



Lowell will seek to provide a range of safe, fair, high-quality, and affordable housing opportunities for residents of all backgrounds in an effort to achieve the level of diversity that will germinate both prosperity and innovation. The city will ensure that residential needs are linked to lifestyle amenities and that sustainable design approaches are employed wherever possible.

HOUSING CHOICE



Photo: Meghan Moore

OPCIONES EN LA VIVIENDA

Lowell buscará proveer una variedad de oportunidades de vivienda seguras, justas, costeables y de alta calidad para todos y todas los residentes en un esfuerzo de lograr un nivel de diversidad que germine la prosperidad y la innovación. La ciudad asegurará que las necesidades residenciales se vinculen a comodidades diarias y que se usen diseños sostenibles donde sea posible.



ឡូអែល នឹងស្វែងរកផ្តល់ឱកាសដែលមានសុវត្ថិភាព, ល្អគ្រប់គ្រាន់, គុណភាពខ្ពស់, និងគេហដ្ឋានដែលសមស្របនឹងជួលបាន សំរាប់អ្នករស់នៅជាអចិន្ត្រៃយ៍គ្រប់មជ្ឈដ្ឋានទាំងអស់ ក្នុងការខិតខំប្រឹងប្រែងសំរេចគោលដៅមានភាពចម្រុះមុខគ្រប់កម្រិត ដែលនឹងកើតទាំងវិបុលភាព និងនវានុវត្តន៍។ សាលាក្រុងនឹងធានាថា សេចក្តីជ្រាបការនៃគេហដ្ឋាន គឺត្រូវតភ្ជាប់ជាមួយនឹងរបៀបរស់នៅគួរជាទីជាប់ចិត្តហើយបង្កើតជាមធ្យោបាយអាចទ្រទ្រង់មុខការនៅពេលណាដែលអាចធ្វើទៅបាន។

ESCOLHA DE HABITAÇÃO

Lowell procurará fornecer uma variedade de habitação segura, acessível, e de grande qualidade para residentes de varias circunstâncias familiares e etapas de vida, num esforço para alcançar o nível de diversidade para promover prosperidade e inovação. A cidade irá garantir que necessidades de habitação estão ligadas a comodidades de estilos de vida e que as abordagens á architectura sustentável são empregadas sempre que possível.

OBJECTIVES

- 1** **Maintain high-quality, healthy homes throughout the city for rent and purchase.**
- 2** **Build and maintain a diversity of housing options throughout the city so as to support economic vitality and meet the evolving needs of residents.**
- 3** **Encourage responsible home ownership to support neighborhood stability.**
- 4** **Maintain an abundance of affordable housing for rent or purchase, and strive to maintain the relative affordability of housing in Lowell compared to other communities in the region.**
- 5** **Prioritize sustainable housing development policies and practices.**
- 6** **Ensure that adequate infrastructure exists for new residential development.**
- 7** **Encourage institutional growth that ensures a high quality of life in Lowell's neighborhoods.**
- 8** **Ensure that all residents have a safe and secure place to call home.**
- 9** **Ensure that all residents have equal access to fair housing.**
- 10** **Balance open space needs with development citywide.**



The Receivership Program provides assistance in stabilizing troubled properties. Abandoned properties are able to be placed back on the market, and tenants avoid displacement when their properties are brought up to code. The City of Lowell hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the unveiling of its first property rehabilitated through receivership, enabling Lowell to collect \$20,000 in unpaid property taxes owed by the prior owner. Photo: DPD

1 MAINTAIN HIGH-QUALITY, HEALTHY HOMES THROUGHOUT THE CITY FOR RENT AND PURCHASE.

- ☐ Identify and publicly acknowledge the efforts of property owners that set a positive example for others.
 - ☐ Continue to implement code enforcement based on the broken windows philosophy, and other proactive approaches.
 - ☐ Improve compliance with building and health codes through increased public education and collaboration with neighborhood groups that can assist in identifying priority improvement areas.
 - ☐ Improve coordination with other city departments and agencies, and continue to implement routine neighborhood inspections with interdepartmental inspection teams.
- ☐ Increase the number of overall inspections within the city, inspecting all multi-unit properties every 3 years for minimum maintenance and other potential violations, and improving data-tracking of those inspected.
 - ☐ Maintain fire safe buildings in compliance with city, state and federal laws.
 - ☐ Provide land-use board training and professional staff support to prevent projects with code violations or safety hazards from being constructed.
 - ☐ Address vacant/abandoned property issues through implementation of the Receivership Program, among other approaches.

- Explore the establishment of a community design resource center to provide consulting services and educational workshops to residents and developers, or a partnership with an established organization that provides similar programming in area communities (ie: Boston Building Materials Coop).
- Seek funding to provide historic preservation loans and other benefits for the preservation and restoration of historic dwellings located within Lowell's Historic Districts.
- Seek resources to support lead safe housing and healthy homes, including educational and preventative opportunities as well as the abatement of documented hazards.
- Explore the establishment of a revolving loan fund for emergency sewer repairs.
- Encourage property owners to invest in upgrades to their homes, prioritizing energy efficiency improvements and upgrades that address building code violations.
- Continue to implement and seek resources to support remaining housing development as identified in the Acre Urban Revitalization and Development Plan area.



Photo: CBA



Photo: Meghan Moore



Photo: DPD

2

BUILD AND MAINTAIN A DIVERSITY OF HOUSING OPTIONS THROUGHOUT THE CITY SO AS TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC VITALITY AND MEET THE EVOLVING NEEDS OF RESIDENTS.



Photo: Trinity Financial



Co-housing provides shared common facilities and a sense of community amongst neighbors. Above is Hearthstone Cohousing Community. Photo: Altpower

- Facilitate 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, and explore the establishment of such zones in other parts of the city where this tool can help catalyze the development of quality market-rate housing.
- Where appropriate, support models that combine ground floor retail space with housing above so as to encourage economic activity.
- Continue to promote live/work housing models to encourage artists and other members of the creative class to remain in or relocate in Lowell and support a culture of vibrancy.
- Explore co-housing developments that encourage resource-sharing and a greater sense of community cohesion amongst residents.
- Explore the development potential for market-rate multi-unit buildings containing mini-units that are designed to draw upon larger common areas and kitchen spaces to accommodate individual needs.
- Encourage the development of market rate housing for 55+ aged residents, and strive to locate it in close proximity to health care facilities and other services.
- Provide incentives for market rate housing in areas where disproportionate amounts of subsidized housing reinforce concentrations of poverty.
- Encourage the conversion of vacant schools, fire houses, religious buildings, and other large historic structures located in residential areas into multi-family residential properties, where appropriate, and preserve these as neighborhood landmarks.
- Increase the percentage of multi-family housing available that will encourage families to move to and remain within Lowell, thereby creating a sense of stability.

3

ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE HOME OWNERSHIP TO SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOOD STABILITY.

- Support organizations that provide first-time home-buyer courses and post-ownership workshops.
- Provide down payment assistance and other incentives for first-time homebuyers to purchase homes in Lowell's neighborhoods and remain in them for at least five years.
- Strengthen property owner associations.
- Promote owner-occupancy, particularly in neighborhoods with traditionally high concentrations of absentee landlords.
- Continue to support Two-for-Lowell and other incentive programs that promote owner-occupancy in two- and three-family buildings.

Through their training programs, the Merrimack Valley Housing Partnership has assisted nearly 13,000 families as of 2012. Photo: Merrimack Valley Housing Partnership





Photo: CBA

4 MAINTAIN AN ABUNDANCE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR RENT OR PURCHASE AND STRIVE TO MAINTAIN THE RELATIVE AFFORDABILITY OF HOUSING IN LOWELL COMPARED TO OTHER COMMUNITIES IN THE REGION.

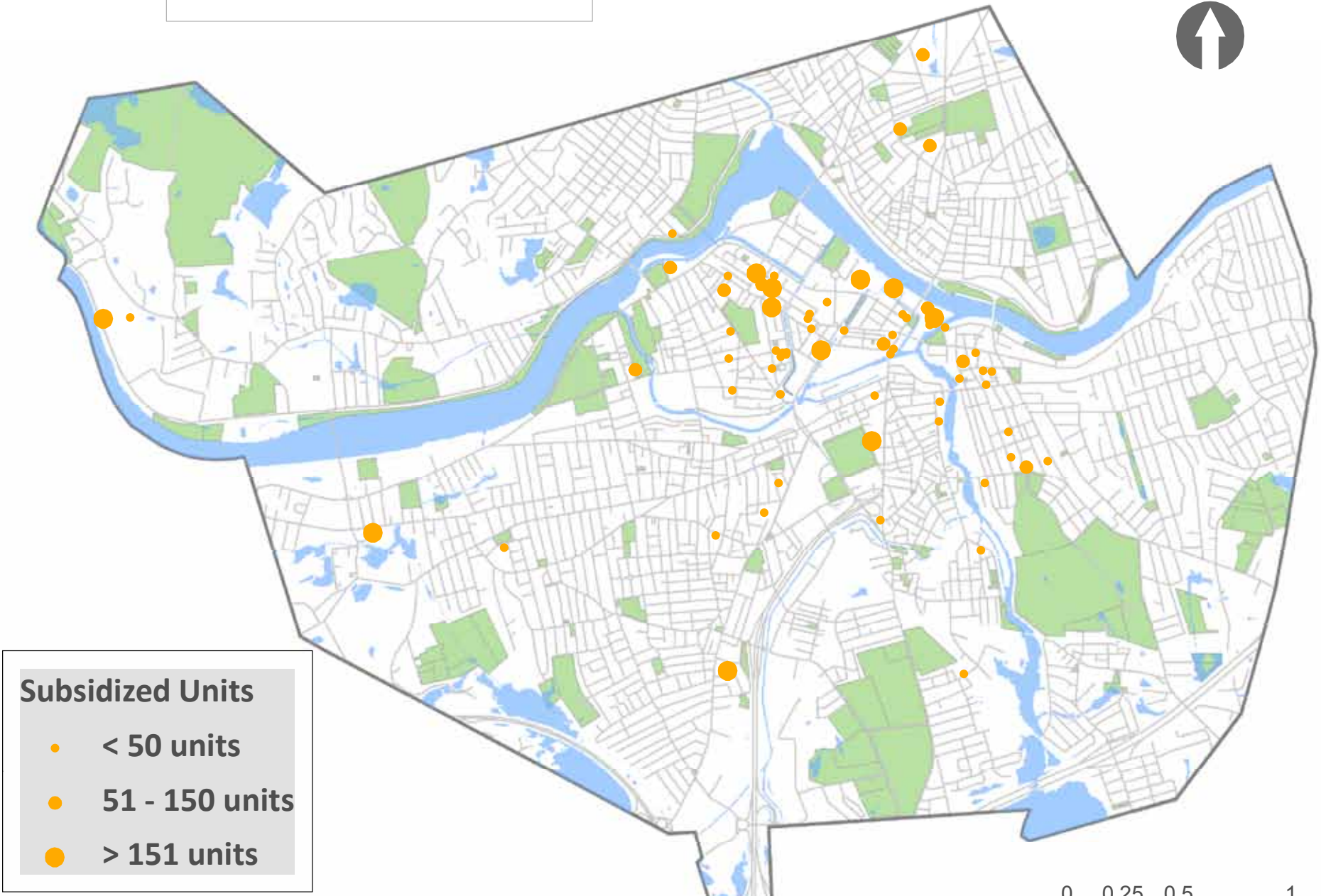
- ❑ Maintain a distribution of affordable housing throughout the neighborhoods.
- ❑ Maintain 10% or more of the city's housing stock as affordable, in compliance with the requirements of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40B.
- ❑ Efficiently utilize diminishing HOME (Housing Opportunity Made Equal) federal block grant program funds in ways that reflect and reinforce the City's established housing priorities.
- ❑ Seek opportunities to replace HOME funds sustainably, as Congressional action continues to threaten the long-term stability of this funding source.
- ❑ Decrease crime so as to reduce high auto insurance rates that may be a deterrent to living in Lowell.
- ❑ Support the establishment and vitality of resident-driven community housing development corporations, as defined by the HOME program to produce distributed affordable housing in Lowell's neighborhoods.
- ❑ Focus government housing subsidies, when appropriate, toward projects that meet other established city objectives, including economic development, historic preservation, urban renewal, downtown and neighborhood revitalization, and the reduction of concentrations of poverty, in addition to producing affordable housing units.
- ❑ Promote energy efficiency and weatherization as a means of reducing overall housing costs.

Father Norton Manor

Photo: DPD



Subsidized Units



Subsidized Units

- < 50 units
- 51 - 150 units
- > 151 units

Data Sources: Department of Housing and Community Development's Subsidized Housing Inventory, 2011

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

5

PRIORITIZE SUSTAINABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES.

- Support the development of housing that links work, transportation, and recreational opportunities.
- Explore deconstruction instead of demolition so as to re-use building materials whenever possible.
- Continue to support programs that reinforce the concept that historic preservation and sustainable development can be mutually reinforcing rather than conflicting objectives.
- Encourage developers and property owners to draw upon local talent and expertise in all residential construction efforts.
- Encourage new residential developments that provide for communal spaces and shared resources.
- Educate developers and residents about the economic and environmental benefits of sustainable building practices, using visual models when possible.



VIA VERDE in the Bronx is affordable, sustainable, and livable. Grimshaw/Dattner, Architects; Phipps Houses/ Jonathan Rose Companies, Developers

Photo: Via-Verde-Dattner-Grimshaw

SUSTAINABLE LOWELL 2025

- ☐ Partner with local companies to encourage implementation of solar arrays and other sustainable design practices.
- ☐ Expand on and market existing programs to provide incentives for energy efficiency improvements that address the unique needs of Lowell's housing stock.
- ☐ Continue to provide consistent enforcement and compliance with the MA Stretch Energy Code, a building code established in 2008 requiring greater energy efficiency in buildings than the standard energy code.
- ☐ Incentivize passive building design approaches, whereby windows, walls and floors are oriented so as to collect, store and distribute solar energy without the use of mechanical or electrical devices, thereby conserving energy.
- ☐ Manage stormwater by incentivizing sustainable design approaches such as xeriscaping (landscaping in ways that reduce or eliminate the need for supplemental water from irrigation), rain barrel usage, edible landscaping, and permeable paving.
- ☐ Require all City-assisted housing developments to achieve significant energy efficiency, including attainment of Energy Star and/or LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification where possible.



Photovoltaics, which convert solar radiation into direct-current electricity, and hot water panels on a home in Lowell
Photo: DPD

An “Edible Estate” reduces water consumption by replacing grass with edible fruits and vegetables.

Photo: DPD



6

ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE EXISTS FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.

- Coordinate utility, recreational, transportation, and infrastructure upgrades with areas of anticipated housing development.

- Collaborate with the University and other public and private entities to develop strategies for developing and maintaining student housing.
- Continue to seek funding for the on- and off-site infrastructure associated with the Hamilton Canal District Master Plan and Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) decision.
- Use the Site Plan Review process to seek private developer assistance in road maintenance or infrastructure improvements so as to mitigate the impacts of proposed developments.

Population Percent Change (2011-Buildout)

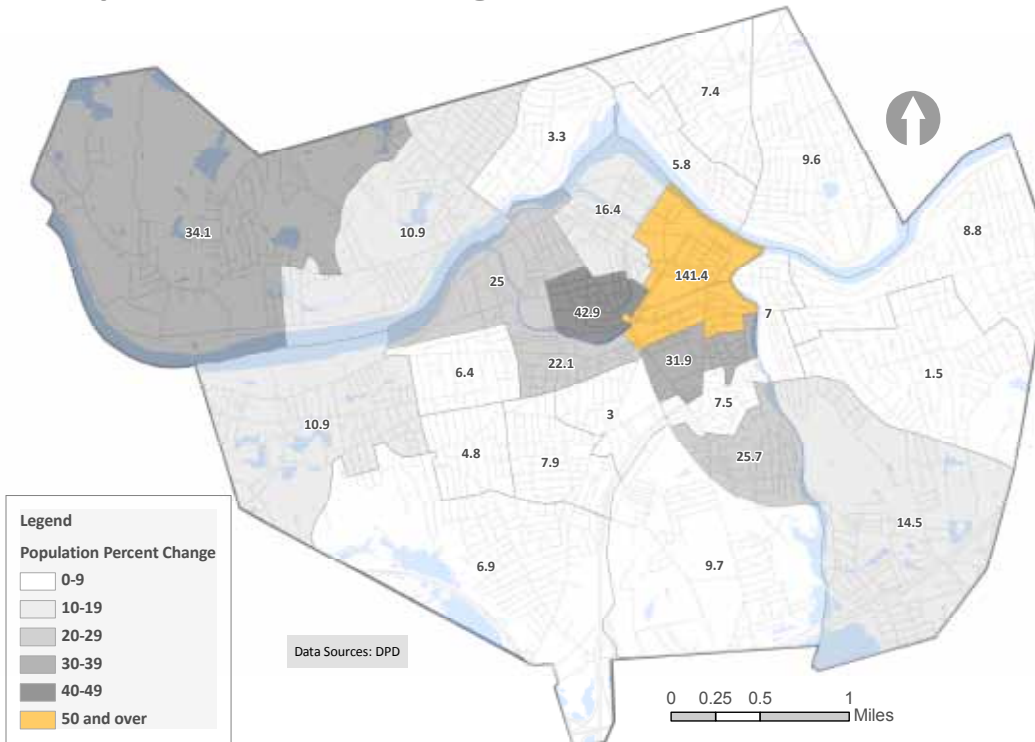


Image: Icon Architecture
SUSTAINABLE LOWELL 2025

7

ENCOURAGE INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH THAT ENSURES A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE IN LOWELL'S NEIGHBORHOODS.

- Explore rezoning of areas around the city's major institutions to accommodate the evolving needs of those neighborhoods, including providing housing that is appealing to recent graduates, faculty, and others affiliated with these institutions that have a long-term, vested interest in the city.
- Encourage UMass Lowell and Middlesex Community College to support efforts by private developers to expand housing on or near the campuses that may be attractive to recent graduates, so as to help retain young talent during their transition between school and the working world.
- Support the development of denser, higher residential development with retail uses at street level as a means of concentrating student retail and employment opportunities, and encouraging construction of off-campus housing with sufficient parking, thereby reducing the impact on the neighborhood housing market.
- Identify areas with convenient access to the University and Middlesex Community College that would be suitable for the development of new student housing, including off-campus dormitories, which will generate tax revenue for the City and offset costs of providing public safety and infrastructure services to students.
- Through the reinvigoration of the Homebuyer Incentive Program and other similar means, incentivize the purchase of homes in Lowell by students, faculty and staff of UMass Lowell, Middlesex Community College, and employees of other major institutions in the community.



University Crossing Student Center, opening 2014
Image: UMass Lowell

University Suites Residence Hall, opening fall 2013
Image: UMass Lowell





Photo: DPD



Photo: House of Hope



Photo: HUD

8 ENSURE THAT ALL RESIDENTS HAVE A SAFE AND SECURE PLACE TO CALL HOME.

- ☐ Prioritize funds used to address homelessness towards programs and initiatives aimed at prevention and re-housing.
- ☐ Support and promote programs that rapidly re-house individuals or families who are currently homeless.
- ☐ Prioritize support for programs serving homeless and/or at-risk homeless veterans as well as those programs working to end chronic homelessness.
- ☐ Implement the city's Partnership for Change: Action Plan to End Homelessness.
- ☐ Work to align city priorities and policies with federal strategies around homelessness prevention.
- ☐ Maintain and strengthen the city's partnerships with non-profit providers serving homeless and at-risk homeless clients.

9

ENSURE THAT ALL RESIDENTS HAVE EQUAL ACCESS TO FAIR HOUSING.

- Address the impediments and recommendations identified in the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) required Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice.
- Educate residents, property owners, landlords and other housing providers on the avenues available for reporting acts of housing discrimination.
- Incorporate fair housing into the City's rental housing inspection and certification process.
- Provide translated trainings and translated documentation on housing policies and programs for enhanced accessibility.
- Support the establishment of a Fair Housing Center in Lowell.



Founded in 1998 and funded by HUD, the mission of the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston is to eliminate housing discrimination throughout the region. The center provides a variety of housing services, including case advocacy, training, and community outreach.



Photo: MIT Lower Highland Neighborhood Plan

Once developed, the proposed Pawtucket Canal Walkway (above) and River Meadow Brook Greenway (below) will serve as valuable and unique open spaces in the densely-populated areas of the city in which they are located.

Photo: DPD




















































































10 BALANCE OPEN SPACE NEEDS WITH DEVELOPMENT CITYWIDE.

- Continue efforts to acquire properties which can support the City's open space goals through tax title foreclosure, conservation restrictions, and municipal acquisition as applicable.
- Preserve existing open spaces in sensitive environmental areas and those which support the City's recreational objectives.
- Require developers to incorporate landscaping into new projects, and maintain public open spaces on their existing properties.
- Continue to collect and analyze land-use and census data for Lowell and peer communities to best assess what types of open space and development needs exist and determine how best to allocate resources.



Photo: Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust

	HISTORIC CHARACTER & PRESERVATION	HOUSING QUALITY & VARIETY	PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNITY PRIDE	SOCIAL EQUITY	RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY	MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION	RESOURCE & INFORMATION SHARING	COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS	EDUCATION & TRAINING	LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INNOVATION	TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY	JOB CREATION	INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT	NATURAL RESOURCE PLANNING & POLICY	CARBON EMISSION CONSERVATION	EFFECTIVE & EFFICIENT OPERATIONS	ENERGY COST REDUCTION	ARTS & CULTURAL OPERATIONS	SHOPPING & ENTERTAINMENT	
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