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*Director of Development Services*

David Fuller  
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TO: Eileen Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*  
FROM: R. Eric Slagle, Director of Development Services  
DATE: January 21, 2020  
RE: Motion by C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Have the Proper Department Update the Master Plan as Required Every Five Years.

This memorandum addresses the request from Councilor Nuon regarding updating the City of Lowell's Master Plan.

As the Council is no doubt aware, the City of Lowell currently has a comprehensive Master Plan, which unlike the City's Open Space Plan (which is required to be updated every five years), the Master Plan should only be updated as needed. That being said, as we are 7 years into Sustainable Lowell 2025, the City is primed for an update to that plan. Sustainable Lowell 2025, which was adopted by the Lowell Planning Board and endorsed by the City Council in March of 2013. The result of this Comprehensive Master Plan process is an officially adopted public document that establishes long-term policies and a shared vision for smart, responsible development within the city. Included within are recommendations regarding transportation, economic development, housing, the physical environment, and other community resources. The Plan also guides the development and maintenance of the many facilities and services provided by the City. As such, the Master Plan is one of the primary policy tools utilized by the City Council, the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the City's Administration, including the Department of Planning and Development, the Department of Public Works, and other entities. M.G.L. c.41, §81D requires that such Master Plans be adopted by each municipality's Planning Board, and may updated from time to time. That being said, as we are 7 years into Sustainable Lowell 2025, the City is primed for an update to that plan.

The City has been making significant progress in the implementation of the Master Plan since its adoption seven years ago. Projects implementing Master Plan items include, but are not limited to:

- Prioritized community policing strategies that increase the visibility and accessibility of officers and build resident trust.
- Updated and implemented the City's Open Space Plan in both 2014 and 2019.
- Made significant progress on the completion of both the Concord River Greenway and the Riverwalk.

- Facilitated additional market rate housing production within the housing development zone in Downtown Lowell that has been designated under the State's Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP).
- Drafted, adopted and implemented a Complete Streets policy for the City.
- Completed Utopia Park and successfully installed the 'Hydro' sculpture.
- Constructed the signature bridge and the on-site infrastructure in the Hamilton Canal Innovation District.
- Completed and began implementation of the Urban Renewal Plan for the Ayer City Industrial Park (Tanner St.).

These achievements only scratch the surface of the steps the City has taken in furtherance of Sustainable Lowell 2025.

Working with DPD staff, we have come up with the following proposed timeline for this update:

- June 2020 – January 2021: DPD staff dedicates time and resources to update Sustainable Lowell 2025 to date. DPD staff will need assistance from the City Manager's Office to direct all City Departments to respond to requests for information in a timely manner.
- January 2021: Presentation to Lowell City Council and Lowell Planning Board outlining what has been accomplished over the past seven (7) years.
- January 2021 – May 2022: DPD staff will attend neighborhood meetings and other community events to present the updated plan. DPD staff will plan on hosting one (or two) larger public meetings at the Lowell Senior Center to discuss the following topics: How is the City doing? Do the Goals and Objectives in the Plan still work? What about the Plan needs to be tweaked? Where can the City be better with Plan implementation? Translation services should be provided at the larger public meetings and select smaller community meetings.
- May 2022 – September 2022: DPD staff will incorporate new information from public process and prepare updated plan. We will translate the Goals and Objectives to both Spanish and Khmer (at a minimum).
- September 2022 – November 2022: City Manager and DPD staff will unveil the official updated Master Plan. Staff will present the plan to be endorsed by the City Council and adopted by the Planning Board.
- Ongoing: City Manager's Office and Department Heads should both require and encourage staff to make reference to the updated Master Plan in all correspondence to the City Council, Land Use Boards and members of the public, etc.

ES

January 21, 2020