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Implementation

Prioritizing

The implementation of the recommendations contained in this Center City Plan will be done in phases over a number of years. The Holyoke Redevelopment Authority (HRA) realizes that not all actions can be completed at the same time, and in fact it makes sense for some improvements to be done sequentially, as some public infrastructure improvements may be needed before private investment can occur.

Therefore, the HRA went through a prioritization exercise, evaluating a number of factors that would help them determine which actions should be undertaken in the near term. The priorities evaluation was applied to the project areas as described in Chapter 3 and list below:

Area 1 - Dwight Street Gateway

Area 2 - Veteran's Park Area

Area 3 - Cabot and Chestnut Area

Area 4 - High Street Area

Area 5 - Passenger Rail/Transit Oriented Development Area (TOD)

Area 6 - High Performance Computing Center

Area 7 - Parsons Paper Redevelopment

Area 8 - South Holyoke

Area 9 - Cabot Street Gateway

Area 10 - Riverfront Area along Second and Third Level Canal

The HRA looked at the following criteria to help them prioritize actions proposed for each of these areas, and these criteria were ranked 1-5, with 5 having a high potential to occur and 1 have a low potential to occur as a result of the URP actions proposed for the project area. The criteria they applied to each area included:



- Opportunity to stimulate private investment
(creating / adding to an opportunity for private investment)
- Job creation potential (consider number and types of jobs)
- Urban Mobility (node concept)
(connections between neighborhoods as well as Mass Transit)
- Availability of Funding (funding potential as well as in-place funding)
- Local Property Tax Generation
- Blight Removal
- Improving Curb Appeal
- Marketing Opportunity (positioning City to attract investors)
- Creation of Home Ownerships Opportunities and Good Affordable Housing
- Opportunity for Partnerships
- Crime prevention
- “But For” public action, private investment may not occur.

The HRA also considered how much their actions in each area would do the following when ranking the above items:

- increase density
- increase workforce development to enhance skills
- improve environmental conditions (air/ water quality, energy efficiency
- contamination remediation)
- preserve cultural/historic resources
- create opportunity for innovation
- cost

As a result of this prioritization exercise, and taking into consideration the amount of investment and effort already underway, the following areas are ranked within 3 tiers of timeframes.

The first tier of areas or “Short Term Expected Completion” received the highest ranking and are expected to have the most activity realized in the following 1 to 5 years. In addition, associated roadway work and park/Canalwalk/open space improvements will be included with the redevelopment actions for these areas. Other areas will be addressed as funding becomes available or when there is specific developer interest that would be facilitated by HRA action.

The next tier of areas or “Mid Term Expected Completion” require a significant amount of lead time for the recommended actions. The importance of addressing the need in these areas was expressed by the HRA throughout development of the plan; however the areas require considerable amounts of action. Particular attention will



be given to actions that require long lead times in order to be ready for implementation over what is expected to be 1 to 10 years.

The final tier of areas or “Long Term Expected Completion” is projected to receive the majority of actions spread out along 20 years. The success of many of these areas will depend on the areas in the first two tiers. When investment is felt in the first areas, these areas will become exponentially more marketable, allowing the HRA to take on actions gradually over the length of the plan.

Short Term Expected Completion (1-5 years)

Area 2 - Veterans Park Area

Area 5 - Passenger Rail/Transit Oriented Development Area (TOD)

Area 6 - High Performance Computing Center Area

Area 7 - Parsons Paper Redevelopment Site

Mid-Term Expected Completion (1-10 Years)

Area 8 - South Holyoke Area

Area 9 - Cabot Street Gateway Area

Long-Term Expected Completion (1-20 Years)

Area 1 - Dwight Street Gateway Area

Area 3 - Cabot and Chestnut Streets Area

Area 4 - High Street Area

Area 10 - Riverfront Area along 2nd and 3rd Level Canal

This phased approach focuses on the improvements that will be implemented in the Project Area, which require the integration of both public and private improvements. The public improvements will include roadway reconstruction, utility upgrades, streetscape improvements, and traffic improvements. Public funds will also be spent to prepare sites for redevelopment and will include actions such as site acquisition, relocation costs, building demolition, site assessment, and contamination remediation. The private improvements will include site preparation, new building construction, parking and loading facilities, landscaping/buffer plantings and associated improvements.

At this time there are no indications of contaminated parcels, but we understand that any contamination found must be abated prior to redevelopment action. The sites are located on private property and it is not presently feasible to gain access to conduct site assessments. Should contamination be found, brownfields grants may be suitable funding streams for site assessment and abatement operations.



Staffing

This plan proposes that the HRA will need to hire or contract one full time equivalent staff person under the supervision of the Office of Planning and Economic Development to help the Authority and City with the implementation of this URP. This employee would oversee the entire urban revitalization process and assist with grant writing. This employee should also have access to legal counsel for advice during the implementation of the Project.

Once this person is in place their sole responsibility should be to undertake the actions necessary to implement this plan, generally following the following sequence of activities.



Support Services

Some initial actions will be necessary before HRA can acquire or take ownership of parcels.

First, before any city-owned land is transferred to the HRA, the Authority must have the resources necessary to maintain the property and secure it for public health and safety. This could be through support to be provided by the City, or funding to allow the HRA to hire property management services.

The HRA will also need to secure appraisal services before acquiring any property. It is the desire of the HRA to purchase any identified acquisitions through negotiations with the property owner to avoid the use of eminent domain.

Before any property is acquired or transferred to the HRA, the Authority will need to complete a due diligence to determine if there are any contamination issues or other liabilities associated with the property. If so, such liabilities need to be taken into consideration before that land or building is acquired.

The HRA will need to engage a specialist/company who will need to be approved as a designated Relocation Advisory Agency to prepare a relocation plan for this project, determine relocation needs, if any, for initial acquisitions, and then assist with any relocations needs.