communities: An 'intensive' roof growing flowering plants and shrubs, including blueberry plants, on the right, at the Lowell Regional Wastewater Utility. An 'extensive' system, with different varieties of low growing, drought-tolerant plants, on the left, at a senior housing complex in Ipswich.

Source: Lowell Regional Wastewater Utility, Mass. DCR.

Action B: Rainwater Harvesting

Support rainwater harvesting through municipal and residential programs. Rainwater harvesting captures water run-off, storing it for non-potable uses such as lawn and garden watering. It helps to reduce demand on public water supplies by using rainwater. A rainwater harvesting system can fit many scales, including small residential rain barrels or large-capacity underground storage tanks. The City could work with local or regional nurseries, hardware or home/yard supply stores to offer education and discounts to residents interested in installing a rainwater harvesting system. In

Hamilton (Massachusetts), a 200-gallon system was installed at an elementary school, where the rainwater served a butterfly and vegetable garden, and teachers developed specific curriculum around the rainwater system.

Action C: Increase Capacity of Bridges and Culverts

Proactively plan culverts, roads and bridges in response to current and anticipated impacts from climate change. In a meeting with public safety and municipal service officials, nine areas within the city were identified to have flooding and drainage issues, with one area specifically noted for storm flooding. These include areas along Massachusetts Avenue, Catherine Street, near Hillside Cemetery, Lyman Street, wetland areas to the east of Route 8 and along the river, and Beaver Street.

GOAL IS 3: ENSURE THAT NORTH ADAMS' PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES MEET CURRENT NEEDS AND RECEIVE THE MAINTENANCE REQUIRED TO PRESERVE THEIR FUNCTIONALITY AND VALUE TO THE CITY

Policy IS 3.1 Promote innovative practices in facility management and maintenance, paying special attention to practices that are good for human health and environmental quality.

Action A: Public Building and facility Assessment Framework

Develop a framework for the assessment of public buildings and facilities and link this to an annually updated report with applicable funding sources. Annually inspect City managed buildings and facilities, documenting maintenance and repair needs with a proposed time line for completion. This will help the City pro-actively maintain assets and avoid big fixes where possible through smaller maintenance or repair efforts.

Action B: Consider Adopting a Comprehensive Environmental Management Strategy for all City Facilities

Identify opportunities to increase energy efficiency of City facilities, and integrate environmentally sensitive landscape design into building areas. The City of Lowell, for example, designed their Regional Wastewater Utility to be an example of green design.

Action C: Streamline Maintenance of Buildings and Grounds Across City Departments

Where possible, consolidate or streamline the maintenance of buildings and grounds in such a way as to increase efficiencies in time and cost.

INFRASTRUCTURE- AND SERVICE-SPECIFIC GOALS, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

- A. Energy
- B. Water and Sewer
- C. Roads and Bridges
- D. Schools and Education
- E. Public Safety
- F. Technology

A. Energy

GOAL IS 4: BUILD A RESILIENT CITY BY PROACTIVELY WORKING TO SET AND ADVANCE CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION BEST PRACTICE

Policy IS 4.1: Endorse Sustainable Berkshires Climate and Energy Element and work to implement its contents at the municipal level.

Action A: Endorse Regional Climate and Energy Element

A key component of the strategy is to set a regional climate emissions reduction target that mirrors that set by the state. The element also sets forth a number of policies on climate adaptation strategies to reduce impacts on the city and region from climate change.

Action B: Adopt Berkshire Climate Resolution

Participate in the drafting and adoption of a climate resolution for regional municipalities and any tracking and reporting discussions that result as it is implemented or pursued.

Action C: Track Emission Reductions

The state has set up Mass Energy Insight, a free online tracking tool of metered utility accounts as a tool for communities implementing the Green Communities Act and pursuing Green Communities designation. This tool is available for all municipalities and special districts and could be used to track emission reductions of the City.

Action D: Highlight Climate Reduction Best Practices and Opportunities in North Adams

As success stories emerge, the City should work to report them as they relate to citizen involvement, cost savings for residents, fiscal efficiency and municipal operations leadership, and the like as a result of climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. This can also be integrated into the City's rebranding message.

Action E: Create a North Adams Energy Committee

Municipal energy or green committees take the lead role in implementing projects and programs in a wide variety of green living topics including solar incentives, municipal energy projects, energy efficiency, water efficiency, and solid waste reduction. The City does not currently have a green committee, but could begin one, perhaps in partnership with MCLA where class projects and guest speakers could help advance thinking and practice while also enhancing the educational experience for students.



The capped landfill will soon be home to a new solar array.

Policy IS 4.2: Create a policy and incentive environment that is supportive of renewable energy project implementation.

Action A: Continue to Pursue Green Communities Designation

The City began the process of exploring interest and logistics of achieving Green Communities designation. Due to staffing turnover and need to further explore and deliberate the desirability of certain criteria, this process was put on hold for the time being. At the time, the program was new and there is now more guidance and case study evidence from communities on the pros and cons of participating. The City should revisit the topic and determine a course for moving forward. For example, even if the City does not want to pursue all five criteria, some of those five may be of interest and value for the City to implement regardless of a desire to pursue designation. If the City does continue to pursue the designation, it would be eligible for State funding made available every six months.

Action B: Renewable Energy Bylaws

Ensure that North Adams has municipal regulations in place to be prepared for renewable energy project proposals and control potential impacts from projects.

Action C: Provide Residential Solar Incentives

Explore Solarize Mass or other partnerships to provide incentives for residential or commercial solar projects. Pittsfield and Lenox currently participate in this program.

Policy IS 4.3: Continue to improve the City's renewable energy portfolio.

Action A: Green Energy Mix Through Group Purchasing

One way the City can green its energy immediately is through negotiating the composition of energy being served to the City by the electric company. Power purchase agreements, whether as a single city or as a collaborative of municipalities, allow a municipality to negotiate a fixed price but also to

negotiate the mix to help raise demand for renewable energy. While results of the former have been mixed as they depend on market fluctuations in the cost of energy, the latter use has solid merit and has gained traction as the primary reason to engage in such contracts, at least given recent energy cost trends which have been lower than projected. This picture may also change. The Town of Lanesborough has started to do this in pursuit of cost savings.

Action B: Lead by Example

North Adams is pursuing solar projects at the airport and/or land fill, and also would like to install solar at the wastewater treatment plant in the long run. North Adams has rooftop and ground mounted solar capacity. GIS analysis indicates greater capacity toward the western edge of the city, within the Route 8 corridor. There is also capacity toward the eastern end of the City. Residential and commercial rooftop potential is dispersed throughout the City, although commercial buildings have greater roof area than smaller residential units. See Map 10 in Appendix C.

Action C: Continue to Pursue Hydroelectric Feasibility

There are seven dams in North Adams with potential for hydroelectric energy. The Eclipse Mill dam has been specifically noted by the City for its high power potential. In the 1980s, the City completed a feasibility study and had developers interested in a hydroelectric energy project, but the cost was then too high. The State has made dam and seawall restoration available through a loan program. North Adams should continue to explore the possibility, and continue to explore funding programs. The City should work with the State to assess these dams and identify a pilot project. See Map 11 in Appendix C.

Action D: Conduct Wind Power Feasibility Study

The city does have wind potential, with two areas identified with a GIS analysis. The first area is along West Mountain Road, accessible via Reservoir Road and just over the Adams/North Adams line, while a smaller area is east of South Church Street, below the Mohawk Trail and adjacent to the Savoy Mountain State Forest. See Map 11 in Appendix C.

Action E: Track Emerging Technologies and Grant Programs

Stay up to date on emerging technologies and promising opportunities for clean, renewable energy generation and evaluate their utility and potential in helping to achieve larger climate and energy goals of the city as well as cost savings or revenue generation.

Policy IS 4.4: Maximize use of existing energy efficiency and conservation programs through marketing and promotion of available options.

Action A: Implement Energy Efficiency In Municipal Buildings

The City should maximize energy efficiency improvements in its buildings and operations to help save money while also helping the environment.

Action B: Promote Available Efficiency Programs

There are numerous energy efficiency programs available to residential and commercial properties that are undersubscribed. The city should work with neighborhood and business groups to promote these programs to help save money and the environment.

Action C: Promote Water Conservation Through Low Flow Appliances

The City has noted reduction in water use through a reduction in water fees received. It would like to maintain this trend. Low-flow fixtures and water efficient appliances help save water at the building level, and should be encouraged in residential homes and apartments as well as institutional or commercial buildings. Examples include: aerators for faucets and showers, ultralow flow toilets, and leak detection systems. Communities in the Ipswich River watershed have offered rebate and discount programs to encourage water-efficient appliances, providing rebates for clothes washers, dishwashers, refrigerators and air conditioners. Such rebate programs can be offered through appliance companies or through the City. The program in Ipswich was managed through EnergyStar and the utility department.

B. Water and Sewer

GOAL IS 5: MAINTAIN ADEQUATE WATER, WASTEWATER AND STORMWATER FACILITIES AND SUBSURFACE INFRASTRUCTURE.

Policy IS 5.1: Implement and maintain an up-to-date water Capital Improvement Plan.

Action A: Expand Long-Term (20 year) Water Study Into Full Capital Improvement Plan

The City has developed a detailed 20 year improvement plan for its drinking water system. The City should adopt this plan and begin to identify implementation items.

Action B: Enterprise Fund

Adopt an enterprise fund for water and sewer services to help fund maintenance and repairs on water and sewer infrastructure.

Action C: Explore Sustainable Infrastructure Alternatives

A number of cities facing high infrastructure upgrade and maintenance costs have been experimenting with green or sustainable infrastructure as a means of lower-cost improvements that reduce or eliminate the need for traditional approaches and associated costs.

Policy IS 5.2: Provide high quality municipal infrastructure and utility services.

Action A: Maintain, Upgrade and Improve Wastewater Collection System

Continue to implement programs to upgrade the wastewater collection system to mitigate existing deficiencies and accommodate the needs of the region in the present and into the future.

Action B: National Pollutant Discharge and Elimination System (NPDES) Compliance

Make the necessary improvements to comply with the National Pollutant Discharge and Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II permit requirements as determined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This program controls water pollution by regulating point sources such as pipes or man-made ditches that discharge pollutants into water. Industrial, municipal and other facilities with discharge going directly to surface waters must obtain a permit.

Action C: Water Supply to Meet Current and Future Needs

Maintain adequate water supply, storage facilities, and delivery system to serve the needs of existing and future residents and businesses. Track population and use projections to ensure adequate supply and retain surface water (reservoir) and associated watershed lands to ensure supply into the future as an added insurance against climate or pollution risks. Install contemporary water meter in all residences in North Adams, to add efficiency to tracking water use.



Two examples of green infrastructure at UMass-Amherst: On the left, a bioretention swale catches storm water and slows it down, allowing it to cool and percolate into the ground instead of flowing quickly, full of sediment, into the Mill River and its wetlands. On the right, a rain garden on the UMass-Amherst campus provides a beautiful space to relax while providing water slowing and filtering services. A parking lot in Wilmington (MA) uses permeable pavement and a swale to reduce water runoff at a lake-side recreation area.

Policy IS 5.3: Manage stormwater to minimize flood hazards and protect water quality by employing watershed-based approaches that balance environmental, economic and engineering considerations.

Action A: Understand the Stormwater System and its Performance

Digitize stormwater system documentation for use in maps and analysis.

Action B: Maintain Drainage

Ensure that the city's drainage systems are adequately maintained.

Action C: Reduce Stormwater Runoff and Protect Water Quality Within North Adams

Pursue a range of approaches to reduce stormwater runoff and protect water quality including during peak flow events. Encourage these tools at all levels: residential neighborhoods, institutional campuses and public spaces. For residential applications, the University of Massachusetts Extension provides information regarding how to site a rain garden, size considerations and suitable plantings. Consider such applications as: Rain gardens, bioretention cells or swales, permeable pavement. These different types of green infrastructure can be encouraged or incentivized through zoning and development regulations.



Improving access to the river (foreground) and eventual removal of the Route 2 overpass (background) to reroute traffic back through downtown are two significant infrastructure objectives.

C. Roads and Bridges

GOAL IS 6: CONTINUE TO PROMOTE A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT AFFORDS MOBILITY FOR ALL AND PROVIDES APPROPRIATE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING, SERVICES AND RECREATION AREAS.

Policy IS 6.1: Advocate for priority transportation infrastructure needs of the city in regional investment and planning decisions.

Action A: Maintain a Map of Roadway Conditions

The city should maintain a map of roadway conditions in GIS that allows the city to analyze and prioritize improvements, including how those improvements could be packaged with other subsurface infrastructure needs. This will also enable the city to quickly respond and advocate its needs in special grants as well as the annual transportation improvement program process.

Action B: Ensure City Transportation Priorities Are Well Represented on Regional Project Lists

Continue North Adams' presence on the regional MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) and develop a municipal list of priority projects eligible for MPO funds for which to advocate in that venue.

Action C: Address Challenges Posed by Route 2 Design and Overpass

Route 2, particularly the overpass, pose a number of access, livability, and multi-modal safety barriers to fostering a people-oriented downtown and supporting economic activity for small businesses. During the planning process, this issue was repeatedly raised and recognized; however, it was considered a longer-term item given the high cost of removing the overpass and relative newness of the roadway. It is not impossible: Buffalo, New York is currently working to remove the "skyway" and rebuild an Olmsted park that had been removed for road construction decades ago. Consider the re-integration of Route 2 into the downtown, perhaps also allowing additional development in that area more reminiscent of the downtown prior to urban renewal demolitions. As road and bridge projects move forward and major investments are planned that include Route 2, a reconstruction should be considered instead of a simple maintenance of the roadway as it is currently built. The City owns this bridge, and will need to pursue state or federal funding to address challenges.

Policy IS 6.2: Implement multi-modal improvements and maintenance for a well connected, safe year-round system.

Action A: Promote Broader Use of Transit in the City

Promote expanded public transportation options and ridership campaigns. Ensure that existing and future employment, commercial and service centers, and housing concentrations are adequately served by public transit.

Action B: Use Incremental Maintenance Process to Implement Multi-modal Streets

Encourage projects, designs and initiatives that promote a shared, safe transportation system for bicyclists, motorists, transit users and pedestrians. Work with MassDOT's GreenDOT initiative, and consider pursuing programs such as Safe Routes to School and working with Mass in Motion to identify and offer multi-modal incentives for things like ride sharing and biking.

Action C: Improve Vehicular Routes and Alignments

The city's roadways, due to the Route 2 overpass and other major changes, contain multiple issues for cars, trucks and buses following intended routes. Inventory these problems, conduct a traffic study and define and implement remedies to traffic flow and safety problem spots. There are also intersections with no signage, which can be confusing to new residents or visitors from out of town. Seek to clearly mark and sign all intersections.

Action D: Identify and Address Areas of Congestion, Chronic Speeding, and Accidents

During the neighborhood meetings, residents pointed to a number of areas where speeding, poor signage, and congestion from on-street parking caused mobility and safety concerns. The city should build on these conversations and work interdepartmentally with property owners and neighborhood groups to implement changes and improvements such as traffic signs, conversion of certain streets to one-ways, stronger enforcement, and addressing multi-family parking needs in high-density areas.

Action E: Identify Priority Areas for Enforced Snow Clearing or Removal

Work with neighborhood associations and businesses to communicate about snow removal requirements and enforce those requirements. The city should also review its role as a snow-removal entity along major roadways to ensure there are not problem spots and whether there are additional areas that should be included in its route. Conversations and enforcement should be age- and ability-aware to ensure there are not outstanding reasons for non-compliance. Work with neighborhood and community groups to assess alternate compliance methods. Consider enforcement regimes with commercial establishments, and include areas around schools and transit stops priority for early snow removal.

Action F: Consider Possibility of Returned Passenger Rail Service to North Adams or the Northern Berkshires

While the City is pursuing efforts to introduce a scenic railway experience between North Adams and Adams, it also has rail tracks used for freight transport. It should consider future use of these tracks for passenger rail service. In the mean time, the City could support the proposed return of passenger rail service from Danbury, Connecticut to Pittsfield, Massachusetts and explore ways it could benefit from this.

Action G: Continue to Promote the Airport as an Asset for Economic Development and Recreation

The airport is an asset for the city of North Adams, and we should continue to pursue funding opportunities for maintenance and enhancements as necessary. The state currently provides funding for municipal airports, including for terminal buildings. In the past, the airport has been a hub for recreational use such as gliding. The Pittsfield airport has undergone substantial infrastructural improvements to improve safety and enhance its use commercially.



The city is fortunate to have McCann Technical School, an important regional asset for workforce development.

D. Schools and Education

GOAL IS 7: PROVIDE PUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT OFFER A HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL NORTH ADAMS' CHILDREN AND ADEQUATE SCHOOL FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT TO SERVE THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY.

Policy IS 7.1: Proactively work with the school departments and school boards to better utilize resources, including infrastructure, in a cost effective manner.

Action A: Hold regular working group meetings with school department, school board and municipal officials

Hold a summit for school departments, school boards and municipal officials and establish a mechanism for regular dialogue. School budgets are a significant component of municipal budgets often approaching or exceeding 50% of the total budget. However, there is no forum for regular dialogue between municipal officials and schools boards or departments at a municipal or regional level. A forum for regular dialogue would enable municipal officials and school departments to identify common issues and objectives and seek collaborative solutions.

Policy IS 7.2: Monitor and forecast school service demand based upon actual and predicted population demographics.

Action A: Participate in the development of, and share demographic information about, population projections

Nearly all of the communities in Berkshire County are experiencing population loss. Many communities are already grappling with low student enrollment and rising education costs. Working constructively to develop and share data is an important first step toward identifying potential problems and viable solutions that work toward the best interests of the majority.

Action B: Explore creative alternatives to meet the changing needs of the region

Explore creative alternatives for providing adequate school infrastructure to meet the changing needs of the city. There is a cost associated with the operation and maintenance of school buildings, along with salaries, health insurance, desks, supplies, etc. With reductions in state aid and declining student enrollment creative alternatives need to be considered to ensure that the needs of the students and the community are met without resulting in a fiscal burden. Creative alternatives may include sources of grant funding, grant application across school districts, shared resources, equipment or technology, and shared use of school buildings for compatible uses where allowed by state law.



The City employs one of the only professional (versus volunteer) fire departments in the county.

E. Public Safety

GOAL IS 8: ENSURE THAT NORTH ADAMS HAS THE NECESSARY SERVICES, FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND MANPOWER REQUIRED TO PROVIDE FOR ALL PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY AND EMERGENCY NEEDS.

Policy IS 8.1: Ensure adequate staffing and facilities to enable public safety services to perform their duties with excellence.

Action A: Complete a Public Safety Facility Study

Complete a study to determine true extent of needed renovations or construction of a new facility. The existing public safety facility has ADA issues. Future efforts should include identifying suitable locations for a public safety facility.

Action B: Replace Aging Cruisers and Fire Apparatus

Existing pumper/engines for the fire department are from 1987 and 1989.

Action C: Interdepartmental Collaboration for Proactive Safe Design in City Projects

As infrastructure and facility projects move forward, departments should include public safety officials to identify hazards in infrastructure or development projects to ensure new problems are not created or an opportunity to eliminate a safety or access problem is missed because of a lack of communication.

Action D: Maintain Mutual Aid or Mutual Assistance Agreements

Maintain mutual aid or mutual assistance agreements with local fire departments to ensure an adequate response in the event of a major fire, fire in areas with limited capacity, or other emergencies.

Action E: Expand the Mutual Aid Model

Expand the mutual aid model to create efficiencies through the use of shared equipment whenever possible without compromising public safety.

Action F: Support Training Costs

The City has identified the need for a Public Safety training facility/program, as many of the training opportunities are far away. This should be included in the Public Safety Facility Study.

Action F: Support Funding for a Public Safety Vehicle Maintenance Program

Create a program and hire or contract out repair and maintenance of all Public Safety vehicles by certified emergency vehicle technicians.

Policy IS 8.2: Take actions and implement programs to support neighborhood and community crime and safety needs.

Action A: Identify Priority Areas for Police Substations

At a series of neighborhood workshops, North Adams residents identified a desire to see enhanced police presence to help prevent crime. Longtime residents noted that neighborhood substations were community assets.

Action B: Identify Priority Areas for Foot or Bicycle Patrols

Neighborhood residents also noted the usefulness of foot or bicycle patrols to ensure police presence and engagement in priority neighborhood areas.

Action C: Identify Locations for Community Policing Programs

Neighborhood residents and the City have noted a need for strengthened relationships between city residents (especially youth) and law enforcement. One suggestion included having officers hold “office hours” in schools or community centers – maintaining an engaged presence while conducting non-patrol work.

Action D: Advocate for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment

Local treatment options for mental health and addiction are limited and yet drug and alcohol use is frequently cited as a major contributing factor to violent crime incidents and property crime events. Continue to advocate for resources to support long-term, intensive mental health care as well as preventative strategies as a form of crime prevention.

Action E: Increase Funding for Evidence-based Crime Prevention Programs

Continue to identify new sources of revenue and support for preventative programs, including the potential of public-private partnerships and youth-based initiatives.

See also Housing and Neighborhoods Chapter.



The concrete flood chutes, while not ideal from a visual or environmental perspective, were put to a full test during Hurricane Irene.

GOAL IS 9: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Policy IS 9.1: Encourage proactive planning within North Adams to reduce the loss of life, property, infrastructure, environmental and cultural resources from natural disasters.

Action A: Develop and maintain up-to-date Hazard Mitigation and Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans

All communities should have up-to-date Hazard Mitigation and Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans on file with Massachusetts Emergency Management.

Action B: Encourage broader participation in Code RED system

North Adams already participates in the Code RED system, but broader participation is desired. Outreach to recruit additional residents into the system could be conducted at the City level as well as at the neighborhood group level. Outreach to vulnerable populations, such as elderly residents living alone, should be prioritized.

Action C: Citywide Disaster Awareness Campaign

Make sure that all North Adams residents are familiar with municipal disaster plans as well as steps individual homes and businesses should take independently to promote their own safety and readiness.

Action D: Coordinate Disaster Planning Between City and Major Employers

Continue to work with North Adams institutions, including area health care providers and the Massachusetts College of Liberal Art to develop disaster plans.

F. TECHNOLOGY

GOAL IS 10: INVEST IN STATE OF THE ART TECHNOLOGY AND RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF FIBER NETWORKS TO BETTER SERVE THE COMMUNITY.

Policy IS 10.1: Continue to improve, expand and maintain state of the art technology equipment.

Action A: Expand City Municipal Fiber Network

Integrate fiber network expansion with other infrastructure projects to cost effectively plan for future fiber network to homes, businesses and local government.

Action B: Increase Capacity for Next-Generation Broadband Connectivity

While recognizing that future emerging technology is challenging, it is critical that planning exists to ensure that capability exists for increased broadband connectivity speeds.

Action C: Adopt Phased Funding Approach to Maintain and Upgrade Technology Equipment

A phased approach to stay ahead of the curve with state of the art technology equipment will ensure that funding is available for regularly scheduled future technology equipment upgrades and improvements.

GOAL IS 11: IMPROVE CITIZEN ACCESS TO BROADBAND.

Policy IS 11.1: Expand and support community broadband access.

Action A: Increase Broadband Access

Partner with broadband provider companies to identify neighborhood-based low broadband usage areas and explore partnerships to provide low-cost or free broadband access.

Action B: Expand Current Public Wireless Broadband Access

Recognize current and future broadband expectations by providing city-wide wireless broadband access with initial focus on all city recreational areas, school campuses, police substations and their surrounding neighborhoods.

Action C: Improve and Support Public Computer Centers

Replace computers used by the public with state of the art equipment and adopt a replacement program to keep them up-to-date. Continue technical support to all city computer centers, including the North Adams Public Library and Council on Aging who provide free broadband access and technical education to our community.

GOAL IS 12: CREATE EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT SERVICES USING TECHNOLOGY

Policy IS 12.1: Improve, Expand, Consolidate and Share Data Centers, Backups, Disaster Recovery and Technology Services

Action A: Develop a Consolidation Plan for City and School Data Centers

Consolidating all city and school computer servers into the city's fully virtualized data center is a cost effective measure that provides disaster recovery and a centralized backup system.

Action B: Identify and Inventory City and School Technology Equipment

Conduct an inventory of all city and school computer technology equipment and identify areas where duplication exists.

Action C: Centralized Mobile Applications

Continue to engage with other governmental entities to provide mobile applications with the flexibility to serve the residential and business needs of our community. The city's investment in mobile applications will strive to provide a central portal for all municipal needs while having the capability for seamless future expansion.

Action D: Expand City Voice and Fax over IP

Continue to expand the city Voice and Fax over IP solution which is a long term cost effective solution with the capability to accommodate future expansion to all city and school buildings.

Action E: Partner with Other Governmental Entities and Educational Institutions

Continue to explore partnerships with other governmental entities and educational institutions to better serve our community and local government.

Action F: Incorporate Cutting-Edge Emerging Technology

Incorporate cutting-edge mobile and social media technology to communicate reliable city public information. The goal is for information to be available anywhere, at any time, and include services such as distributing bills, receiving bill payments or soliciting resident concerns, etc.

Action G: Coordinate City-Wide Technology Purchases

Recognize technology investments made and coordinate future city-wide technology purchases to ensure that all equipment maintains a level of flexibility and interoperability to efficiently and economically handle the changing needs of technology.

Action H: Explore State-Wide Financial Software Solutions

Acquire a secure flexible centralized financial software solution that has the capability to handle all city and towns while allowing for autonomous reporting and analysis. The software modules would minimally include General Ledger, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Purchase Orders and Payroll and have the flexibility to seamlessly integrate future applications.

Action I: Explore a State-Wide Centralized Mobile-Based Application for Bill Collections

Explore a centralized portal to handle all bill collections for every city and town in Massachusetts.

Action J: Implement Non-Cash Payment Methods

Implement the capability for non-cash payment methods using debit, credit cards and automatic bank account withdrawals.

Action K: Develop and Implement Geographical Information System (GIS) Strategic Plan

Recognize the importance of maintaining and improving the city's Geographical Information System (GIS) by developing a strategic plan for future investment. Continued development of the city's geospatial data and integration with the State of Massachusetts' Geographical Information System (GIS) data is an integral component for a successful Geographical Information System (GIS).

Action L: Replace Water Meters with Electronic Readers

Implement and fund the replacement of all water meters with automatic electronic meters that could be automatically read from vehicles that traverse the city on a daily basis.

Action M: Pursue Paperless Local Government

Identify areas where going paperless is cost effective and develop plans for replacement solutions.

Action N: Support Telecommunication Expansion

Continue to lobby for expanded and improved telecommunication to better serve our city.

Action O: Explore Centralized Retirement Board Administration

A centralized Retirement Board Administration computer system available to all retirement systems throughout the commonwealth is a cost effective solution for every city and town.

9 LAND USE

The city is set within a valley with steep terrain on all sides. This means that the city has naturally developed with a compact footprint and is largely “built out” in terms of additional developable land. This does not however mean that land use pattern changes cannot occur. The city can still define the patterns it would like to see in the future through new development, infill, and redevelopment. This chapter sets out the future land use plan, the map and accompanying land use descriptions that convey what patterns are desired for the future of the city. It then sets goals, policies, and actions for the city to pursue to implement that map to achieve the quality and type of development to foster a strong future for the city.



Related Maps

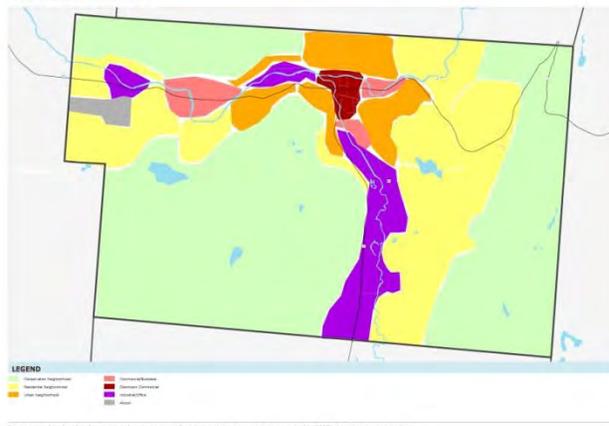
- Map 16: Existing Land Use (State)
- Map 17: Existing Land Use (Assessor)
- Map 18: Zoning
- Map 19: Future Land Use Plan

Located in Appendix C

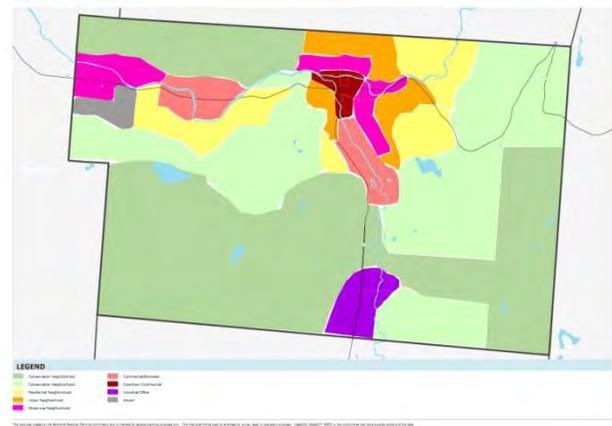
FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

A future land use plan maps out land use patterns and functional areas for the long-term future of a community. It is a non-regulatory blueprint intended to guide development or redevelopment efforts, zoning changes, and encourage a range of place making efforts. A summary of the public open house on land use and infrastructure and services is contained in Appendix D.

SCENARIO 1



SCENARIO 2



The future land use plan was developed through scenarios whereby members of the public and the steering committee were given two scenarios, and asked to indicate which they preferred. The first scenario demonstrated the status quo, or land use continuing as is in North Adams. The second scenario demonstrated new mixed use areas, scaled back development expectations in areas with constraints, and emphasized community gateways to mark entry into the city. Participants resoundingly selected scenario 2 as the future land use plan for the city.

LAND USE CATEGORIES

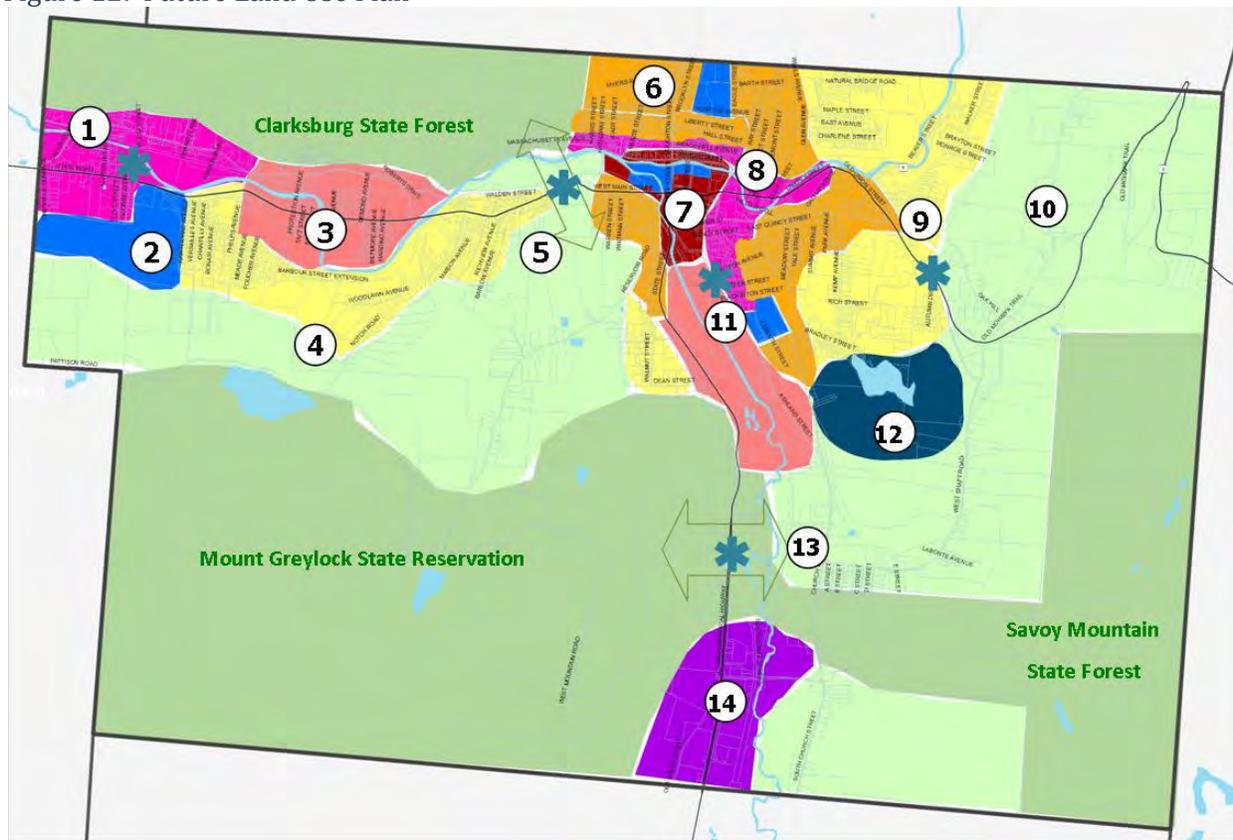
This table provides a summary of each land use category. These categories sync with the regional land use plan adopted through the Sustainable Berkshires plan in March 2014. The summary paints the picture – what land use looks like in the area. The primary and secondary uses indicates area appropriate uses to support through land use and zoning regulation.

Future Land Use Category	Description	Primary Uses	Secondary Uses
Resource Conservation <i>Density: Very low</i>	<p>This land use category denotes those lands currently protected from development. It contains state owned land as well as lands protected by conservation restrictions, held by towns and non-profit organizations such as land trusts. These lands contain critical habitat, provide biodiversity and offer recreation resources. They provide connectivity of other resource areas and provide corridors for wildlife. Typically they have many constraints to development including habitat and slope constraints. The scenic nature of many of these areas, including view sheds and landscapes, is a contributing factor to the Berkshires being a tourism attraction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Space • Recreation • Habitat preservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestry • Watershed protection
Rural Residential <i>Density: Low</i>	<p>This land use category represents areas where low-density residential development either exists or in many instances could occur, although in many instances there are severe constraints to development that would preclude any development, such as slope or wetlands. These areas are outside of the downtown and generally adjacent to conserved lands. The emphasis here is to maintain a distinct rural identity and landscape and ensure that low density development in these areas employs best practices for wildlife-friendly landscaping, stormwater management, and resource protection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-family residences • Agriculture • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duplexes • Home-based businesses • Rural small businesses • Resource based economic development
Outdoor Recreation Neighborhood <i>Density: Medium to High</i>	<p>Regionally, these areas are medium to high density neighborhoods around lakes, ski or other resort areas. They are located there because of the lake or resort and may be largely second homes. In the city, the development around Windsor Lake resembles this given, while more connected to the city than other such areas in the county, the lake is a key draw and asset. Care needs to be given not to degrade the recreational asset or impair associated environmental qualities or restrict access to a degree that limits the lake as a recreational resource for the broader community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single family residences • Condos • Recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting retail /commercial • Home-based businesses
Residential Neighborhood <i>Density: Medium to High</i>	<p>This land use category represents areas of medium to high density residential development. This is the Berkshires version of the suburbs. These are our well-established neighborhoods, often with sidewalks, of primarily single family homes with some duplexes and apartments. They are largely auto-dependent and do not contain a broad mix of services or retail opportunities for residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-family residences • Duplexes • Apartments • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale gardening • Home-based businesses

<p>Urban Neighborhood <i>Density: High to Very High</i></p>	<p>This land use category contains predominantly high density residential development in an urban environment. These areas contain single and multi-family residences in close proximity to each other. A diverse mix of residents populates these areas. Residents feel closely linked to the activities happening in downtown and to nearby neighborhood-serving retail as well as service and employment opportunities. Services such as pocket parks, corner stores or coffee shops provide the opportunity for social engagement. High quality public services are generally provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-family residences • Duplexes • Apartments • Condos • Multi-family residences • Neighbor-hood commercial and retail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community services • Home based business
<p>Mixed-Use Neighborhood <i>Density: Medium to High</i></p>	<p>Mixed use neighborhoods contain an eclectic mix of uses, including a range of residential densities, vertical and horizontal mixed use, and commercial uses - that can provide for many of the needs of the residents without the use of cars.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community retail • Community services • Home-based businesses
<p>Highway/Corridor Commercial <i>Density: Medium to high</i></p>	<p>These areas provide retail, commercial, and professional services developed corridor-style along route 2 and route 8. Public transit generally serves these sites although they are auto-oriented in their design, typically with large parking areas in front of the buildings. Most of the shopping areas, including grocery stores, are located in these sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail • Professional office • Hotel / motel • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage / warehousing
<p>Downtown Commercial <i>Density: Very high</i></p>	<p>The downtown is the physical and social heart of the city. It has high density mixed use multi-story buildings in close proximity to each other. A wide mix of land uses offer basic as well as specialized good and services along with municipal services and cultural opportunities. Residential opportunities, especially on upper floors, are provided. There is a space for residents and visitors of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy social engagement, recreational activities and cultural events. Pedestrian accessibility is a strength of these areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail • Medical services • Professional services • Cultural amenities • Senior housing • Apartments • Restaurants • Residential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban recreation • Light manufacturing
<p>Industrial <i>Density: Low to high</i></p>	<p>These areas serve as employment centers and house a number of the city's larger employers. They have major infrastructure needs: arterial highway access is very important and transit service is available. This includes the industrial park and other current industrial use areas as well as some additional land that could be developed with employment uses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturing • Industrial • Energy & infrastructure • Freight / goods movement • Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting commercial • Storage/ware housing •
<p>Special Use Area</p>	<p>These areas contain educational institutions (MCLA), the hospital, and the airport: institutions with relatively large land holdings and a unique function within the city distinct from more general land use categories, They are areas that are relatively self-contained but exert a strong influence on the surrounding areas. They can serve as activity centers used by relatively large numbers of people on a periodic or regular basis. In many instances they have their own facilities plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Institutions • Hospitals • Airports • Cultural Institutions¹ • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting commercial

¹ Because the Mass MoCA campus includes additional commercial use, the Steering Committee opted to not designate it as a Special Use Area.

Figure 12: Future Land Use Plan



- 1 Blackinton area is designated mixed-use, which is similar to the current land use pattern which includes a mix of housing types and interspersed small-scale commercial both in the small commercial district and along Route 2.
- 2 The airport is highlighted as a major feature with a strong connection to and gateway treatments on that section of Route 2 to create an attractive entry for those entering the city from the west or by air.
- 3 Community-scale commercial is retained in this area of Route 2.
- 4 Neighborhood density is “feathered” getting less dense closer to mount Greylock to both create an urban-rural transition and to reflect some of the natural constraints, including slope and draining, in this area.
- 5 This area, with cemeteries on either side of route 2, creates a natural break just before one begins the descent into downtown. This break is emphasized here as a gateway into downtown, doubling as a wildlife crossing.
- 6 Urban neighborhoods surround downtown and support patronage of the businesses and activities there.
- 7 The downtown is a higher density mixed use area with an emphasis on vertical mixed use that includes housing.
- 8 Mixed use areas surround downtown and create a transition between the higher-density mixed use of the downtown with some more moderate density mix of uses (vertical and horizontal).
- 9 Route 2 gateway treatments for those descending into the city from Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway east of the city.
- 10 Rural neighborhoods along West Shaft Road and Mohawk Trail retain their lower-density rural character.
- 11 The commercial corridor or Ashland Street is emphasized as an important corridor connecting the downtown and MCLA.
- 12 Windsor Lake and the surrounding neighborhood is highlighted with a special district emphasizing the recreation and natural values of the resource and retaining access for public use into the future.
- 13 This area, with its many wetlands and seasonal flooding, is not well suited to development and serves as a natural gateway separating the industrial uses on Route 8 in Adams and North Adams from the downtown area.
- 14 The industrial park and additional nearby undeveloped lands are retained as an important land supply for primary employment sites and jobs creation.

GOALS, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

GOAL LU 1: IMPLEMENT FUTURE LAND USE PLAN TO ACHIEVE COMMUNITY GOALS RECOGNIZED THROUGHOUT NORTH ADAMS VISION 2030

Policy LU 1.1: Use the future land use plan as a guide for land use, development and conservation decisions within North Adams.

Action A: Use the Plan as a Guide for Development or Redevelopment Decision Making

Use desired land use goals and other plan goals to guide projects that will positively influence the City of North Adams.

Action B: Comprehensive Zoning Update

Update North Adams' existing zoning code to be consistent with the future land use plan, possibly including form-based code elements. The City will be working with BRPC to identify issues with the existing zoning code, and identify strategies to bring the code up to date and become a tool to help implement goals of the North Adams Vision 2030 plan.

Policy LU 1.2: Adopt land use tools and techniques to revitalize and expand activity within downtown.

Action A: Consider Mixed-use Zoning in the Downtown Area

Increasing the mix, including allowing housing on the upper floors of buildings, and businesses can help support a more active downtown. This was noted in both the Economic Development and Housing and Neighborhoods chapters.

Action B: Consider Adopting Design Guidelines

Design guidelines can help the city guide and enforce aesthetics of areas, whether infill and modifications within the downtown or areas identified as downtown gateways. Gateways are a visitor's first impression of a community and design guidelines can help guide plantings, façade improvements and property maintenance.

Action C: Consider a Smart Growth Zoning Overlay District (40R)

The 40R Overlay District encourages mixed income housing development by providing financial incentives to municipalities through payments for units, bonus payments, educational costs and funding preference from DHCD, the Executive Offices of Environmental Affairs, Transportation, and Administration and Finance.

Action D: Designate Local Historic District Bylaw with Design Guidelines

Having a local historic district allows for review of exterior architectural changes visible from a public way for respect to the historic character of a district. Encouraging design guidelines within the district would ensure renovations or new development are consistent with and do not detract from the historic character.

Action E: Adopt a Corridor Overlay District in the Downtown

A pedestrian-friendly downtown is a key objective of the city. This overlay district can help support pedestrian-friendly design by promoting denser development or redevelopment, mixed-use, parking considerations and urban design elements such as building placement, parking location, or provision of active facades. In the public workshops, residents especially noted the need for traffic calming along Route 2.

Action F: Adopt Cultural District Designation

The Massachusetts Cultural Council's Cultural District designation aims to strengthen the sense of place, stimulate local economic activity and improve the personal experience of visitors and residents. The designation will bring attention to the City as a tourist destination rather than one or two individual sites, and will also build a case for grant program applications and focused investment.

Policy LU 1.3: Adopt land use tools and techniques to support and expand the industrial park and commercial areas to retain and add living wage jobs, and to promote North Adams as a business-friendly community.

Action A: Identify Priority Growth or Priority Development Area(s)

The state has incorporated this language into a number of its programs as it works to prioritize and package public investment in a way to maximize impact. The region has set a goal of working to identify these sites countywide, whether those sites are local or regional. The city should proactively work to identify its own priority sites to make it more competitively placed for funding and enable it to advocate for one or more city sites as sites of regional and state priority.

Action B: Consider adopting the Chapter 43D Expedited Permitting Zoning Bylaw

43D sites have an expedited permitting pathway which allows municipalities to offer a maximum of a 180 day local permitting process. Opting into 43D allows cities to target areas for economic development through streamlined permitting. The Berkshire region has three of these districts, but none are in North Adams. Such a district could be a tool in redeveloping some of the larger, unused buildings in the City. This could ideally be linked to a high priority site the city would like to see listed as a state Priority Development Area as the state considers 43D status in those selections.

Action C: Consider an Adaptive Reuse Zoning Bylaw

One city objective is to facilitate the reuse of historic buildings and sites, including mills, churches, former big box stores or any kind of large building. An Adaptive Reuse Zoning Bylaw can be linked to special permitting to allow further discretion for the City and/or permitting authority.

Action D: Foster Business-friendly Environment Within Zoning Update Process

Work with the business community to identify current problem areas and explore zoning or permitting tools or incentives to remove barriers as a means of facilitating industrial and commercial site reuse and business growth and development. These could include overlay districts as described above.

Action E: Consider a Corridor Overlay District on Route 8 and Route 2

These two main arterial corridors are also home to planned bike paths, major community serving commercial and major employers. It is therefore important to support traffic management and foster a multi-modal environment in highway commercial and industrial areas, particularly where the bike paths or major pedestrian routes (e.g. Appalachian Trail crossing) interface with those areas.

Action F: Continue to Ensure That the City Supports Alternative Means of Employment

With broadband expansion, alternate employment and business models such as telecommuting and home-based businesses are expected to increase. The city can support this by reviewing and updating home based business regulations and by promoting mixed use opportunities in the Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

Policy LU 1.4: Employ appropriate land use tools and techniques to support the river as a central recreation and character asset in the downtown and larger community.

Action A: Consider a Low Impact Development Bylaw

The river is a major feature of the city and one planned for increased recreation and aesthetic focus. The terrain of the city means water runoff and flood management has been and will continue to be a critical infrastructure need. Current practice is working to integrate “green infrastructure” to help support system capacity and function as an alternative to traditional, high-cost upgrades. Practices encouraged in a Low Impact Development bylaw could include green infrastructure such as stormwater planters, vegetated swales, and rain gardens or required use of infiltration or permeable pavements.

Action B: Consider Adopting Native Landscaping Standards for Neighborhoods

Individual property owner decisions on landscaping and maintenance can impact water quality. Develop a bylaw to help cultivate best practices, particularly within the riparian corridor or near other features of natural resource significance to help protect the integrity of wildlife corridors and crossings.

Action C: Provide Training and Technical assistance for Residents and Businesses

Commercial and private property owners interested in implementing green infrastructure in front yards of right of ways should be able to access information and technical assistance to do so. This could include partnering with MCLA or McCann, as well as with local nursery or gardening centers, and working with City to identify priority areas for green infrastructure implementation and best practices.

Action D: Maintain Resource Protection Overlay Districts

North Adams has resource protection overlay districts, and maintaining these districts will help protect natural resources and public health and welfare.

Action E: Continue to Pursue the Planning and Implementation of the Mohawk Bicycle Pedestrian Trail

North Adams is working with BRPC and Williamstown to plan and implement a bicycle and pedestrian pathway between the two communities and along the river. This planning effort offers great benefits for residents of both communities.

Action F: Consider Adopting Scenic Mountains Act

Scenic Mountains Act is a Berkshire County land use tool designed to guide development in higher-elevation areas as a means of safeguarding surface water quality in lowland areas. While much of the upland area surrounding the city is in conservation, the bylaw could be of use in helping to retain the scenery of the surrounding landscape, assist with stormwater runoff, and protect surface water quality of Windsor Lake and the river.

Policy LU 1.5: Use land use tools and techniques to retain or improve linkages to key recreational resources.

Action A: Negotiate Public Resource Connections

Explore how the negotiation of public resource connections can be retained through development review process to help promote linkages to public resources regardless of ownership.

Action B: Maximize the Use of Publicly or Privately Conserved Land

This effort can be pursued through estate planning, to secure permanent public access to recreation and open space resources

Policy LU 1.6: Adopt land use tools and techniques to encourage the maintenance of and reinvestment in all of North Adams' neighborhoods.

Action A: Consider Complete Streets Design Standards

This would be best used for neighborhoods struggling with vehicular traffic. These standards can address street width, parking patterns, plantings and other elements of design and construction to help calm traffic and focus on pedestrian safety and comfort.

Action B: Adopt a Mixed-use Bylaw

A Mixed-use bylaw or district supports neighborhood-scale commercial activity in what are now primarily residential neighborhoods. It also helps advance the addition of housing in the downtown, helping to maintain continual activity and presence. A mixed use district for the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods should include design parameters that prioritize pedestrian access and safety. Route 2 corridor mixed use should also accomplish this, but may have different criteria given the more residential setting and scale, however, addressing traffic-calming for Route 2 and Massachusetts Avenue is a priority in that area.

Action C: Designate Local Historic District Bylaw with Design Guidelines where Appropriate

The city has a number of national historic districts, but no local districts which carry a greater degree of protection. As the Historical Commission works through the process of updating surveys and nominating districts, the Planning Board and other city leaders should support the investigation and proposal of one or more local historic districts where there are concentrations of notable sites and structures.

Policy LU 1.7: Adopt land use tools and techniques to support and expand food production within the City of North Adams, and to support active life styles through enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure as well as linkages to recreation and open space.

Action A: Require Multi-modal Infrastructure

Consider incorporating pedestrian or cycling infrastructure as a design standard in new development or adaptive reuse projects.

Action B: Safe Routes to School

Consider implementing Safe Routes to School to encourage walking or biking as healthy and safe means of school transportation

Action C: Right to Farm

Adopt a Right to Farm bylaw to encourage food production within North Adams.

GOAL LU 2: PROVIDE THE NORTH ADAMS PLANNING BOARD WITH THE SUPPORT NECESSARY TO CHAMPION THE NORTH ADAMS VISION 2030 LAND USE PLAN

Policy LU 2.1: Communicate and educate on the plan and how to use it.

Action A: Support Boards Through Increased Access to Training

Actively pursue training opportunities open to planning board members, including workshops and presentations hosted by BRPC or the Citizen Planner Training Collaborative.

Action B: Working Group Meetings

Encourage working group meetings between the planning board and city staff, boards, and officials to foster better understating of implementation efforts and progress and opportunities for collaboration.

Action C: Seamless Development Review Communications within City

Ensure staff and other boards and commissions (e.g., Conservation Commission and Historic Commission) are brought into development decisions early, perhaps using an all boards approach if the proposal is complex enough to warrant it.

Action D: Promote Use of the Neighborhood Geographies

Continue to incorporate the newly delineated neighborhood boundaries into land use planning efforts and implementation.

Action E: Engage the North Adams Neighborhood Council in land use planning efforts

Once created, engage them as community partners to help define and shape land use planning efforts as appropriate (See Housing and Neighborhoods, Goal 3, Policy 2, Strategy 1).

10 IMPLEMENTATION

The following section reviews the mechanisms and resources through which the plan will be implemented. While the list of actions called for in the plan is extensive, it is useful to remember that the list is long because it is intended to keep the City and its partners busy for ten years or more.

PLEASE NOTE: As of May 1, this implementation table has not been completely filled out. It is included in the planning packet to provide the Planning Board with an idea of how implementation will be guided and tracked.

HOW WILL THE PLAN BE IMPLEMENTED?

TYPES OF IMPLEMENTATION ACTION

The implementation table, below, breaks down the actions of the plan into five basic types:

1. **Policy/Planning (PP):** Actions that call for new policies enacted at the administrative level to guide departments and City functions or additional studies to bring a project or idea to fruition.
2. **Regulatory (R):** Actions that call for new or amended regulations by the City including formal policies adopted by City Council, changes to zoning, addition of special districts, and other similar tools.
3. **Capital Investments (CI):** Actions that require hard investments by the City such as anything related to transportation, water, and wastewater infrastructure and the equipment and facilities needed to provide City services.
4. **Work Plan Integration (WPI):** Strategies that can easily be integrated into the existing work plans for City departments, boards, commissions, non-profits, business groups, and civic groups.
5. **Existing Collaboration (EC):** For strategies that are either being addressed through a current collaboration or initiative, or that could be addressed through an expansion of an existing effort.
6. **Partnerships/Initiatives (PI):** For strategies that would be new – no one is currently doing this work or efforts are fragmented and would benefit from some economy of scale or coordination. This includes any number of partnerships as make sense for the specific action, including public, private, institutional, and/or nonprofit/institutional sectors. The goal is to leverage resources to maximum impact for the community.

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

While the City will take the lead with plan implementation and tracking progress over time, it will not be alone. Achieving all of the goals for the future of North Adams will require the unified collaboration of non-profits, community groups, private sector, and residents working with each other and the City.

Community Partners

IB	I Berkshire	NBBUW	Northern Berkshire United Way
ATC	Appalachian Trail Conservancy	NB-CoC	Northern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce
BCoC	Berkshire Chamber of Commerce		
BCREB	Berkshire County Regional Employment Board	nbCC	Northern Berkshire Community Coalition
		P	Partnership for North Adams
BHS	Berkshire Health Systems	RR	Hoosic River Revival
BH	Berkshire Housing Development Corp		
BNRC	Berkshire Natural Resources Council		Spitzer Senior Center
BVB	Berkshire Visitors' Bureau		Airport Commission
C	City of North Adams		Industrial Park Commission
BRPC	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission		
MCLA	Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts		
MiM	Mass In Motion		
MoCA	MASS MoCA		

North Adams Boards and Departments

OT	North Adams Office of Tourism	MO	Mayors' Office
NAHA	North Adams Housing Authority	CA	City Administrator
	Planning Board	OCD	Office of Community Development
	Historical Commission	BD	Building Department
	Zoning Board of Appeals	DPW	Department of Public Works
		PARK	Parks Department
		PD	Police Department
		FD	Fire Department
		SD	School Department

FINANCING IMPLEMENTATION

- **Policy/Planning:** The City will maximize the use of existing staff time and use specialized consultants as needed depending on the types of policy changes or type and extent of planning studies.
- **Regulatory:** Regulatory changes will be made through a combination of staff work and the use of specialized consultants.
- **Capital Investments:** Capital investments will be financed through the city, with a maximum emphasis on bringing various grants or private investment into specific projects to minimize cost to the city.
- **Work Plan Integration:** These should be primarily achievable through existing staff time, with the exception of any ancillary costs such as additional tools or training that might be needed.
- **Partnerships/Initiatives:** With the exception of capital improvements, these are potentially the most costly over the long-term. This is because there is up-front work needed to build momentum and coordinate individual turfs and agendas to pave the way for changes or new initiatives that these actions envision. These would be largely funded through private and grant funds.

C	City of North Adams	TBD	To be determined
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant		
MiM	Mass In Motion (and related future program grants that sustain work on health and wellness)		
PARC	PARC Grants		

IMPLEMENTATION TIMING AND TRACKING

This plan is intended to contain enough action steps to create a 10+ year work plan for the City and its partners. In the following implementation matrix, each action step is assigned a target implementation time in one of four categories:

- O Ongoing
- 0-1 Early/first year
- 2-5 Shorter-term but not immediate
- 5+ Longer-term

Some actions either dovetail well with current efforts or can easily be integrated into city functions. These can be identified as either ongoing or early actions to take. Other actions are more complicated in that they either require additional plans or studies (including engineering), consensus building, capital investment, or all of the above. Priorities are not set in detail after five years with the expectation that the City will revisit this table as time goes by and items are implemented to set new priorities within the actions within this time category.

As items are completed, assigned timing can be revised to check off the C for complete. This should be done on an annual basis through a collaboration of city staff and the Planning Board, with a summary update provided to the City Council at a regular meeting, which will be televised for city residents to view.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
GOAL E 1: EFFECTIVELY REBRAND AND MARKET THE CITY								
Policy E 1.1: Develop a rebranding package to effectively communicate the city to residents and visitors.								
<i>Action A: Rebrand and Market the City</i>		✓				PI	OT, BVB	
<i>Action B: Offer a Central Platform for North Adams and Northern Berkshire Tourism and Events</i>		✓				PI		
Policy E 1.2: Work with local, northern Berkshire and regional entities to market the city.								
<i>Action A: Increase Local Use of Northern Berkshire Events and Attractions</i>		✓				EC		
<i>Action B: Coordinate Unified Messaging and Reciprocity</i>		✓				EC		
<i>Action C: Cultivate Local Business Referral Practices</i>			✓			EC		
<i>Action D: Maximize Benefit to City of Regional Marketing and Business Development Efforts</i>			✓			EC		
GOAL E 2: LEVERAGE THE CITY'S MANY ASSETS INTO ECONOMIC CATALYSTS								
Policy E 2.1: Capitalize on the proximity of local colleges to grow new business and link graduates into the workforce.								
<i>Action A: Grow Innovation Challenge Events</i>			✓			EC		
<i>Action B: Offer Local Start-up Financing to Grow or Support Clusters</i>						PI		
<i>Action C: Continue to Partner with MCLA On Mutually Supportive Projects and Investments</i>	✓					EC		
<i>Action D: Maximize Economic Impact of New Center for Science and Innovation</i>		✓				EC		
<i>Action E: Expand Degree Programming to Meet Economic Development Goals</i>			✓			EC		
<i>Action F: Alumni Business Recruitment Events</i>						EC		
Policy E 2.2: Grow the region as a premier active outdoor recreation destination in the northeast.								
<i>Action A: Increase Visitor Capture From Mt. Greylock</i>			✓			EC/PP		
<i>Action B: Promote Active Outdoor Recreation Business Development</i>						EC/PP		
<i>Action C: Increase Number of Outdoor Race Events</i>		✓				EC		

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
<i>Action D: Create Better Connections Between City and Surrounding Trail Systems</i>			✓			EC		
<i>Action E: Achieve Appalachian Trail Community Designation</i>		✓				EC/PP		
Policy E 2.3: Strengthen health services in the city to support the economic vitality of the northern Berkshire region.								
<i>Action A: Restore and Enhance Health Care Delivery to Fit Community Needs</i>						EC		
<i>Action B: Enhance Preventative Health Programming</i>			✓			EC/PI		
<i>Action C: Highlight Local Health Care Services as an Important City Asset</i>		✓				EC		
<i>Action D: Support Medical Workforce Needs</i>			✓			EC/PI		
<i>Action D: Evaluate Potential and Desire for Health Industry Cluster</i>			✓			PP		
GOAL E 3: WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH BUSINESS, THE COMMUNITY AND INVESTORS TO ACHIEVE A CONTINUAL CYCLE OF INVESTMENT AND IMPROVEMENT IN THE CITY								
Policy E3.1: Make permitting and city processes a model of business-friendly best practice.								
<i>Action A: Streamline and Modernize Development Permitting and Review</i>		✓				R		
<i>Action B: Advance Ways to Quickly Connect Small Businesses to Appropriate Resources to Improve Success Rate</i>		✓				PI		
Policy E 3.2: Make optimal use of tools and incentives to attract and leverage investment.								
<i>Action A: Pursue New Market Tax Credits to Leverage Investment</i>		✓				PP		
<i>Action B: Designate Key Sites for Financing Tools and Incentives</i>		✓				PP		
<i>Action C: Work With North Adams Chamber of Commerce on Business Improvement District</i>			✓			EC		
<i>Action D: Develop Package of Small Business Programs</i>			✓			EC/WPI/PI		
<i>Action E: Explore Ways to Meet Full Range of Small Business Financing Needs Locally</i>			✓			PI		
<i>Action F: Leverage Investment Through Public-Private-Non-Profit Partnerships</i>				✓		PI		

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			

GOAL E 4: ENCOURAGE JOB GROWTH AND BUSINESS RELOCATION IN THE CITY

Policy E 4.1: Actively recruit new businesses to the city.

Action A: Offer a Clear and Coordinated Business and Resident Recruitment Platform			✓			PI/WPI/EC		
Action B: Designate Single Point of Contact for Business Recruitment		✓				WPI		
Action C: Expand and Improve Technology Infrastructure				✓		PI		

GOAL E 5: GROW A SKILLED WORKFORCE TO MEET ECONOMIC NEEDS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

Policy E 5.1: Offer a diverse range of internship, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training opportunities in the city.

Action A: Strengthen Internship Network		✓				EC		
Action B: Utilize Technical High School for Emerging Workforce Training Opportunities			✓			EC/PI		
Action C: Enable Additional Higher Education Opportunities				✓		EC/PI		

Policy E 5.2: Ensure that the City's Pre-K-12 education system is one of the best in the region.

Action A: Focus on Early Childhood to Improve Kindergarten Readiness			✓			EC		
Action B: Set Targets for School Performance and Then Meet or Exceed Them			✓			WRI/PI		
Action C: Offer a Multi-faceted Curriculum that Maximizes Benefit of Context			✓			PI		

GOAL E 6: IMPLEMENT STRATEGIC REDEVELOPMENT ACTION TO RECONNECT AND REBUILD THE DOWNTOWN TO ELIMINATE THE SCARS LEFT BY URBAN RENEWAL

Policy E 6.1: Build upon strong anchor points within the downtown, expanding and connecting destinations until the cycle of reinvestment impacts the entire downtown.

Action A: Develop Zoning to Better Support Redevelopment				✓		R		
Action B: Ensure Future Development Improves Downtown Fabric			✓			PP		
Action C: Assess Parking Needs and Distribution		✓				PP		
Action D: Create a Tool to Market Downtown Spaces for Rent		✓				EC/PI		
Action E: Plan for Future Needs of Downtown Commercial Occupants			✓			PP		
Action F: Develop Key Partnerships to Advance Private Investment Efforts			✓			EC/PI		

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
<i>Action G: Utilize New Cultural District Designation</i>		✓				PP/R		
Policy E 6.2: Target key pedestrian and bicycle improvements to foster safe and easy movement throughout the downtown and between the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.								
<i>Action A: Plan for Long-Range Municipal Improvements to Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure</i>		✓				PP/CI		
<i>Action B: Utilize Best Practices to Make Streets Safe for All Modes of Travel</i>			✓			PP/CI		
<i>Action C: Reduce Excessive Pavement in the Downtown</i>				✓		PP/CI		
<i>Action D: Develop Bike Routes in Key Locations</i>				✓		PP/CI		
<i>Action E: Address Problem Intersections for Pedestrians and Cyclists</i>			✓			PP/CI		
<i>Action F: Support Multi-modal Culture in the City</i>		✓				PP/CI		
GOAL E 7: IMPROVE THE LIVABILITY AND LIVELINESS OF DOWNTOWN								
Policy E 7.1: Increase the number and diversity of people living and working in the downtown.								
<i>Action A: Diversify Housing Options in Downtown</i>				✓		PP/PI		
<i>Action B: Coordinate Development of Artist Housing</i>			✓			PP/PI		
<i>Action C: Encourage Student Housing in Downtown</i>		✓				EC/PP		
<i>Action D: Provide Transit Options to Connect Students to Downtown</i>		✓				EC		
Policy E 7.2: Develop attractive gateways and critical capture points to draw people into the downtown.								
<i>Action A: Utilize Signage to Market Key Destinations</i>		✓				PP/CI		
<i>Action B: Support Transit to Better Connect Local Communities</i>		✓				EC		
Policy E 7.3: Link economic decisions to regional plan.								
<i>Action A: Connect Key Anchor Points in the Downtown</i>			✓			PP/CI		
<i>Action B: Link Special Events to the City Core</i>		✓				PP/EC/CI		
<i>Action C: Streamline Permitting for Special Events</i>		✓				R/WPI		
<i>Action D: Encourage Visitation of Downtown with Accessible Entertainment</i>		✓				PP/CI		

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
<i>Action E: Leverage Downtown Proximity to Mount Greylock</i>			✓			PP/CI		
Policy E 7.4: Integrate accessible and interactive community spaces for all ages throughout the downtown.								
<i>Action A: Increase New Green and Public Spaces in the Downtown</i>			✓			PP/CI		
<i>Action B: Improve Existing Community Spaces</i>		✓				PP/CI		
<i>Action C: Reconnect the Community to the Hoosic River</i>		✓				PP/CI/EC		
<i>Action D: Continue Art Displays</i>		✓				EC		
<i>Action E: Utilize Bike Path Development for the Benefit of Downtown</i>			✓			PP/CI		
GOAL E 8: ENHANCE BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN THE CITY CORE								
Policy E 8.1: Coordinate and promote existing businesses in the downtown.								
<i>Action A: Enhance Retail and Business Options for Residents and Visitors</i>			✓			EC		
<i>Action B: Develop an Internal Scheduling Process</i>		✓				WPI		
<i>Action C: Continue to Encourage Buy Local Campaign</i>	✓					EC		
Policy E 8.2: Support programmatic connections between downtown and anchor attractions such as MCLA and MASS MoCA.								
<i>Action A: Strengthen Programmatic Connections from MCLA to Downtown</i>			✓			EC		
<i>Action B: Make North Adams More of a College Town</i>				✓		EC/PP/CI		
<i>Action C: Address Physical Barriers Around Anchor Institutions</i>				✓		PP/CI		
GOAL E 9: DEVELOP SOUTH ROUTE 8 AS A KEY EMPLOYMENT AREA AND STRENGTHEN ITS CONNECTION TO THE REST OF THE CITY								
Policy E 9.1: Target specific priority sites along the Route 8 corridor for redevelopment and supporting infrastructure improvements.								
<i>Action A: Route 8 Corridor Study</i>		✓				PP		
<i>Action B: Safeguard Southern Route 8 Corridor as an Employment Hub</i>			✓			PP/R		
<i>Action C: Support Key Investments at Noel Field</i>			✓			PP/CI		
<i>Action D: Reposition Heritage State Park as a City Attraction</i>		✓				EC/CI		

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			

Policy E 9.2: Cultivate and connect Route 8 gateway district to serve as an attractive gateway and extension to the downtown.

Action A: Business Façade and Streetscape Beautification			✓			PP/CI		
Action B: Traffic Calming, Bike and Pedestrian Improvements				✓		PP/CI		
Action C: Gateway Signage and Treatments			✓			PP/CI		

GOAL E 10: BUILD AN ATTRACTIVE GOODS AND SERVICES CORRIDOR ALONG ROUTE 2 BETWEEN WILLIAMSTOWN AND NORTH ADAMS

Policy E 10.1: Make physical improvements to improve appeal and usability of the Route 2 Corridor.

Action A: Reduce Unnecessary Signage Along Route 2				✓		PP/CI		
Action B: Target Pedestrian Improvements at Key Locations				✓		PP/CI		

Policy E 10.2: Target specific priority sites along the Route 2 corridor for redevelopment and supporting infrastructure improvements.

Action A: Continue to Support Airport Improvement		✓				EC		
Action B: Determine Potential Future Uses of Fairground Site			✓			PP		
Action C: Address Needs for Redevelopment of Mills			✓			PP/R		
Action D: Reuse Remediated Sites				✓		PP/CI		

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

GOAL OSR 1: OFFER A HIGH-QUALITY AND DIVERSE RECREATION SYSTEM TO SUPPORT THE HEALTH, ENJOYMENT, AND ECONOMIC NEEDS OF THE CITY.

Policy OSR 1.1: Make the parks and recreation offerings of the city more visible to residents and visitors. (4)

Action A: Develop Comprehensive North Adams Recreation Guide		✓				PI		
Action B: Improve Recreation Amenity Wayfinding Signage			✓			PP/CI		
Action C: Coordinate and Maintain Comprehensive Trail Map Data	✓					EC		

Policy OSR 1.2: Maintain a high level of service for different user groups across the city. (6)

Action A: Maintain an Up-to-date Open Space and Recreation Plan	✓					PP		
Action B: Centralize the Organization of Recreation Facilities, Programs, and Outreach				✓		WPI		

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
<i>Action C: Prioritize Existing Facility Maintenance and Enhancement</i>		✓				WPI/PP		
<i>Action D: Provide Safe Routes to Recreation</i>			✓			PP/CI/EC		
<i>Action E: Expand Use of Existing Recreational Facilities</i>			✓			WPI		
<i>Action F: Catalyze and Coordinate Development or Protection of Priority Sites</i>	✓			✓		PP/CI/PI		
Policy OSR 1.3: Leverage city park and recreation amenities to support business development, tourism, and resident attraction and retention efforts. (7)								
<i>Action A: Cultivate System of Mountain Biking Trails</i>			✓			PI		
<i>Action B: Increase and Leverage Presence of Winter Outdoor Recreation</i>			✓			WPI/EC		
<i>Action C: Market North Adams Businesses to Outside Racing Events and Attractions</i>	✓	✓				WPI/EC		
<i>Action D: Make North Adams a Trail Friendly Community</i>						EC		
GOAL OSR 2: IMPLEMENT WESTERN NEW ENGLAND GREENWAY COURSE THROUGH THE CITY								
Policy OSR 2.1: Implement Bikepath as Part of Western New England Greenway Vision (4)								
Policy OSR 2.2: Cultivate Riverway Multi-use Path as Asset for Recreation and Enjoyment (6)								
<i>Action A: Focus on River Greening and Increased Access within Community Core</i>			✓			EC/CI/PP		
<i>Action B: Secure or Create River Access Points for Recreational Use</i>			✓			EC/CI/PP		
<i>Action C: Recreation-Supporting Infrastructure</i>			✓			PP/CI		
Policy OSR 2.3: Employ the River Corridor Greenway as Wildlife Habitat and Movement Corridor								
<i>Action A: Employ Wildlife-Friendly Landscaping</i>			✓			PP		
<i>Action B: Ensure Conservation Commission Involved In Development Review Process</i>		✓				WPI		
GOAL OSR 3: PROMOTE YEAR-ROUND HEALTHY LIVING AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLES FOR ALL AGES								
Policy OSR 3.1: Promote healthy active living within the community. (14)								
<i>Action A: Increase Healthy Activity in City's School System</i>		✓				WPI		
<i>Action B: Establish Network of Walking Routes and Trails</i>			✓			WPI/EC		

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
<i>Action C: Make More Healthy Heart Trails Locally</i>			✓			EC		
<i>Action D: Mayor's Fitness Challenge</i>		✓				WPI/PI		

GOAL OSR 4: RESPECT THE CITY'S PLACE WITHIN IMPORTANT HABITAT AREAS BY PROVIDING WILDLIFE CORRIDORS AND CONNECTIONS TO SUPPORT BIODIVERSITY

Policy OSR 4.1: Work with local conservation partners to implement the regional Conservation Framework within the city. (4)

<i>Action A: Refine and Adopt Conservation Framework</i>				✓		WPI/PP		
<i>Action B: Educate Landowners on Conservation Options</i>			✓			WPI/EC		

Policy OSR 4.2: Develop appropriate tools and practices to support wildlife-friendly development, prioritizing important habitat areas as identified within the Conservation Framework. (1)

<i>Action A: Facilitate Safe Wildlife Movement Across Route 2</i>				✓		WPI/EC/CI		
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GOAL OSR 5: CONTINUOUSLY WORK TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND INTEGRITY OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN AND AROUND THE CITY

Policy OSR 5.1: Improve the data environment to inform decision-making around environmental quality and natural resources. (5)

<i>Action A: Advocate for and Support a Hoosic Watershed Rare Species Survey</i>			✓			PI		
<i>Action B: Develop Comprehensive Understanding of Municipal Conservation Issues</i>		✓				PP		
<i>Action C: Continue Water Quality Analysis and Pollution Reduction Strategies</i>		✓				EC		
<i>Action D: Create and Maintain Comprehensive Brownfield Site Inventory</i>		✓				WPI/EC		

Policy OSR 5.2: Protect and enhance the water quality of rivers and lakes throughout the city. (7)

<i>Action A: Work with Army Corps of Engineers and other River Partners to Improve Water and Habitat Conditions in Chutes</i>				✓		PI		
<i>Action B: Implement Urban Tree Program along River</i>			✓			WPI/PI		
<i>Action C: Address Dams and Other Sources of Stream Fragmentation</i>			✓			PP/CI/PI		
<i>Action D: Engage in Local Education About Non-point Source Pollution</i>		✓				WPI		
<i>Action E: Offer Programs and Incentives for Property-Owner Run-off Reduction</i>						WPI		

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			

GOAL OSR 6: BROADEN RANGE OF TOOLS AND PARTNERS TO ACHIEVE EFFICIENT RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT.

Policy OSR 6.1: Diversify funding and stewardship resources to benefit open space and recreation amenities. (4)

Action A: Adopt Community Preservation Act		✓				R		
Action B: Pursue Corporate Sponsorship Arrangements		✓				PII		
Action C: Gradually and Consistently Pursue Grants to Implement Improvements	✓					WPI		
Action D: Encourage Community Members to Adopt a Park or Trail		✓				PI		
Action E: Engage Local Youth to Care for their Recreation Facilities		✓				PI		

Policy OSR 6.2: Coordinate Maintenance to Maximize Impact of Scarce Resources (3)

Action A: Coordinated Recreational Resource Management				✓		WPI		
Action B: Identify and Promote Financial Benefits for Private Owners			✓			WPI/PI		

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

GOAL HN 1: PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY HOUSING OPTIONS THAT MEET A VARIETY OF NEEDS AND LIFESTYLES

Policy HN 1.1: Monitor housing supply and demand to proactively plan to meet needs.

Action A: Maintain Up-to-Date Housing Needs Assessment						WPI/PP		
Action B: Create a Municipal Affordable Housing Committee						PP		

Policy HN 1.2: Support public, private and individual reinvestment into housing and neighborhood conditions.

Action A: Support Non-profit Housing Renovation Program Activity						EC		
Action B: Update the Mill Revitalization District to Increase Flexibility						R		

Policy HN 1.3: Transition affordable housing stock to a mixed-income model.

Action A: Prioritize Sites for New Mixed-Income Construction or Renovation						PP		
Action B: As Housing Authority Complexes Age, Rethink Their Shape, Location, and Function						PP		

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
GOAL HN 2: ADDRESS BLIGHT AND IMPROVE PROPERTY VALUES								
Policy HN 2.1: Empower neighborhoods and individuals to combat blight and disrepair conditions.								
Action A: Offer Creative Programs to Support Owner Action						PI		
Action B: Continue City Cleanup Days						WPI		
Policy HN 2.2: Improve issue property identification and enforcement procedures.								
Action A: Neighborhood Code Violation Monitors						PI		
Action B: Enhance Vacant or Foreclosed Property Ordinance								
Action C: Use GIS to Track Geography of Code Violations and Police Calls						WPI		
Policy HN 2.3: Create progressive system to bring tax lien and delinquent properties back into productive use.								
Action A: Maintain Property Inventory						WPI		
Action B: Streamline Receivership						WPI/PP		
Action C: Develop Reuse Strategy to Help Target Efforts						PP		
Policy HN 2.4: Work with landlords to maintain their properties.								
Action A: Rental Property Registration and Inspection						WPI/PP		
Action B: Create Meaningful Incentives and Penalties to Support Action						PP/R		
GOAL HN 3: SUPPORT STRONG COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS WITHIN NEIGHBORHOODS								
Policy HN 3.1: Collaborate to reduce crime in neighborhoods.								
Action A: Neighborhood Watch						PI/EC		
Action B: Property Security Trainings						PI		
Action C: Neighborhood Beat Officers						WPI		
Action D: Prioritize Safety Lighting Needs						WPI		
Policy HN 3.2: Support neighborhood groups and neighborhood activities.								
Action A: Create a Standing Neighborhoods Committee						WPI/PP		
Action B: Provide Annual Support for Community-Driven Neighborhood Initiatives						WPI		
Policy HN 3.3: Work to create stronger physical and social connections between affordable housing projects and surrounding neighborhoods.								
Action A: Bike Path and Walking Connections						EC/WPI		

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
<i>Action B: Continue to Support Programs and Efforts to Create Broader Concept of Neighborhood</i>						WPI/EC/PI		

Policy HN 3.4: Ensure each neighborhood has quality local recreation options and easy connections to city or regional amenities.

<i>Action A: Focus Project Priorities on Increasing Variety and Balancing Supply of Recreation Options Across Neighborhoods</i>						WPI/PP		
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION

GOAL HP 1: PROVIDE THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION WITH THE SUPPORT AND RESOURCES NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THE CITY'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOALS.

Policy HP 1.1: Maintain and expand historic inventory and listing activity.

<i>Action A: Bring All Existing Surveys Up-to-Date</i>						WP/II		
<i>Action B: Identify and Prioritize Additional Survey Areas or Resource Types</i>						WPI		
<i>Action C: Identify Ongoing Revenue Sources to Fund Survey Work</i>						WPI		
<i>Action D: Make Historic Inventories Available Online</i>						WPI		
<i>Action E: Map Historic Resources</i>						WPI		
<i>Action F: Pursue Regional Survey Partnerships</i>						PI		

Policy HP 1.2: Integrate the Historical Commission into larger city government functions and decision-making.

<i>Strategy A: Increase the Capacity of the North Adams Historical Commission</i>						WPI		
<i>Strategy B: Historic Preservation Tools and Techniques Education and Outreach</i>						R/PP/WPI		

GOAL HP 2: RETAIN AND MAINTAIN THE HISTORIC FABRIC OF THE CITY TO THE GREATEST EXTENT FEASIBLE

Policy HP 2.1: Implement municipal bylaws and policies to protect historic resources from irrevocable harm.

<i>Action A: Adopt a Demolition Delay Bylaw</i>						R		
<i>Action B: Adopt an Affirmative Maintenance Bylaw</i>						R		
<i>Action C: Identify Buildings with Maintenance Concerns Early</i>						WPI/PI		
<i>Action D: Identify Priority Areas to be Protected through a Local Historic District</i>						PP/R		
<i>Action E: Identify Priority Areas to be Protected through Architectural Preservation Districts, aka Neighborhood Conservation Districts</i>						PP/R		

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
Policy HP 2.2: Develop and make available financial incentives supporting historic property reinvestment in the city.								
Action A: Establish a Revolving Loan Fund						R/PI		
GOAL HP 3: MAXIMIZE THE BENEFITS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION TO THE CITY'S ECONOMY								
Policy HP 3.1: Promote and facilitate the sensitive and robust reuse of historic residential, commercial and industrial properties throughout the city.								
Action A: Include Up- and Down-Zoning in zoning rewrite						R		
Policy HP 3.2: Integrate historic tourism into the city's overall culture and tourism strategy.								
Action A: Make the Historic Fabric of North Adams Part of a Wayfinding Campaign						PI		
Action B: Maintain and Enhance a Historical Museum						CI/PI		
Action C: Support Efforts to Designate Downtown North Adams as a Cultural District						WPI		
Policy HP 3.3: Support preservation and robust use of local landmarks and institutional uses.								
Action A: Develop Zoning to Protect Landmarks and Civic Uses						R		
Action B: Locate Cultural Activities within and around Historic Properties						PP/PI		
Action C: Call Attention to Lost or Hidden Historically Significant Sites						WPI		
GOAL HP 4: SET HISTORIC PRESERVATION PRACTICE AS A CORNERSTONE FOR AN OVERALL HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS STRATEGY								
Policy HP 4.1: Facilitate Homeowner Access to Information on Historic Properties and Preservation Options								
Action A: Promote Publicly Available Information on Historic Properties						WPI		
Policy HP 4.2: Promote and facilitate the purchase of and investment in historic properties in foreclosure or owned by the city.								
Action A: Create a Catalogue of Historic Homeownership Opportunities with a Financial Incentive						WPI/PP/PI		
Action B: Offer a Guide to Historic Housing Rehabilitation						WPI/PI		

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			

GOAL HP 5: MAXIMIZE SOCIAL BENEFITS OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCE BENEFITS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Policy HP 5.1: Build community awareness and support for historic preservation.

<i>Action A: Encourage Local History in Elementary and Secondary Schools</i>						WPI		
<i>Action B: Support Local History at Institutions of Higher Learning</i>						WPI		
<i>Action C: Offer Glimpses of City History on a Daily Basis</i>						WPI		
<i>Action D: Continue and Enhance Historic Tours</i>						WPI		
<i>Action E: Develop a Clearinghouse of Information about North Adams History</i>						WPI		
<i>Action F: Promote the Connection of Historic and Cultural Resources</i>						WPI		

GOAL HP 6: SUPPORT REGIONAL PRESERVATION INITIATIVES AND ENSURE CITY IS WELL REPRESENTED

Policy HP 6.1: Support efforts to coordinate historic preservation initiatives and programs at the regional-scale.

<i>Action A: Encourage a Revolving Loan Fund for Private Homeowners</i>						PI		
<i>Action B: Participate in Scenic Byway Planning</i>						EC		
<i>Action C: Support a Regional Historic Preservation Organization</i>						PI		

FOOD AND HEALTH

GOAL FH 1: STRIVE TO INTEGRATE A ROBUST, LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM (PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION AND ACCESS) INTO EXISTING URBAN FABRIC

Policy FH 1.1: Promote urban farming and community gardening as a way to produce and distribute local, healthy foods in North Adams.

<i>Action A: Identify Viable Spaces for Urban Farming or Community Gardens</i>						PP		
<i>Action B: Facilitate Use of City-Owned Vacant Parcels for Garden Spaces</i>						PP		
<i>Action C: Align Regulations with Local Food Goals</i>						R		
<i>Action D: Link Gardens to Education to Empower More People to Grow and Eat Fresh</i>						EC/PI		
<i>Action E: Incorporate Food Production in Affordable Housing Site Plans</i>						PP		

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			

GOAL FH 2: STRENGTHEN THE NORTH ADAMS ECONOMY THROUGH ITS FOOD SYSTEM

Policy FH 2.1: Encourage the growth of businesses that grow, distribute, process and sell local and healthy foods – especially those that offer healthy food access to low-income neighborhoods or areas designated as USDA Food Desert.¹

Action A: Market and Site Analysis to Understand Business Development Options						PP		
Action B: Consider Growing and Recruiting Food Related Anchor Businesses						PP		
Action C: Encourage the Location of a Local Foods Market in North Adams						PP		

GOAL FH 3: PROVIDE ACCESS TO HEALTHY, LOCAL FOOD FOR ALL NORTH ADAMS RESIDENTS

Policy FH 3.1: Promote pedestrian friendly locations for food outlets, including healthy food retail, farmers markets and community gardens within easy walking or cycling distance of low-income neighborhoods, work places and other gathering points.

Action A: Safe Routes to Food						WPI/PP		
Action B: Eliminate Food Desert						PP		
Action C: Relocate North Adams Farmers Market						EC		
Action D: Encourage Healthy Options in all Food Retail Sites						EC		

Policy FH 3.2: Enhance affordability and access of local, healthy food options for all North Adams residents.

Action A: Expand Retailer Options for Food Subsidy Program Recipients						EC/PI		
Action B: Offer Healthy Food Purchase Incentives						PI		
Action C: Offer ‘Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program’						EC/PI		
Action D: Continue to Support Subsidized CSA Share Programs						EC		
Action E: Create Mobile Food Options						EC/PI		
Action F: Healthy Cooking Training for Food Service Employees						PI		
Action G: City-MCLA Garden Partnership						EC		
Action H: Promote Food Education to Facilitate Healthy Eating Behaviors						WPI/PI		

¹USDA defines a “food desert” as an area where at least 500 people and/or 33% of the census tract population reside more than one mile from a supermarket or grocery store.

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
Policy FH 3.3: Support food assistance sites, such as pantries and meal locations, in providing local, healthy foods.								
Action A: Increase Presence of Local Food in Emergency Food Options						EC		
Action B: Increase Exposure to Healthy Food						EC		
Action C: Season Extension						PP		
Policy FH 3.4: Enhance existing opportunities for healthy and local foods at local restaurants, stores and other market outlets.								
Action A: Partner with Northern Berkshire Community Coalition's Mass in Motion Program to Assist Local or Neighborhood Stores in Stocking Fresh, Healthy Foods						EC		
Action B: Augment Awareness of and use of SNAP or WIC Benefits at the North Adams Farmer's Market						EC		
Action C: Encourage Healthy and Fresh Food Options in Local Restaurants						PP/EC		
GOAL FH 4: INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN NORTH ADAMS SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTIONS								
Policy FH 4.1: Promote health and nutrition through better eating and other wellness activities in and around North Adams schools and institutions.								
Action A: Promote Partnerships for Healthful Eating in City Institutions						EC		
Action B: Support Education and Career Development Focused on Agriculture and Food Systems, Including Food Preparation, Value-added Processing, Nutrition and Hospitality.						EC/WPI/PI		
Action C: Encourage Opportunities for Youth Training and Participation with Local Partners						EC		
Action D: Encourage Healthy and Local Foods in Cafeteria Settings						WPI		
Action E: Explore Municipal Purchasing Arrangements between City Programs and Local Food Suppliers.						WPI		
Action F: Provide Municipal Support for School Wellness Programs.						WPI		

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
Policy FH 4.2: Promote local foods in the North Adams education system, and reduce non-healthy food options.								
Action A: Provide Municipal Support Where Possible for School Gardens.						WPI		
Action B: Encourage Healthy, Local Food Options in Schools through Both Cafeteria Service and Curriculum Development.						WPI		
Action C: Provide Technical Assistance for North Adams Schools Interested in School Gardens.						PI		
Action D: Identify Funding Opportunities for School Gardens from a Variety of Funding Sources, including Public and Private Entities.						WPI		
Action E: Promote Healthy Vending Opportunities in North Adams Schools.						PP		
Action F: Help Connect North Adams with Partners to Increase the Range of Snacks Available within City Schools.						WPI		
Action G: Encourage Sharing and Promotion of Nutrition and Physical Activity Best Practices at North Adams Schools.						WPI		
Action H: Establish a Working Group of Food Service Directors, Superintendents and other School Stakeholders to Address Farm to School Opportunities and Challenges.						PI		
Action I: Implement a Pilot Farm to Cafeteria Project: Identify a Grower and Institution Interested in Testing out Contractual Growing.						WPI		
Action J: Include Garden Mosaics Service Learning Program as a Fixed item in the School Budget to Encourage Sustained Capacity.						PI		
Action K: Promote Healthy Eating and Living through a Variety of Media						WPI		
Policy FH 4.3: Integrate food and agriculture planning efforts into broader policy and governance conversations.								
Action A: Be An Active Advocate in Ongoing Work of the Massachusetts Food Policy Council						WPI		
Action B: Develop Working Group, Such as North Adams Food Policy Council, Representing a Full Cross-section of Local and Regional Government								
Action C: Leverage Local and Regional Assets to Grow and Sustain Community Food System Initiatives						EC		

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
<i>Action D: Use Food System-related Actions to Help Achieve Open Space, Transportation, Land Use, Community & Economic Development, Housing, Natural Resource and Solid Waste Goals of Comprehensive Plan, and vice a versa.</i>						WPI		

GOAL FH 5: PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE METHODS OF FOOD PRODUCTION AND FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT

Policy FH 5.1: Encourage sustainable gardening and agriculture practices through community education opportunities and outreach.

<i>Action A: Partner with Local and State Institutions and Organizations to Provide Gardening Workshops</i>						EC/PI		
<i>Action B: Consider Possible Partnerships with Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts MCLA</i>						PI		

Policy FH 5.2: Reduce food waste.

<i>Action A: Synchronize Local Efforts to Address and Meet State Regulations Regarding Food Waste</i>						PI		
<i>Action B: Work with Schools and Institutions to Implement Composting Program</i>						PI		
<i>Action C: Consider Food Waste as a Potential Energy Resource within the City of North Adams</i>						PP		
<i>Action D: Support Investment in Organics Infrastructure – for the Collection and Hauling of Organic Materials</i>						PP		
<i>Action E: Support Targeted Business Development to Create New and Green Jobs in Food Waste Reduction and Recycling</i>						PP		

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

GOAL IS 1: ENSURE THAT LONG-TERM PLANNING INITIATIVES INCLUDE THE MAINTENANCE, OPERATION AND EVENTUAL REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Policy IS 1.1: Engage in proactive asset management programs in all aspects of infrastructure planning including both new development and routine maintenance.

<i>Action A: Adopt a Capital Improvement Plan and Community Facilities Plan</i>						WPI/PP		
<i>Action B: Encourage a Proactive Asset Management Regime in All City Departments</i>						WPI		
<i>Action C: Expand Use of User Fees</i>						PP/R		
<i>Action D: Track Infrastructure in GIS</i>						WPI		
<i>Action E: Municipal Services Efficiency</i>						WPI		

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
<i>Action F: Plan to Maintain and Develop Services to Enhance North Adams' Competitiveness</i>						WPI		
Policy IS 1.2: Prioritize economic self sufficiency at the department level – where feasible, encourage the adoption of an enterprise fund and departments to engage in revenue generating strategies.								
<i>Action A: Establish Dedicated Maintenance and Replacement Accounts for Infrastructure Projects</i>						PP		
<i>Action B: Consider Enterprise Funds for Public Utilities, Recreation or Transportation</i>						PP		
Policy IS 1.3: Explore new opportunities for shared services and/or regionalization to reduce costs and create efficiencies.								
<i>Action A: Group Purchasing</i>						PP		
<i>Action B: On-line Permitting</i>						PP		
<i>Action C: Continuously Pursue Service Delivery Efficiency</i>						PP		
GOAL IS 2: BUILD CLIMATE RESILIENCE INTO THE PLANNING AND MAINTENANCE OF MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SPACES								
Policy IS 2.1: Integrate planning for increased temperatures into North Adams planning practice								
<i>Action A: Offer Shade and Drinking Water in Public Spaces</i>								
<i>Action B: Encourage Shade Tree Planting in Public Works and in Commercial or Residential Plans or Areas</i>								
<i>Action C: Develop a Cooling Center Network</i>								
<i>Action D: Develop a Vulnerable Populations Phone Tree</i>								
Policy IS 2.2: Work to reduce impacts caused by hydrologic extremes from increased intensity and frequency of storm events to periods of drought.								
<i>Action A: Green Roofs</i>								
<i>Action B: Rainwater Harvesting</i>								
<i>Action C: Increase Capacity of Bridges and Culverts</i>								
GOAL IS 3: ENSURE THAT NORTH ADAMS' PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES MEET CURRENT NEEDS AND RECEIVE THE MAINTENANCE REQUIRED TO PRESERVE THEIR FUNCTIONALITY AND VALUE TO THE CITY								
Policy IS 3.1 Promote innovative practices in facility management and maintenance, paying special attention to practices that are good for human health and environmental quality.								
<i>Action A: Public Building and facility Assessment Framework</i>								

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
<i>Action B: Consider Adopting a Comprehensive Environmental Management Strategy for all City Facilities</i>								
<i>Action C: Streamline Maintenance of Buildings and Grounds Across City Departments</i>								

GOAL IS 4: BUILD A RESILIENT CITY BY PROACTIVELY WORKING TO SET AND ADVANCE CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION BEST PRACTICE

Policy IS 4.1: Endorse Sustainable Berkshires Climate and Energy Element and work to implement its contents at the municipal level.

<i>Action A: Endorse Regional Climate and Energy Element</i>								
<i>Action B: Adopt Berkshire Climate Resolution</i>								
<i>Action C: Track Emission Reductions</i>								
<i>Action D: Highlight Climate Reduction Best Practices and Opportunities in North Adams</i>								
<i>Action E: Create a North Adams Energy Committee</i>								

Policy IS 4.2: Create a policy and incentive environment that is supportive of renewable energy project implementation.

<i>Action A: Continue to Pursue Green Communities Designation</i>								
<i>Action B: Renewable Energy Bylaws</i>								
<i>Action C: Provide Residential Solar Incentives</i>								

Policy IS 4.3: Continue to improve the City's renewable energy portfolio.

<i>Action A: Green Energy Mix Through Group Purchasing</i>								
<i>Action B: Lead by Example</i>								
<i>Action C: Continue to Pursue Hydroelectric Feasibility</i>								
<i>Action D: Conduct Wind Power Feasibility Study</i>								
<i>Action E: Track Emerging Technologies and Grant Programs</i>								

Policy IS 4.4: Maximize use of existing energy efficiency and conservation programs through marketing and promotion of available options.

<i>Action A: Implement Energy Efficiency In Municipal Buildings</i>								
<i>Action B: Promote Available Efficiency Programs</i>								

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
<i>Action C: Promote Water Conservation Through Low Flow Appliances</i>								

GOAL IS 5: MAINTAIN ADEQUATE WATER, WASTEWATER AND STORMWATER FACILITIES AND SUBSURFACE INFRASTRUCTURE.

Policy IS 5.1: Implement and maintain an up-to-date water Capital Improvement Plan.

<i>Action A: Expand Long-Term (20 year) Water Study Into Full Capital Improvement Plan</i>								
<i>Action B: Enterprise Fund</i>								
<i>Action C: Explore Sustainable Infrastructure Alternatives</i>								

Policy IS 5.2: Provide high quality municipal infrastructure and utility services.

<i>Action A: Maintain, Upgrade and Improve Wastewater Collection System</i>								
<i>Action B: National Pollutant Discharge and Elimination System (NPDES) Compliance</i>								
<i>Action C: Water Supply to Meet Current and Future Needs</i>								

Policy IS 5.3: Manage stormwater to minimize flood hazards and protect water quality by employing watershed-based approaches that balance environmental, economic and engineering considerations.

<i>Action A: Understand the Stormwater System and its Performance</i>								
<i>Action B: Maintain Drainage</i>								
<i>Action C: Reduce Stormwater Runoff and Protect Water Quality Within North Adams</i>								

GOAL IS 6: CONTINUE TO PROMOTE A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT AFFORDS MOBILITY FOR ALL AND PROVIDES APPROPRIATE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING, SERVICES AND RECREATION AREAS.

Policy IS 6.1: Advocate for priority transportation infrastructure needs of the city in regional investment and planning decisions.

<i>Action A: Maintain a Map of Roadway Conditions</i>								
<i>Action B: Ensure City Transportation Priorities Are Well Represented on Regional Project Lists</i>								
<i>Action C: Address Challenges Posed by Route 2 Design and Overpass</i>								

Policy IS 6.2: Implement multi-modal improvements and maintenance for a well connected, safe year-round system.

<i>Action A: Promote Broader Use of Transit in the City</i>								
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Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
<i>Action B: Use Incremental Maintenance Process to Implement Multi-modal Streets</i>								
<i>Action C: Improve Vehicular Routes and Alignments</i>								
<i>Action D: Identify and Address Areas of Congestion, Chronic Speeding, and Accidents</i>								
<i>Action E: Identify Priority Areas for Enforced Snow Clearing or Removal</i>								
<i>Action F: Consider Possibility of Returned Passenger Rail Service to North Adams or the Northern Berkshires</i>								
<i>Action G: Continue to Promote the Airport as an Asset for Economic Development and Recreation</i>								

GOAL IS 7: PROVIDE PUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT OFFER A HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL NORTH ADAMS' CHILDREN AND ADEQUATE SCHOOL FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT TO SERVE THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY.

Policy IS 7.1: Proactively work with the school departments and school boards to better utilize resources, including infrastructure, in a cost effective manner.

<i>Action A: Hold regular working group meetings with school department, school board and municipal officials</i>								
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Policy IS 7.2: Monitor and forecast school service demand based upon actual and predicted population demographics.

<i>Action A: Participate in the development of, and share demographic information about, population projections</i>								
<i>Action B: Explore creative alternatives to meet the changing needs of the region</i>								

GOAL IS 8: ENSURE THAT NORTH ADAMS HAS THE NECESSARY SERVICES, FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND MANPOWER REQUIRED TO PROVIDE FOR ALL PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY AND EMERGENCY NEEDS.

Policy IS 8.1: Ensure adequate staffing and facilities to enable public safety services to perform their duties with excellence.

<i>Action A: Complete a Public Safety Facility Study</i>								
<i>Action B: Replace Aging Cruisers and Fire Apparatus</i>								
<i>Action C: Interdepartmental Collaboration for Proactive Safe Design in City Projects</i>								
<i>Action D: Maintain Mutual Aid or Mutual Assistance Agreements</i>								
<i>Action E: Expand the Mutual Aid Model</i>								

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
Action F: Support Training Costs								
Action G: Support Funding for a Public Safety Vehicle Maintenance Program								

Policy IS 8.2: Take actions and implement programs to support neighborhood and community crime and safety needs.

Action A: Identify Priority Areas for Police Substations								
Action B: Identify Priority Areas for Foot or Bicycle Patrols								
Action C: Identify Locations for Community Policing Programs								
Action D: Advocate for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment								
Action E: Increase Funding for Evidence-based Crime Prevention Programs								

GOAL IS 9: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Policy IS 9.1: Encourage proactive planning within North Adams to reduce the loss of life, property, infrastructure, environmental and cultural resources from natural disasters.

Action A: Develop and maintain up-to-date Hazard Mitigation and Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans								
Action B: Encourage broader participation in Code RED system								
Action C: Citywide Disaster Awareness Campaign								
Action D: Coordinate Disaster Planning Between City and Major Employers								

GOAL IS 10: INVEST IN STATE OF THE ART TECHNOLOGY AND RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF FIBER NETWORKS TO BETTER SERVE THE COMMUNITY.

Policy IS 10.1: Continue to improve, expand and maintain state of the art technology equipment.

Action A: Expand City Municipal Fiber Network								
Action B: Increase Capacity for Next-Generation Broadband Connectivity								
Action C: Adopt Phased Funding Approach to Maintain and Upgrade Technology Equipment								

GOAL IS 11: IMPROVE CITIZEN ACCESS TO BROADBAND.

Policy IS 11.1: Expand and support community broadband access.

Action A: Increase Broadband Access								
Action B: Expand Current Public Wireless Broadband Access								

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
Action C: Improve and Support Public Computer Centers								

GOAL IS 12: CREATE EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT SERVICES USING TECHNOLOGY

Policy IS 12.1: Improve, Expand, Consolidate and Share Data Centers, Backups, Disaster Recovery and Technology Services

Action A: Develop a Consolidation Plan for City and School Data Centers								
Action B: Identify and Inventory City and School Technology Equipment								
Action C: Centralized Mobile Applications								
Action D: Expand City Voice and Fax over IP								
Action E: Partner with Other Governmental Entities and Educational Institutions								
Action F: Incorporate Cutting-Edge Emerging Technology								
Action G: Coordinate City-Wide Technology Purchases								
Action H: Explore State-Wide Financial Software Solutions								
Action I: Explore a State-Wide Centralized Mobile-Based Application for Bill Collections								
Action J: Implement Non-Cash Payment Methods								
Action K: Develop and Implement Geographical Information System (GIS) Strategic Plan								
Action L: Replace Water Meters with Electronic Readers								
Action M: Pursue Paperless Local Government								
Action N: Support Telecommunication Expansion								
Action O: Explore Centralized Retirement Board Administration								

LAND USE

GOAL LU 1: IMPLEMENT FUTURE LAND USE PLAN TO ACHIEVE COMMUNITY GOALS RECOGNIZED THROUGHOUT NORTH ADAMS VISION 2030

Policy LU 1.1: Use the future land use plan as a guide for land use, development and conservation decisions within North Adams.

Action A: Use the Plan as a Guide for Development or Redevelopment Decision Making								
Action B: Comprehensive Zoning Update								

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
Policy LU 1.2: Adopt land use tools and techniques to revitalize and expand activity within downtown.								
<i>Action A: Consider Mixed-use Zoning in the Downtown Area:</i>								
<i>Action B: Consider Adopting Design Guidelines:</i>								
<i>Action C: Consider a Smart Growth Zoning Overlay District (40R)</i>								
<i>Action D: Designate Local Historic District Bylaw with Design Guidelines</i>								
<i>Action E: Adopt a Corridor Overlay District in the Downtown</i>								
<i>Action F: Adopt Cultural District Designation</i>								
Policy LU 1.3: Adopt land use tools and techniques to support and expand the industrial park and commercial areas to retain and add living wage jobs, and to promote North Adams as a business-friendly community.								
<i>Action A: Identify Priority Growth or Priority Development Areas</i>								
<i>Action B: Consider adopting the Chapter 43D Expedited Permitting Zoning Bylaw</i>								
<i>Action C: Consider an Adaptive Reuse Zoning Bylaw</i>								
<i>Action D: Foster Business-friendly Environment Within Zoning Update Process</i>								
<i>Action E: Consider a Corridor Overlay District on Route 8 and Route 2</i>								
<i>Action F: Continue to Ensure That the City Supports Alternative Means of Employment</i>								
Policy LU 1.4: Employ appropriate land use tools and techniques to support the river as a central recreation and character asset in the downtown and larger community.								
<i>Action A: Consider a Low Impact Development Bylaw</i>								
<i>Action B: Consider Adopting Native Landscaping Standards for Neighborhoods</i>								
<i>Action C: Provide Training and Technical assistance for Residents and Businesses</i>								
<i>Action D: Maintain Resource Protection Overlay Districts</i>								
<i>Action E: Continue to Pursue the Planning and Implementation of the Mohawk Bicycle Pedestrian Trail</i>								

Goals, Policies and Actions	Implementation Timing					Type of Action	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	O	0-1	2-5	5+	C			
Policy LU 1.5: Use land use tools and techniques to retain or improve linkages to key recreational resources								
<i>Action A: Negotiate Public Resource Connections</i>								
<i>Action B: Maximize the Use of Publicly or Privately Conserved Land</i>								
Policy LU 1.6: Adopt land use tools and techniques to encourage the maintenance of and reinvestment in all of North Adams' neighborhoods.								
<i>Action A: Consider Complete Streets Design Standards</i>								
<i>Action B: Consider adopting a Mixed-use Bylaw (this will be explored through the scenarios)</i>								
<i>Action C: Designate Local Historic District Bylaw with Design Guidelines where Appropriate</i>								
Policy LU 1.7: Adopt land use tools and techniques to support and expand food production within the City of North Adams, and to support active life styles through enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure as well as linkages to recreation and open space.								
<i>Action A: Require Multi-modal Infrastructure:</i>								
<i>Action B: Safe Routes to School</i>								
<i>Action C: Right to Farm</i>								
GOAL LU 2: PROVIDE THE NORTH ADAMS PLANNING BOARD WITH THE SUPPORT NECESSARY TO CHAMPION THE NORTH ADAMS VISION 2030 LAND USE PLAN								
Policy LU 2.1: Communicate and educate on the plan and how to use it.								
<i>Action A: Support Boards Through Increased Access to Training</i>								
<i>Action B: Working Group Meetings</i>								
<i>Action C: Seamless Development Review Communications within City</i>								
<i>Action D: Promote Use of the Neighborhood Geographies</i>								
<i>Action E: Engage the North Adams Neighborhood Council in land use planning efforts</i>								