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12.02(3): Project Objectives

Introduction

Once a flourishing and successful industrial city, Holyoke's Center City is underutilized as evidenced by the many abandoned properties and urban blight woven throughout the neighborhoods. Currently, the City of Holyoke is working to prepare for future development and revitalization activities. This redevelopment effort is an outgrowth of many recent studies and recommendations beginning with *The Holyoke Master Plan* (1999), the *South Holyoke Revitalization Strategy* (2008) as well as multiple master plan initiatives, including the Arts and Industry Overlay District (effective February 2002), planning and construction of the Canalwalk (ongoing), Transit-Oriented Development District (ongoing), the Brownfields Program (ongoing), Library expansion (under construction), and the Holyoke Transportation Center. Over the past couple of years the City of Holyoke has made significant strides towards preparing a strategy for revitalization of Center City through an extensive public participation process. Efforts included a community visioning process, which is summarized in the *Center City Vision Plan* prepared by VHB, Inc. for the City of Holyoke in August 2009 (described further below and provided in Attachment A). Also, a Citizen's Participation Committee (CPC) was created by the Holyoke Redevelopment Authority (HRA) to bring an independent perspective to help guide this URP (refer to Section 11, *Citizen Participation*).

As a result of these efforts, the HRA has outlined the redevelopment strategies, goals, associated objectives, and specific public actions presented in this section. This section also describes the proposed conditions (e.g., changes to land use), and presents an implementation plan as the next steps and timeline that will ultimately connect, construct and create a revitalized Center City.



Overview of the Vision Plan

Through the community process and feedback received on the Vision Plan, a number of core principles were developed for the Center City and became the basis for this Urban Renewal Plan. These core principles were:

- Revitalize the Center City;
- Increase the density and types of development (more residents, more jobs);
- Create an active Center City with a variety of 24/7 uses (events, retail, restaurants, family destinations, etc.);
- Preserve Holyoke’s historic urban character and valuable architectural resources (blocks, streets, buildings);
- Increase housing choices with building styles that compliment the character within each urban neighborhood (multi-family, townhouse, duplex, etc.);
- Improve downtown circulation with walkable, safe and pedestrian-friendly streets and open spaces; and
- Promote local utilities, green technology and the innovative sectors as economic development initiatives (HG&E’s water power, renewable energy, creative jobs).

The Urban Renewal Plan expands upon these initiatives as described in the following pages of this chapter.

Overall Redevelopment Goal and Strategy

The Holyoke Redevelopment Authority (HRA) established goals and objectives to direct the recommendations contained in this URP based on the public participation process and past studies. These goals were developed to address the economic deficiencies identified in the Project Area in a proactive manner utilizing Smart Growth principles.

The overall goal for the Holyoke City Center URP 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.

Urban Renewal Plan Goals and Initiatives

The redevelopment recommendations proposed in this plan are based on the actions originally recommended in the *Center City Vision Plan* (Attachment A) produced by VHB, Inc. for the City of Holyoke in August 2009, then expanded upon during the public participation process for this URP. These action items are presented in further detail below.

The URP redevelopment recommendations are intended to address the findings described in Chapter 2 and improve deficient and inadequate conditions in order to achieve the community's vision for the Center City area and the overall goals of this plan.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned overall goal of this URP, the following goals have been established:

- Promote private investment and create new jobs
 - Retain critical business – such as retail, manufacturing, commercial
 - Attract new business –fill vacant buildings and parcels with new jobs
 - Support existing and key planned development projects – such as the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center

- Improve housing options
 - Provide more housing choices – market rate and affordable housing, rental and ownership
 - Improve housing stock – better quality, more choices, rehabilitate existing
 - Increase home ownership opportunities –a policy statement for Holyoke Redevelopment Authority supported actions

- Rehabilitate or remove blighted properties
 - Address public safety concerns – such as deteriorating structures
 - Preserve valuable resources – rehabilitate/restore historic resources
 - Improve image – by addressing the most distressed property

- Upgrade public infrastructure
 - Streetscape improvements and street paving
 - Subsurface power, water and sewer improvements
 - Bridge replacements

- Create a sustainable community
 - Promote and enhance green energy – HG&E low cost renewable power
 - Promote transportation options – bicycle, pedestrian, rail, mass transit
 - Promote a mix of housing (rental through home ownership) and businesses (retail, manufacturing, office, health care, etc.)



- Improve quality of life
 - Enhance open space network – rehabilitate parks, expand Canalwalk, and promote open spaces
 - Enhance cultural offerings – Victory Theater, art events and promoting the City as a destination for creative economy industries
- Increase the tax base in the Center City area
 - Redevelop underutilized and vacant property – increases property values
 - Add more density – residential and commercial
- Modify Regulations and Develop Programs to Support URP Actions
 - Modify Zoning Bylaw where needed to support URP program
 - Develop Design Guidelines for the Center City Area
 - Create incentive programs to assist private development, property owners and businesses who are proposing actions that support URP goals – such as programs that address hazardous materials and building improvements, amongst others.
 - Promote energy efficiency in buildings

Initiatives

To address these goals, this URP builds upon the following initiatives from the Vision Plan, as expanded on below, to address the needs of the Center City area.

1. Develop key nodes;
2. Enhance the “Arts and Innovation” District;
3. Expand Open Space Amenities;
4. Transform the Riverfront;
5. Enhance the urban neighborhoods; and
6. Reconnect the City through gateways and complete streets.

Each of the following sections lists the redevelopment objectives and identifies the planned public actions intended to stimulate and support private investment and development within the Project Area.



Initiative #1: Develop Key Nodes

Holyoke’s Center City is characterized by its grid of streets, commercial corridors, proximity of its urban neighborhoods, and the mixed use activities located within each of its areas. There is an opportunity to reconnect and strengthen these various streets and places within the Center City by focusing rehabilitation, new development, streetscape enhancements and cultural activities within four “key nodes” of the downtown. Equally important is connecting these nodes to each other,



as well as the neighborhoods that contain them, ultimately becoming a “porthole” that links neighborhoods and the downtown back together.

The Vision Plan identifies the following four nodes where development and redevelopment should support the overall goal for a vibrant urban center filled with active ground floor and broad mix of retail, office, business, residential and institutional uses:

1. “Municipal” Node;
2. “Learning” Node;
3. “Transit-Oriented Development” (TOD) Node;
4. “Cabot & Main” Node.

Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations will be enhanced between each of the four nodes through such activities as reconstructed sidewalks, improved pedestrian crossings which may include bulb-outs to reduce the length to cross the street, traffic calming to reduce speeds of vehicles, street trees, and street furniture that will complete an enhancement to the environment and encourage pedestrian and bicycle activities. The first segment is in design currently utilizing City and CDBG funding and is known as the Transportation Connections Corridor. This Corridor will include the connection between the Municipal Node and Transit-Oriented Development Node along Dwight Street.

Proposed Public Actions and Desired Outcomes

■ Municipal Node:

- Work with the potential developer of the Diocese property to advance plans for residential development in those currently vacant buildings.
- Expand pedestrian connections between the Holyoke Transportation Center and other parts of downtown with strong linkages to the proposed passenger rail station. Develop a Transportation Connections Corridor between the two locations (see 3-13).
- Build on the existing municipal uses, such as City Hall, Heritage Sate Park, and Veteran's Park, including the planned parking structure upgrades and new park behind City Hall.
- Promote and expand Center City actives and amenities to attract more people to this area.

■ Learning Node:

- Celebrate the theme of “learning” by advancing the planned improvements to the City Library and the potential expanded or renovated Lawrence School by acquiring vacant, tax delinquent and/or contaminates properties, performing pre-development



activities such as remediation or parcel aggregation and marketing them for infill educational, residential, recreational or other uses complimentary to the area.

- Connect these opportunities to the Holyoke Transportation Center where Holyoke Community College offers courses.

■ Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Node:

- Support the development of the new passenger rail stop by acquiring and aggregating parcels that will be needed for the construction of the platform and helping obtain funding if possible.
- Restore connections to the Flats by implementing the proposed pedestrian bridge over the rail line and/or enhancing connections to downtown via Dwight, Bowers and Mosher streets.
- Evaluate feasible alternative sites for relocating incompatible uses adjacent to the passenger rail stop to facilitate development of dense, mixed and pedestrian friendly retail, commercial and housing buildings.
- Promote mixed-use development with active ground floor uses, with opportunities for new high density housing, through the establishment of a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zone around the passenger rail site and along Main Street.

■ Cabot @ Main Node:

- Support recommendations found in the South Holyoke Plan (Attachment C) to promote infill development and redevelopment by targeting incentive such as a Façade improvement program or commercial loan program that enhances the character of Main and Cabot Streets with a mixed uses that energizes the street.
- Seek development that creates a sense of place and provides for enhanced connections to the South Holyoke neighborhood.

Initiative #2: Enhance the “Arts and Innovation” District

Holyoke was once the epicenter for innovation for manufacturing, art, sport and engineering feats. With the construction of the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center, along with the emergence of creative industries in the downtown, it is once again poised to be a center for innovation in the Valley. This URP proposes to extend the existing Arts and Industry Overlay District from the first and second canals to Maple and High Streets so that the Victory Theater, the War Memorial and other buildings can take part in the zoning advantages offered by the overlay, and rename the zone as the Arts and Innovation Overlay District.

Proposed Public Actions and Desired Outcomes

- Promote clean energy and other technological innovation, and the creative economy as drivers for growth by focusing business recruitment efforts and targeting incentives towards innovative companies that will thrive on the collaboration of ideas.
- Provide parking options to support the redevelopment of the Victory Theatre and other attractive venues nearby by upgrading the existing parking decks on Suffolk and Dwight Streets.
- Provide a new parking structure at a vacant lot bounded by Appleton, Water, and North Canal Streets that can facilitate redevelopment along the Third Level Canal area.
- Support creative economy organizations to expand programmed events such as walking tours, historic tours and cultural events.



Initiative #3: Expand Open Space Amenities

Holyoke is home to several notable parks, such as the Heritage Sate Park that celebrates Holyoke’s unique history as the first planned industrial city; Pulaski Park, which was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted – an internationally recognized landscape architect. The city is also home to several community gardens maintained through grassroots efforts and considerable sweat equity. In general, the City will work to enhance existing key public open spaces and find ways to introduce and maintain open spaces, parks, community gardens, expansions to the Canalwalk (as discussed under ‘Goal #4: Transform the Riverfront’) and potential streetscape enhancements (as discussed under ‘Goal #6: Reconnect the City Through Gateways and Complete Streets’) that will connect these amenities throughout the Center City.

Proposed Public Actions and Desired Outcomes

- Veterans Park:
 - Continue with and expand programmed activities that activate the park
 - Utilize the state’s Gateway City Park Program to rehabilitate key park elements which will include:
 - Removing the existing concrete paving, fencing, trees, turf, curbing, planters, furnishings;
 - installing new concrete sidewalks and curbing, including Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant curb cuts, accessible ramps and crosswalks;
 - installing new benches, trash receptacles, and bike racks;



- installing new fencing around the park's monuments;
 - installing new plants, including 21 trees to replace 28 trees that will be removed;
 - renovating existing turf areas;
 - installing utilities for drainage, electrical and LED site lighting.
 - Existing park monuments -- including tributes to Vietnam, Korean Conflict and World War II veterans and the "Female Liberty" monument which dates to 1876 and recognizes 55 city residents killed in the Civil War -- will be preserved during the renovation process.
- City Hall/Heritage State Park Area:
 - Advance the City's plan to demolish the existing parking structure behind City Hall making way for construction of a new parking space that will abut City Hall and provide space for outdoor activities and serve as an accessory use to Heritage State Park across Heritage Street
 - Seek opportunities to improve Holyoke as a destination for the celebration of Volleyball (support for the Hall of Fame, park improvements, special events)
 - Expanded/Rehabilitated Lawrence School Park:
 - Work with the School Department to advance plans for the Lawrence school by acquiring and aggregating parcels if necessary and the opportunity to introduce new open space/recreational facilities.
 - Acquire and prepare 9 vacant parcels to market for infill residential units that surround the park to provide more "eyes on the street".
 - Build a network of linkages to connect open spaces:
 - Enhance sidewalks and the streetscape along key streets that link neighborhoods to parks and open spaces such as along Cabot Street to the Library park, Dwight Street to Veterans Park, Dwight and Appleton Streets on either side of Canalwalk, and surrounding Carlos Vega Park on Clemente, South East and Cabot Streets.
 - Expand the Canalwalk with linkages to an improved streetscape network. (see below)

Canalwalk

The Canalwalk is a very important component of an enhanced open space system throughout the Project Area. The Canalwalk design includes a wide promenade along the 1st and 2nd Level Canals, and includes decorative paving, lighting, landscaping, railings, and benches to enhance and encourage pedestrian and bicycle activity along the canals to bring life back to the underutilized and sometimes vacant



abutting sites and buildings. The project will open up the water to the community that has been shut off from the river by a flood control and rail lines blocking access to the River. The Canalwalk project will serve as a new pedestrian and bicycle transportation network. The project will connect major potential economic centers within the City's Arts & Innovation District, including the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center and create a multi-modal transportation corridor for access between those centers and to housing. The Canalwalk will also provide a regional link to the Connecticut River Greenway project that will link the Pioneer Valley along a recreation and commuter system for alternative transportation such as walking and biking.

- As discussed in Chapter 2, *Area Eligibility*, Phase I was constructed through funding from MassDOT and city funding. Federal funding has been secured for the design and construction of Phases II. The City has developed 25 % design plans for Phase II of the Canalwalk, which is being designed and is scheduled for construction in 2013. The remaining Phase III is included as a proposed public action as part of this URP. These infrastructure improvements will help attract private investment within the district for adaptive mix-use redevelopment projects.
- Public health of the population is a serious concern in Holyoke since the City has one of the highest rates of asthma in Massachusetts and a high rate of obesity. By providing the infrastructure, the City hopes to encourage exercise, which is the focus of the Holyoke Food & Fitness Policy Council , Mass In Motion Initiative, and the "Let's Move Holyoke" initiative all of which the City participates in. From an environmental standpoint, the Canalwalk project will increase the ability for users to travel safely within the canal district by non-vehicle means; thereby, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reliance on transportation choices that rely on fossil fuels. Additionally, the Canalwalk project will increase the amount of greenery within the district through tree plantings and other planting beds. It will include new Best Management Practices for urban tree plantings to ensure proper long-term maintenance and health of the plantings. The reduction of GHG emissions and increased vegetation will have quantifiable impacts to the environment through the reduction of heat island effects in the urban setting of the project.



Initiative #4: Transform the Riverfront

The existing riverfront properties that are located between the Connecticut River and the Second Level Canal are mostly occupied by industrial buildings. Several of them are vacant, some of which have recently been demolished and are being cleared for future development. The Vision Plan has identified that this area continue to be used



for job creation and commerce, targeting new development for manufacturing and innovative technology industries. In addition, the northern area close to route 116 has been identified as a possible site for additional housing . The Vision Plan also identifies the potential to extend the Canalwalk on the western side of North and South Canal Streets. As redevelopment and investment occurs along these riverfront properties, emphasis should be placed on the building edges and landscaping that fronts the Canal to enhance the aesthetics of this area.

Proposed Public Actions and Desired Outcomes

- The City, through its Office of Community Development, is currently working on establishing a Façade Improvement Program in partnership with the Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce. Through this or similar programs, emphasis should be placed on façades that front the Second Level Canal - including restoration of existing historic buildings and new development to enhance the character of the building frontage. Also, landscape buffers should be promoted to limit views to loading docks, parking lots and storage areas along the canals and riverfront
- Promote Holyoke as a test bed for new renewable energy technologies and compliment the City's large renewable energy supply
- Work with HG&E to advance plans for their properties, provide open views to the river for properties along Water Street.



Initiative #5: Enhance the Urban Neighborhoods

There are opportunities to enhance each of the four Center City neighborhoods by advancing new infill development, improving their appearance through façade programs, and promoting community gardens where residents benefit from access to locally grown foods.

The Vision Plan has identified various opportunities for infill sites that can accommodate a wide range of housing and mixed-use development. Many of these sites are included for action within this URP as described in more detail later in this chapter. Future development on these sites should be in scale and character with the surrounding context and should contribute to their urban setting by fronting buildings towards the street and accommodating parking within the internal portions of their lots or at the rear of the buildings.

Many of the existing vacant lots are adjacent to the residential uses. New development should expand upon the existing housing choices to provide a variety of unit types that can cater to Holyoke's existing and growing population at all

income levels. Opportunities for home ownership should be expanded to provide for greater socioeconomic mobility in the community and a more diversified portfolio to the City's housing stock.

Proposed Public Actions and Desired Outcomes

Through the powers and tools afforded to the HRA under MGLC 121B, the HRA will seek the following desired outcomes through their own direct actions and stipulations within the Request For Proposals (RFP):

- Rehabilitated properties and new developments should be compliant with health and safety codes. Rehabilitate or remove properties that are a blighting influence on the Center City.
- Convert appropriately placed and accessible vacant lots into community gardens, where appropriate;
- Holyoke's historic urban character and valuable architectural resources should be preserved where feasible (blocks, streets, buildings) through disposition or providing rehabilitation or structural support directly;
- Adopt the Housing Development Incentive Program legislation to allow for local and state tax incentives for the development of market-rate units in existing buildings within the Center City.
- Through the RFP process give preference to types of projects that increase the density, provide more jobs and create active neighborhoods with a variety of 24/7 uses (events, retail, restaurants, family destination, etc.);
- Develop Design Guidelines, to set standards for the rehabilitation or construction of buildings including façade, signage and streetscape standards, and sustainable development practices for all new development. Also develop guidelines that keep housing and building styles complimentary to the physical character of the neighborhood (multi-family, townhouse, duplex, etc.) Through the Request For Proposals (RFP) process, these guidelines, standards and principals should be encouraged and given priority to.
- Identify and recommend changes to current Zoning Ordinances to support the redevelopment recommendations in the Center City.
- Establish and promote grant or loan programs for building rehabilitation projects.



Initiative # 6: Reconnect the City through Gateways and Complete Streets

The Center City area has a set of distinct boundaries that include: the Connecticut River to north and east; I-391 and Resnic Boulevard to the south; and Beech Street (Route 202) the west. Celebrating arrival to the Center City should be highlighted by making enhancements to key points of entry or “gateways.” Improvements to the existing grid of streets, specifically several east-west streets offer the opportunity to improve connections between each other and mixed-use corridors like High and Main Streets. Connections between the four nodes should be enhanced through improved streetscape and transportation choices, such as improved sidewalks and a downtown bus circulator.

These recommendations include improving existing sidewalks, roadway infrastructure, truck access, traffic circulation and streetscape/gateways. Enhancing these transportation elements, along with strategic roadway planning to improve connectivity, will assist in economic development and revitalization of the downtown.

A more pleasant pedestrian environment can be accomplished through streetscape improvements, such as installation of new lighting, paving, street trees, informational and directional signs, benches and improved trash pickup along sidewalks. A new sign program should include identity graphics for the Center City, and should direct vehicles to parking resources as they approach their destinations.

Recommended “gateway” locations:

- Beech Street (North near Lyman and Dwight streets and the River, south near the High School)
- High and Maple Streets (North at Lyman Street, south at the entrance to I-391)
- Main Street (South at the crossing of the Third Level Canal and I-391)
- Cabot Street (east at the crossing of the Third Level Canal)
- North Bridge Street (North at the Second Level Canal and the river)

Recommended streetscape and street improvements include:

- Jackson Street, Sargeant Street, Cabot Street, Appleton Street, Dwight Street, Lyman Street, Main Street, High Street, Maple Street.
- Advance plans to convert Maple and High Streets to two-ways streets, from Lyman to Cabot Streets

Maple Street Green Streets Corridor



The Maple Street Green Streets Corridor project will design and implement improvements to the multi-modal transportation system that serves as a main artery within Downtown. The project area includes Maple Street between Hampden Street and Cabot Street, and is anchored by the new Holyoke Transportation Center on one end and the Library on the other. It serves as a public service corridor with the War Memorial facility, Holyoke Health Center adaptive reuse project recently completed, and the future renovated Victory Theater between the two anchors. It connects two nodes of the downtown transportation network that were developed through the community Vision Plan process. This project will support the city, state, and private investments planned in the corridor. This project serves as the connection between the Learning Node and the Municipal Node.

Proposed improvements include accommodations for all modes of transportation in a Complete Streets design approach where the favored mode of transportation is currently vehicles within the system. The City also would like to make stormwater improvements to the existing streetscape to be able to qualify for the DOT's Green Streets designation. The creation of a Complete Street and a Green Street on this corridor will serve as a pilot for other streets within the City, region and nation as a way to accommodate all modes of transportation along an existing urban grid of streets while also making the street more sustainable environmentally.

Specific proposed improvements include:

- Pedestrian safety and crossing upgrades (particularly at the intersection of Dwight and Maple Streets);
- Traffic signal upgrades to improve safety for pedestrians and vehicles alike; Bicycle lanes/accommodations;
- Bus shelter improvements;
- Addition of street tress;
- Low Impact Development (LID) improvements that meet Green Streets Designation; and
- Energy-efficient LED traffic and street light conversions.
- Bike accommodations plan to establish the most appropriate areas and methods of accommodations.

Transportation Connections Corridor Project

With the completion of the Holyoke Transportation Center and the near future construction of a passenger rail station in Holyoke there is a great opportunity to connect those features as part of one corridor. The Transportation Connections Corridor will serves as a major artery in the core of Center City. This connection will encourage those working in the Center City to reduce the number of short vehicle trips to businesses along the canals by making the pedestrian environment more accessible and enjoyable. Making the area more accessible will also help to attract more residents and businesses to the urban core, furthering the economic competitiveness of the area.



The City has begun design of these connections through improvements to the pedestrian and vehicle environment, but is in need of additional funds to complete the project. The specific area of improvement includes Dwight Street from High Street to Main Street, Heritage Street, and Front Street.

Proposed Public Actions and Desired Outcomes

- Improve downtown circulation and connect nodes with walkable, safe and pedestrian-friendly streets, streetscape improvements and open spaces (Sidewalks, crosswalks, landscaping, lighting, traffic calming, bike accommodations, etc.).
- Plan for a transportation “Hub” in each node. These “Hubs” would serve as a focal point at each intersection highlighting the 4 major transportation nodes illustrated in the Plan. Physical improvements should be made in each hub such as new signage for access to bus stops and train platforms, enhanced pedestrian features in the form of new benches and lighting, and others focused on placemaking around the various modes of transportation. Each Hub should represent its unique character within the Center City.
- Create a transit service that loops through the Center City and connects each node that could be potentially a bus service that circulates regularly between each node and provides easy access between each of the four Center City neighborhoods, to major transportation centers, more educational institutions, and major central business districts.

Implementation Plan

The initiatives described above were carefully evaluated by the HRA with specific actions being identified in the URP to advance elements of these initiatives. These actions have been grouped by area to better describe them, their location and the synergy between the various actions.

Because of the geographic size of the URP area, the following 10 action areas were created to concentrate public action. These action areas were developed around current or planned investments and include only the most critical properties. By concentrating on properties that are most in need of public action, this will build momentum off and compliment the projects to spur private development. In repeating this process throughout the 10 action areas, the whole Center City will become a more attractive environment for private investment.

Area 1 - Dwight Street Gateway

This area includes both sides of Dwight Street from Beech Street to Elm Street, which serves as a western gateway into the downtown area. There are a number of vacant



lots and City-owned parcels along this section of Dwight Street. Streetscape enhancements were recently completed by the City through the use of CDBG-R funding. This work included new sidewalks and the installation of sustainable plant beds located to the rear of the sidewalk when possible. Recommendations include the acquisition of vacant lots, combining lots where necessary to create larger parcels, and then selling the lots to be redeveloped for mixed residential and retail use that is in the same scale and character as the abutting neighborhood, along with accessory uses. Streetscape improvements are also included. If redevelopment is not imminent, the promotion of green spaces should be encouraged to minimize the blighted appearance. In addition, a formal themed “gateway” through the use of art and visual elements should be created.

Area 2 – Veterans Park Area

This area includes the old Diocese of Springfield property that a developer is planning to rehabilitate for residential use, Veterans Park and key vacant buildings in the area. The housing project will rehabilitate the vacant diocese buildings to include approximately 50 new residential units. Veterans Park will be upgraded. Streetscape improvements will be included as a part of the park rehabilitation as the core of this Area. Improvements have been made previously along Maple Street as a part of the Transportation Center Project.. Vacant buildings will be acquired and many will be slated for rehabilitation for mixed-use opportunities. It is further recommended that any future use of this property should be consistent with the neighborhood and the preservation of the existing character and architecture should be strongly encouraged. Efforts will be made to improve the public transit connectivity to the PVTa bus terminal to enhance its use.

Area 3 – Cabot and Chestnut Area

This area includes parcels around the Holyoke Public Library, former Lawrence School, and Senior Center. Actions in this area include supporting these projects with residential infill by partnerships, where possible, to include a variety of housing options and redevelopment in a manner consistent with existing and adjacent housing. Also in the vacant Chestnut, Cabot, Elm and Hampshire Street block (former Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish property) construction of a neighborhood school was expressed as a desire by members of the public. The School Department has expressed interest into expanding onto this site, but if such plans to not evolve, then residential infill and complimentary uses will be supported for the vacant block.

Existing buildings that are in a state of disrepair should be acquired and addressed to further minimize demise (e.g. repair roofs, as appropriate). In addition, the former Armory site is proposed for acquisition and redevelopment.

Area 4 – High Street Area

This area includes the area between High Street and Nick Cosmos Way/Heritage Street, and the Lyman Terrace complex. Recommendations include working with the Holyoke Housing Authority as a partnership for the rehabilitation or redevelopment



of the Lyman Terrace buildings. Public infrastructure actions include rehabilitation of the existing Dwight Street parking garage, reconstruction of the Suffolk Street parking deck, demolition of the old Police Station/parking deck and construction of a small parking lot with green space in its place, streetscape improvements, and the acquisition of vacant buildings in the area for rehabilitation and reuse.

The HRA also will take actions to support the revitalization of the Victory Theater, the Holyoke House and Hadley Falls Trust building, which should be done in a manner which insures the preservation of the building's historic characters and attributes and is complementary to adjacent properties.

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

This area includes the site of the proposed new passenger rail stop at the bottom of Dwight Street along with associated parking and multi-modal access. Other actions in the area include the HRA acquisition and redevelopment, as well as support for private redevelopment, of vacant buildings and lots, additional parking, streetscape improvements (Lyman and Main), extension of the Canalwalk along Race Street, and improved pedestrian connections to the Flats.

Other actions that will require the HRA to team with other entities include: efforts concerning the rehabilitation and redevelopment of the old train station in a manner that embraces the historic character of the building; efforts to improve the connectivity to the PVTA bus system such that the rail and bus transit systems operate efficiently and in tandem; and development of retail (grocery), commercial, restaurant and additional parking in this area. Arts inclusion and green spaces should be encouraged as part of any redevelopment efforts.

Area 6 - High Performance Computing Center

This area includes acquiring the underutilized buildings known as 130/216 Appleton Street and vacant parcel known as 191 Appleton Street surrounding the site of the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center (MGHPCC) and marketing toward innovative high-tech businesses complimentary to the MGHPCC, market-rate housing for employees of those companies or live/work housing to support the nearby concentration of artists and to promote more housing choices - market rate and affordable housing, rental and ownership - as indicated in the Executive Summary (S-5) and Projective Objectives (Section 3-3). Also capitalizing on the investment of the MGHPCC, actions in the area include streetscape improvements (Appleton and Cabot), and the extension of the Canal Walk along Race Street and support for the private redevelopment of 200-218 Race Street, by acquiring and aggregating adjacent vacant parcels for parking and access to the building.

Area 7 - Parsons Paper Redevelopment

This area includes the 4-acre Parsons Paper site. Actions include acquisition of the site, site clean-up and hazardous material remediation, completing the demolition of the existing building and selling of the site for commercial and/or industrial reuse.



Redevelopment plans should incorporate historic and cultural considerations as part of the overall redevelopment.

Area 8 – South Holyoke

This area includes the central portion of the South Holyoke neighborhood around the Morgan School. Recommended actions in the area build off of the recommendations in the South Holyoke Revitalization Strategy prepared with neighborhood input in 2008. Actions include 5 buildings and 18 land acquisitions resulting in redevelopment, new open space, new housing, roadway improvements and neighborhood retail. Mixed use housing and affordable home ownership will be the priority for housing development. In addition, efforts will be undertaken to improve overall pedestrian access and walkways to enhance neighborhood connectivity and use. In conjunction with pedestrian improvements, improved lighting throughout South Holyoke will be undertaken to improve visibility, improve safety conditions and deter crime. The development of a police substation in South Holyoke is recommended to create a greater police presence and a safer atmosphere for both residents and visitors.

Area 9 – Cabot Street Gateway

This area includes both sides of Cabot Street between the Third Level Canal and South Bridge Street. Actions in this area are intended to form a public/private partnership between the HRA and private land owners to develop a retail core with grocery store to serve the South Holyoke and Flats areas. Linkages to the Flats would be improved through streetscape improvements including new sidewalks, lighting and street-trees and extension of the Canalwalk system along the Second and Third Level Canal in this area. 14 key parcel acquisitions and one right-of-way acquisition would allow larger parcels to be created to allow the HRA to work with private land and business owners to develop retail and grocery businesses to serve the larger project area.

As with South Holyoke, pedestrian access and walkways should enhance neighborhood connectivity and use, and improved lighting throughout should be undertaken to improve visibility, improve safety conditions and deter crime and undesirable activity. In addition, a significant “gateway” treatment is warranted along Cabot Street.

Area 10 – Riverfront Area along Second & Third Level Canal

This area includes parcels along the Second & Third Level Canal and Connecticut River from the Route 116 Bridge past Cabot Street. Actions in this area are intended to stimulate the private redevelopment of many of the vacant buildings and parcels in this area. One acquisition and two demolitions are proposed for buildings in poor condition and with contamination issues. Primary reuse recommendations include light industrial, however, the HRA will support residential uses in the northern area close to Route 116 if possible.



A new public parking facility is proposed to support private redevelopment on North Canal Street by Appleton Street. Other infrastructure improvements include streetscape improvements with the extension of the Canalwalk system along the Second & Third Level Canal, dedicated bike lanes, conversion of the private Water Street to a public street, extension of water service improvement into the area, and rehabilitation of the old bridges that cross the canal. These actions are intended to support the redevelopment of many of the vacant lots and one existing industrial building in this area.

At a minimum, industrial use regulations, including those limiting noise levels and hours of operation, must be fully enforced to protect the quality of life of abutters and area residents.

Regulatory/Policy Recommendations

In addition to the number of infrastructure and property improvements described above, the HRA is proposing regulatory and policy related actions intended to support the intended redevelopment of the area.

Zoning

- Allowed uses
 - For the most part, proposed uses are consistent with zoning
- Parking
 - Implement actions recommended through the EPA funded Parking Technical Assistance
 - City needs to complete a comprehensive parking study
 - Need to provide flexible parking requirements
- Consider a “Payment in Lieu Of Taxes” (PILOT) program to increase the tax base and support development
- Dimensional requirements
 - Need to be consistent with historic development patterns
- Signage
 - Complete wayfinding program to navigate through city and direct visitors to attractions and parking
 - Can be tied to Design Guidelines/Standards for uniform commercial signage
- Expand the Arts and Industry Overlay District and rename it as the Arts and Innovation Overlay District to better capture redevelopment recommendations for this area.

Design Guidelines

- Work with the Planning Board to identify funding to develop “Guidelines” to provide guidance but at the same time allow for flexibility for each specific individual project.



- Guidelines should assure a certain neighborhood character is maintained in redevelopment or new development projects.

Incentives

- Loans - Provide loan programs for community needs such as:
 - Façade improvement or rehabilitation programs,
 - Commercial loans in partnership with local banks and agencies,
 - Other programs as applicable.
- Tax Incentives
 - Promote existing 5 to 20-year Special Tax Assessment (STA) and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program offered by the City for qualified new or expanding businesses.
 - Adopt the State Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP) to create the Center City Housing Incentive Program (CCHIP) which will serve as a local TIF for qualified market-rate residential development in existing buildings.

Programs

- Green Community
 - Holyoke is a “Green Community”.
 - Continue to utilize the Commonwealth's Green Communities Grant programs to reduce energy consumption.
 - Implement recommendations from the City Energy Reduction Plan.
 - Complete necessary regulatory approvals to be able to enter into an ESCO to complete energy upgrades on city buildings.
- Historic Preservation

Promote historic preservation through design guidelines/standards, rehab preferred where feasible