

Over the past several years the residents of Holyoke have clamored for a concentrated effort to revitalize and redevelop the Center City; an area that despite its rich history, architectural traits and waterfront views, has suffered the plight of many urban centers, that of abandonment and blight. It is clear that to make Holyoke a vibrant community, a renewed Center City must emerge.

This desire has translated into multiple public, private, and non-profit investments in the downtown area: through the emergence of creative economy industries and activities; redevelopment of the Holyoke Transportation Center, Public Library and Victory Theater; creation of the Canalwalk; construction of the new Senior Center and the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center, all new investments that have triggered the need for better streetscapes and housing opportunities, renewed passenger rail service and access, and will have brought about the transformation of Center City as a source of innovation and a renewed quality of life.

The motivating force created to ignite these aspirations into a realistic plan of action was the Holyoke Redevelopment Authority (HRA), created in 2008. The HRA was given the mandate to develop and implement an urban renewal plan that would eliminate blighted conditions and foster neighborhood reinvestment, improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods, promote business expansion and job creation, and maintain and enhance development that will revitalize Holyoke's economic and cultural growth; all while making our community more attractive, prosperous, and self-sufficient.

After several years of civic engagement, through numerous public meetings and hearings, analysis and planning, the HRA has completed their roadmap for action: "**Connect. Construct. Create. - A plan for the revitalization of Center City Holyoke**". Its primary purpose is to promote economic development and growth in Holyoke by capitalizing on the City's unique characteristics, '**connecting**' people and places, '**constructing**' infrastructure, and '**creating**' a more vibrant and prosperous Center City.

The Center City plan is founded on the notion that Holyoke is well on its way towards an economic transformation, thanks in large measure to the energy and commitment of countless community minded citizens. Unlike the (sometimes) tattered history of urban renewal across our nation, this plan will not displace, remove, or otherwise destruct the Center City's existing neighborhoods. On the contrary, approximately 92% of all parcel acquisitions included in this plan's actions are vacant or abandoned lots or buildings. Special attention was given to creating and enhancing market rate housing and affordable housing.

Ours is a plan sufficiently ambitious, yet realistic for the future of Holyoke to encompass a diverse, entrepreneurial and prosperous City, one that can grow its population over the next two decades and can provide for a quality of life where all desire to live, work and play. We have begun the process and welcome all to join in our efforts.

Signed

Holyoke Redevelopment Authority

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