

Executive Summary

North Adams Comprehensive Plan
2014



Introduction

North Adams Vision 2030 is the first comprehensive plan for the city in over 40 years. This important document is intended to serve as a long-range blueprint for initiatives, investments, regulatory changes, and development or redevelopment in the city. All of the goals and action steps called for in the plan are intended, ultimately, to enable the city to achieve its desired future (see Vision, right).

The actions called for in the plan are the result of a combination of data analysis, best practice research and a broad public outreach process that occurred between July or 2011 and February of 2014. This process included:

Steering Committee

A 16-member group of North Adams stakeholders helped to guide and shape the plan.

Stakeholder Interviews

BRPC interviewed key local actors representing anchor institutions, municipal departments, and other local initiatives such as the Hoosic River Revival and the Partnership for North Adams.

Public Workshops and Open Houses

The public was invited to open houses, workshops and forums to review content and provide input to help the plan reflect the community's vision and values.

The plan itself is divided into ten sections:

Introduction and Overview
Vision
Economy
Open Space and Recreation
Housing and Neighborhoods
Historic Preservation
Local Food and Health
Infrastructure and Services
Land Use
Implementation
Appendix

This executive summary is intended to provide an overview of the goals and spectrum of topics covered in the plan. Those interested in reading more are encouraged to view or download the entire document, available online at:

<http://vision2030.wp.northadams-ma.gov>

North Adams Vision 2030 provides a map to guide the City of North Adams and community partners toward a resilient and positive future. As the City focuses its energy on implementation, it does so with a solid footing born out of robust public process, research and collaboration.

Vision

In 2030, the City of North Adams will...

- 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.

5 Plan Themes

While the plan itself is broken down into topic-specific chapters, there are five basic messages of the plan that cut across those topics and focus on the big picture of what the city wants for its future—a future the city will work to achieve by implementing the policies and actions of the Vision 2030 plan.

Economic Renewal

The city has faced a number of economic hardships over the years, from the decline of manufacturing employment to the recent closure of North Adams Regional Hospital. However, the city has also seen the addition of MASS MoCA, the success of MCLA, and small business success in the downtown. The plan sets a number of actions for:

- Investing in employment and job growth
- Supporting and growing small and local businesses
- Educating and training a skilled workforce now and in the future

Physical Reinvestment

The city is an older city with numerous physical investment needs—from infrastructure to home renovations to mill reuse. These investments will likely require public-private-non-profit partnerships to move forward. The plan sets priorities and action steps for specific areas and types of improvements needed to help guide and align action and investment over time to make scarce resources go farther and offer the highest impact to the city.

Thriving, Connected Community

North Adams has a wealth of engaged residents, ready to pitch in and help the city succeed. They are also committed to fostering a community that is welcoming, accessible, and inclusive to all residents—regardless of age, tenure, income, or other points of difference. In addition to social connections, the plan has a number of actions to foster and support physical connections between people and places—trails, bike paths, community gardens, civic spaces and more.

Intergenerational Thinking

The plan is forward-looking and therefore an opportunity to think about what long-term changes and investments are needed to offer today's youth a strong and healthy future. This includes planning for climate change as well as investing in youth and young families.

Fiscal Efficiency

States and municipalities across the country are struggling to balance budgets and continue to provide the quality and quantity of services needed to have a thriving, healthy, and competitive community. The city is committed to using new tools and approaches to service planning and provision to make dollars go farther.

The community visioning exercises and stakeholder interviews which kick started the plan, combined with a comprehensive review of data, trends, and conditions in the city, resulted in the identification of nineteen key priorities – what the city will address through implementing the plan.

Community Identity

- Retain core community values in the face of change
- Rebrand the city

Economic Development

- Address conditions that make employer and employee recruitment and retention challenging
- Facilitate economic growth and transition
- Comprehensive update of zoning code

Agriculture and Local Food

- Ensure access to local healthy food

Historic and Cultural Resources

- Treat historic resources as asset
- Support stable and vibrant arts community

Open Space and Recreation

- Maintain high quality recreation options
- Offer recreation options for all ages
- Leverage presence of open space and wild lands

Health and Wellness

- Address gaps in health care service
- Support healthy, active lifestyles

Housing and Neighborhoods

- Address widespread neighborhood blight
- Foster residential (re)investment
- Integrate public housing developments with their larger neighborhoods and community

Infrastructure and Services

- Improve mobility through viable multi-modal options
- Rectify issues resulting from past deferred maintenance and investment in infrastructure and services

Energy and Climate

- Reduce dependence on energy from non-renewable sources

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 Process

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.

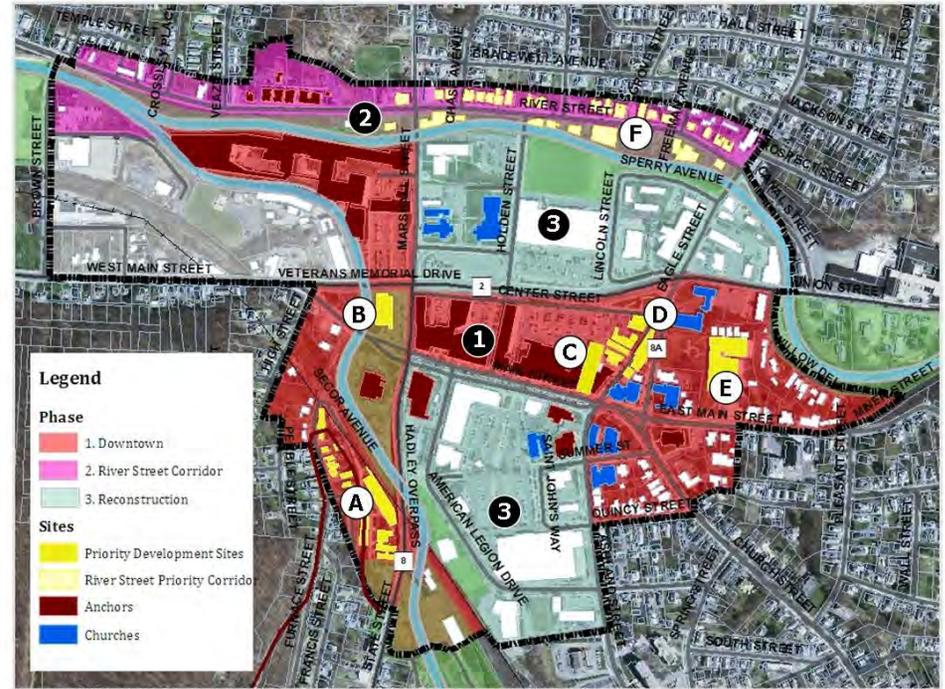
Economy Workshop and Open House: A public workshop was held on the economy of the city, including an overview of small business input received at the forums. The discussion and exercises were broken down into four basic categories: the city overall, and what should happen in downtown, Route 8 Corridor, and Route 2 Corridor.

Downtown Walkability Audit: 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. 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.

Goals

1. Effectively Rebrand and Market the City
2. Leverage the City's Many Assets into Economic Catalysts
3. Work Effectively with Business, the Community and Investors to Achieve a Continual Cycle of Investment and Improvement in the City
4. Encourage Job Growth and Business Relocation in the City
5. Grow a Skilled Workforce to Meet Economic Needs Now and In the Future
6. Implement a Strategic Redevelopment Strategy to Reconnect and Rebuild the Downtown to Successfully Eliminate the Scars Left by Urban Renewal
7. Improve the Livability and Liveliness of Downtown
8. Enhance Business Activity in the City Core
9. Develop South Route 8 as a Key Employment Area and Strengthen its Connection to the Rest of the City
10. Build an Attractive Goods and Services Corridor along Route 2 Between Williamstown and North Adams

Downtown Investment Strategy



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 bikeway 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 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 & 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.

Open Space & Recreation

The city is lucky 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.

The Process

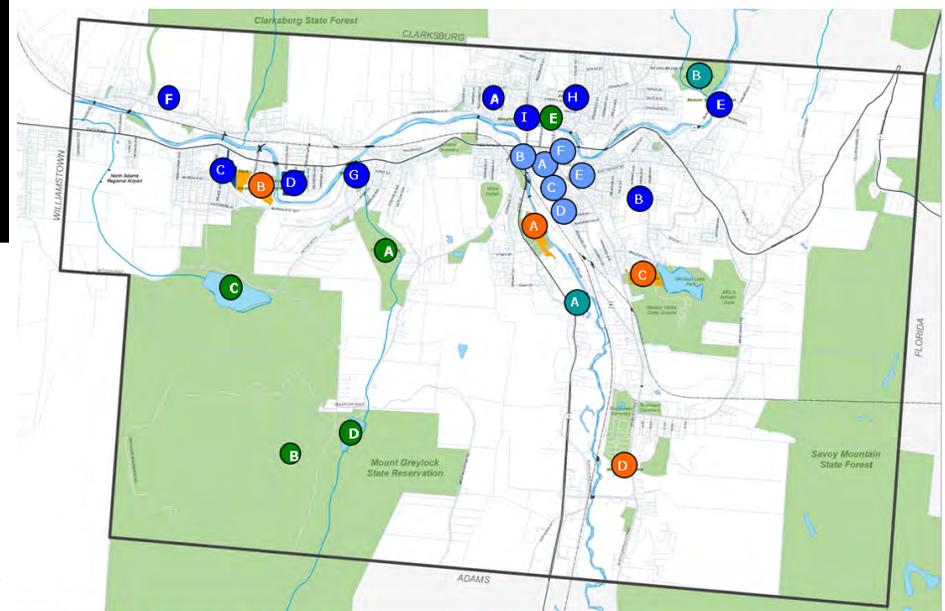
Park Level of Service Study: BRPC teamed with a Williams College Center for Environmental Studies community planning class to conduct an assessment of how well all parts of the city were served by current parks. Students made some recommendations on potential new parks to fill service gaps as well as some potential improvements that could enhance amenities and use of current parks. These 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. Community member's reviewed the Hoosic River Revival's greenway concept diagrams, Northern Berkshire Community Coalition's draft urban walking loop ideas, and 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.

Goals

1. Offer a High-quality and Diverse Recreation System to Support The Health, Enjoyment, and Economic Needs of the City
2. Implement Western New England Greenway Course
3. Promote Year-round Healthy Living and Active Lifestyles for All Ages
4. Respect the City's Place within Important Habitat Areas by Providing Wildlife Corridors and Connections to Support Biodiversity
5. Continuously Work to Improve the Health and Integrity of the Natural Environment In and Around the City
6. Broaden Range of Tools and Partners to Achieve Efficient Recreation and Open Space Management.

Park and Recreation Amenities



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

Housing & 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.

The Process

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 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.

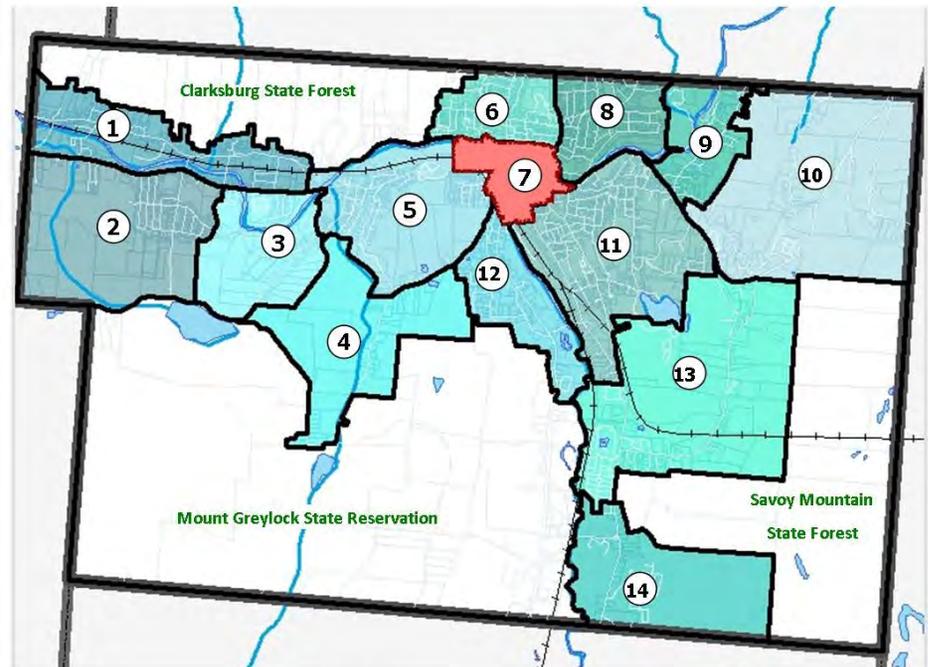
Four Neighborhood Meetings: Once we felt comfortable with the neighborhood boundaries, BRPC worked with nbCC neighborhood program coordinator to promote and co-host four neighborhood meetings, organizing the 13 neighborhoods into four groups. These open house pizza party meetings were intentionally social 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.

Goals

1. Provide High Quality Housing Options that Meet A Variety of Needs and Lifestyles
2. Address Blight and Improve Property Values
3. Support Strong Community Connections Within Neighborhoods

North Adams Neighborhoods



- | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| ① Blackinton | ⑤ Braytonville | ⑨ The Beaver | ⑫ State Street |
| ② West End | ⑥ UNO/River Street | ⑩ Mohawk Trail | ⑬ West Shaft Road |
| ③ Greylock | ⑦ Downtown | ⑪ Church Street | ⑭ Wheel Estates |
| ④ Greylock Mountain | ⑧ Freeman | | |

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. Historic structures and cultural features of the community have been demonstrated to have economic benefit. 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.

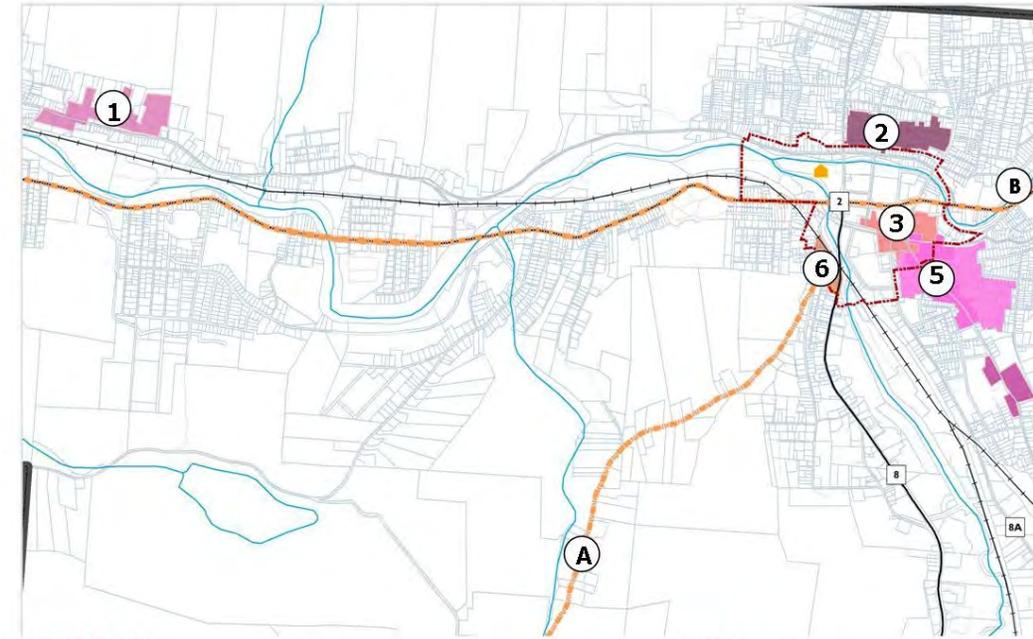
The Process

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.

Goals

1. Provide the Historical Commission with the Support and Resources Needed to Achieve the City's Historic Preservation Goals
2. Retain and Maintain the Historic Fabric of the City to The Greatest Extent Feasible
3. Maximize the benefits of Historic Preservation to the City's Economy
4. Set Historic Preservation Practice as a Cornerstone for an Overall Housing and Neighborhoods Strategy
5. Maximize Social Benefits of Historic and Cultural Resource Benefits for the Community
6. Support Regional Preservation Initiatives and Ensure City is Well Represented

National Historic Districts and Federal Scenic Byways



Historic Districts

- ① Blackinton
- ② Freeman Grove
- ③ Church Street/Cady Hill
- ④ Monument Square/Eagle Street
- ⑤ Normal School
- ⑥ Freight Yard

Scenic Byways

- Ⓐ Mount Greylock Scenic Byway
- Ⓑ Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway

Food and Health

There is very limited agricultural activity remaining in North Adams. 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 buildings and related infrastructure for the production, processing and distribution of food. Institutions are active in identifying and promoting spaces for community gardens. North Adams is working as a community to actively address food access and equity.

The Process

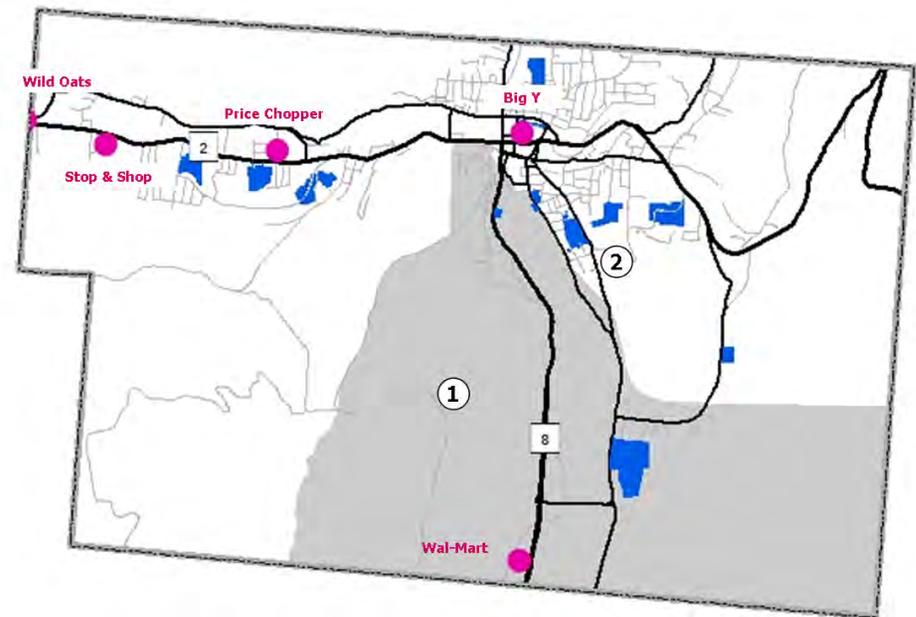
Keep Farming Surveys: A regional Keep Berkshires Farming initiative was part of the regional planning process, but broke down the county into groupings of communities with northern Berkshire as one group. There was strong participation from North Adams residents on that volunteer working group and much 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.

Goals

1. Strive to Integrate a Robust, Local Food System (production, distribution and access) into Existing Urban Fabric
2. Strengthen the North Adams Economy Through its Food System
3. Provide Access to Healthy, Local Food for All North Adams Residents
4. Increase Opportunities for Health and Wellness in North Adams Schools and Institutions
5. Promote Sustainable Methods of Food Production and Food Waste Management

Community Gardens and USDA Food Desert



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 kitchen 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.

Infrastructure & Services

The City of North Adams is responsible for a network of built infrastructure, and a number of services. Aged infrastructure has been noted to be an issue, as has the condition of some public facilities. As the population has declined, so has the tax base and municipal revenue. This creates a challenging scenario: needed infrastructural repair or replacement with limited fiscal resources. The City is in a position to adopt practices to further fiscal and environmental sustainability. Public workshops identified traffic calming, street and sidewalk repair, snow removal and residential solar programs as priorities. Climate change and its potential impacts to the city, along with mitigation and adaptation tools are also addressed in this chapter.

The Process

Stakeholder Interviews: Staff interviewed department heads to identify priority needs and goals, and to review any existing materials related to infrastructure and services.

Public 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.

Goals

General

1. Ensure that Long-Term Planning Initiatives Include the Maintenance, Operation and Eventual Replacement of Existing Infrastructure.
2. Build Climate Resilience into the Planning and Maintenance of Municipal Facilities and Spaces.
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.

Energy

4. Build a Resilient City by Proactively Working to Set and Advance Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Best Practice.

Water and Sewer

5. Maintain Adequate Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Facilities and Subsurface Infrastructure.

Roads and Bridges

6. Continue to Promote a Transportation System that Affords Mobility for All and Provides Appropriate Access to Employment, Housing, Services and Recreation Areas.

Schools and Education

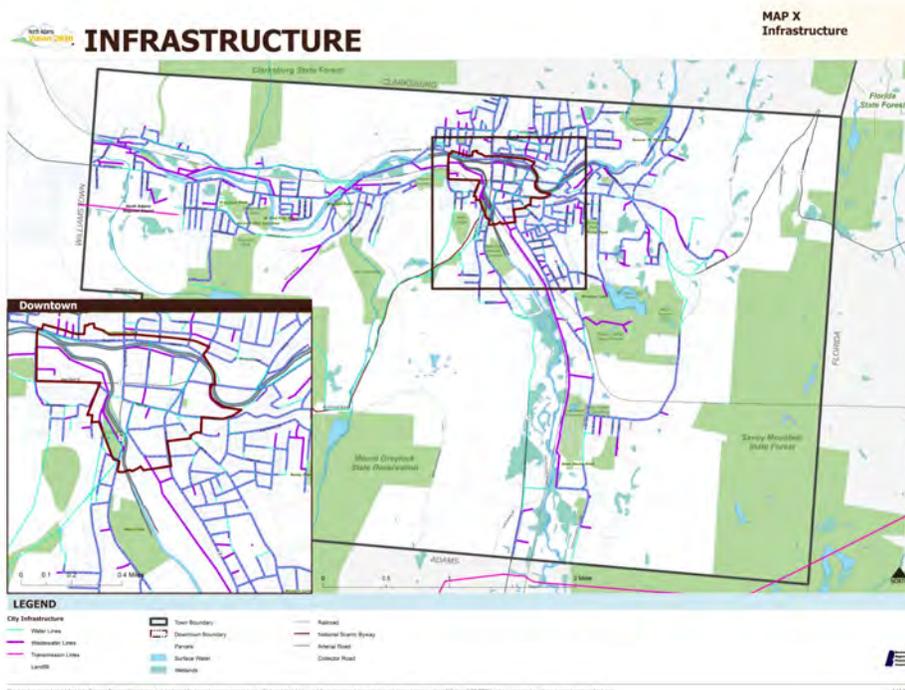
7. Provide Public Schools That Offer a High Quality Education for All North Adams' Children and Adequate School Facilities and Equipment to Serve the Entire Community.

Public Safety

8. Ensure that North Adams has the Necessary Services, Facilities, Equipment, and Manpower Required to Provide for All Public Health, Safety and Emergency Needs.
9. Disaster Preparedness

Technology

10. Invest in State of the Art Technology and Recognize the Importance of Fiber Networks to Better Serve the Community
11. Improve Citizen Access to Broadband
12. Create Efficient Government Services Using Technology



Land Use

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 Housing & Neighborhoods section 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.

The Process

Public 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 display and worksheet were also available for people to consider land use plan choices for crafting a future land use plan.

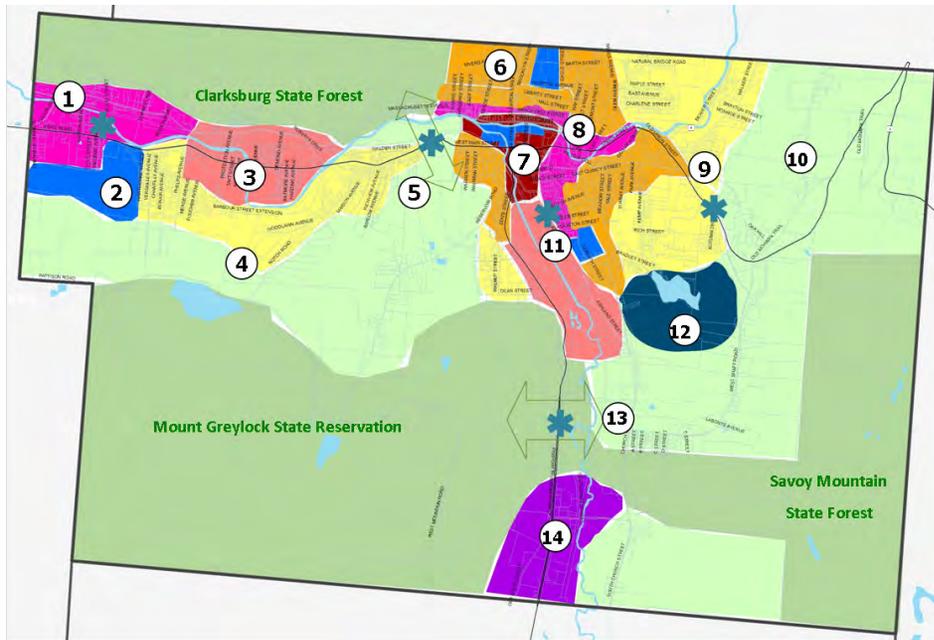
Goals

1. Implement Future Land Use Plan to Achieve Community Goals Recognized Throughout North Adams Vision 2030
2. Provide the North Adams Planning Board With the Support Necessary to Champion the North Adams Vision 2030 Land Use Plan

Land Use Plan—Land Use Categories

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Resource Conservation |  Mixed-Use Neighborhood |
|  Rural Residential |  Highway/Corridor Commercial |
|  Outdoor Recreation Neighborhood |  Downtown Commercial |
|  Residential Neighborhood |  Industrial |
|  Urban Neighborhood |  Special Use Areas |

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.

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.

The Process

The Office of Community Development will work to make sure its activities will primarily be based around plan actions and policies, and the City Planner will ensure that the plan is implemented. As part of regular business, departments will be encouraged to pursue relevant action items, and staff will be encouraged to join sub-committees. Priorities will be reviewed at department head meetings, and the Mayor will discuss progress at annual State of the City speeches. The OCD will provide an annual update to the Planning Board and City Council.

Community and Economic Development Advisory Board (CEDAB)

This group will be expanded and reinvigorated with yearly meetings focused on North Adams Vision 2030, and work to review current initiatives, prioritize future efforts, review new actions as suggested by the sub-committees, and identify new partnerships.

Smaller Subcommittees

CEDAB members or other community stakeholders or residents will be able to join by interest/expertise and meet 2-4 times a year. The sub-committees will host focused discussions and provide update on progress related to each action, offer priorities for next initiatives, and identify new actions not already included in the plan.

Types of Implementation Actions

Policy/Planning: 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.

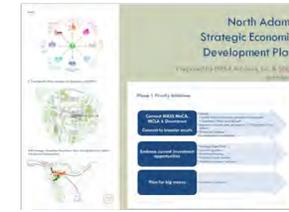
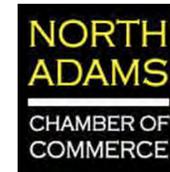
Regulatory: Actions that call for new or amended regulations by the City including formal policies adopted by City Council, changes to zoning, addition of special districts, and other similar tools.

Capital Investments: 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.

Work Plan Integration: Strategies that can easily be integrated into the existing work plans for City departments, boards, commissions, non-profits, business groups, and civic groups.

Partnerships/Initiatives: 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 through the Office of Community and Development and City Planner, they 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.

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 of 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 on scale of what these actions envision. These would be largely funded through private and grant funds.

Implementation

As the North Adams Vision 2030 plan developed, some policies and actions were implemented or began the implementation process. They are listed below by plan topic. This is a sampling of implemented items – because the plan is a living document, the list is continuing and will continue to grow as time goes on.

Open Space and Recreation

Started the 5-year Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

Sent OSRP Survey through City Census

Continuing bike path planning

Historic and Cultural Resources

Historic Resource Inventory Update

Historic Asset Reuse Study—Churches and Mills

North Adams Cultural District Initiative

Health and Wellness

Mayor's Fitness Challenge

Senior Center Building Study

Walkability Study: Downtown and Neighborhoods

Urban Walking Route Implementation

Economic Development

Assistance and collaboration with the North Adams Chamber of Commerce

Parking Study in Downtown

Retail Visioning (MDI application)

Land Use

Zoning Restructuring

Cataloguing of zoning needs

Infrastructure and Services

Capital Improvements Plan

Housing and Neighborhoods

Neighborhood Planning with the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition

Exploring Receivership Programs

