

# Executive Summary

Lowell Forward is our city's comprehensive plan for the future. It captures a twenty-year vision and roadmap for supporting growth and investment in our Downtown, neighborhoods, communities, open and natural spaces, and infrastructural networks. This plan is a collective endeavor driven by the vision and dedication of our community leaders and citizens, and reflects a great deal of effort from countless individuals, all determined to propel their city into the future.

## Community Engagement page 41

The Lowell Forward team engaged the community in inclusive dialogue to identify shared community priorities and establish a vision for Lowell's future. Community engagement was built into every step of the process, with substantial investments of time and resources, including a full-time community organizer, a series of city-led focus groups, three citywide public workshops, two citywide surveys, and social media outreach.

Intended audience for this chapter: **all community members**

## Our Vision page 42

Looking forward, we envision Lowell as a city that:



Equitably connects our communities to the housing and resources needed to live a fulfilling life



Embraces, celebrates, and elevates our diversity and unique heritage



Conveniently transports us to where we need to go whether by car, transit, walking, biking, or rolling



Takes care of our public spaces, natural resources, and each other



Cultivates educational and economic opportunity for everyone to thrive



Prepares for and responds to the impacts of climate change

## Our Guiding Values page 44



## Priority Goals and Actions page 81

Intended audience for this chapter: **action takers**

### Land Use and Urban Form

1. Comprehensive zoning review
2. Downtown growth
3. Growth in neighborhood activity centers and partnerships with institutional anchors
4. Redevelop underutilized industrial or heavy commercial areas

### Mobility

1. Safe, equitable and connected mobility network that accommodates all users including walkers, riders, drivers, bikers and rollers
2. Provide convenient access to and navigation toward transportation options
3. High-quality, reliable transit, and incentives for utilizing transit options

### Energy, Climate, and Environment

1. Achieve carbon neutrality by 2050
2. Building Resilience
3. Promote clean energy economy
4. Energy Equity: ensure that decarbonization goals do not result in a disproportionate increase in energy burdens for our most vulnerable residents

### Arts and Culture

1. Leverage the arts and support creative placemaking in Lowell
2. Support Lowell's economic vitality through arts, culture and creativity

### Housing

1. Plan for equitable and accessible growth
2. Develop homes for all
3. Increase housing quality
4. Eliminate homelessness and reduce housing insecurity
5. Provide housing options for households that make low- and very low- incomes
6. Expand and create new opportunities for affordable homeownership
7. Ensure fair housing policies and practices

### Economic Development

1. Downtown revitalization
2. Promote, support, and grow Lowell's local businesses
3. Expand commercial and industrial opportunities and increase job opportunities for Lowell residents

### Parks, Open Spaces, and Trails

1. Strengthen Social Resilience, Equity, Access, and Maintenance to and of Parks, Open Spaces and Trails
2. Strengthen Climate Resilience and Sustainability in Parks, Open Spaces and Trails

## Implementation Framework

page 165

The Lowell Forward implementation framework identifies timeframes for goals and actions to aid **action takers**—like city departments, local organizations, anchor institutions, and the community—in the prioritization of tasks and next steps.

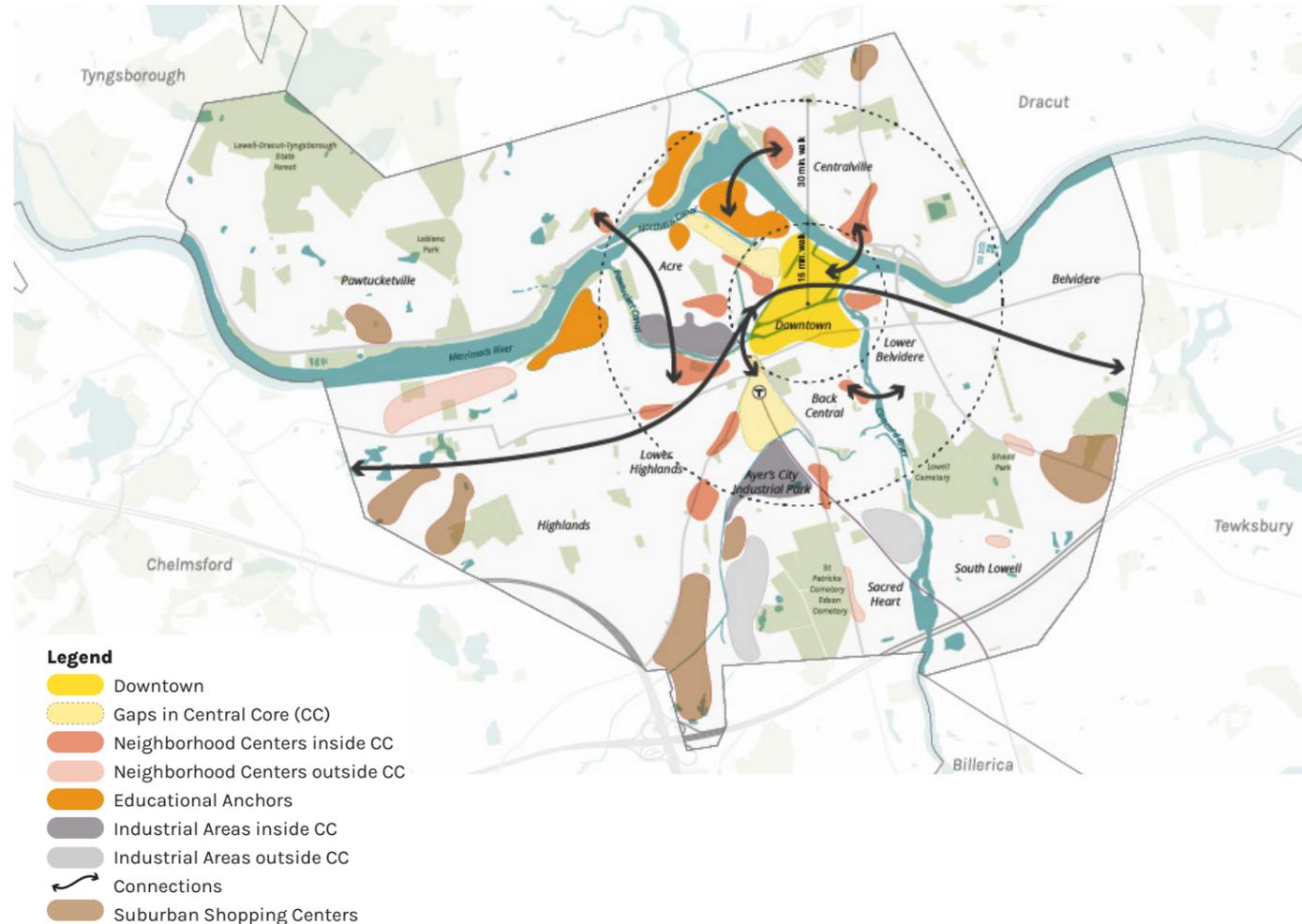
See next page for Strategies for Growth and Change →

# Strategies for Growth and Change page 55

As Lowell evolves, it will encounter new opportunities and challenges that shape its growth and transformation. This plan provides a significant opportunity for the City and community to prioritize the specific enhancements we value for our neighborhoods and to determine the extent of change we are comfortable with. Chapter 3 outlines strategies aimed at guiding and shaping sustainable and equitable growth and development in Lowell. These strategies were created in collaboration with the community and informed by many conversations and feedback received throughout the Lowell Forward engagement process.

Intended audience for this chapter: **action takers**

1. Grow and Activate our Downtown
2. Build on our Unique Strengths: Neighborhood Centers and Institutional Anchors
3. Create Opportunity in Strategic Industrial Areas



## 1. Grow and Activate our Downtown

1.1: Density, Activate, and Connect Downtown



Support a vibrant, 24/7, mixed-use Downtown district that appeals to a broad range of users and bring several benefits to our larger community

1.2: Activate the Riverfront and Canals



Maximize the potential of our canals and waterways to become a connector, an experience, and an identifier of Lowell

1.3: Fill Gaps in the Central Core



Increase residential density in and around Downtown and potential infill areas for compact, mixed-use, and walkable neighborhoods.

## 2. Build on Lowell's Unique Strengths

2.1: Enhance Neighborhood Centers



Promote contextually sensitive development that enhances neighborhood vitality, improves connectivity, and celebrates each neighborhood's distinct identity

2.2: Leverage Institutional Anchors



Create strategic partnerships with anchor institutions to support small businesses, provide jobs, and boost the city's economy and built environment  
Photo Credit: City of Lowell

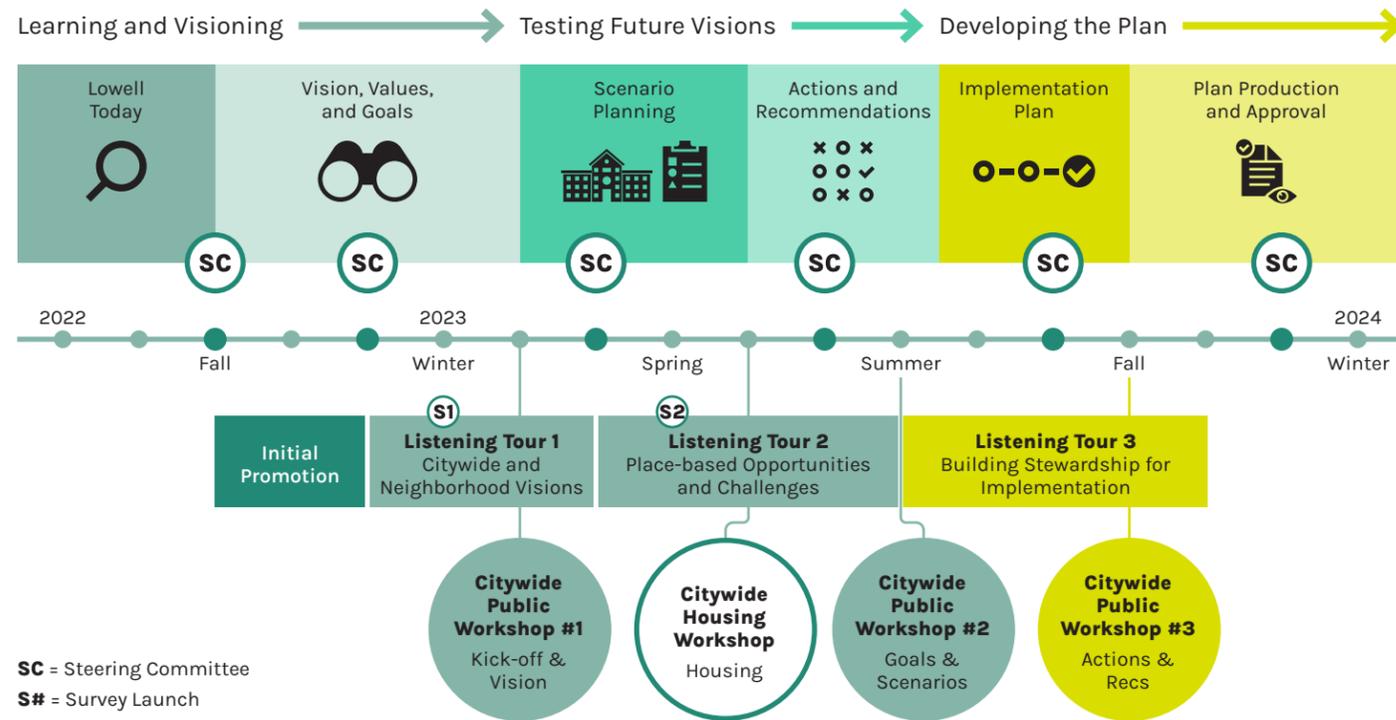
## 3. Create Opportunity in Strategic Industrial Areas



There are a number of opportunities to redevelop older industrial sites across Lowell for new economic development and job creation efforts. These include the Ayer's City Industrial Park or Tanner Street Corridor and the area along Western Ave and Pawtucket Canal in Acre neighborhood.

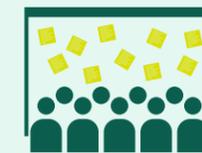
# Community Engagement page 41

Community engagement consisted of three phases illustrated below:



## Phase 2: Testing Future Visions

### Public Workshop 2:



with more than **40** attendees and more than **178** written comments or sticky notes

### Citywide Vision and Goals Survey 2:



more than **366** responses

### Community Organizer:



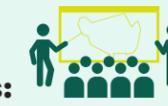
more than **8** conversations or focus groups

### City-led focus groups:



**7** topic-specific focus groups and **8** neighborhood specific focus groups

### Steering Committee Meetings:



**2** meetings

## Phase 1: Learning and Visioning

### Public Workshop 1:



with more than **100** attendees and more than **300** written comments or sticky notes

### Citywide Vision and Goals Survey 1:



more than **700** responses

### Community Organizer:



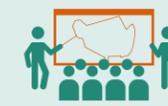
**21** conversations, **40** comment cards

### City-led focus groups:



**10** topic-specific focus groups

### Steering Committee Meetings:



**2** meetings

## Phase 3: Developing the Plan

### Public Workshop 3:



partnership with CHOP Dinner, **140+** participants, and more than **700** sticker reactions on boards.

### Community Organizer:



**10** conversations focused on topic-specific goals and actions including:

- The Merrimack Valley Housing Partnership
- Small Business Owners
- Project Learn
- Coalition for a Better Acre
- Lowell Litter Krewe
- Greater Lowell Community Foundation
- Lowell Public Schools
- Mill City Grows
- Greater Lowell Health Alliance
- Mary Wambui

### Steering Committee Meetings:



**2** meetings