CHAPTER 2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

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 essential goods and services like supermarkets, veterinary, and auto repair. Route 8, on the other hand, is defined by the presence of an industrial park 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 1: EFFECTIVELY REBRAND AND MARKET THE CITY

Policy 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 the city 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 in the city, including historic, arts, cultural, and outdoor activities and destinations.

Policy 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.

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

Policy 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 entrepreneurism 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, 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 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 neighborhoods of the city, 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 Section.

Action E: Achieve Appalachian Trail Community Designation
Designate the city as an Appalachian Trail Community to enhance marketing opportunities via that national platform.

Policy 2.3: Strengthen connections between the North Adams Regional Hospital and the larger community, while supporting the economic vitality of Northern Berkshire Healthcare.

Action A: Enhance Preventative Health Programming
Promote community wellness through supportive programming regarding insurance, preventive medicine, and healthy lifestyle options.

Action B: Highlight the Hospital as an Important City Asset
Increase the visibility of the hospital within the city through signage, advertising, and wellness messaging to highlight its prominence as an employer of skilled labor and regional health asset.

Action C: Support Hospital Workforce Attraction and Retention Needs
Work with Northern Berkshire Healthcare to identify employee retention factors related to community-based needs and develop a process of addressing them.

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

Policy 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 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 4: ENCOURAGE JOB GROWTH AND BUSINESS RELOCATION IN THE CITY

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

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

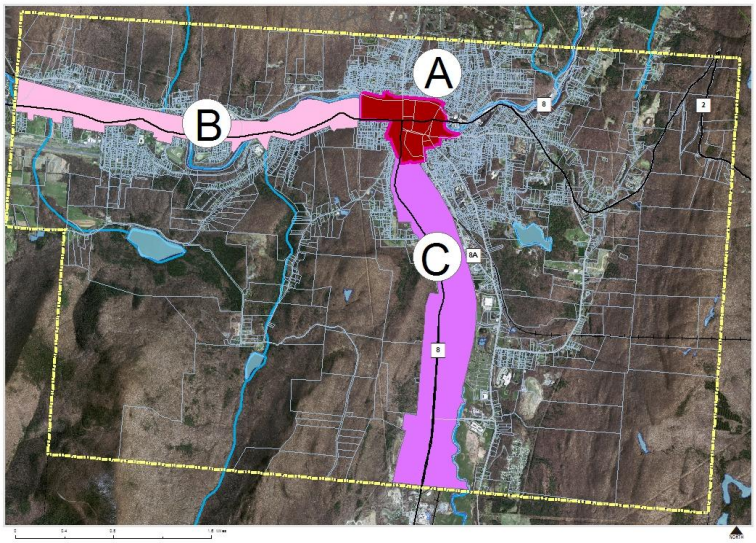
Action A: Focus on Early Childhood to Improve Kindergarten Readiness
Engage the entire community, including businesses, to promote early childhood education experience. Glean lessons learned from the Pittsfield Promise initiative and the Berkshire Compact on Education to make positive educational change 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 6: IMPLEMENT A STRATEGIC REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY TO RECONNECT AND REBUILD THE DOWNTOWN TO SUCCESSFULLY ELIMINATE THE SCARS LEFT BY URBAN RENEWAL

Policy 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.

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 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.

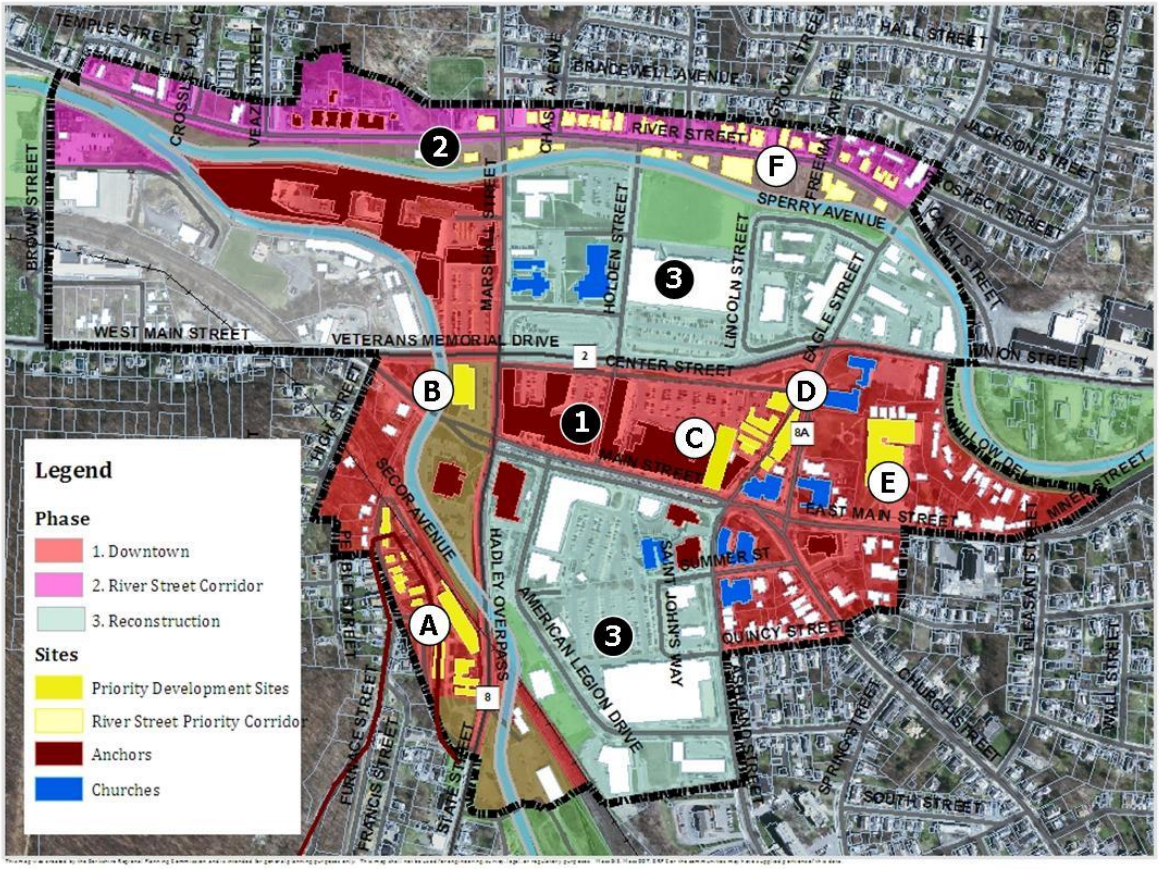
Action B: Utilize Best Practices to Make Streets Safe for All Modes of Travel
Enhance the sense of bike/pedestrian safety through the use of speed control mechanisms, enhanced lighting, and police patrol routes to ensure that students and others are comfortable traveling by foot by day or night.

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.

Figure _: 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 State Park** — This city-owned site is to be restored as Greylock Market, a commercial gateway to Mount Greylock showcasing local artisans and products.

B **Marshall & 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.

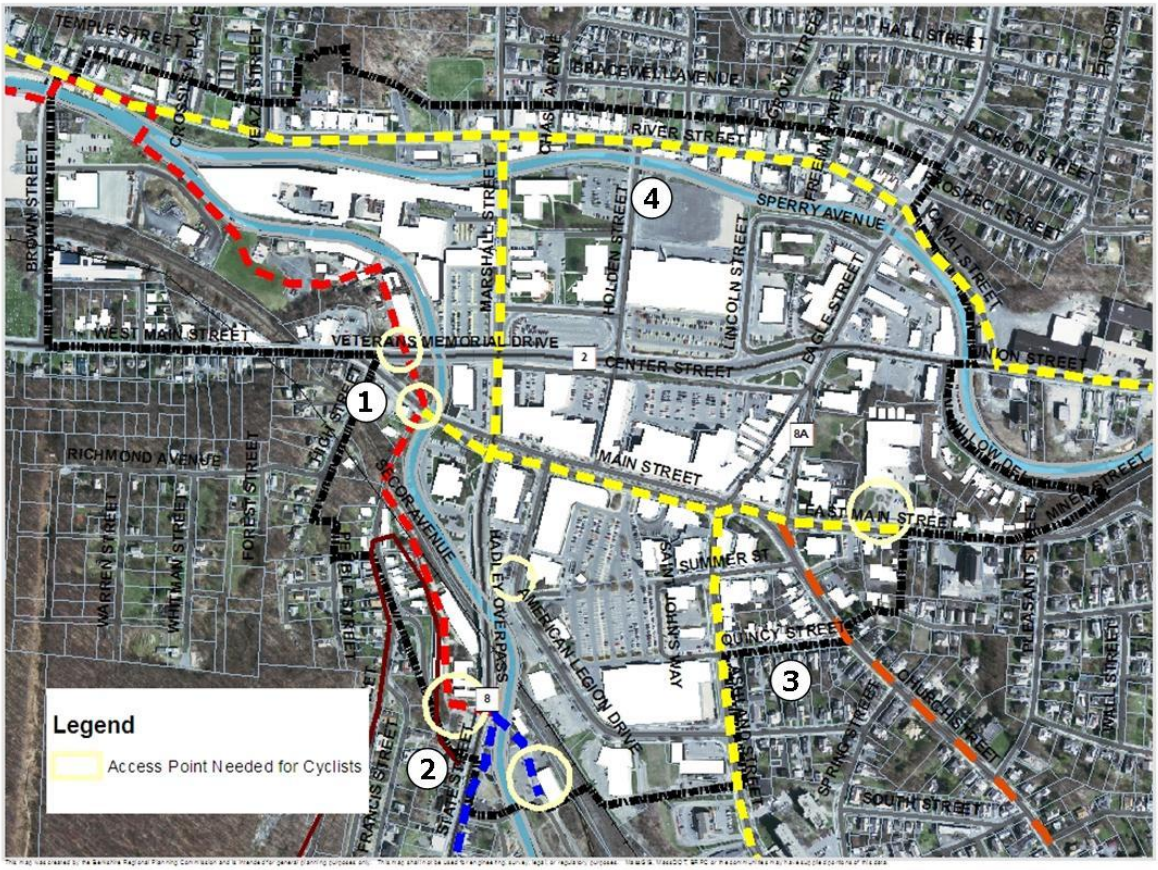
E **School Reuse Project** — The planned relocation of Conte Middle School to downtown will add significant activity to the downtown once completed.

F **River Street Corridor**— The 30+ structures along this corridor are a mix of residential and commercial uses with a number of vacant parcels. A key reuse and redevelopment opportunity to add local business space.

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_: Bike Framework for Downtown



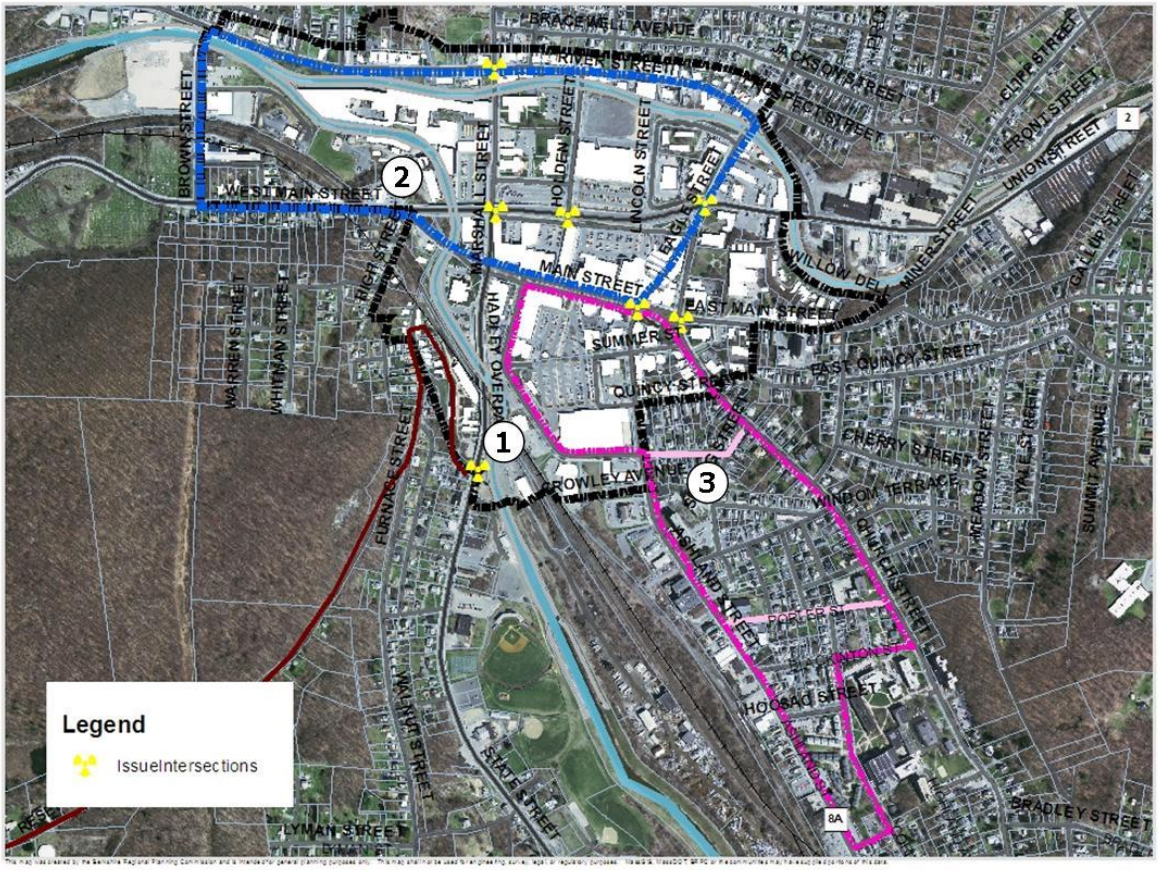
1 **Mohawk Trail Bike Path**—Connects downtown North Adams with Williamstown to the west. With some bike access improvements, this route will provide strong connections into Main Street and on-road bike routes in the city. The route will also connect to the north-south Ashuwillticook Rail Trail.

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 a, 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_: 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 7: IMPROVE THE LIVABILITY AND LIVELINESS OF DOWNTOWN

Policy 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 add shuttle service between their campus and downtown.

Note: See also the Housing and Neighborhoods chapter.

Policy 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. Determine possibility 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 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 with Accessible Entertainment
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 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).

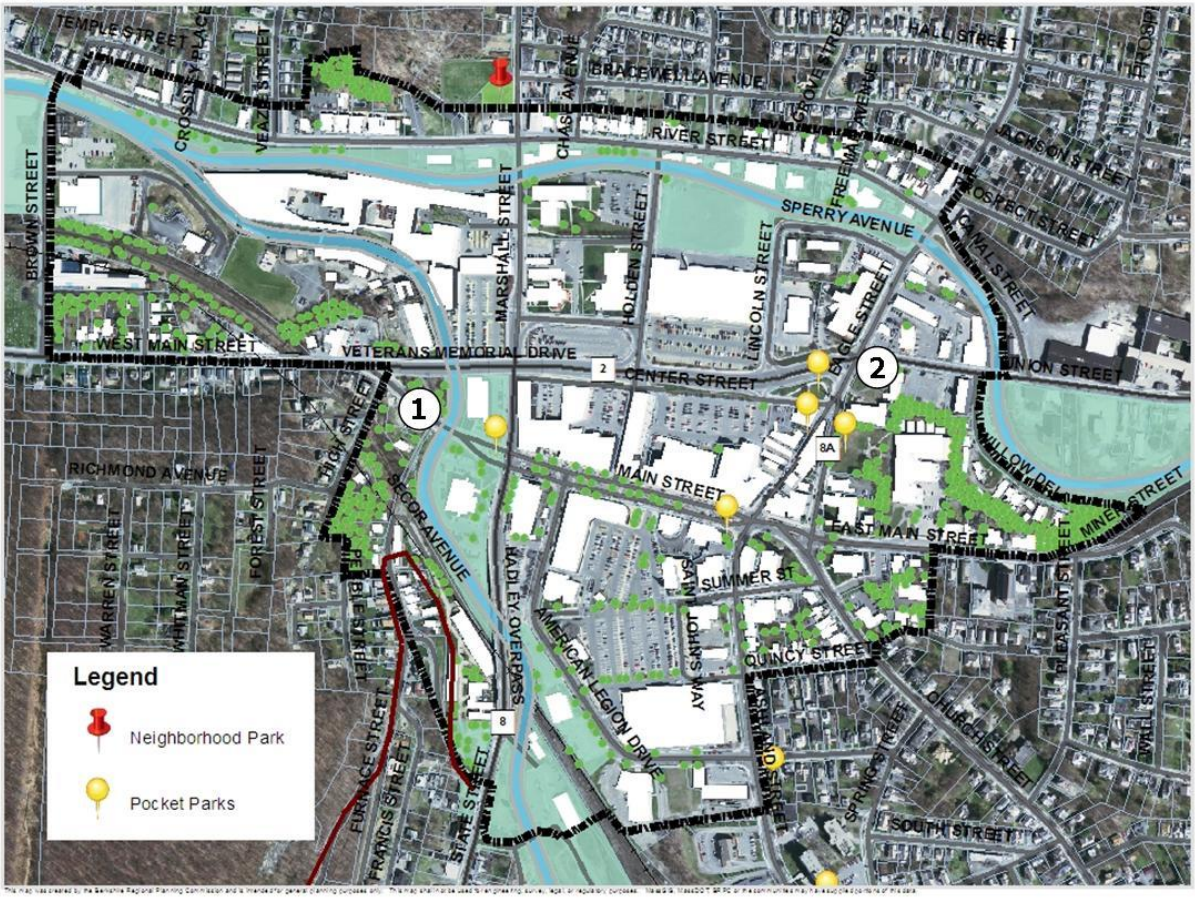
Action B: Improve Existing Community Spaces
Enhance the usability and attractiveness of existing downtown community spaces, such as Veteran's Park and Colgrove Park.

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.

Figure_: 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 sight 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.

GOAL 8: ENHANCE BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN THE CITY CORE

Policy 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 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.

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.

B. Area Focus: Route 8

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

Policy 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 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 facade 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.

C. Area Focus: Route 2

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

Policy 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 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 the city.

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 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.