

A BLUEPRINT FOR BROCKTON: DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN



JULY 2017

Prepared for:

The Brockton Planning Board

City of Brockton Department of Planning and Economic Development

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Acknowledgements

The following individuals and staff have contributed their time to develop *A Blueprint for Brockton: Brockton Comprehensive Master Plan*. Their contributions join the comments of hundreds of residents and stakeholders who participated in meetings, workshops, and surveys during the planning process.

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Funding was made possible by City Council reinvesting MGL 40R Bonus Payment (Dividend) back into other planning projects.

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I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION



Brockton is poised to benefit from the transformation of urban communities that is underway in 21st century cities. Brockton has distinctive strengths as a place to live, work, and visit that can be significantly enhanced through concerted actions. This document provides a *Blueprint for Brockton* with both guidance and inspiration for those actions.



Brockton, Massachusetts



Brockton's past was dominated by its 19th century heritage as an industrial and commercial center. But the economic forces that built and maintained many of its factories, neighborhoods, commercial, and civic structures are gone. The 19th century economy has been replaced by a dramatically different set of trends and opportunities. Brockton is now in the midst of a regional economy that is growing due to its ability to rapidly adapt to changing technologies, information, and skills. In today's world, successful communities provide a high quality of life that retains, attracts, and supports the residents and businesses who are engaged in the actively changing economic environment.

While Brockton retains the distinctive character as a complete community, it benefits from its role in the regional economy. It has excellent transportation access that links employment, employees, education, and services. While other communities in the Greater Boston area have become very expensive places to live or to conduct a business, Brockton provides a high-quality alternative that is relatively affordable to all.

Brockton provides the benefits that arise from a culturally diverse population and the diversity of its employment base. In contrast to suburban communities, this is a complete city – with its diverse places to work, study, shop, and live. The neighborhoods are compact, walkable, and endowed with a solid stock of housing. It has a remarkably varied and extensive network of open spaces, cultural and civic institutions.

In order to be successful in this century, the City with its leadership, and residents must work together to actively manage its future. Positive change must be planned in advance and then implemented through focused policies, programs, and improvements. As the *Comprehensive Master Plan* for Brockton, this document describes the fundamental elements that compose the civic and economic life of the city and then provides specific recommendations for those people involved in shaping these elements.

The plans and actions will benefit from a shared vision of Brockton's future. This *Comprehensive Master Plan* has been built on the foundation of this vision, which emerged through the discussions and contributions of all of those that participated in crafting this *Blueprint for Brockton*.



A *Blueprint for Brockton* is composed of separate, related documents.

This *Comprehensive Master Plan* presents the core vision, objectives, and goals for the future. This document includes concise summaries of the eight different elements and the keys to their implementation.

The *Master Plan Elements* are contained in a companion document. That document provides separate sections with expanded discussions of each constituent element. It includes analyses and relevant data, maps, and descriptions. Each element includes an expanded set of recommendations. The *Master Plan Elements* includes an Implementation Matrix to serve as the guide for future actions, and provides a list of planning resources and references.

The *Plan Record* contains descriptions and results of the community participation process that was an essential ingredient in preparing *A Blueprint for Brockton*. The *Plan Record* is available on the City's website in a compiled digital format to facilitate review and reference due to its size.

VISION FOR BROCKTON

Brockton will be valued and increasingly recognized by everyone as a high quality and affordable place to live, work, or visit because it offers all dimensions of a 21st century city. Its acknowledged quality of life will be linked to the character of our neighborhoods and the complete range of services, amenities, and housing choices geared to our residents. Our prosperity will grow with the new businesses and land redevelopment attracted by the benefits of a community offering both urban and neighborhood residential districts that are exceedingly well connected to the region through our transit and roadway access. As a 21st century city, we will build on our historic resources and character, but become a leader in the emerging trend that values innovative use of land, mixing of uses, and provision of services, within attractive, walkable districts.

Brockton will:

- **Be a community with an economically strong, fully-developed, mixed-use Downtown and commercial districts** fully adapted to the 21st century, connected by well-developed and designed corridors reaching into the neighborhoods and out to the region.
- **Have stable and safe neighborhoods** that offer the benefits of high quality housing choices and an environment geared to families which provides easy access to the services and amenities that residents need.
- **Be an incubator for new entrepreneurial businesses and job creation**, while retaining our important existing base of businesses and employment through innovative changes to the commercial, industrial, and mixed-use areas of the City.
- **Fully leverage our rail connections** to invite Transit Oriented Development that will provide the benefits of housing and employment in compact areas around the stations.
- **Provide increased housing choices for our residents** for our residents with a range of types and densities suited to the changing needs of the middle class and its young adults, families, and residents who will age in place in Brockton.
- **Update and improve the municipal facilities, including our schools**, that provide a key building block for the future of our children and our entire community.
- **Provide a surprising range of cultural resources and events** celebrating the diversity of our population and their interests.
- **Have restored parks and expanded recreation facilities** that increasingly attract and serve our residents because they are attractive places offering a range of activities.
- **Provide convenient transportation choices** that increasingly emphasize transit, walking, and bicycling while reducing unnecessary traffic congestion on our streets and roads.
- **Upgrade utilities for 21st century prosperity and efficiency**, replacing outmoded and outdated components of our systems.
- **Have a growing network of committees, organizations, and City leadership working together** to advance our community.

FOCUS FOR THE FUTURE: FOUR OVERALL OBJECTIVES

This *Comprehensive Master Plan* has four clear objectives that need to be achieved to best advance its vision. These objectives link all the Plan's elements and recommendations. Expressed as overarching themes for the next stages of Brockton's planning and development, they can be considered keys for the future. Each objective is tracked throughout the Comprehensive Master Plan and include:

RESTORE LAND USE BALANCE:



Brockton will benefit from attracting and supporting new mixed-use and commercial development in locations that are well served by transportation and where land is not fulfilling its market potential. But the community will also benefit from thoughtful preservation and enhancement of stable neighborhoods with the high quality of community life that they can provide. Patterns of new development should respect and bring new value to the historic resources that can be preserved and adapted to 21st century uses.

BE A GREAT COMMUNITY FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS:



Brockton has fundamental strengths associated with its quality as a predominately middle class community. For Brockton to thrive, it must retain the middle-class residents with incentives to stay and age within the community as they move through the different phases of their lives. Brockton should help retrain its residents and support the constant need for continuing education integral to finding and keeping employment. Brockton can grow by recruiting new residents who are attracted by its affordable, high quality of life.

EXPAND STEWARDSHIP:



Brockton should attract and value the civic contributions of a growing circle of stewards who are engaged and committed to advancing our future. Great communities are marked by the involvement of many individual residents, organizations, neighborhood associations, institutions, and businesses in civic life. In this regard, the future of Brockton will benefit from the expanded advocacy and stewardship drawn from every part of its diverse population.

PROVIDE EQUITY:



Brockton is composed of a racially and economically diverse population that is distributed among different districts and neighborhoods. All areas and all citizens in the City should be equitably served with appropriate and excellent access to City services and amenities. Convenient transportation access should be extended to every part of the community, with improvements distributed to locations that will help achieve this balance. Similarly, all residents and areas of Brockton should be served by an efficient utility infrastructure that keeps pace with contemporary needs and standards.

FOCUS ON BOTH PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Restoring land use balance will include:

- Targeting redevelopment towards underutilized and former industrial areas
- Repositioning and revitalizing the Downtown
- Clustering new development around transit
- Redeveloping commercial strips to better serve nearby neighborhoods
- Creating mixed use development that is integrated into the community

FOCUS ON THE “R”S TO RETAIN, RETRAIN, AND RECRUIT

A great middle class community will include:

- Affordable housing costs to rent or own, coupled with access to both amenities and necessities
- High quality walkable neighborhoods that are safe, family-oriented places
- A range of housing choices in locations that match a full range of middle class lifestyles
- Quality schools, attractive parks and recreational programs, and cultural resources - from events and celebrations to theater and entertainment
- Education and retraining programs to be competitive for high value jobs in a changing economy

FOCUS ON BUILDING COMMUNITY

Expanding stewardship will include:

- Significant numbers of new volunteers to serve on committees, boards, and civic-minded organizations
- Growing identification of residents with the neighborhood or district in which they live
- New contributions of time and resources from businesses and institutions to civic purposes
- New events and opportunities for citizens to meet one another and find common ground

FOCUS ON SERVICES, AMENITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Providing equity will include:

- Expanded locations to provide community services throughout the City
- Active outreach and communication bridging cultures and languages
- Balanced, distributed investments in the services and amenities for all neighborhoods and districts
- Provision of the same high level of utilities and transportation improvements in every area of Brockton

STARTING POINT: THE CITY IN PERSPECTIVE

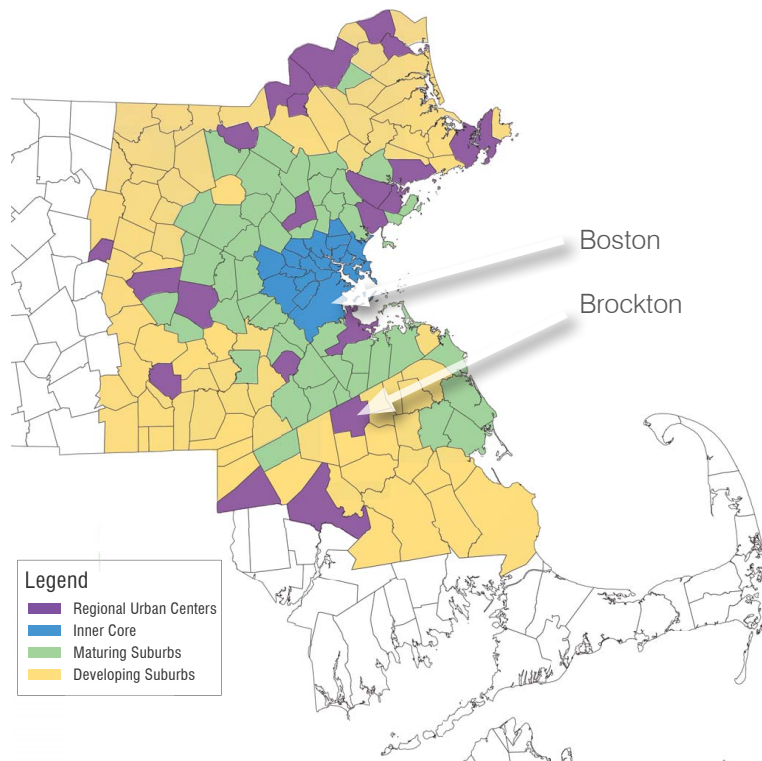
The starting point for this *Comprehensive Master Plan* encompasses both the history and current circumstances of the City of Brockton. Some of the underlying facts regarding Brockton's state provide a useful frame of reference that is shared by all its constituent elements.

Brockton is an incorporated city located 20 miles south of Boston, in Plymouth County. Originally separated from Boston by a ring of rural communities, Brockton became a major center of industrial and commercial expansion in the 19th century. It attracted a large population to work in its businesses and to fill out every dimension of a prosperous New England city.

The development of the City was shaped by its topography of hills and rivers. A complete downtown with businesses, institution and civic buildings grew in the center of Brockton. Neighborhoods were created along a web of streets around the edges of the downtown. Served by rail and trolley car lines, businesses and neighborhood services clustered along these key transportation corridors.

The 20th century transformed the region and Brockton. The Greater Boston region has become an interconnected network of suburbs and cities linked by the interstate highways, arterial corridors, and commuter rail lines. Industries faded and the economic energy of the City was dispersed within the automobile-dominated transportation network.

But Brockton remains a distinct and large urbanized center, very different from nearby suburban towns. The City of Brockton is a community of 94,532 people. The City has a land area of approximately 21.5 square miles with a population density of 6.9 people per acre.



Although it lacks the economic vitality of its past, the City has retained a large housing stock that has remained relatively affordable within the context of the MetroBoston region. The housing stock and family-oriented neighborhoods of Brockton have attracted and supported a predominately middle class population. The family orientation is evident in the population statistics. Residents are slightly younger than state average, with a median age of just under 36 years. Brockton has a proportionately greater number of young children and young people under the age of 18. Data supporting these findings is located in the *Master Plan Elements* document.

But the overall economic status of Brockton stems from the reduction in its commercial vitality of past eras, which is reflected in the circumstances of some of its residents. In general, average annual incomes in the City are lower and poverty rates are higher than the comparable state and county averages.

Brockton has substantial ethnic and demographic diversity. The white, black/African-American, and Hispanic proportions represent about 46%, 40%, and 10% of the population, respectively. But there are many other ethnicities and cultural origins represented within Brockton, as well. For example, there is a significant representation of those with Cape Verdean or Haitian ancestry, who together compose nearly 30% of the population. As it has for more than a century, Brockton also remains a community with a significant number of foreign-born residents.

The land use and development patterns in Brockton reflect the sequence of its economic and transportation evolution. The traditional neighborhood fabric of homes, blocks, and streets comprises the largest proportion of the developed land in the City. The downtown retains its historic urban character, but is being adapted for new uses. It is in the process of a major revitalization through City initiatives (e.g., *Downtown Action Strategy*, *Urban Revitalization Plan*). The Downtown is being directed towards a new role as a mixed-use district, taking advantage of the trends favoring urban places as a preferred location for both enterprises and residents.



Contemporary retail and commercial developments occupy strategic sites near the regional highways. But underutilized corridors of land persist along the internal roads, mixing auto-oriented business as with the remnants of traditional buildings and neighborhoods that line them. Other corridors of commercial and industrial development are clustered along regional rail lines, including significant parcels of underutilized land.



In broad terms, Brockton's overall economic circumstances are relatively strong and improving. Employment trends are positive for most of the major segments of Brockton's economy. Real estate vacancy rates for key sectors are dropping and Brockton appears well-positioned to attract new entrepreneurial businesses.

The City has substantial open space and recreational resources, including a network of public parks and amenities. The condition of some of these assets requires updating, however, and additional amenities that are convenient to all City neighborhoods are needed.

Brockton provides a full range of public services supported by its municipal facilities. As a community that has endured decades of economic challenges, some of these facilities require additional improvements and reinvestment so the City can provide cost effective services in the future. Some of the utilities in Brockton have aged under similar circumstances and need to be upgraded or replaced.

Brockton has substantial advantages associated with its excellent connections to the regional transportation network. Arterials connect all the districts of the City and lead to major highway interchanges. Commuter rail lines connect three station areas to the region. But vehicular circulation within Brockton is subject to the congestion associated with high levels of automobile use. In this context, there are many opportunities to expand the benefits of transit, pedestrian and bicycle networks to provide alternatives.

PLAN ELEMENTS

The *Comprehensive Master Plan* is composed of eight different elements. Each element comprises a different dimension of the City and the community. The elements include:

1. Land Use

This element describes how the land is allocated among different purposes and addresses zoning as the City's greatest tool for shaping land use over time.

2. Economic Development

This section considers how Brockton provides economic opportunity for businesses, employers, and residents and how these opportunities are related to the financial strength of the City.

3. Housing

This element considers the current and future needs of Brockton's residential population and the City's role in supporting those needs.

4. Open Space and Recreation

This portion addresses both passive and active use of open space as they are related to community needs and goals.

5. Natural and Cultural Resources

The natural resources consist of the water and other systems that support the community and its environmental health. The cultural resources consider the role that Brockton's heritage and contemporary culture play in the life of the community.

6. Services and Facilities

This section analyzes existing and forecasted needs for municipal services and facilities and provides strategies for future service needs and high quality facilities.

7. Infrastructure and Utilities

This element provides the planning framework for the provision of water, sewer, communications, and other services that support all the activities in Brockton.

8. Transportation

The transportation segment addresses all modes of travel and circulation in Brockton, including vehicles, transit, pedestrians, and bicycles.

1. LAND USE

Key Goals

- **Develop detailed land use and zoning plans to support job creation in commercial and industrial districts and corridors.**
- **Create zoning to maximize transit-oriented development around all three commuter rail stations.**
- **Direct activities to neighborhoods in need of reinvestment.**

Plan



In its historic past, Brockton was a city with many vibrant neighborhoods and districts that complemented each another. Brockton's land use became unbalanced because of economic and transportation changes. The residential neighborhoods remain a solid part of Brockton's land use patterns. However, many commercial and industrial districts have declined due to economic changes. To regain balance, the City should convert these underutilized areas to 21st century land use development patterns.

In the past, urban planning helped channel uses into well-defined areas regulated by traditional zoning methods that valued simple distinctions and separations. These patterns are evident in the Existing Land Use Map.

Contemporary community planning recognizes the value of blending compatible uses together where this mixture adds stability, value, variety, and brings new investment. The Future Land Use Map reflects these ideas. The map indicates areas that can benefit from a mixture of uses and more flexible planning. This *Blueprint for Brockton* also recognizes that districts and land use patterns work best if parcels are designed and improved to reinforce the quality of the entire area, creating appropriate transitions among them. Within these areas, the City can apply new zoning tools and take other actions to encourage reinvestment.

Redefining Districts and Corridors with New Uses and Investments

This *Master Plan* identifies specific redevelopment areas that should be the focus of land use improvements. These areas are represented on the Development Area Map.

- Good Samaritan/Westgate and Coweset Brook – In an era of changing retail patterns and innovative business needs, areas with directly highway links can absorb updated investments that create better places to shop, work, and live in the future. These area offer excellent locations to add higher density development that expands Brockton's supply of well-compensated jobs.
- Fairgrounds – The land can become a major contributor to Brockton's economy and provide other benefits through planned redevelopment.
- Downtown – The Downtown will be a major focus of multi-use redevelopment, advancing the *Brockton Downtown Action Strategy*.
- Montello and Campello Areas – These areas have the potential to provide strong neighborhood centers and provide places for new businesses, and benefit from transit.
- Quincy Street Area – This area can be strengthened as a center for the surrounding neighborhoods with enhanced businesses, amenities, and services
- Edson Brook Area – Underutilized commercial land could be enhanced for a mix of light industrial, contemporary mixed-use industrial, commercial and other business-oriented development.

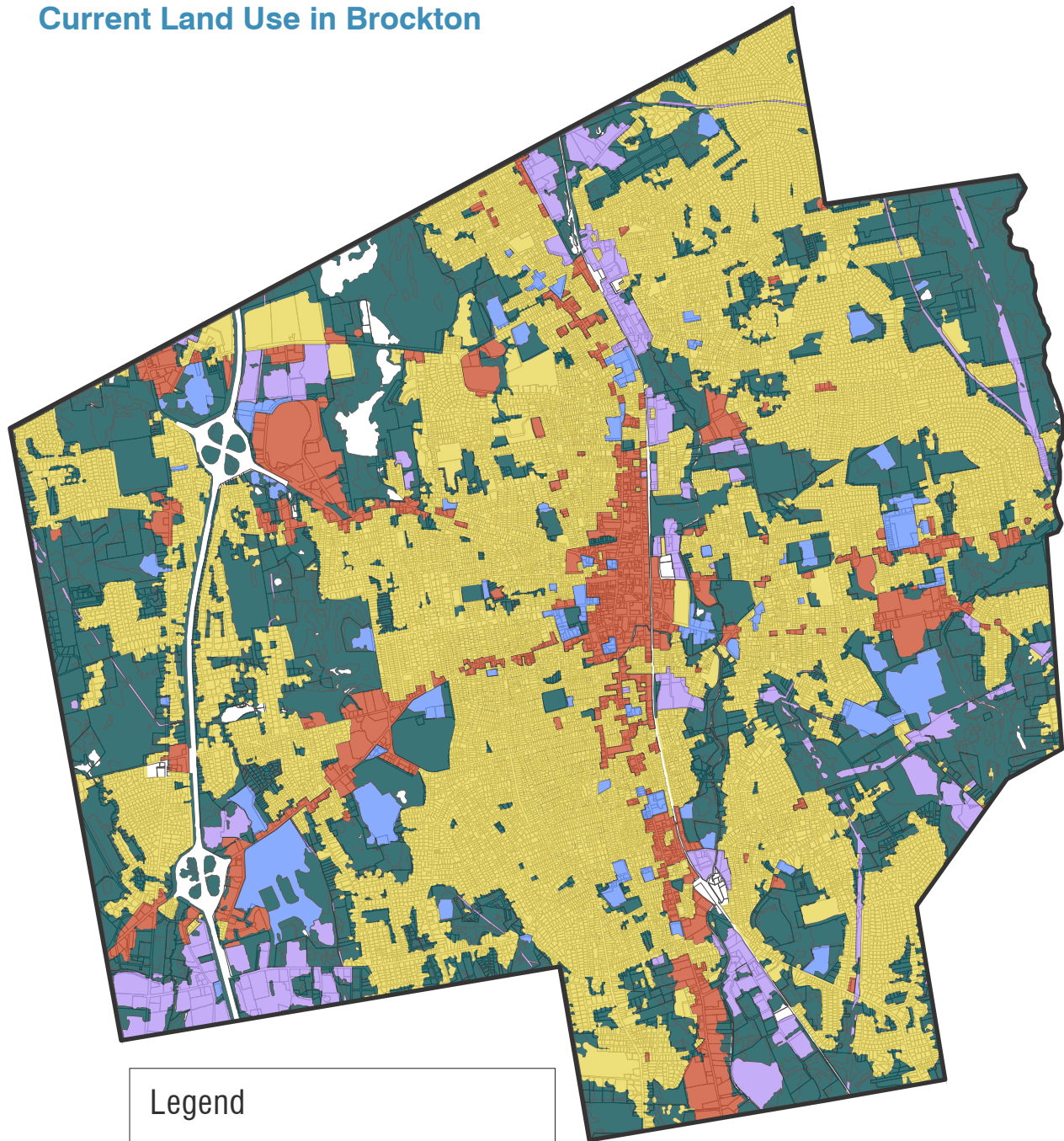
In addition, connecting corridors along major arterials will benefit from targeted planning and redevelopment. These are identified as "Neighborhood Related" on the overall Land Use Plan and includes segments along Pleasant, Belmont, North Main, Montello, and Crescent Streets. Outdated auto-oriented development or underutilized commercial land can provide places for new businesses and housing that are related to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Unlocking Transit-Oriented Development: The Downtown, Montello, and Campello



Access to the regional commuter rail network is attracting major mixed-use redevelopment throughout the region, and Brockton has three station areas that can leverage transit. This includes the land within easy walking distance of the Downtown station, as envisioned in the *Downtown Action Strategy*. The Montello and Campello station areas can become mixed-use, walkable areas that also become stronger neighborhood centers for the residential areas around them.

Current Land Use in Brockton



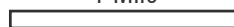
Legend

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Open Space

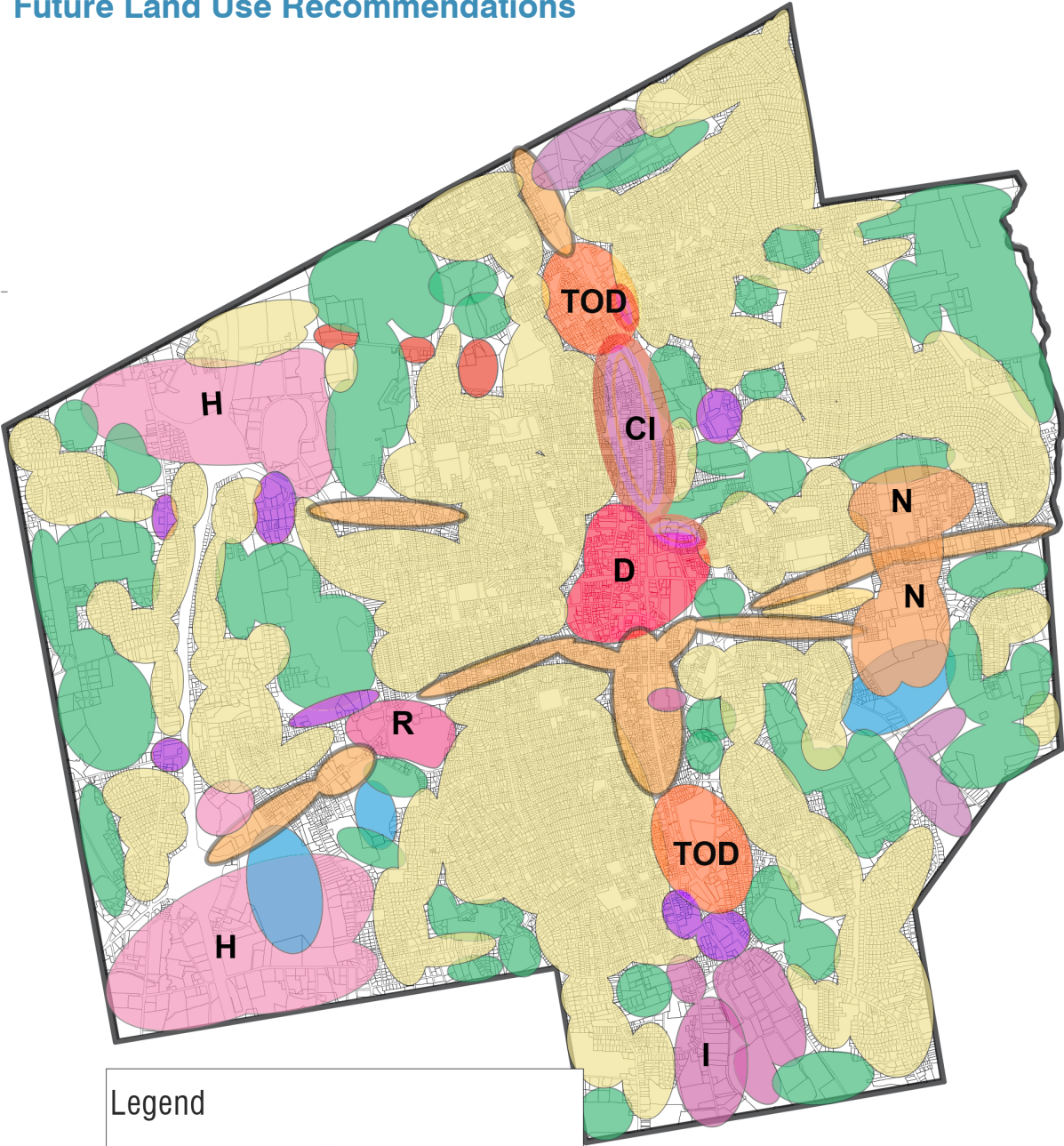
Data Sources: Land use data from the City of Brockton; Aerial from Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community.



1 Mile



Future Land Use Recommendations



Legend

Residential/Neighborhood

Neighborhood Commercial Corridors

Open Space

Institutional

Industrial

Commercial

CI Commercial/Industrial Mix

D Downtown Mixed Use

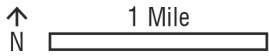
TOD Transit Village TOD

I Industrial Oriented Mixed Use

H High Density Mixed Use

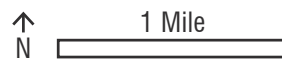
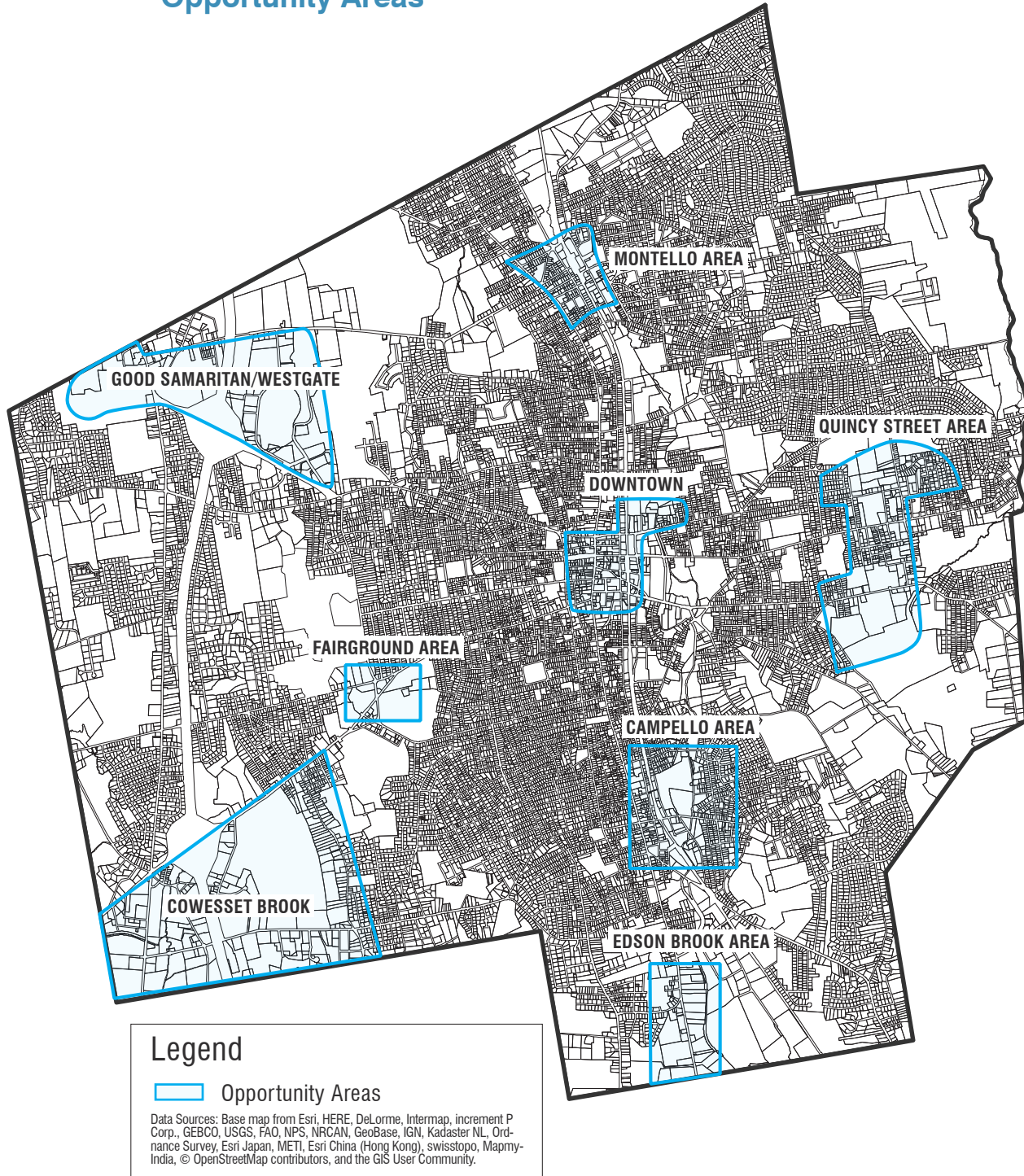
N Neighborhood Related Mixed Use

R Regional Resource Mixed Use



Data Sources: GIS base layer from the City of Brockton

Opportunity Areas



Investing in Neighborhoods and their Commercial Areas

There are empty and underused parcels and buildings within the fabric of the neighborhoods that detract from their value and quality. Retail and service uses that serve the neighborhoods are scattered among auto-oriented development along arterials. New investment – including a mix of commercial and residential uses – can convert this land into uses and patterns that will become convenient, walkable parts of the neighborhood fabric.



Recommendations and Actions

- LU1. Promote and encourage transit-oriented development in areas around the existing commuter rail stations.** *Actions include special area planning, new zoning, and leveraging public land and infrastructure investment.*
- LU2. Unlock large parcels for additional development.** *Actions include repurposing municipal land, working with property owners, changing zoning, and applying financing and funding tools.*
- LU3. Utilize appropriate areas for increased economic development.** *Actions include market-driven planning, public/private partnerships, and zoning.*
- LU4. Balance new development with preservation of neighborhoods and create appealing places within them.** *Actions include innovative zoning, design improvements in the public realm and increased focus on municipal services and amenities distributed throughout these areas.*
- LU5. Create a vibrant, livable Downtown with access to city services, commuter rail, and commercial retail.** *The Downtown Action Strategy is the central component for implementing this Recommendation, along with expanded redevelopment plans, zoning, funding, and financing measures.*

2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Key Goals

- **Increase the number of good paying jobs through measures like improving CSX site access, promoting high-value development near the Route 24 interchanges, and leveraging the Fairgrounds site.**
- **Promote the development of land and sites that are underutilized within the city.**
- **Change public perception of Downtown, and continue the revitalization of the Downtown as a mixed-use district that combines all the uses and amenities associated with contemporary needs and market demand.**
- **Promote neighborhood scale, mixed-use development rather than expanding auto-oriented corridors.**
- **Provide and promote training and education programs that will enhance the skills and employment opportunities for Brockton residents.**
- **Provide and promote programs and actions that will attract and support entrepreneurial businesses, including small business and minority entrepreneurs.**

Plan

Although Brockton is well located within a regional economy that has been expanding and prospering, Brockton's economy has not yet fully participated in these trends. Brockton can leverage its position within this larger economic context due to its competitive advantages that include large areas of underdeveloped land with excellent transportation. It has an inventory of buildings and properties that are competitively priced within an increasingly expensive region, and a real estate market seeking additional space for use. It has a large residential population with buying power that can support additional shops and businesses. Brockton's opportunities extend to its population. Through additional education and training, Brockton's workforce can become more successful and well compensated participants in the region's positive employment environment.

Supporting Contemporary Redevelopment with Brockton's Land Assets



Brockton has large underutilized land areas to absorb strategic redevelopment that takes advantage of their scale and relationship to transportation. Target areas for redevelopment are defined in the Land Use Element of this Master Plan. Most of these areas have vacant land or are occupied by low density, low value improvements. Development should be sought that increases the density of jobs provided on this land, and attract employment opportunities with more diverse and higher compensation than within the current conditions. Many contemporary businesses

are attracted to areas that are more than just a place to work; employers and employees benefit from locations that are complete districts that have transit, complementary businesses, housing, amenities, and food establishments within convenient walking distances. As a result, area-wide planning and coordinated investments lead to broader success.

Reframing the Downtown for Economic Development



The plan for the Downtown includes completing its transformation into a 21st century mixed use district. The *Brockton Downtown Action Strategy* is incorporated into this *Comprehensive Plan* and will be a model for additional similar initiatives. An inherent part of the development strategy is the transformation of the citizen and market perception of the Downtown. The City must cultivate the message that the Downtown is “up and coming” through an extended

sequence of small changes and visible projects that provide new destinations and amenities, repopulating the downtown.



Growing Both Businesses and Jobs

Brockton can become a region-leading host for new and innovative businesses that benefit from its low costs, excellent transportation, and access for employees. The redevelopment areas should provide and preserve low-cost, small spaces that can be quickly adapted into many different types of businesses. These businesses will benefit from City-supported services, marketing, promotion, and networking. For light industry and manufacturing, new flexible zoning and incentives will be beneficial.

Adapting to Changing Opportunities through Training and Education

Brockton's workforce will prosper if it adapts to a rapidly changing economy through education and training. The City should continue to provide – and expand – its educational initiatives through its school system. At the same time, new partnerships and funding should be sought through institutions, corporations, state, and federal resources to keep in step with the skills needed in the region's 21st century economy.

Recommendations and Actions

- E1. Promote the development of land and sites that are underutilized within the city.** *Actions include focused development planning, new zoning, financing, and funding tools, and leveraging public land and infrastructure investment for the areas identified within the Land Use Element.*
- E2. Continue the revitalization of the Downtown as a mixed-use district that combines the types of diverse uses and amenities associated with contemporary needs and market demand.** *Many coordinated actions will fundamentally shift the image, character and uses that compose a contemporary Downtown, building on the Brockton Downtown Action Strategy.*
- E3. Promote the redevelopment of auto-oriented corridors with new use development patterns that are consistent and compatible with the nearby neighborhoods.** *Actions include creating innovative zoning adapted to new uses and high value development, accompanied by streetscape and circulation changes.*
- E4. Provide and promote training and education programs that will enhance the skills and employment opportunities for Brockton residents.** *Actions include expanding the programs offered through the school system, adding new institutional and corporate partners, and advocating for additional programs and funding through state and federal sources.*
- E5. Provide and promote programs and actions that will attract and support entrepreneurial businesses.** *The City can seek new funds and partnerships to provide support for the innovation sector.*

3. HOUSING

Key Goals

- **Provide an emphasis on market rate housing development through incentives, programs, mixed-use development, and generally improving the attractiveness of the community as a place to live.**
- **Rehabilitate current housing and reuse vacant buildings for residential or mixed-use redevelopment.**
- **Provide for innovative use of historic commercial and residential buildings.**

Plan



Brockton has a strong residential base composed of its single-family and lower density neighborhoods that are distributed throughout the city. A significant stock of multi-family housing is located within and at the edges of the Downtown, or in denser neighborhoods along the north/south rail corridor. Several separate, large multi-family developments are situated along arterials or at the edges of single family neighborhoods.

Providing for Long Term Residency and the Benefits of a Stable Community

Brockton enjoys remarkable residential stability. The average length of residency is more than 19 years. To retain its residents even longer, Brockton can extend opportunities with housing catering to varying economic and family circumstances. This includes the ability to “age in place” in units for senior citizens. Good choices should be available to young professionals, “live/work” situations, and housing for “empty nesters” when they no longer need family-sized housing. Brockton has a healthy balance of ownership and rental units; about 55% of the units are owner-occupied and 45% are rented. In general, ownership contributes to stable communities and should be encouraged.

Combining Housing with District Revitalization

Brockton's emerging new development districts – including its Downtown – offer opportunities to diversify the housing choices in concert with new businesses, amenities, and other improvements. This type of mixed-use development in “transit villages” helps bring complementary businesses and jobs, as well.

Maintaining Affordability



Although it offers housing of different types and sizes, the cost of housing in Brockton is generally less expensive than comparable units in many other communities in the greater Boston region. For example, Brockton's average home costs about \$100,000 less than other homes in Massachusetts. Similarly, rents are lower. These factors contribute to a desirable circumstance for middle class

citizens, if the housing is in good condition and in a setting that offers a high quality of life. About 12.6% of Brockton's housing is categorized as affordable subsidized units, exceeding the statewide goal of 10%. Brockton should also focus on rehabilitation of current housing stock as well through code compliance measures.

Recommendations and Actions

- H1. Attract new development for all segments of income, age, and family type that are needed or desirable.** *Actions include focused development planning, new zoning, financing, and funding tools that combine market rate housing and affordable components.*
- H2. Preserve existing residential neighborhoods.** *City actions include enforcing codes and regulations and improving the quality of life through improved services, better streets and sidewalks, and amenities.*
- H3. Promote home ownership throughout the city.** *Actions include requiring home ownership units as part of redevelopment where practical, and supporting home ownership assistance financing programs.*

4. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Key Goals

- Rehabilitate all City parks and playgrounds, improve access, safety, and signage.
- Take better care of parks by establishing a GroundworkUSA affiliate, like in Lawrence and Fall River, recruiting for a MassLift Americorps coordinator (community engagement and land stewardship), and creating an Adopt a Park/ Friends Group program.
- Adopt the Community Preservation Act to fund future projects and park improvements.
- Serve the open space and recreational needs of all Brockton residents.
- Solicit broader community participation in open space and recreational planning.
- Rehabilitate, adequately maintain, and improve safety of recreational grounds and facilities.
- Increase open and green space in the downtown area.
- Protect conservation land within city limits.

Plan



Brockton completed its *Open Space and Recreation Plan* (OSRP) in 2013, providing a foundation of information, goals and recommendations that have been incorporated into this *Blueprint for Brockton*. Current perspectives were provided by the many participants in the planning process, leading to targeted findings and recommendations.

Upgrading and Maintaining the City's Parks and Recreation Facilities

Brockton has a remarkable collection of parks and recreation facilities. This inventory ranges from the picturesque D.W. Field Park and its municipal golf course to over 40 other parks and facilities throughout the City. These facilities include active recreation fields and courts for a range of sports. Without adequate resources, the City could not consistently maintain all of these facilities at high levels. The community appreciates its parks and recreational facilities, and recognizes that they are better used if they are clean, maintained, and safe. In some cases,

the facilities might be altered to conform better to sports and activities that are currently popular. The facilities and the events within them will benefit from a better program of signage and information.

Preserving Open Space

As a developed urban area, Brockton's remaining natural open spaces provide a high environmental and community value. There are 464 acres of conservation land managed by the City along with other areas devoted to the natural resources within them. These include the Stone Farm, Beaver Brook Conservation Area, Brookfield Nature Area, and Washburn Meadow. Many of these resources are associated with networks of wetlands and wildlife corridors that should be managed and maintained if they are to provide optimum ecological benefits. For example, the City could invite the State to expand the Ames Nowell State Park at the northeast corner of Brockton and combine it with Beaver Brook Conservation Area, linking trails, stewardship, and environmental benefits.



Recommendations and Actions

OSR1. Provide physical and operational improvements to rehabilitate City parks and make them accessible, safe, and attractive. *Actions include securing and directing more financial and community resources towards upgrades and upkeep of the City's facilities. The City should consider adoption of a local Community Preservation Act provision to assemble new resources, while also seeking other sources of funds. Shared actions include expanding partnerships and community-based stewardship support.*

OSR2. Expand the range and locations for active and passive recreation. *City actions include shifting the use of existing open space and recreation areas to meet current needs, expanding public open space and recreation benefits in association with private development, and focusing on future provision on an indoor recreation center for year-round activities.*

5. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Key Goals

Natural Resources

- Promote sustainability and resilience.
- Promote urban agriculture.
- Protect natural spaces and water resources.

Cultural Resources

- Work to create community centers that have multicultural programs and services for seniors and youth.
- Bring a variety of cultures together to create all-inclusive events.
- Maintain and promote Brockton's history, heritage, and historic assets.

Plan



Protecting Natural Resources as Systems that Serve the Community

The City relies on its natural resources for some of its water supply, which must be protected. Brockton must actively protect the quality and quantity of its own water resources through management of land and regulating run-off.

There are 20 different brooks and waterways that channel water and are critical parts of the system that drains stormwater. Wetlands, lakes and ponds are also part of the stormwater management system. Because low-lying areas have been subject to damaging flooding in the past, the City must actively monitor and manage this system. Looking into

the future, climate change is likely to result in more severe storm events. Planning to avoid worst case scenarios will ensure that Brockton is prepared and resilient.

The City's open land and water systems are valued ecological habitats that provide another dimension to the community. Brockton has large, connected networks of forests, wetlands, lakes, ponds, and brooks that provide many indirect benefits. In combination with the City's open space and recreation assets, the natural environment contributes to the quality of life of Brockton's residents.

Historic Resources

Brockton's historic resources are exceptional links to the past which can contribute to its 21st century identity. The resources include a Frederick Olmsted-designed park, several historic districts, and many National Register of Historic Places-listed buildings that represent different eras and dimensions of Brockton's evolution. In some cases, adaptive reuse can convert these assets and incorporate them into new developments designed to restore the traditional fabric of the Downtown and neighborhoods.



Preserve the Cultural Resources in a Cultural Diverse Community.

The City has a rich mix of organizations that provide and promote cultural events and venues. They range from museums to festivals, farmers' markets to parades. The participants in this planning process underlined the opportunities to expand the cultural life of Brockton. Additional entertainment opportunities including cinemas and theaters are part of this vision. Using examples from other communities, Brockton can be a patron of public art and supporter of innovative programs that draw residents out of their homes and bring visitors to the city.

Recommendations and Actions

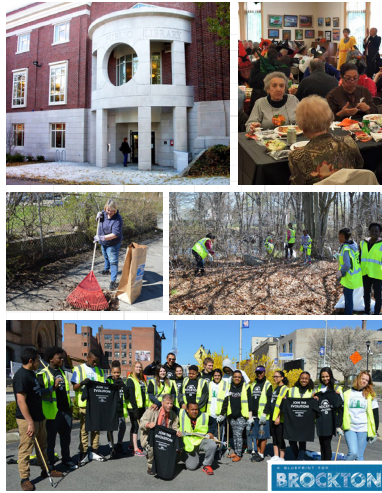
- NC1. Take actions to minimize and treat stormwater runoff and minimize development impacts to wetlands, waterways, and forests.** *These actions will include enhanced regulations and enforcement.*
- NC2. Promote habitat and community resiliency planning to mitigate flooding and other weather-related impacts.** *Regional, state and federal resources should be sought.*
- NC3. Support partnerships and third party organizations that increase the community's understanding of the value of natural resources.** *Actions include active outreach.*
- NC4. Adopt actions and policies to protect Brockton's aquifers and water supply resources.** *These actions will include enhanced regulations and enforcement.*
- NC5. Take actions that support the needs of Brockton's growing and diverse community.** *Actions include outreach and multi-lingual programs.*
- NC6. Identify public, non-profit, and private funding for priority parcel protection. The City can consider adoption of the Community Preservation Act and promote protection by others.**
- NC7. Preserve the city's historic resources as a connection to its past and a part of the community's identity.** *Actions can include zoning measures and pursuit of outside funding.*
- NC8. Engage the community in a variety of cultural events and programs.** *Actions include seeking grants and art funding and involving community organizations.*
- NC9. Make artistic expressions visible throughout the city.** *The City can create an Arts Plan and be a patron of public art.*

6. SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Key Goals

- Increase public safety and reduce crime.
- Protect and maintain municipal facilities.
- Work to create community centers that have multicultural programs and services for seniors and youth.

Plan



Keeping the Focus on Public Safety

The participants in the planning process consistently underlined the need to maintain the City's focus on supporting public safety. The City needs to continue to promote public safety through its funding and staffing of a police force that fulfills established standards for a community of Brockton's size. Some of the emphasis is placed on the City's police facilities, including the need for a new headquarters facility. But there are many ways that public safety can be enhanced through programming. The City should continue and expand active outreach into the neighborhoods and locations where concerns over public safety effect quality of life.

Planning Based on Facility Conditions and Broad Community Needs

The City is completing a facilities master plan that will evaluate the conditions of its buildings and sites. The master plan will provide specific recommendations for changes and improvements that will help fulfill the associated goals of this *Comprehensive Master Plan*.

The City should also take advantage of surplus and outdated facilities to support other planning purposes. These include surplus buildings and land like the former Howard School. This site can be redeveloped and contribute to the transformation of the Montello area as a transit-oriented village. The historic preservation of the outdated central Fire Station and the demolition of the existing Police Headquarters can contribute to the transit-oriented revitalization and redevelopment of the Downtown.

Distributing Services and Facilities

The community places great value on activities and programs that could be provided for youth, seniors, and other residents in locations near their neighborhoods. The City should seek innovative methods to provide more programs using schools, extend the operations of branch libraries, and/or find available space in concert with community partners. Eventually, additional community centers might be distributed around the City.



Recommendations and Actions

- SF1. Expand the services and facilities that are needed to increase public safety and reduce crime.** *These actions will include meeting applicable state standards for staffing and programs. In addition to updated facilities, the City should seek funding and undertake programs that extend public safety initiatives into neighborhoods and engage the entire community.*
- SF2. Implement the recommendations of Brockton's *Municipal Facilities Plan*.** *The City is completing a comprehensive evaluation of its facilities that will result in list of actions and investments that will be needed to meet 21st century needs.*
- SF3. Strive to create additional facilities that serve as community centers, with an emphasis on programs for seniors and youth. Multicultural programs should be prioritized.** *Actions include adapting existing spaces or creating new spaces to distribute community-oriented programs, including programs created through partnerships with organizations and institutions.*

7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

Key Goals

- Prepare a *Capital Improvement Plan* and budget to repair and replace aging infrastructure.
- Inventory and analyze infrastructure by completing the City's Geographic Information System (GIS) database (water, sewer, drainage, lights, walkways, and road widths), documenting the existing water/sewer system (age, size, type), and evaluating roads using "street scan."
- Re-evaluate utility rates and consider the actual cost of services and fund long-term capital improvements.

Plan



The City provides and maintains an extensive network of public utilities, and helps coordinate the provision of some services by private providers. Brockton is responsible for its water supply system, sanitary sewers, stormwater system, and its network of roadways. The City owns the streetlight fixtures and maintains all associated steel support posts, although the power is supplied by a private utility.

Portions of these systems were installed when Brockton was growing, but are now significantly outdated and no longer performing properly. Brockton can benefit from more efficient operations if it identifies and then replaces the portions of the systems that are nearing – or well past – their useful economic life.

Using Contemporary Approaches to Infrastructure Improvements and Management

In general, the City will benefit by using contemporary methods to document and manage the capital investments associated with all utilities that it controls. Current computer technologies allow digital mapping and databases to be assembled that provide the basis for an organized, accurate assessment of conditions and needs. For the water system, digital information (now being completed) will provide the basis for analysis of performance and targeted improvements. The sewer system is in the process of being upgraded, so some of the City's future focus can be placed on its proper operation, including preventing and enforcing penalties for illegal dumping. Using contemporary information systems, road network repair and replacement can be more accurately budgeted and accomplished. The streets light operating costs will drop dramatically when the City completes its conversion to LED light sources.

Cost and Rate Management

The City must balance the costs of its water and other services with the need to maintain competitive rates that do not exceed appropriate levels for Brockton's rate payers so that they are not overburdened.

Recommendations and Actions

- U1. Prepare a comprehensive digital database mapping all the City's utilities to facilitate improved planning, management, and maintenance.** *Actions includes funding and adoption of new practices.*
- U2. Maintain and upgrade the City's water supply system to keep pace with current needs and future standards associated with comparable communities, including appropriate water rates.** *Actions includes studies, funding, and improvements.*
- U3. Continue to upgrade the City's sanitary sewer system and promote programs addressing problems of illegal dumping and use of the system.** *Actions include education and enforcement.*
- U4. Provide for a well-organized program for long-term pavement management of the streets and roads in Brockton.** *Actions including adopting contemporary methods and management systems.*
- U5. Identify and address issues associated with the stormwater system.** *Actions include studies, funding for improvements, and maintenance changes.*
- U6. Upgrade the City's street lighting system.** *Actions include financial planning and acquiring new, more efficient lighting.*
- U7. Keep Brockton competitive through up-to-date fiber optic communications links.** *Actions include long-term connection plans with a carrier.*

8. TRANSPORTATION

Key Goals

- **Implement Complete Streets by developing a pedestrian and bicycle transportation plans, a sidewalk management plan, increasing sidewalk repair and construction, and implementing a Safe Routes to Schools program.**
- **Restore two-way traffic to Main Street.**
- **Maintain regional connections, but create a sense of place for live, work, and play.**
- **Create bike lanes and networks throughout the city, both on-street and off-street.**

Plan



The City is generally responsible for providing an efficient, multi-modal circulation system and support facilities that integrate all modes of travel. In addition to vehicular traffic, the City's network includes provisions for pedestrians and bicyclists and several forms of transit. The City coordinates its efforts with the entities responsible for regional transportation, including MassDOT and the MBTA. In addition, the Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT) provides bus service within Brockton and nearby communities.

The City benefits from its connections to the regional highway and interstate network through two major interchanges with Route 24. It also benefits from the regional rail access through three stations on the MBTA commuter rail network that leads into Boston.

Reducing Congestion and Barriers to Circulation within Brockton

Moving between different areas of Brockton can be difficult during peak periods when segments of streets and intersections become overloaded. Although it has a dispersed network of arterials and grids of connecting streets, traffic becomes concentrated at key points. These include restrictions for those vehicles travelling between the east and west parts of Brockton, where arterials cross the north/south street and rail alignments. Other congestion points exist where there are concentrations of employment or destinations like the Westgate Mall. Strategic street and intersection improvements can help relieve these points. Similar improvements must accompany any future large scale developments within the City.

Other sources of congestion include the turns into and out of properties along busy streets. By consolidating access points, safer and more effective circulation can be created for pedestrians and vehicles.

Traffic and Parking in the Downtown

The traffic and parking planning in the Downtown must fully complement the redevelopment and revitalization of the entire central district. The district will benefit from less complex circulation patterns that reduce the number of one-way streets and value the importance of an excellent pedestrian environment. Adequate parking must be provided, but it should be distributed and located so that the parking facilities support development patterns and are linked by excellent sidewalks and crosswalks as recommended in the recently completed *Downtown Parking Plan*.

Moving to Alternate Travel Modes

The City has many opportunities to expand the choice of transportation modes and reduce the reliance on single person automobile-centric transportation. This includes a renewed focus on pedestrian facilities. Some Brockton neighborhoods lack basic sidewalk and crosswalk amenities, which can be incrementally corrected through planned investments. The sidewalk and crosswalk networks should be completed in the areas near the bus and rail stations and stops. Pedestrians can also be accommodated in areas without sidewalks through a road diet program which narrows vehicle travel lanes in favor of expanded shoulders. New transit oriented development along the commuter line should emphasize the walkability of the transit villages that will emerge.

Bicycle lanes can be extended along roads and streets extending the existing network. These can be linked to new trails to and through open spaces, parks, and power line easements.

The City should remain active advocates for additional service and route refinements for the buses that serve Brockton, including the BAT system.

Recommendations and Actions

- T1. Provide an efficient and well-maintained transportation system.** *Actions include identifying strategic locations for improvements and securing state and federal funding to assist in accomplishing them.*
- T2. Increase transportation choices for different types of trips.** *Actions includes active advocacy for additional transit service, an organized program of investments in sidewalks and pedestrian improvements, extension of additional bike lanes and paths, and adoption of policies and programs to manage transportation choices for large employers and destinations.*
- T3. Integrate transportation options in a safe and connected manner for all users.** *Actions include establishing City standards for Complete Streets, designing improvements and securing state and federal funding to assist in accomplishing them.*

IMPLEMENTING THIS MASTER PLAN

Steps

The recommendations contained in this *Master Plan* must be implemented over time, following a sequence that will be determined by many factors. Deliberate steps can be taken to advance all the elements in the Master Plan, but the City must be flexible and prepared to adapt to the changing economic and governmental environment. Once adopted, the City's implementation efforts should include:

- Prioritizing Actions – The City's leadership, boards and departments should collaborate to confirm priorities for short-term attention among the recommendations in the *Master Plan*.
- Distributing Responsibilities – Clear responsibilities should be distributed among the City's entities for action.
- Monitoring Progress – The Planning Board and its staff should monitor progress towards meeting the goals and objectives of this Master Plan on a periodic basis, and recommend revised priorities for implementation.
- Updating this Master Plan – The City should update this Plan as new circumstances arise that require clear new directions to fulfill the community's vision for Brockton.

Roles

- City Leadership – The City's elected leadership will frame policies, direct funding, and make decisions that will be critical to implementing this *Master Plan*.
- Planning Board – The Planning Board is the overall steward of the *Master Plan*, and should be an advocate for its implementation. It will have a direct role in revising zoning and land use regulations and in many planning initiatives described in this document.
- Boards, Commissions, and Authorities – Many of the constituent bodies of the City will have specific roles associated with their responsibilities. The relevant topics must be introduced into their agendas and priorities.
- City Staff – Various departments will be engaged in implementing this Plan; staff resources and time must be allocated to support their roles.
- Committees – Committees of residents and stakeholders can be created to focus on implementing the Master Plan and its elements. These committees can study ideas, advance concepts, provide forums and advance specific recommendation to the City leadership, its governing entities, and its staff.
- Organizations and Institutions – Some of the recommendations will rely on active participants among the advocates, interest groups, organizations and institutions that are also stewards of Brockton's future.
- Citizens – Anyone can be part of the help of making sure this "Blueprint" is accomplished.

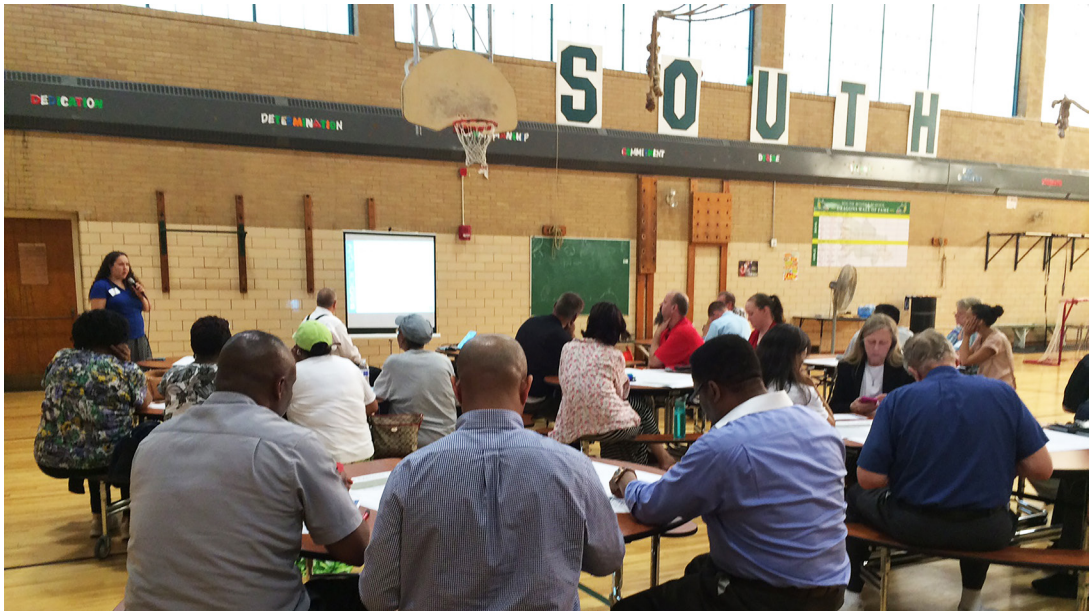
Methods and Resources

A companion document– the *Master Plan Elements* - contains detailed lists of potential methods and resources that can be applied to accomplish the recommendations in *A Blueprint for Brockton*.

Fulfilling the Massachusetts Requirements for a Municipal Master Plan

Communities in Massachusetts must fulfill state requirements for preparing municipal master plans in order to be considered for certain programs and grants. *A Blueprint for Brockton: Brockton Comprehensive Master Plan* fulfills the requirements of Massachusetts General Law Section 81D. This law is designed to encourage planning boards to establish a comprehensive master plan to inform long-term decisions for development. The plan is required to include nine different components, all of which are contained in this document. The required components are the goals and policies, land use, housing, economic development, natural and cultural resources, open space and recreation, services and facilities, circulation (transportation), and implementation.

PLANNING PROCESS AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION



This *Blueprint for Brockton* has been accomplished with broad community participation through a sequence of steps over the course of a year.

The planning process was initiated, conducted, and managed by the City's Department of Planning and Economic Development and coordinated with the Office of the Mayor.

Specialized professional assistance was provided by a team led by Harriman (urban planning) that included FXM Associates (economics), the BSC Group (transportation, utilities, open space and recreation) and McMahon Associates (transportation). This team provided research and evaluations for each of the elements in this *Comprehensive Master Plan*, and provided staff support for the community participation and communication process.

Community participation has been integral in the development of this *Comprehensive Master Plan*. The outreach and communication program included many workshops, presentations, online surveys, and other opportunities to gather input from the people of Brockton. The draft version of the *Comprehensive Master Plan* will be provided for community review and presented to the Planning Board and the City Council for final review and approval.

An important part of the community participation was a working committee that served as the Master Plan Leadership Team. Their charge was to shape the direction of the *Comprehensive Master Plan*, as well as to review and provide input as the *Plan* was being developed. The Leadership Team was made up of 26 members, including advocates from many of the City's wards, along with other representatives of organizations and resident stakeholders in the future of Brockton.

Four Leadership Team meetings have been held during the planning process, to date. The initial meeting of the Leadership Team was in May 2016. The members provided their thoughts on the topics that should be the focus for planning. The second meeting, in September 2016,

focused on issues surrounding land use and development. The third meeting took place in January 2017, where a draft vision for the future of the City and prioritized goals for each of the *Comprehensive Master Plan*'s elements were advanced. The final working session, in April, provided a discussion of the draft *Comprehensive Master Plan*.

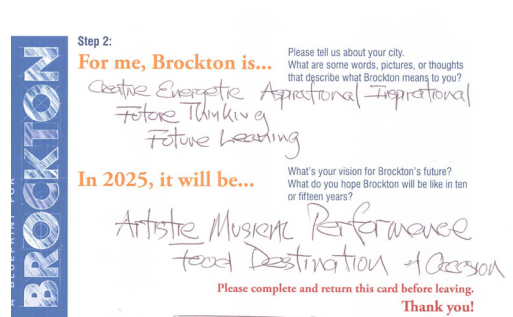
The community engagement process began with a sequence of meetings to gather community ideas and concerns about the future of Brockton. These "listening tours" were undertaken by the City staff and planning consultants. Eight meetings were conducted in locations across Brockton, including:

- North Middle School - June 14, 2016
- South Middle School - June 16, 2016
- East Middle School - June 22, 2016
- West Middle School - June 23, 2016
- Senior Center - July 19, 2016
- Our Lady of Lourdes - August 12, 2016
- Boys and Girls Club - August 16, 2016
- Downtown Arts and Music Festival - August 26-28, 2016

At each of these listening tours, mapping exercises and questionnaires were conducted. The mapping exercises asked about the participants' neighborhood, locations that they favor for shopping and entertainment, and locations that should be the focus of the *Comprehensive Master Plan*. In addition to the map questions, postcards and questionnaires were distributed and input gathered to understand the participants' visions for Brockton.

Three public workshops were held to explore key planning topics in the fall of 2016. These well-attended meetings provided an opportunity for the participants to learn about key issues and provide input for each of the eight elements that compose the *Comprehensive Master Plan*. The first meeting was held on October 27, 2016, and the topics presented and discussed were natural and cultural resources, open space, and recreation. The second meeting took place on November 10, 2016, and the topics on the agenda were economic development and infrastructure. The last of the three meetings was held on December 15, 2016, and dealt with land use and zoning, transportation, housing, and services and facilities. Each of the meetings involved presentations about existing conditions, issues and opportunities, and possible recommendations for each respective element.

The community engagement process is being brought to its conclusion with a sequence of public meetings and presentations to the City Council, through its committee structure, and the Planning Board.



PRECEDENTS AND PLANNING SOURCES

A Blueprint for Brockton was built upon a strong foundation of preceding plans and civic initiatives. These sources provided the context for understanding of persistent issues and emerging opportunities that are directly related to the findings and recommendations in this document. Important contributions were provided by the sequence of plans, policies and studies that included:

- *Brockton Comprehensive Policy Plan*, 1998.
- *Two Rivers Master Plan*, Hubert Murray, 2008.
- *Plan Brockton 2008, A Briefing for the Future*, Boston Society of Architects and Community Design Resource Center, 2008.
- *Brockton Open Space and Recreation Plan*, 2013.
- *Walk Assessment, Brockton*, Walk Boston, 2014
- *Bikeability Assessment, Brockton*, MassBike, 2014.
- *Trends in Brockton, Land Use Report*, 2015, Old Colony Planning Council, 2015.
- *Market Analysis of Reuse Options at Brockton Fairgrounds*, Hodge Economic Consulting, 2016.
- *Downtown Brockton Urban Renewal Plan*, A.G. Jennings, LLC with Stantec, 2016.
- *Brockton Downtown Action Strategy*, MassDevelopment, Stantec, A.G. Jennings LLC, 2016.
- *Brockton Smart Growth Zoning Ordinance Amendment*, 2017.

In addition, the preparation of this *Comprehensive Master Plan* draws information and insights from many additional publications and sources. A more extensive list of these references is contained within the companion document, *Master Plan Elements*.

A BLUEPRINT FOR

BROCKTON