

# Envision Our Chicopee: 2040 Steering Committee

June 1, 2023



# Today's Goals

**Quick Reminder: How did we get here???**

**Final Formatted Plan**

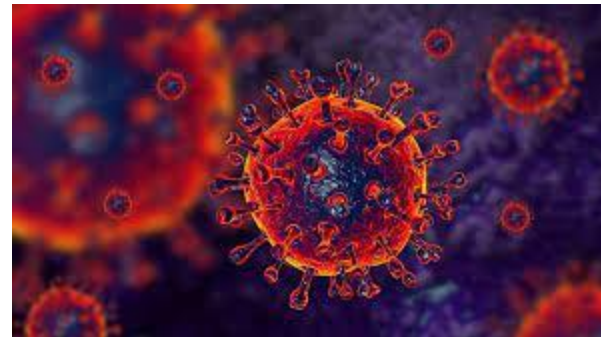
**New to You!**

**Action Plan – Getting it Done**

How did we get here???

It's been a long road! Here's a brief reminder of what got us to where we are today

- **July 2019:** City of Chicopee hires HW
- **August 2019:** Kick off engagement and survey at the Downtown Get Down
- **November 2019:** Kick off Steering Committee meeting
- **January – February 2020:** Preparing for first round of public workshops, building off data from the Baseline Report
- **March 2020:** We took a little . . . pause and redirected



How did we get here???

- **June 2020:** Steering Committee had its first virtual meeting – shift to virtual public engagement
- **Summer 2020:** Preparation of Key Takeaways to present to the public
- **September 2020:** Virtual Public Workshops
- **Fall 2020:** Virtual Open House and Meetings-in-a-Box – Developing “themes” and a structure for the Plan based on community feedback
- **January - June 2021:** Drafting the Plan – Online and hard copy surveys, *over 1,000 responses!*
- **June - September 2021:** Review by City staff and Steering Committee – refining of action items

How did we get here???

- **Fall 2021 - Spring 2022:** Formatting of Plan
- **Fall 2022:** Preparation of Action Plan
- **Spring 2023:** Review of Action Plan by supporters

**Today!** Review of final formatted Plan and Action Plan by the Steering Committee

## What Happens Next?

We're very close to getting this over the finish line!

- **July 13:** Plan reviewed by the Planning Board
- **TBD:** Public hearing and adoption
- **TBD:** Endorsement of the City Council

**Ongoing** hard work every day to make sure the plan is implemented and updated as needed over the next 10-20 years

# Action Plan – Getting it Done

This is the only major piece of the plan the Steering Committee has yet to review and comment on.

## Implementation

The Action Plan opens with a framework for implementation. Make sure things get done!

Some things can happen right away – others may take a decade or more to implement.

City can consider adopting all or parts of this framework into its Code Of Ordinances, for extra weight.

# Action Plan – Getting it Done

## Implementation Committee

- Established and appointed by Mayor/City Council
- Coordinates and monitors implementation of the Plan
- Meet at least twice a year
- Be empowered to track progress of all Plan actions
- Reach out to all “Champions” for annual progress updates
- Compile all updates into an Annual Progress Report, including:
  - ✓ Major successes
  - ✓ Barriers to implementation
  - ✓ Justification for any inconsistencies
  - ✓ Specific actions for the coming year
  - ✓ Recommendations for future plan edits, if needed



# Action Plan – Getting it Done

## Champions

Includes City department heads or their designees, the Mayor's Office, City Council, City boards and commissions, and possibly non-governmental entities such as non-profit organizations and private citizen groups.

- Report out each year on the actions they are responsible for
- Government entities should be required by ordinance to complete this annual report out
- Responsible for getting updates from "Supporters" and "Community Partners" identified in the Action Plan

# Action Plan – Getting it Done

## Planning Board

- Planning Board is the Champion for many actions
- Set aside at least 2 hours every four months to work on these actions
- Planning Board should have the authority to request updates from any other Champion or Supporter

## Mayor's Office

- Responsible for holding the Implementation Committee accountable for its responsibilities
- May request further information or explanation from the Committee

## Action Plan – Getting it Done

### Communications and Transparency

- Annual Report should be posted on the City's website
- Advertised broadly through the Mayor's Office
- Contact information for each Champion should be provided
- Chicopee residents are welcome to reach out with any questions, or to express an interest in volunteering to help implement any action
- Share copies of the report annually with all neighboring municipalities

# Action Plan – Getting it Done

## Education

Making sure City staff, volunteers, and elected officials are aware of the Plan

- Every City facility or department should maintain a hard copy of the Plan for staff reference.
- Each new member of any City board or commission, local elected official, and City staff should take a brief tutorial on the Plan given by Planning Staff and the Implementation Committee.

# Action Plan – Getting it Done

## Getting it Done – A Recap

Develop a process for Plan implementation that ensures Envision Our Chicopee: 2040 is referred to in all City decision making and that champions are held accountable for furthering the action(s) for which they are responsible

- Develop and officially adopt a system for multiple people and groups to monitor implementation progress of the Plan.
- Reserve meeting time each year for the Planning Board to focus on Plan implementation and encourage other champions to do the same.
- Develop a system for ensuring that all City staff, volunteer board and committee members, and elected officials are educated on the content of the Plan and how to use it.
- Develop a public communications strategy to ensure the general public knows where to find information on Plan implementation or to volunteer to help.

# Action Plan – Getting it Done

## Funding

- Almost every action requires some level of funding.
- The Plan does NOT serve as a budget for the City.
- It is not sustainable to overly rely on federal funding for ongoing expenses.
- It is not sustainable to overly rely on property taxes.
- Bonding is a valid way to invest in things, but it adds to the debt burden and cannot be overly relied upon.

So what do we do?

- Explore new and more locally driven sources, large and small.
- Everything should be on the table, from tax reform to public-private partnerships.

*Our leaders should approach the City's budget with clear goals, data, accountability, innovation, and equity*

# Action Plan – Getting it Done

## Action Matrix

- All actions listed per Chapter.
- A **Champion** is listed for each action – the lead agency responsible for implementation of an action.
- Up to three **Supporters** listed - other agencies that will be critical in assisting with implementation of an action.
- Some actions list **Community Partners** - Organizations outside of City government who may play a role in assisting with implementation of an action.

Each action is marked with a **Priority Level** of  
**Highest – High – Medium – or- Lesser**

*These are all the same Actions the Steering Committee has already reviewed, with a handful of edits from City staff*

## Action Matrix example . . .

### 1. Coming Together

#### Improving Our Neighborhood Centers

Action	Priority Level	Champion	Supporter 1	Supporter 2	Supporter 3	Com. Partners
Prioritize investments in Chicopee Center that align with this plan and equitably serve neighborhood residents, other City residents, and visitors, and then build on that success by expanding investments to the other neighborhood centers.	Highest	Planning Dept.	Com. Dev.	DPW	Mayor's Office	Chamber of Commerce
Regularly budget for City investments that will make the neighborhood centers more attractive for residents, visitors, and private development, including plantings/landscaping, more public trash and recycling bins, bicycle racks, reconfiguring traffic flow and eliminating one-way streets where possible, and better connecting bike paths and sidewalks to and within neighborhood centers.	High	DPW / Engineering	Mayor's Office	City Council	Planning Dept. / Engineering	Chamber Commerce
Develop better incentives for the revitalization of old mills and other important buildings in our neighborhood centers, like the old library, the Rivoli theater, and the former Uniroyal property.	High	Redev. Authority	Planning Dept.	Econ. Dev.	Mayor's Office	
Explore opportunities for purchasing foreclosed or other distressed or underutilized properties in or near neighborhood centers and converting them into pocket parks, plazas, or other community spaces, or making them available for housing or economic development.	High	Planning Dept.	Com. Dev.	Econ. Dev.	Redev. Authority	



# Action Plan – Getting it Done

## Action Spreadsheet

- The Action Matrix is also available in an Excel spreadsheet.
- This will help City Staff and others easily sort actions by **Champion, Supporter, Community Partners, or Priority Level.**
- This will make it easier to provide information to people on the action items they are responsible for.

Section	Action	Priority Level	Champion	Supporter 1
Improving Our Neighborhood Centers	Prioritize investments in Chicopee Center that align with this plan and equitably serve neighborhood residents, other City residents, and visitors, and then build on that success by expanding investments to the other neighborhood centers. Regularly budget for City investments that will make the neighborhood centers more attractive for residents, visitors, and private development, including plantings/landscaping, more public trash and recycling bins, bicycle racks, reconfiguring traffic flow and eliminating one-way streets where possible, and better connecting bike paths and sidewalks to and within neighborhood centers.	Highest	Planning	Community Development
Improving Our Neighborhood Centers	Develop better incentives for the revitalization of old mills and other important buildings in our neighborhood centers, like the old library, the Rivoli theater, and the former Uniroyal property.	High	DPW/Engineering	Mayor's Office
Improving Our Neighborhood Centers	Explore opportunities for purchasing foreclosed or other distressed or underutilized properties in or near neighborhood centers and converting them into pocket parks, plazas, or other community spaces, or making them available for housing or economic development.	High	Redevelopment Authority	Planning
Improving Our Neighborhood Centers	Consider ways to address commercial vacancies, such as increasing property taxes for vacant but habitable commercial spaces or providing tax incentives for renovating or occupying vacant spaces, such as the City's existing Tax Increment Financing program.	High	Planning Department	Community Development
Improving Our Neighborhood Centers	Install new signage and wayfinding for parking and shops. Consider banners or signage that clearly identify and celebrate each neighborhood.	Medium	Assessor	Economic Development
Improving Our Neighborhood Centers	Increase the number of people living and working in each neighborhood center by revising zoning to allow for a more	Medium	DPW	Planning Department

# Discussion

*Questions, Comments, Concerns?*

*Any suggestions before this is presented to the Planning Board?*

***THANK YOU for your expertise, resilience, persistence, and patience throughout this process!!!***