

BINGHAMTON, NY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON

FORWARD TOGETHER

a citizen-driven plan for

BINGHAMTON'S FUTURE

INTERFACE-STUDIO

REAL ESTATE STRATEGIES
CIVIC ECONOMICS
SAM SCHWARTZ ENGINEERING
SHUMAKER ENGINEERING
VIBRANT CREATIVE
CODE STUDIO

ADOPTED 08.01.2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

B **BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON: FORWARD TOGETHER** is the 2014 update of the City of Binghamton's Comprehensive Plan. The City received a Community Challenge Planning Grant from the **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)** to fund this citizen-driven effort to plan for our collective future. Thank you to HUD and to everyone in the Binghamton community who volunteered their time and talents, ideas, expertise, and resources to help us move our City forward together. While a full list of the thousands of residents and stakeholders who participated in the Blueprint Binghamton planning process is impossible to produce, the Appendix includes a more extensive listing of those who gave of their time in interviews and focus groups.

Special thanks to the **BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON** Steering Committee members who provided guidance throughout the process, and to our Community Partners who generously shared their resources, talents, and time through in-kind donations.

STEERING COMMITTEE

TINA BARBER, Program Officer, Community Foundation for South Central New York
KATHLEEN BUNNELL, Director, Broome County Office for Aging
AARON CHAMLEUNSOUK, Owner, Thai Time
THOMAS COSTELLO, Supervisor of Building Construction, City of Binghamton Zoning, and Code Enforcement
MATT CUSTER, Director, Binghamton Senators Community Relations
MARTY DOOREY, Community Development Advisory Committee
CLAUDIA EDWARDS, Broome County Health Department
MERRY HARRIS, Former Director, Binghamton Office of Economic Development
DAVE HUSCH, Director, Binghamton University Off Campus College
PEG JOHNSTON, Curator, Cooperative Gallery 213
MAURA KAMMERMAN, President, Binghamton City School District Board of Education
ROBIN KINSLOW-EVANS, Vice President, UHS Strategy and Market Development
KATHY MACRI, West Side Resident
JOSEPH MAHON, Vice President Broome County Regional Manager, Peoples Neighborhood Bank
MARION MARTINEZ, Superintendent of Schools, Binghamton City School District
MARY MCFADDEN, Supervising Public Health Educator, Broome County Health Department
JANET MCHENRY, Coordinator, North Side Neighborhood Assembly
ELAINE MILLER, Commissioner of Broome County Planning and Economic Development
BOB MONTGOMERY, West Side Resident
ROBERT MURPHY, Attorney
MICHELLE O'LOUGHLIN, City of Binghamton Planning Commission
CYNDI PADDICK, Executive Director, Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study
MARYLOU RUTKOWSKI, Sunflower Park Steering Committee
JOE SELLEPACK, Executive Director, Broome County Council of Churches
JEFF SMITH, Architect, Chianis+Anderson Architects, Commission on Architecture & Urban Design
MARK SORIANO, Former President, Binghamton University Student Association
CLAUDIA STALLMAN, Project Director, Lesbian and Gay Family Building Project
COLLEEN WAGNER, Former Director, City of Binghamton Youth Bureau
LEA WEBB, City Council, 4th District
MARK YONATY, President, Greater Binghamton Development LLC
JASON ZBOCK, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness and Enrollment Planning, Broome Community College

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

BINGHAMTON NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECT,

for developing and administering a citywide survey to inform the creation of this plan

CITIZENS BANK,

for sponsoring the Blueprint Binghamton Community Discussion series

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for sponsoring a Blueprint Binghamton Community Discussion as well

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for including the Project Design Studio among the creative spaces featured at the monthly First Fridays Art Walk

QUARTER YELLOW,

for curating and installing an exhibit of local artists in conjunction with the opening of the Project Design Studio

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for sharing your visions (written and illustrated!) for the Binghamton of the future, which were featured at the special youth edition of the Project Design Studio Binghamton University Basketball Program, for sending the teams to meet and inspire Binghamton youth at the special youth edition of the Project Design Studio

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IRISH DANCERS,

for sharing your talent and providing entertainment during the special youth edition of the Project Design Studio

B-METS,

for sending the mascot, Buddy the Bee, to support the special youth edition of the Project Design Studio

CITY STAFF

JOEL BOYD, Economic Development

TOM COSTELLO, Building & Code Enforcement

MELISSA ENOCH, Planning Housing & Community Development

KEN FRANK, Corporation Counsel

ANGELA HOLMES, City Clerk

GARY HOLMES, Commissioner, Department of Public Works

PHIL KREY, City Engineer

H. PETER L'ORANGE, Planning Housing & Community Development

TITO MARTINEZ, Planning Housing & Community Development

LEIGH MCCULLEN, Planning Housing & Community Development

CAROL QUINLIVAN, Parks & Recreation

OMAR SANDERS, Economic Development

SCOTT SNYDER, City Assessor

JENNIFER TAYLOR, Acting Director, Planning Housing & Community Development

ELECTED OFFICIALS

MAYOR RICH DAVID, 2014 - present

JERRY MOTSAVAGE, 1st Council District

JOSEPH MIHALKO, 2nd Council District

TERI RENNIA, 3rd Council District, Council President

LEA WEBB, 4th Council District

CHRIS PAPASTRAT, 5th Council District

JOHN MATZO, 6th Council District

BILL BERG, 7th Council District

SPECIAL THANKS also for the time and effort dedicated to the creation of Blueprint Binghamton by former City staff and elected officials:

FORMER MAYOR MATT RYAN, 2006 - 2013

TARIK ABDELAZIM, Former Director, Planning Housing & Community Development

LUKE DAY, Former Commissioner, Department of Public Works

PATRICK DAY, Former Planner, Planning Housing & Community Development

MERRY HARRIS, Former Director, Economic Development

KEVIN KANE, Former Parks Maintenance Supervisor, Parks & Recreation

CAROLINE QUIDORT, Former Chief Planner, Planning Housing & Community Development

KYLE SEELEY, Former Special Assistant, Mayor's Office

COLLEEN WAGNER, Former Director, Youth Bureau

PLANNING TEAM

INTERFACE STUDIO - City Planning & Urban Design

Scott Page
Mindy Watts, AICP
Stacey Chen, AICP
Jamie Granger

REAL ESTATE STRATEGIES - Commercial & Residential Market Analysis

Meg Sowell, CRE

CIVIC ECONOMICS - Retail Market Analysis

Matt Cunningham

SAM SCHWARTZ ENGINEERING - Transportation Planning

Mark de la Vergne
Zeke Mermell
Vig Krishnamurthy

SHUMAKER ENGINEERING - Civil Engineering

Jim Cummings, PE
Kelly Saladis

CODE STUDIO - New Zoning for Court and Main Streets

Lee Einsweiler
Colin Scarff
Emily Cowles

VIBRANT CREATIVE - Web Design

Chris Quereau
Lucy Bayly
Leah McDonald
Lars Ewell

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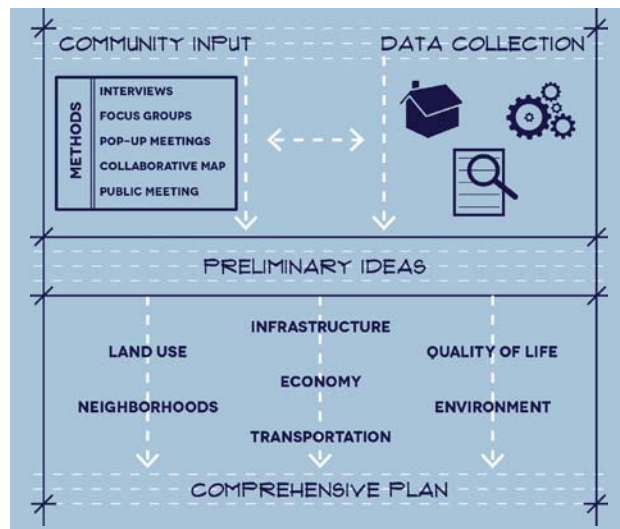
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BLUEPRINT
BINGHAMTON

INTRODUCTION PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

PROJECT BACKGROUND

B **BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON: FORWARD TOGETHER** is the 2014 update of the City of Binghamton's Comprehensive Plan, a citizen-driven effort to plan for Binghamton's future and move our City forward together. In 2011, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded the City a Community Challenge Planning Grant* to update the Comprehensive Plan and develop a corridor plan focused specifically on the design and redevelopment of Court and Main Streets. The planning process began in the fall of 2012, and included input from thousands of people. Their input, combined with an analysis of Binghamton today, form the vision for the City's future and the basis for the action areas of the Plan.



WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

Since the last Comprehensive Plan in 2003, new businesses and housing have brought new life to Downtown; the City's population has stabilized, and the waterfront trail and parks have given a boost to the quality of life and regional image of Binghamton.

But there is still a lot to do to keep the City's infrastructure and neighborhoods in good shape, advance the local economy, and fully realize the potential of Binghamton's educational assets. Even more pressing, the devastating floods of the last few years have made it clear that the City must think proactively and prepare for tomorrow, today.

That is where a Comprehensive Plan comes in. A Comprehensive Plan is a State-mandated document that describes the City's policies and actions related to Binghamton's land use, neighborhoods, transportation, infrastructure, the economy, the environment and quality of life. Updating the Comprehensive Plan now provides the opportunity to build on the positive initiatives already in full swing while proactively tackling new challenges. The Comprehensive Plan, involving extensive community outreach, also provides a framework for the development of programmatic goals and budgetary planning for the upcoming 2015-2020 HUD Consolidated Plan, which identifies housing and community development priorities through community-wide dialogue.

PLANNING PROCESS

BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON: FORWARD TOGETHER is the culmination of a year and a half-long planning process that sought to involve everyone with a stake in the City of Binghamton. The **BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON** planning process had four main phases:

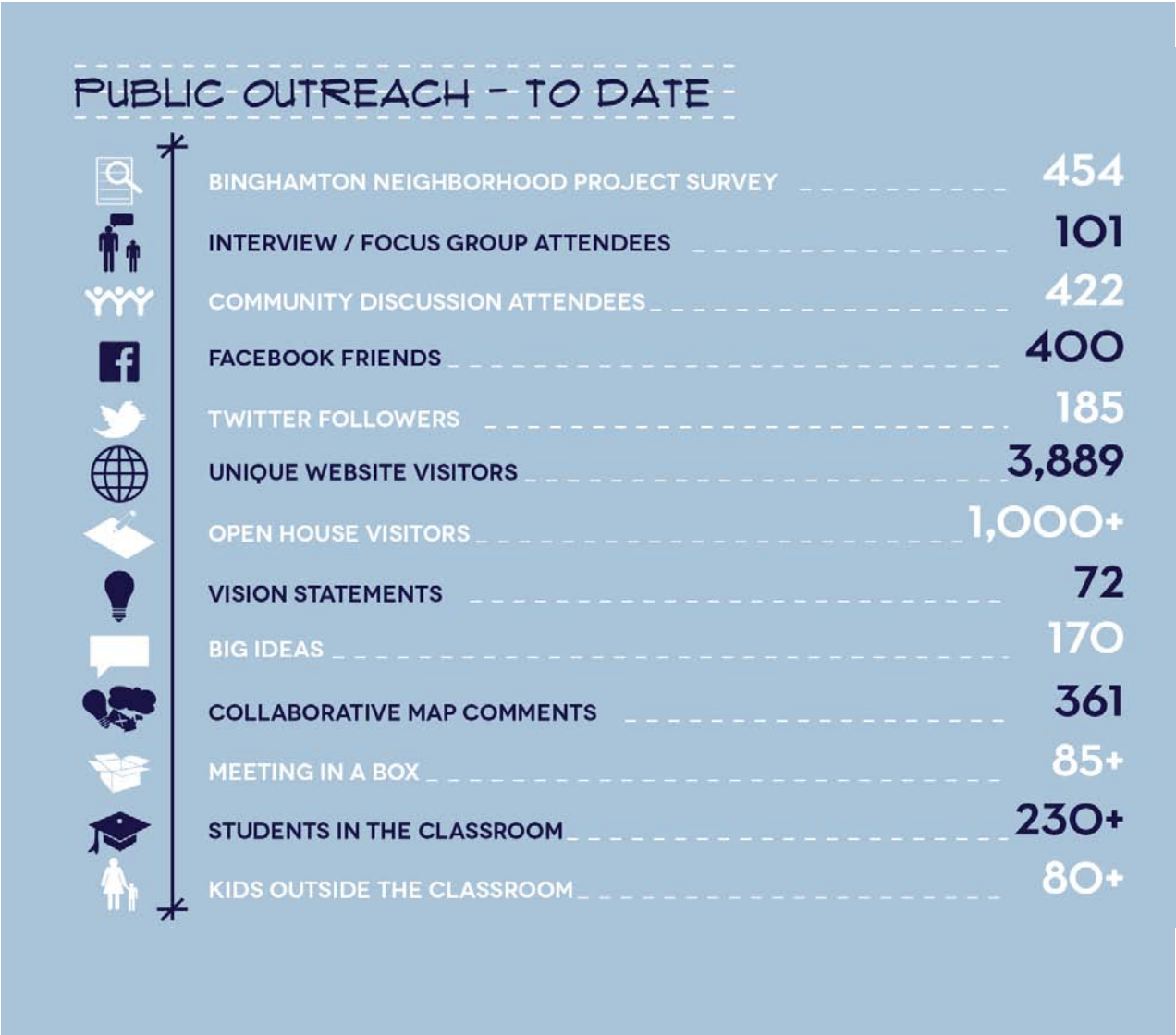
- **PHASE 1: ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS** - The first phase of work was all about studying the City in detail, collecting data, conducting interviews, and listening to the concerns and ideas of the Binghamton community.
- **PHASE 2: VISION + RECOMMENDATIONS** - The second phase of work was about imagining the way things could be. The vision statement for Binghamton tomorrow blends all of the hopes and dreams that people shared and organizes those aspirations into key goals for the City and their partners to work toward.
- **PHASE 3: PLAN DEVELOPMENT** - The third phase of work brought the analysis, vision, and recommendations together into one plan - this Plan - complete with many pictures and quotes to reflect the citizen-driven process. This plan includes the action steps necessary to make our shared vision a reality.
- **PHASE 4: FORM-BASED CODE FOR THE COURT STREET-MAIN STREET CORRIDOR** - The fourth phase of the planning process provided an opportunity to kick-start implementation through the drafting of a form-based code for consideration as new zoning for Court and Main streets.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The overarching goal of **BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON** was to ensure that this update to our City’s Comprehensive Plan would be a community-driven effort to move our City **FORWARD TOGETHER**, so public involvement was a central component of each phase in the planning process. We committed to a robust, equitable and meaningful public process, and we dreamt up and implemented an innovative approach to outreach and engagement in order to reach and reflect the diversity of our Binghamton community. As a community, we had FUN as we worked together on this Plan!

THOUSANDS of people who live, work, worship, learn, and play in Binghamton participated in the planning process between Fall 2012 and Spring 2014, making time to share their visions, hopes, and dreams for the next decade in the life of our City. **MANY THANKS TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU.**

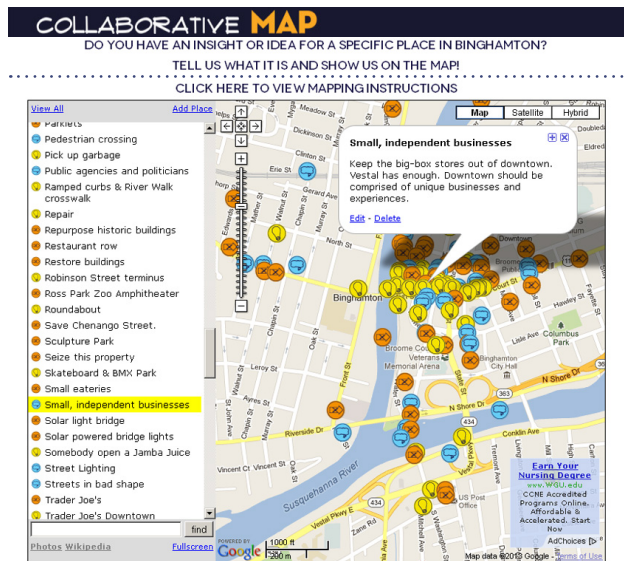
* The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported by funding under an award with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. The author and publisher are solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

To foster a truly citizen-driven process, **BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON** employed a range of strategies to meet the people of our City, learn from their unique perspectives, and use their local knowledge to inform the creation of the plan. Opportunities for learning and sharing, involvement and action included:

- **TRADITIONAL MEETINGS** with the public, with community groups, and with the Steering Committee convened to help guide the process
- **A CITYWIDE SURVEY**, developed and administered (both online and door-to-door) by the Binghamton Neighborhood Project, that reached **454 RESIDENTS** across the city (see summary on next page)
- **INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS** with more than **120 RESIDENT/COMMUNITY EXPERTS** on topics from community health to infrastructure, housing to commercial districts, transportation to zoning and design, the elderly in Binghamton to the youth of Binghamton
- A series of free lunchtime **COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS** that explored different community development issues - **442 PEOPLE** attended the first round of seven community discussions, which addressed:
 - Green Infrastructure
 - Placemaking & Economic Development
 - Trends in Residential Markets
 - Energy Efficiency for Businesses
 - Historic Preservation & Adaptive Reuse
 - Environmental Justice: Blight, Brownfields & Land Banks
 - Public Health & Community Design
- A **PROJECT WEBSITE** [WWW.BLUEPRINTBINGHAMTON.COM] that catalogued the planning process, public events, results, and findings and invited input and interaction through mini-surveys and an online collaborative map. Before the publication of the final Blueprint Binghamton: Forward Together plan, the website had received **3,889 UNIQUE WEB VISITORS!**
- Frequent updates using the powers of the internet to reach a **FACEBOOK** following of **400 PEOPLE**, and a twitter following of **185 PEOPLE**, and counting...
- Anevolvingseriesofinteractiveexhibitshosted in the **PROJECT DESIGN STUDIO**, the Blueprint Binghamton public headquarters and pop-up gallery located in the former First National Bank at 49 Court Street. Over the course of the planning project, the Project Design Studio was open to the public for meetings and events, the biggest of which happened every few months in conjunction with Gorgeous Washington Street Association's First Fridays Art Walk. The Project Design Studio opened its doors to the public five times, and was a HUGE success, drawing **MORE THAN 1,000 VISITORS** who signed in (many more attended and participated in the activities). The space featured exhibits designed to raise awareness of the Plan, ask people to share a bit about themselves, their ideas and insights for the city, their vision, and their priorities for the future of Binghamton.



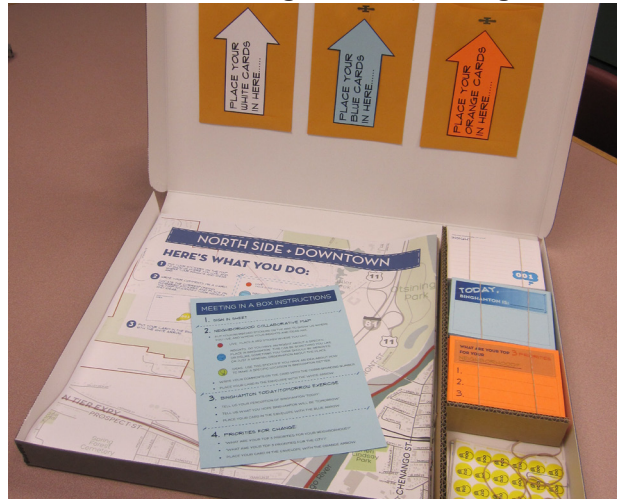
Online Collaborative Map



Advertisement for public outreach



5th Graders at work, thinking about Blueprint Binghamton



Meeting in a Box brought planning activities to neighborhoods



The Pop-Up Gallery



The Pop-Up Gallery

SPECIAL FOCUS ON YOUTH

Binghamton's youth are the future of our City. **BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON** wanted their voice to be heard loud and clear, and their vision for the Binghamton of tomorrow to be central to our planning effort. Working with the Youth Bureau and the Binghamton City School District, City staff visited classrooms with important lessons, cultivating a cadre of concerned citizens and aspiring planners-to-be.

- Over 100 5th graders from Horace Mann and Theodore Roosevelt Elementary Schools wrote and illustrated essays about their neighborhood as it is today, and their ideal neighborhood as they envision it in the future.
- 212 students in 11th and 12th grade at Binghamton High School participated in eight sessions, generating thorough lists of Binghamton's Strengths, Weaknesses, and Suggested Solutions for the future.
- About 20 planning students from Binghamton University participated in a focus group to share their thoughts about what would make them more likely to remain in Binghamton after graduation.
- 40 kids told us what would make Binghamton a safer city at the Stand for Children Anti-Bullying Rally hosted by City Planning staff in Recreation Park.
- 40 kids attended the Juneteenth Celebration in Columbus Park where kids and parents shared their priorities for the City's future.

- More than 200 kids attended the Special Edition Pop-Up Gallery for Kids. City Planning staff, Blueprint Binghamton volunteers, and ten teens from the Cornell Cooperative Extension's Citizen U program hosted a youth-focused version of the Pop-Up Gallery with the interactive exhibits retooled to be kid-friendly.



Photos from the youth events



VISION & PLAN ORGANIZATION

Over the course of the planning process, thousands of people who live, work, learn, and play in Binghamton have made time to share their visions for the next ten years in the life of the City and its evolving story. The rich collection of community inputs resulted in a collective vision for the City:

Our Plan for moving **FORWARD TOGETHER** calls for a **BLUEPRINT FOR A BINGHAMTON** that is:

“ZOEY ENJOYS PLAYING AT THE CITY PARKS. ALL OF THEM ARE BEAUTIFUL AND DIVERSE. WE ATE DINNER AT A LOCAL RESTAURANT WITH FRESH, LOCAL INGREDIENTS. EVERYONE HERE IS SMILING BECAUSE THEY HAVE ENOUGH TO EAT, PLACES TO PLAY, THEY HAVE JOBS, AND A SENSE OF COMMUNITY. WE ALL HAVE A COMMON BOND AND THAT IS THAT WE ARE PROUD TO BE RESIDENTS OF THE COOLEST CITY IN THE WORLD.”

Quote from a “postcard from the future”

THRIVING

with a bustling Downtown and home-grown businesses that create local jobs, driven by our spirit of entrepreneurialism

RESILIENT

a city of safe neighborhoods nestled within a beautiful landscape, where greener design renders the City more resilient to changing weather patterns, and local institutions support a continuum of learning and opportunity for all

HEALTHY

with active citizens who take advantage of the City’s walkability, proximity to natural assets and recreation along the rivers

PROUD

with the authenticity of place fostered by our rich cultural and architectural history, emboldened by the growing sense of possibility we celebrate and project a renewed self-image

ALIVE

one of a cadre of small cities across America experiencing a resurgence based on quality of life driven by an engaged public, Binghamton today and tomorrow is a great place in which to raise a family and grow old, a welcoming home to people of all ages, races, ethnicities, and incomes who choose to live here, and more importantly, stay here.

This recommendations that comprise BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON: Forward Together fall within seven topic-specific sections or mini-plans that together comprise the City’s new Comprehensive Plan.

BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON’s seven mini-plans include:

- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** a plan for a city that prospers
- **HOUSING:** a plan for those at home in the city
- **TRANSPORTATION:** a plan for a city that walks, bikes, rides transit...and drives too
- **INFRASTRUCTURE:** a plan for where the rivers meet the city
- **ENVIRONMENT & OPEN SPACE:** a plan for preservation and play
- **LAND USE & ZONING:** a plan for the land
- **COMMUNITY BUILDING:** a plan for neighbors and neighborhoods

The following pages summarize the key issues, goals and strategies associated with each mini-plan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A PLAN FOR A CITY THAT PROSPERS

A

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The economic development chapter or **BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON MINI-PLAN ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** speaks to residents' primary concerns about local jobs and businesses. The plan addresses the need to create jobs (and training) for workers of varied skill and education levels, the importance of encouraging new jobs at big companies that require big sites as well as small businesses and start-ups, strategies for promoting businesses that restore vibrancy Downtown, and the benefits of expanding connections between businesses and major institutional anchors. This Plan strives to position Binghamton as a City that businesses choose for its business-friendly environment, creative vibe, and high quality of life offered to employees.

The key to a revitalized Binghamton is economic development and job growth for all residents. Since the closure of the major industries that fueled regional growth, the lack of jobs has remained a constant concern for residents and City leaders alike. The perceptions of the City, combined with the relatively low incomes of local families, have also limited the opportunities for new retail establishments. What were once vibrant industrial and retail corridors are now a reflection of the economic challenges faced by the City.

Despite these challenges, the City has the opportunity to reverse course and capitalize on its inherent assets including its location,

infrastructure (freight rail, highways, and utilities) and concentration of jobs Downtown. There is also momentum Downtown with new restaurants and services as well as a significant amount of new student housing to support retail. The recommendations in this chapter address one or more of the following objectives:

- Encourage **LOCAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY** and help businesses thrive
- Improve downtown as a **REGIONAL DESTINATION** and strengthen neighborhood commercial corridors
- Improve the **IMAGE** of the **CITY**
- Encourage new **INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**
- Leverage **LOCAL INSTITUTIONS** for local job growth
- Utilize the **ARTS** to help spur economic development



SCHUYLKILL BANKS OUTDOOR MOVIE
PHILADELPHIA, PA



CLARK PARK FARMERS' MARKET
PHILADELPHIA, PA



FRANKLIN FLEA WINTER MARKET
PHILADELPHIA, PA



PENNY'S LANDING ICE RINK
PHILADELPHIA, PA

Downtown activities

GOALS

OUTCOMES

KEY STRATEGIES

- 01** IMPROVE THE IMAGE OF THE CITY AS AN EXCELLENT PLACE TO DO BUSINESS
- 02** LEVERAGE RAIL AND BRANDYWINE BOA FOR JOB GROWTH
- 03** LEVERAGE THE VALUE OF LOCAL ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- 04** CREATE A MIXED-USE DOWNTOWN THAT IS A REGIONAL DESTINATION
- 05** ENCOURAGE LOCAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY AND HELP SMALL BUSINESSES THRIVE
- 06** CREATE STRONG NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL HUBS
- 07** FOSTER THE LOCAL ARTS & HERITAGE TOURISM

- Improved perception of the City
- Boost in economic development, new jobs and services

- Proactive planning and investment
- New industrial businesses
- Employment opportunities for residents

- Local entrepreneurs linked to anchor institutions such as hospitals and universities
- New small businesses that provide employment for residents of all backgrounds

- A clean, branded and improved Downtown that attracts more businesses and services
- More residents and customers
- More restaurants and local retailers

- Access to local business support
- Strong local retailers

- Local commercial hubs offering services close to local families
- Greater diversity of businesses

- Enhanced public art and a more attractive business environment
- Thriving local arts that leads to economic returns
- Growing heritage and tourism industry

- Develop professional branding strategy for the City
- Seek "Shovel Ready" designation to enhance marketing of the Charles Street Business Park
- Create an Industrial Preservation Area within the Brandywine industrial corridor
- Focus site acquisition efforts on the Brandywine BOA, using land bank program to assemble property
- Use tools such as BOAs and I/I credits for redevelopment
- Implement the Binghamton University Technology Incubator and position the City to offer space for incubator "grown-ups" and ancillary businesses supporting the incubator
- Challenge anchor institutions to purchase 20% (with annual escalator) of procured goods and services from local businesses
- Improve coordination amongst Downtown stakeholders to build on the successes and momentum in Downtown Binghamton
- Promote more activities Downtown to encourage commuters to stay after work
- Create an aesthetically appealing and cohesive visual identity
- Embrace the idea of pop up shops and retail incubators to encourage entrepreneurial activity
- Support and grow the Buy Local campaign
- Streamline the regulatory process for small, independent retailers
- Allow the preservation of neighborhood commercial development to give residents the option to shop and eat in their neighborhoods
- Proactively guide the redevelopment of key areas such as Binghamton Plaza and Chenango Street
- Create a volunteer Public Art Commission to foster local arts
- Encourage visible and large-scale public art
- Participate in local and regional efforts to boost tourism and heritage tourism

HOUSING A PLAN FOR THOSE AT HOME IN THE CITY

B

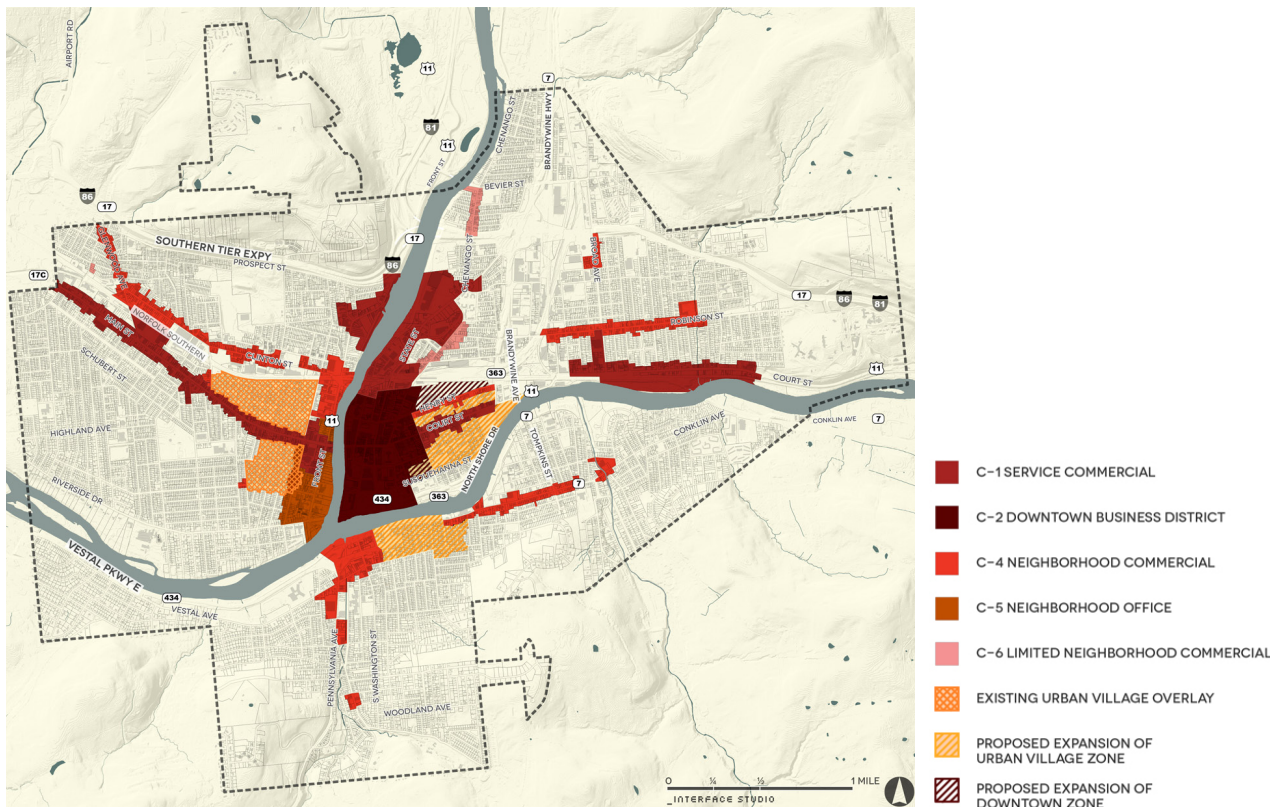
The housing chapter addresses the needs of homeowners, landlords, renters, policy makers, public agencies, investors, and developers, alike - all people affected by Binghamton's housing stock and housing market. Recommendations encompass

strategies for maintaining the City's aging housing stock, opportunities to diversify housing typologies to bring beautiful buildings back to life and better serve certain market segments, and tactics to preserve affordability and the integrity of neighborhoods.

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Binghamton's neighborhoods offer a range of choices from urban apartment living to almost rural, secluded environments. The affordability of housing makes Binghamton attractive to prospective buyers and renters but at the same time, constrains new residential construction. There are however opportunities to improve the condition of housing and neighborhoods in the City for existing residents and attract a broader variety of residents. All of the recommendations in this chapter address one or more of the following objectives:

- Maintain **QUALITY HOUSING** and **ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS** to foster pride and quality of life
- **REVITALIZE** neighborhoods through balanced **HOUSING DEVELOPMENT** throughout the City
- Encourage **STUDENT HOUSING** where it will best benefit the surrounding community and City as a whole
- Develop diverse and distinctive **HOUSING OPTIONS** to attract various types of households to live in the City



Rental housing zones

GOALS

OUTCOMES

KEY STRATEGIES

01

PRESERVE THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

- Reduced blight
- Strong and marketable neighborhoods

- Work with the Binghamton Housing Authority (BHA), private developers/owners, and community development corporations to preserve and expand quality affordable rental housing
- Assist residents in need (low-income, seniors) with maintenance and repairs
- Develop "Fix to Own" program for City-owned properties to transition to owner-occupied properties

02

EXPAND HOUSING CHOICE IN BINGHAMTON

- New housing to compete with neighboring areas and plan for changing demographics
- More residents choosing to live in Binghamton
- New housing investment

- Work with Broome County Land Bank to assemble redevelopment sites for new for-sale housing units
- Develop new market-rate rental housing for general occupancy
- Develop affordable housing and mixed income developments adjacent to services and transportation

03

MANAGE THE QUALITY OF RENTAL AND STUDENT HOUSING

- Improved housing conditions
- Better code enforcement
- Rehabilitated housing and new housing

- Devise a new urban village/mixed use zoning classification to legalize and better regulate rental housing while also managing externalities
- Identify opportunity sites and incentives for new student housing development
- Work with the BHA to ensure that properties leased to families with Housing Choice Vouchers have been inspected and are in compliance

04

REVITALIZE DOWNTOWN WITH A MIX OF HOUSING OPTIONS

- Adaptive reuse of historic properties
- A mix of housing types to appeal to a diverse range of residents

- Encourage historic preservation and reuse to provide unique, attractive housing options
- Develop moderate-income senior housing near amenities
- Apply for a Choice Neighborhood Initiative Planning Grant for Woodburn Court II

05

MARKET BINGHAMTON HOUSING TO ATTRACT DIVERSE RESIDENTS

- Marketing campaign and message deployed through realtors, institutions and City agencies

- Develop branding strategy for different target populations and neighborhoods
- Work with institutions to offer employee incentives to live in Binghamton
- Expand Binghamton Homeownership Academy (BHOA) services and partnerships

TRANSPORTATION: A PLAN FOR A CITY THAT WALKS, BIKES, RIDES TRANSIT... AND DRIVES TOO

C

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The transportation chapter or **BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON MINI-PLAN ON TRANSPORTATION** is about how Binghamton moves - more specifically about the multiple ways in which people travel through the City and how the City can better balance its public rights-of-way to serve those traveling on foot, by bicycle, by bus, and by car to get where

they need to go for work, for school, and for fun. The transportation strategies address the existing network of streets and parking areas, bike trails and transit services while seeking to add amenities, options, and alternatives to boost safety, convenience, and mobility via multiple modes.

Binghamton is remarkably walkable due to its urban street grid, and this aspect should be emphasized with all future transportation planning. There are a number of opportunities to improve the city's transportation to reduce the cost of living in Binghamton, attract new residents, and help encourage economic development and livability. All of the recommendations address one or more of the following objectives:

- Improve the **CONNECTION** between **DOWNTOWN** and the **UNIVERSITY** through improved multi-modal infrastructure and service
- Improve **WALKING AND BIKING ACCESS** to parks and open space and other destinations
- Prioritize **MAINTAINING** and **MODERNIZING** existing **INFRASTRUCTURE**
- **REDUCE** infrastructure **BARRIERS** that fragment the city
- Begin to build a **MULTI-MODAL** foundation that makes it easier to live, work, and **GET AROUND BINGHAMTON WITHOUT A CAR**



Rendering of proposed improvements at intersection of State & Hawley showing a narrowed gateway to slow speeds as drivers enter Downtown

GOALS

OUTCOMES

KEY STRATEGIES

01

UPGRADE AND MAINTAIN TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

- Improved roadway and rail infrastructure
- Reduced costs

- Expand and regularly update a citywide roadway infrastructure plan
- Work with private rail companies to improve rail infrastructure
- Develop guidelines and standards to integrate green infrastructure in street rehabilitation projects
- Reduce City costs by removing excessive infrastructure where possible

02

ADDRESS PARKING AND MAINTENANCE ISSUES

- A balance of parking supply and demand
- Increased parking revenue
- Improved alternative transportation to reduce competition for parking

- Undertake a comprehensive Downtown parking study
- Develop a Parking Improvement District in Downtown, and utilize a portion of revenue from parking for Downtown improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Introduce shared parking arrangements or residential permit parking in neighborhoods with student housing zones

03

PROMOTE ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

- Improved public transportation experience
- Safe streets for non-auto users
- Reduced maintenance
- More foot traffic and economic development

- Improve transportation connections between Binghamton University and Downtown
- Improve the public transportation experience
- Develop complete streets hierarchy for street design
- Develop a crosswalk policy
- Develop a citywide bike network

04

IMPROVE THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE ON CITY STREETS

- Safer, more attractive streets
- More foot traffic and economic development

- Reclaim underutilized asphalt space on wide streets and intersections
- Make the bridges distinctive through lighting and highlighting architectural detail
- Address the needs of Binghamton City School District students who walk or take the bus to school

INFRASTRUCTURE: A PLAN FOR WHERE THE RIVERS MEET THE CITY

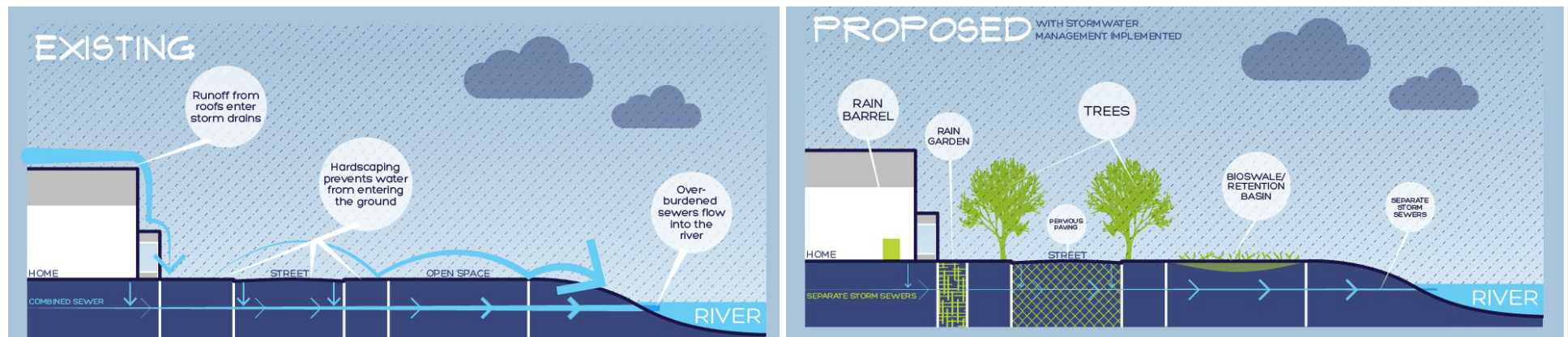
D

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The infrastructure chapter or **BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON MINI-PLAN ON INFRASTRUCTURE** recognizes the realities that Binghamton faces as a city trisected by rivers. In addition to strategies that address energy, utilities, and operating costs in an era of budget cuts, portion of the plan puts forth strategies to address the volume and quality of water flowing downstream which threaten Binghamton's riverfront and low-lying properties during riverine flood events, stormwater regulations and opportunities for smaller-scale interventions that mitigate flash flood events caused by rainfall, and the relationship between water and urban land use decisions in the future.

Binghamton must be creative in addressing some of the very pressing infrastructure and water issues facing the city. With aging infrastructure, threats of future flooding, and a limited budget, a coordinated effort is needed to tackle these issues in an environmentally and financially sustainable manner. All of the recommendations address one or more of the objectives listed below:

- **REDUCING** operational and **MAINTENANCE COSTS**
- Maintaining **INFRASTRUCTURE REPAIRS** and upgrades
- Enhancing existing flood protection
- **REDUCING EFFECTS** of small scale and **FLASH FLOODING** through **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**



Stormwater management practices to reduce infiltration and inflow

GOALS

OUTCOMES

KEY STRATEGIES

01

**REDUCE THE IMPACT OF FLOODING
AND PROTECT BINGHAMTON
NEIGHBORHOODS & BUSINESSES**

- Safer, more resilient homes compliant with new floodplain standards
- Flood mitigation in areas of high risk

- Implement the City's established priority projects in the County's 2013 Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Help residents reduce the impact of flooding on their homes and comply with new floodplain standards to reduce flood insurance costs
- Proactively manage land in the floodplain to reduce blight and implement flood mitigation measures

02

**IMPROVE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
AND RIVER WATER QUALITY**

- Proactive stormwater management
- Informed and engaged public
- Improved river water quality
- Reduced infrastructure costs

- Enforce and enhance Urban Runoff Reduction Plan (URRP) requirements
- Continue to make sewer system improvements
- Develop public education and awareness campaign for stormwater and sewer overflows to encourage individual action and responsibility

03

**CONSERVE WATER/ENERGY
RESOURCES AND REDUCE OPERATING
COSTS**

- Reduced resource use and improved efficiency
- Reduced maintenance
- Reduced operating costs
- Improved planning and decision-making through data

- Incentivize low impact development practices
- Invest in wireless meter system for all water uses, allowing the City to monitor where water is being used, and correct areas of water loss
- Update water model to assist in detecting areas of concern within the system to target funding
- Openly coordinate/communicate between departments and utilities on any major projects to reduce redundancies

ENVIRONMENT & OPEN SPACE

A PLAN FOR PRESERVATION AND PLAY

E

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The environment & open space chapter or **BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON MINI-PLAN ON ENVIRONMENT & OPEN SPACE** focuses on the City's natural landscapes - rivers, riparian edges, and park spaces - as well as opportunities in daily life for Binghamton's citizens to contribute

to a healthier City, region, and planet by reducing waste output, increasing the urban forest and flora, and strengthening the connection between people and the parks, playgrounds, rivers, and trails that welcome healthy play so long as they remain clean and safe spaces.

The environment and open space chapter of Blueprint Binghamton seeks to recognize and reinforce the importance of Binghamton's beloved parks and natural landscapes, with the understanding that each citizen can take steps to lessen his or her impact on the environment while also taking new steps to engage more directly with the City's trees and rivers, parks and open spaces. All of **BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON'S** environment and open space recommendations address one or more of the following objectives:

- Adopt new habits to **MINIMIZE** the **WASTE OUTPUT** of the City
- Invest in the **URBAN FOREST** and a new generation of citizen pruners who can support the City's efforts to add more green to the public realm
- **REENGAGE** with the **RIVERS**, both through waterfront parks and trails and water-based recreation
- Celebrate the City's **PARK SYSTEM** and ensure that each neighborhood has **SAFE** and **BEAUTIFUL PLACES** for residents of all ages to relax and play for generations to come



"BIG IDEA" Comments - Columbus Park

GOALS

OUTCOMES

KEY STRATEGIES

01

REDUCE WASTE

- increased recycling
- Reduced costs to the City

- Increase household recycling through incentive programs
- Add recycling containers to public trash receptacles in business district, at public facilities, and at public events
- Launch a City compost program
- Adopt a construction and demolition recycling ordinance

02

INCREASE TREE COVER TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY AND THE PUBLIC REALM

- Improved tree cover
- Improved stormwater management
- Beautification of the public realm

- Expand the tree inventory database, and add to the tree inventory with size-appropriate species in under-planted areas
- Continue to support efforts by Shade Tree Commission as a key partner for Park and Recreation
- Enlist the community in tree planting efforts through education

03

IMPROVE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE CITY AND ITS NATURAL ASSETS

- Active riverfronts
- Economic development

- Improve existing Riverwalk
- Extend the Riverwalk Trail north to Otsiningo Park and east/west along both banks of the Susquehanna River
- Reactivate the Rivers with water-based recreation
- Acquire easements along entire waterfront and require easements as a condition for future waterfront development

04

MAINTAIN PARKS AND PLAY SPACE IN EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD TO BRING RESIDENTS TOGETHER

- Safer and active recreational spaces
- Improved maintenance of green spaces

- Improve access, visibility, active recreation at targeted parks
- Formalize and provide technical assistance to Friends of Parks groups to maintain and program neighborhood parks
- Expand community service maintenance program to supplement parks and landscape maintenance
- Continue to expand business partnerships for landscape maintenance in business districts

LAND USE & ZONING

A PLAN FOR THE LAND

F

The land use and zoning chapter or **BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON MINI-PLAN ON LAND USE & ZONING** includes one of the most important elements to emerge from a comprehensive planning process, a future land use map, which is a tool that indicates where existing land uses should be preserved, and where property should be positioned for redevelopment to accommodate a mix of new uses. The future land use recommendations will inform updates to the City's Zoning Code as well as decisions by the Planning Commission and Zoning Board regarding development proposals for properties throughout Binghamton.

The proposed future land use for Binghamton seeks to reinforce areas of stability within our City and adjust the land uses allowed in underperforming areas to make room for development that meets emerging or demonstrated market potential, all while balancing development with the need for environmental sensitivity in the City's flood-prone zones. All of **BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON'S** land use and zoning recommendations address one or more of the objectives listed below:

- Embrace policy changes that reinforce **RESILIENT LAND USE PATTERNS** and proactively tackle land use challenges
- Reinvent **MAJOR OPPORTUNITY SITES** with new, market-driven, **MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT** that will breathe **NEW ECONOMIC LIFE** into neighborhoods and Downtown
- Encourage appropriate types and intensities of development and **IMPROVE FLOODWATER INFRASTRUCTURE** in areas rendered vulnerable, both physically and economically, by the shifting floodplain
- **REWRITE THE ZONING CODE** to ensure that the intent of the future land use map is supported by appropriate zoning and zoning procedures that work with the development community



Residential block in the West Side



Riverwalk Downtown

GOALS

OUTCOMES

KEY STRATEGIES

- 01** **UPDATE MAPS CODES AND PROCEDURES**
- 02** **ALLOW GREATER HOUSING CHOICE AND PROTECT THE LIVABILITY OF BINGHAMTON'S NEIGHBORHOODS**
- 03** **ENCOURAGE NEW COMMERCIAL USES DOWNTOWN AND ALONG TRADITIONAL COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS**
- 04** **EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**
- 05** **PROTECT BINGHAMTON'S HISTORIC CHARACTER AND ENCOURAGE DESIGN EXCELLENCE**

- Streamlined and transparent development process benefiting investors, developers, the City, and residents

- Diverse, livable neighborhoods with a mix of housing

- Increased commercial activity
- New businesses Downtown and along commercial corridors
- Stabilized residential areas adjacent to commercial uses

- New industrial growth and employment
- Protected industrial districts
- A greater mix of production businesses and jobs
- Increased tax revenue for the City

- New private investment
- Restored historic structures
- Appropriate design standards for major new projects

- Update the Land Use Map
- Rewrite the Zoning Code to ensure that appropriate zoning supports the future Land Use Map
- Incorporate a Special Purpose classification for key sites
- Study current land uses allowed by the Zoning Code and examine ways to simplify the Code
- Convert the Urban Village District Overlay into a zoning category, and expand its application
- Create a new, low density zoning classification for environmentally sensitive areas
- Allow the development of parking facilities in the Urban Village District subject to strict design guidelines
- Enable higher density housing along Main Street
- Change mix of uses permitted within the Urban Business Park (UBP) zoning classification
- Explore parking maximums or lower parking minimums for Downtown development
- Lessen off-street parking requirements for commercial redevelopment along traditional commercial corridors
- Update the sign ordinance
- Identify and code an Industrial Preservation Area within the Brandywine Industrial Corridor
- Buffer industrial areas from residential communities
- Re-zone to allow small-scale production and a mix of uses in targeted areas
- Establish a threshold for design review for large projects to provide a streamlined review process and ensure good design
- Evaluate current landscape requirements and develop clear standards for all project types

COMMUNITY BUILDING

A PLAN FOR NEIGHBORS AND NEIGHBORHOODS

G

The community building chapter or **BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON MINI-PLAN ON COMMUNITY BUILDING** stems from the energy and momentum built during the planning process with strategies that seek to harness the community's interests and ideas with tools that foster actions for change - at the block level, the community level, the neighborhood level. With ideas that pertain to your backyard, your streetscape, your children, and your health, these quality of life recommendations establish a common ground that will bring each part of the Binghamton community to the implementation table to help make BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON: forward together a reality.

Community building is vital for the success of Binghamton's future. A strong healthy community and network of active civic groups that are self-motivated and engaged can serve as important partners with the City to bring about the changes needed to improve each neighborhood and Binghamton as a whole. All of Blueprint Binghamton's community building recommendations address one or more of the objectives listed below:

- Ensure that **POSITIVE CHANGE** is **DISTRIBUTED** throughout the entire city
- **EMPOWER RESIDENTS** to guide the revitalization of their own neighborhoods
- Support **HEALTH** and **SAFETY** in all neighborhoods
- Promote the **EQUITABLE REVITALIZATION** of all neighborhoods for a mix of incomes and families

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A CDC?

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

ASSIST RESIDENTS

- HOUSING COUNSELING
- LOANS + FINANCING
- WORKSHOPS + TRAININGS
- EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

SUPPORT BUSINESSES

- FINANCING
- SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT
- BUSINESS DIRECTORY
- PROPERTY LISTINGS

IMPROVE PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

- NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING
- VACANT LAND MANAGEMENT
- GREENING + GARDENS
- HOUSING REPAIR + DEVELOPMENT

ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

- EVENTS
- NEWSLETTERS
- LIASON WITH PARTNERS
- PROMOTION AND IMAGE



Potential programs of a community development corporation

Walnut Street Park is an example of grassroots efforts led by Safe Streets Binghamton

GOALS

OUTCOMES

KEY STRATEGIES

01 EXPAND THE CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE CITY

- Engaged residents and community organizations
- Increased funds for community improvements and investment
- Increased capacity to assist City departments in implementation activities

- Explore the creation of a Binghamton Neighborhood Development Corporation
- Cultivate pride through branding and improvements at the neighborhood and block level
- Develop media and communication plan to keep the community engaged and updated

02 MAINTAIN A CONTINUUM OF CARE FOR RESIDENTS AND FAMILIES IN NEED

- New supportive housing with access to services
- Improved health of residents
- Improved effectiveness of existing services

- Strengthen and support development of supportive housing for developmental disabilities, mental health and substance addiction recovery with access to transportation and service providers
- Support community development initiatives to improve access to preventive care and chronic disease management for high-utilizing patients

03 INTEGRATE RESIDENT HEALTH INTO NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING AND REINVESTMENT

- Improved health of residents
- Reduced costs to local hospitals
- Reduced incidents of chronic disease
- Improved access to fresh food and active programming

- Encourage partnerships between the community development and health sectors to foster healthier neighborhoods
- Ensure each neighborhood has access to healthy, fresh food
- Promote tobacco and smoke free living through better protections for non-smokers and youth
- Promote healthy and active living through education programs and activities

04 ACTIVELY ENGAGE YOUTH IN CITY INITIATIVES

- New collaborative initiatives between educational institutions and the City
- Youth-led community improvement projects
- Greater civic involvement and participation by youth and families
- Identification and encouragement of potential future City and business leaders

- Support Youth Success Initiative as key youth services liaison and provider
- Coordinate with non-profit youth organizations to maintain an inventory of programming and address gaps
- Formalize partnerships between the School District, the City, and area institutions of higher education

05 ENSURE SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS FOR ALL RESIDENTS

- Reduced crime rates
- Reduced code citations
- Clean, attractive streets
- Improved perceptions of the City and more economic activity

- Formalize partnership with BOCES vocational programs
- Educate residents on code enforcement
- Initiate a "Dumpster Day" program for large, bulky items; electronics recycling; clothing drive
- Strengthen community resiliency to crime and drugs with community policing
- Improve neighborhood lighting for visibility and safety

