

Envisioning Centralville

Lowell,
Massachusetts

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City of Lowell

City of Lowell

- Population: 105,167
- Population increased 11.9% since 1980
- 4th largest city in the Commonwealth
- 13.8 square miles
- 7,635 residents per square mile
- 30 miles to Boston, 20 miles to Nashua, NH, 40 miles to Worcester, MA
- Located at confluence of Rte. 3 & 495

A Brief History

- Renaissance ongoing since the 1970's
- Creation of the National Park in 1978
- Diversification of local economy:
technology, education, health care
- Symbols of rebirth: Arena, Ballpark open in 1998
- Artist loft housing

Lowell's Downtown

Lowell National Historical Park

- First urban national park in the country
- Over 750,000 visitors per year
- Park includes: 5.6 miles of canals, textile mills, worker housing, 19th century commercial buildings, operating weave rooms, trolleys, guided tours on foot and by boat, etc.

Revolving Museum



- In Boston for 16 years
- Opened in Lowell in 2002
- Community Involvement engine

Downtown Projects

Ayer Lofts: ■ 51 units, gallery & retail

- All units sold prior to completion
- Catalyst to future development

305 Dutton: ■ 129 Market Rate Apartments

- \$14 million investment
- Walk to transit & downtown

Fairburn Building – Kearney Square

- 27 market rate condominiums under construction
 - First units complete February 2005
 - \$3.5 million investment

Downtown Projects

Inventory of recent & current projects

<u>Recently Completed</u>	<u>Units</u>
305 Dutton	129
McCartin Building	27
Moller's Building	24
Harmon's Building	12
DL Paige	12
Dutton Street Artist Lofts	<u>12</u>
	215
<u>Under construction/planned</u>	
Boott Mills apartments*	152
Canal Place III*	124
Lawrence Mills*	153
Fairburn Building*	25
Lull & Hartford Building*	14
Massachusetts Mills III	153
Boott Mills condominiums	106
Birke's Lofts	14
<i>*now under construction</i>	741

Total: **956**

Lowell's Neighborhoods

**The Acre Neighborhood:
Selected Urban Renewal
with Historic Board Review**

**Lowell's Neighborhoods:
Traditional Development Typologies**

**The Neighborhoods:
The Infill Housing Challenge**

Neighborhood Revitalization Hosford Square

**Lowell's
Centralville Neighborhood**

Scope of Work

What is an appropriate vision for the neighborhood?

What interventions can the City of Lowell make to encourage that vision?

How might the city finance those interventions?



Project Deliverables

- Address key in-fill sites and project ideas
 - Bridge and West Sixth
 - Bridge and West Third
 - Riverfront and Gateway
- Current zoning code (specifically the NB district).
- Costs and Risks



Questions to Ask

- How should Lowell's neighborhoods grow and evolve?
- Is there a place for neighborhood service businesses?
- What are the greatest challenges facing Centralville?
- How can the City best provide its resources to the neighborhood?
- How does the DPD bring all stakeholders to the table?





Parking Lots



Mobil Station



Sunoco Site



Bridge and West Sixth



Fourth Street Fire Station



Farther along Bridge Street



The Residential Neighborhood



Infill Townhouses



Moulton Square







The Riverfront



Neighborhood Groups



HUD

- Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA)
- Concentrates federal grant funding on implementing the plan
- Project report should be able to serve as NRSA document for the Bridge Street area

DPD Assistance to the Planning Process

- Site tour(s)
- Neighborhood group meetings and interviews
- Additional stakeholder interviews
- Presentations and feedback

**Successes so far:
An introduction to Lowell's
Master Plan and Zoning**

Land Use Regulation in Lowell

- May 2003: Comprehensive Master Plan
- December 2003: New code to improve structure of code, close loopholes, expand site-plan review, and ensure consistency with recent case law
- December 2004: New map, districts, dimensional table, use table, parking table building conversion ordinance and special permit requirements
- December 2005: Proposed: New Subdivision Regulations

The Lowell Zoning Ordinance

- Designed to address concerns about infill and new construction not matching neighborhood character:
 - Inappropriate multi-family housing
 - Car-centered activities and development
 - Misunderstanding between urban and suburban forms
- Interest in not shutting down development, but seeking better form of development

Masterplan Goal Chapters

- Neighborhood Quality of Live
- Lifetime of Housing Opportunities
- Unique Waterfront Environments
- Vibrant and Diverse Downtown
- Institutional and Cultural Development
- Economic Growth
- Regional Retail
- Transportation
- Sustainability

Zoning Strategies

- Innovations in setback regulations
 - Multiple front-yard setbacks, particularly in 'traditional' districts
 - Limitations on front-facing garage doors
 - Limitations requiring front landscaping
 - Allowances to match existing buildings on each side

Dimensional Table

ARTICLE V. DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

SECTION 5.1 TABLE OF DIMENSIONAL REGULATIONS

No building or structure shall be built nor shall any existing building or structure be enlarged which does not conform to the regulations as to maximum ratio of floor area to lot area, minimum lot sizes, minimum lot area for each dwelling unit or equivalent, minimum lot frontage, minimum setback dimensions of front, side and rear yards, minimum open space, and maximum height of structures, and all other dimensional requirements in the several districts as set forth in the Table of Dimensional Regulations, except as hereinafter provided.

	District	Type of Use	Dimensions (in feet or square feet unless otherwise noted)													
			Max. FAR	Min. Lot Size	Min. LA/DU	Min. Frontage	Front Yard Setbacks					Minimum Side Yard	Min. Rear Yard	Minimum UOS /DU	Max. Height	Max. Stories
							Min.	Max.	Projections	Porches	Garages					
SUBURBAN DISTRICTS	SSF	All permitted uses	0.5	10000	10000	75	25	----	22	17	30	10 SUM 25	25	750	35	2.5
	SMF	All permitted uses	0.75	20000	3000	25	25	----	----	----	30	20	25	750	40	3
	SMU	Residential Dwellings	2	20000	3000	25	25	----	----	----	30	20	0†	300	----	----
		All other uses	2	----	----	25	----	----	----	----	----	0†	0†	----	----	----
	RR	All permitted uses	2	----	----	25	----	----	----	----	----	0†	40	----	----	----
TRADITIONAL NGHBRHD. DISTRICTS	TSF	All permitted uses	0.5	7000	7000	55	15	20	12	9	24	10 SUM 25	20	300	32	2.5
	TTF	1 family dwelling	----	6000	3000	55	15	20	12	9	24	10	20	250	32	2.5
		All other uses	----	6000	3000	65	15	20	12	9	24	10 SUM 25	20	250	35	2.5
	TMF	1 family dwelling	----	4500	2500	50	15	20	12	9	24	5 SUM 20	20	250	32	2.5
		All other uses	----	6000	2500	65	15	20	12	9	24	10 SUM 25	20	250	35	3
	TMU	1 family dwelling	----	4500	2500	50	*	*	*	*	21	5 SUM 20	20	250	32	2.5
		Other Residential Dwellings	----	6000	2500	65	*	*	*	*	21	10 SUM 25	20	250	45	4
		All other uses	1	----	----	25	----	8	----	----	21	0†	0†	----	45	4
		NB	Residential Dwellings	1	6000	2500	40	*	*	*	*	21	0†	20	250	35
	All other uses		1	----	----	25	----	8	----	----	21	0†	0†	----	40	3
URBAN DISTRICTS	USF	1 family dwelling	0.75	3000	2500	35	10	15	7	4	21	3 SUM 17	15	----	32	2.5
		All other uses	----	5000	2500	35	10	15	7	4	21	3 SUM 17	15	----	32	2.5
	UMF	All permitted uses	----	3400	1000	40	*	*	*	*	*	3 SUM 17	15	----	65	6
	UMU	Residential Dwellings	----	3400	1000	40	*	*	*	*	*	3 SUM 17	15	----	----	----
		All other uses	4	----	----	25	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
	DMU	All permitted uses	4	----	----	25	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
SPECIAL PURPOSE DISTRICTS	HRC	Residential Dwellings	3	43560	----	25	25	--	----	----	30	20	25	100	200	15
		All other uses	5	----	----	25	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	200	15
	INST	All permitted uses	2	----	----	25	----	8	----	----	----	0†	0†	----	100	8
	OP	All permitted uses	2	----	----	25	40	----	----	----	----	20	40	----	50	4
INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS	LI	All permitted uses	2	----	----	25	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
	GI	All permitted uses	2	----	----	25	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

----Denotes no dimensional requirement.

* Front setbacks in these districts shall be consistent with existing setbacks on the block.

† Side and rear yard setbacks in these districts must be at least 15 feet when abutting a residentially-zoned lot.

Zoning Strategies

- Innovations in parking regulations
 - Shared parking table
 - New regulations for driveway setbacks and lawns
 - Allowing multi-family to use parking leases downtown
 - Allowing neighborhood businesses with limited on-site parking
 - Allowing for off-site parking lots to be used in some situations

Zoning Strategies

- Site Plan Review and Special Permits
 - More planning board review means more staff oversight
 - Specific criteria for approval for site plan and special permits
 - More multi-family use by special permit to allow rejection of inappropriate development
 - Includes many developments created on ANR lots
 - Excludes developments downtown reviewed by historic board

Zoning Strategies

- Artist's Live-Work Overlay District
- Downtown Parking Flexibility

Zoning Strategies

- Building Conversion Ordinance

Results:
New Residential Site Plans

Results:
The Neighborhood Business Zone

The Future: Subdivision Standards

- Address different standards for different transect zones
- Design streets appropriate for pedestrians as well as vehicles
- Encourage traffic calming measures to keep traffic slow on subdivision streets
- Encourage stormwater management practices that are appropriate for the level of urban or suburban development

**The Future:
Form-Based Codes for the
Hamilton Canal District**

**The Future:
Form-Based Code for the proposed 40R Overlay
District in the Acre Neighborhood**

The Future: Solutions for Centralville

- Additional neighborhood planning
- Better zoning in the NB districts
- Appropriate solutions for Bridge Street
- Additional regulatory innovation for the neighborhoods of Centralville
- Traffic calming
- Incentives and financing
- Etc., etc., etc. . . .