

The Lowell Plan ~ 2018 Strategic Plan

Introduction

The Board of Directors and Staff of The Lowell Plan developed this strategic plan with assistance from the UMass Lowell, Center for Community Research and Engagement. This plan provides The Lowell Plan with a three- to five-year roadmap for achieving its vision: that the City of Lowell is a successful thriving place for all to live, learn, work, play, and grow a business in a rapidly changing global economy.

In 2015 the organization conducted a visioning process. The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to:

- Update the 2015 visioning process
- Reaffirm the organization's mission and principles
- Strengthen support for an endowment
- Assist with membership retention and recruitment

This plan was developed with broad involvement and guidance from the Board of Directors and Staff. A six-member Strategic Planning Committee met during the course of six months to reflect on the mission, vision, and guiding principles of the organization. During this time Staff surveyed the full Board to help define the direction of the plan and identify action steps. The Board of Directors and Staff will review progress on the plan quarterly and update it annually as needed.

Executive Summary

The Lowell Plan, Inc. is a private non-profit economic development organization that provides a forum for private and public sector leaders to discuss Lowell's economic, educational, and cultural development.

The mission of the Lowell Plan is 1) to facilitate and advocate for transformative data-driven change through big picture, forward thinking visioning and collaborative strategic planning; and 2) to foster collaboration across private, non-profit, and public sectors in Lowell that impacts the region.

The Lowell Plan will achieve this mission by focusing on the following guiding principles:

- Promote change through visioning and collaborative planning
- Focus on economic development, advantages, and innovations
- Growth through support of educational civic engagement initiatives

The Lowell Plan is committed to fostering a dialogue that will take Lowell well into the 21st century as a city with a productive and sustainable economy; lifelong educational opportunities; and vibrant and diverse cultural offerings. With a belief in the value of community service, the Lowell Plan also makes civic engagement a priority.

The Lowell Plan commits to a renewed public-private partnership to achieve the goals outlined in this plan.

Vision		
The Lowell Plan is a private nonprofit that ensures the City of Lowell is a successful thriving place for all to live, learn, work, play, and grow a business in a rapidly changing global economy.		
Mission		
The mission of the Lowell Plan is (1) to facilitate and advocate for transformative data-driven change through big-picture, forward thinking visioning and collaborative strategic planning; and (2) to foster collaboration across private, non-profit, and public sectors in Lowell that impacts the region.		
Guiding Principles - Values - Actions		
Promote change through visioning and collaborative planning		
Facilitating dialogue and collaborative planning among the city's key leaders in business, government, education, nonprofits, and community development will continue to ensure that Lowell's economic development initiatives are diverse and expansive.	Strong, coordinated and fact-based advocacy can be a driving force to move the economic development agenda forward with greater effectiveness and efficiency.	
Strengthen membership engagement	Support and/or sponsor data-driven reports and promote their recommendations	
Encourage stronger engagement from public officials at Board meetings	Provide guidance to city officials to help develop and enhance a long-range vision for the city	
Seek periodic updates from public sector officials on key development projects	Take a public stand on projects that will have a positive broad economic development impact on the city	
Strengthen interactions between the Lowell Plan and public officials		
Cultivate relationships between members and Public Matters alumni		
Focus on Economic Development, Advantages, and Innovations		
Advocating for Lowell's uniqueness and authenticity will inspire new businesses and patrons to the City.	Promoting economic development initiatives bolsters the city's business community	Supporting the city's cultural diversity strengthens diverse business development
Seek an update on the City's marketing efforts and make recommendations that will help expand promotions of Lowell to the Greater Boston area	In partnership with the City, identify and implement best practices to activate upper stories of downtown buildings	Assess the 2008 Cultural Economy Plan and determine how the Lowell Plan can assist in updating and implementing new action steps
Encourage cooperative marketing efforts across industry sectors to ensure a consistent message is used to promote Lowell as a place to live, work, and play	Support the sale and/or reuse of signature downtown buildings to help stimulate positive redevelopment of vacant/underutilized spaces	Encourage the Cultural Organization of Lowell to be a stronger voice for the arts and culture community
	Continue to advocate for and support the development of market rate housing, particularly in the downtown.	Assist the city's arts and cultural institutions and Lowell National Historical Park in sharing their positive news stories
	Advocate for the completion of key development projects (i.e. Hamilton Canal Innovation District, Rourke Bridge, Lowell High School)	Engage Lowell's diverse business owners through subcommittees
	Advocate for the enforcement of minimum maintenance and cleanliness standards in the downtown central business district as well as in the neighborhood business corridors	Support the city's cultural, sporting, entertainment and recreational assets by advocating for resources which create strong, attractive, and functional places to experience the best of Lowell.
	Support the adoption of modern, efficient parking solutions that will improve access to downtown businesses and cultural attractions	
	In partnership with the City, develop a progressive transportation plan that includes alternative modes of transit and addresses short term challenges expected with projects currently in the pipeline	
Growth through Support of Educational and Civic Engagement Initiatives		
Fostering and enhancing the knowledge and skills of emerging and diverse leaders in the city ensures that the Lowell of tomorrow will be served by inspired stewards of the city's history, natural resources, social and cultural capital, and economic and government institutions	Supporting Middlesex Community College and UMass Lowell underscores higher education as an integral component to economic growth	
Continue the Public Matters program to engage emerging leaders	Partner with Lowell Public Schools, MCC, and UMass Lowell to promote the city's educational resources and talented workforce as an integral piece of Lowell's identity as an attractive place to live and work	
Strengthen the value of the Public Matters alumni experience		
Promote Public Matters alumni as a resource to the public and private sectors		
Continue the Lowell Plan Speaker's Series	Identify how the Lowell Plan can support educational initiatives as they relate to the business community (i.e. business-student mentorships, aligning educational programs with workforce needs)	
	Promote the creation of a continuum of educational/training opportunities to support the upward mobility of Lowell residents	