



# UTICA MASTER PLAN

Briefing

# Agenda

- > Welcome
- > Understanding the planning process
- > Draft vision and guiding principles
- > Sub-committee reports
- > Continued community outreach & input
- > Open discussion



# Understanding the Planning Process

Vision without action is a daydream.

Action without vision is a nightmare.

Japanese proverb



# Understanding the Planning Process

## Definition of a Master Plan

Process to make policy

- > A master plan provides a vision for the growth and development of the community and includes the goals it wishes to achieve and the actions it will take to achieve those goals.

Communicate policy

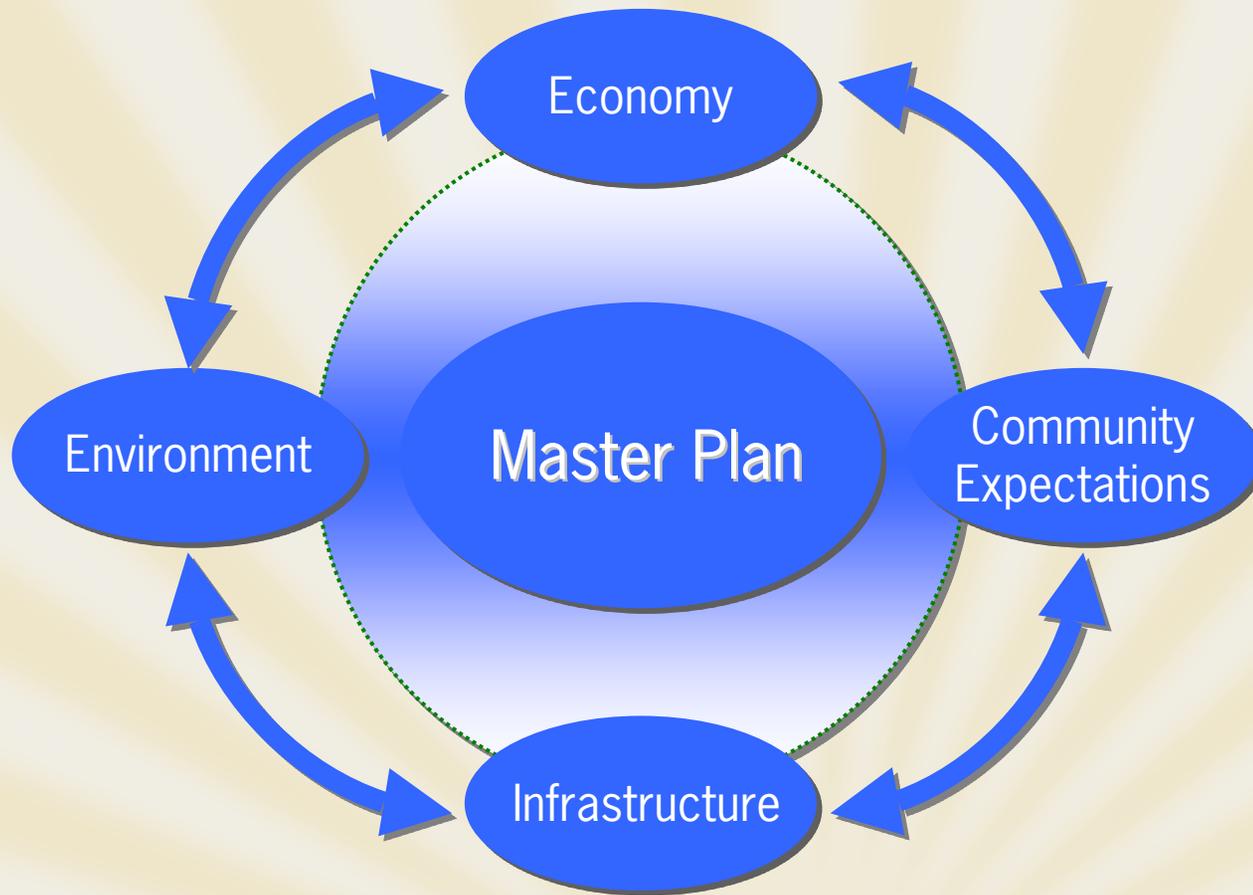
- > While it is not law, the document should be used as policy to guide decisions about the development of within the community.

Implement policy

- > The Utica Master Plan will provide the framework and policy direction that will be used by the City, private-sector investors and community members for implementation.



# Understanding the Planning Process



# Understanding the Planning Process

## Community Outreach Completed to Date

- > 7 full committee meetings with a 50+ member steering committee with 5 sub-committees.
- > 6 neighborhood meetings (Cornhill (2), West Utica, East Utica, South Utica, North Utica).
- > 8 focus groups (including economic development, arts, students, seniors, downtown, NYS DOT).
- > Creation of a project website with regular postings and progress reports — [www.uticamasterplan.org](http://www.uticamasterplan.org)
- > City of Utica Department head meetings
- > Numerous informal listening sessions throughout community
- > Press conference and media briefing, interviews and media notifications of all neighborhood meetings.



# Understanding the Planning Process

Some key findings driving the vision, guiding principles, goals and recommendations

## Common Concerns

- > Perception of and real **crime** issues in some of the City's oldest neighborhoods.
- > Need for **housing stabilization** and maintenance.
- > **Rehabilitation of city roads, sewers and water system.**
- > Overall need for **improved sidewalk maintenance** citywide.
- > Essential to **rebuild the City's image and re-brand** not only to attract new business & industry and residents, but also to retain existing residents, especially the youth.
- > Need **improved connectivity** throughout the City (busing, sidewalks, etc).
- > Too much City, too few people. Need to "**right-size**" the community.
- > **Accountability** in City government.



# Understanding the Planning Process

Some key findings driving the vision, guiding principles, goals and recommendations

## Common Opportunities

- > The City has a **unique historic character** the needs to be cherished and built upon.
- > **Ethnic diversity** sets the stage for cultural and economic development opportunities.
- > Good **food** and great **restaurants**.
- > Incorporate **sustainability** and **green** initiatives.
- > Strong **arts and culture** opportunities.
- > Excellent **park system** that provides a variety of opportunity (but concern that there is not enough manpower available to maintain the system).
- > Mixed reactions about the quality of **neighborhoods**.
- > Build opportunities for **collaboration** and **regionalization**.
- > Support and strengthen **locally-owned businesses**.
- > **Affordability** of housing.
- > Boilermaker, build on theme.



# Draft Vision Statement

Utica is *the place* for people seeking a culturally rich, economically successful and environmentally friendly place to live, visit, and conduct business. Our homes, our neighborhoods, our schools, our places of work and play allows for opportunities for an even exchange between people and place; Utica is a community that invites all the qualities within our people to emerge and define our City. Utica is the hub of regional collaboration, social diversity, and economic progress. Our city is ripe with potential, which we will maximize with extensive community input, emphasizing high-performance, sustainable economic redevelopment and a healthy network of neighborhoods, parks and waterfront renewal.



# Draft Guiding Principles

As we move forward into the 21st Century, Utica will be ...

...A *dynamic city* with a thriving downtown supported by a flourishing arts community surrounded by healthy, safe, and interconnected neighborhoods. Neighborhoods will be active, interesting and attractive places where people feel safe walking or biking and talking with neighbors.

...A *center of opportunity* for collaboration and innovation that builds an entrepreneurial culture. Our thriving downtown will be at the core – a place of commerce and culture. A diversity of creative entrepreneurs build on a model of partnerships with our educational institutions, employers, community agencies and students will drive the City's economy, increase job opportunities, and contribute to a greater quality of life for all.



## Draft Guiding Principles

- ...*The heart of regional creativity* by supporting and attracting cultural venues, artisans and talent. Utica's theaters, music venues, and art galleries will be the focus of the cultural economy in the Mohawk Valley. Our reputation as a lively center for arts and culture will attract more artisans, more visitors and more residents and businesses. The City will protect and celebrate its historic character embodied in our unique architectural buildings.
- ...*A community that celebrates diversity* as one of its greatest assets. As an urban center, Utica has traditionally been an economic and ethnic melting pot. We will continue to embrace different cultures and make Utica an attractive destination.



## Draft Guiding Principles

...A city that practices sustainable development in all public and private endeavors. At the core of this initiative is a focus on combating global environmental gradation by fostering the incorporation of sustainable practices in all of our community activities. As a City, we are committed to right sizing and developing sustainable alternatives in our building designs, infrastructure systems and neighborhoods, such as creating opportunities for urban agriculture to support our local residents and restaurants.

...A great little American City whose people come together with pride to guide the City's future.



# Master Plan Committee

- > Professionals with varied knowledge, experience and abilities to offer technical assistance throughout plan development
- > Generate ideas and identify most critical concerns of the community at-large
- > Generate community enthusiasm and teamwork environment
- > Foster community dialog and contributions
- > Become stewards of the Master Plan



## Sub-Committee Structure

1. Housing & Neighborhood Development
2. Business & Technology Development
3. Downtown Development
4. Parks, Recreation, Arts/Culture & Historic Preservation
5. Infrastructure & Waterfront Development



# Housing & Neighborhood Development Draft Goals

1. To substantially increase the percent of owner-occupied housing within the City of Utica.
2. To have access to a diversity of housing options within each neighborhood for people of all ages and income levels.
3. To have all properties meet prevailing code.
4. To increase the number of downtown residents.
5. To enhance personal safety and mobility along neighborhood streets.
6. To emphasize the attributes of neighborhoods that enhance their attractiveness and usefulness.



# Downtown Development Draft Goals

1. Provide a framework, guidelines and action plan for the arts that will contribute to creating a culturally dynamic downtown.
2. Identify ways to encourage creative partnerships and collaborations working to support a dynamic downtown with an entrepreneurial spirit.
3. Ensure safe downtown with ample parking for residents and businesses.
4. Promote residential and mixed-use development downtown that is consistent with Utica's heritage and architecture.
5. Provide safe, comfortable and efficient multi-modal connectivity.



# Infrastructure & Waterfront Development Draft Goals

1. Enhance the overall quality of Utica's physical infrastructure and municipal services.
2. Create pedestrian friendly streetscapes.
3. Create an effective transportation system, including public transit, automobiles, and a pedestrian bike path system in the City of Utica.
4. Increase public awareness of, and public access to, the Erie Canal/Mohawk River
5. Ensure that the waterfront and inner harbor create a destination attraction for Utica.
6. Reconnect Utica's downtown to waterfront.



# Business & Technology Development Draft Goals

1. Diversify the City's economy by attracting new business and industry to Utica through a multifaceted plan and incentives
2. Facilitate the retention and expansion of local business and industry in the City of Utica. (A) Create more sites for business
3. Create an environments in the City of Utica that fosters entrepreneurship.
4. Develop a skilled and educated workforce that will meet the needs of existing businesses and emerging industries in the City of Utica.
5. Maintain the high quality of life already present in Utica and improve those elements most likely to attract young professionals.
6. Expand and capitalize on Utica's diverse historic and cultural fabric.
7. Redevelop Brownfield sites.



# Parks, Recreation, Arts/Culture & Historic Preservation

## Draft Goals

1. Introduce and reintroduce population to city parks, non-parks, and recreational facilities.
2. Use our parks system and natural areas for stimulating economic development.
3. Develop use of Erie Canal and the Mohawk River around historic, recreational and regional objectives to stimulate economic development.
4. Formalize protection and enforcement of that protection for historic buildings and historic districts.
5. Increase public awareness of heritage tourism.
6. Develop the city's identity as a place for artists and as a place for art.
7. Coordinate arts event to enable better marketing opportunities.



# Continued Community Outreach & Input

Variety of ways to reach people

- > Promote use of Project Website — [www.uticamasterplan.org](http://www.uticamasterplan.org)
- > Community Open House — March TBD
- > Publication/distribution of Master Plan information with feedback mechanism
- > Availability of City of Utica Department of Planning, Consultant Team, Steering Committee Members.
- > Regular media briefings
- > Even with submission of a draft plan, it is a living document. City of Utica is committed to ongoing public input including a formation of an implementation committee



# Open Discussion



Thank you!

