Acknowledgements

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**Arts and Culture Committee**: Co-Chairs Mary Guerrero, owner of Café Azteca and El Taller restaurant and bookstore, teacher at the Oliver School and Lawrence resident, and Victor Perez, Company Director of the Hacha Y Machete dance company and Lawrence resident. *Committee members*: Mory Espaillat, Lisette Gora, Rich Gorham, David Meehan, Gabriela Perez Fiano, Dick Purinton, Elissa Salas, Linda Siegenthaler, Pam Yameen.

**Budget and Finance Committee**: Co-Chairs Kristen Harol, Vice President of the Life Initiative and Lawrence resident, and David Tibbetts, President of the Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council and Senior Advisor for Workforce Development at Northern Essex Community College and Middlesex Community College. *Committee members*: David Abdoo, Rachel Concepcion, Dennis DiZoglio, Bob Halpin, Mark Ianello, Danissa Lembert, Andrew Maylor, Gladys Mencia, Maria Silva, and Councilor Kendrys Vasquez.

**Community Engagement Committee**: Co-Chairs Jim Blatchford, Lawrence School Committee member for District F, and Francina Victoria, Operations Manager at Community Day Arlington Elementary School and Lawrence resident. *Committee members*: Councilor Sandy Almonte, Pedro Ayala, Spencer Buchholz, Yoed Cameron, Javier Chalas, Ansia Galva, Wayne Hayes, Joan Kulash, Anna Lembert, Ana Luna, Angel Rivera, Pastor Susan Santos.

**Education and Youth Committee**: Co-Chairs Quin Gonell, teacher at Lawrence High School, founding member of the Greater Lawrence Young Professionals Network and Lawrence resident, and Eliana Martinez, teacher at Lawrence High School and Lawrence resident. *Committee members*: Sheila Balboni, Aliali Belkus, Lou Bernieri, Dianne Domenech Cruz, Laureini Guerrero, Jorge Hernandez, Steve Kelly, Gary Mannion, Misael Martinez, Frank McLaughlin, Josh Miner, Rhadames Nova, Raymond Nunez, Myra Ortiz, Councilor Estela Reyes, Howard Sticklor, Ed Warnshuis.

**Health and Wellness Committee**: Co-Chairs: Dr. John Raser, MD, family physician, Director of Community Medicine at the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, member of the Board of Health and Lawrence resident, and Wander Morel, physical fitness expert, Owner of Anos Fitness and Lawrence resident. *Committee members*: Sandy Almonte, Imanni Grullen, Steve Ives, Vilma Lora, Heather McMann, Victor Ng, Vidal Primiterio, Stacy Seward, Liz Sweeney, Martha Velez, Linda Zimmerman.
Housing Committee: Co-Chairs Jessica Andors, Executive Director of Lawrence CommunityWorks and Lawrence resident, and Efrain Rolon, Deputy Director of the Lawrence Housing Authority. Committee members: Councilor Oneida Aquino, Jim Barnes, Larry Curtis, Jose Estrella, Evelyn Friedman, Yesenia Gil, Rachel Heller, Mary Marra, Sean McDonnell, Jordany Peña, Ana Rodriguez, Bridget Shaheen, Larry Sharp.

Jobs and Economic Development Committee: Co-Chairs: Marianne Paley Nadel, Owner and General Manager of the Everett Mills in Lawrence, and Julia Silverio, Owner and CEO of Silverio Insurance Agency and Lawrence resident. Committee members: Dianne Anderson, June Black, Cesar Camargo, Benny Espaillat, Wendy Estrella, Lane Glenn, Franly Gomez, Rafael Guzman, Hamlet Hidalgo, John Lavoie, Rosa Lopez, Sal Lupoli, Councilor Modesto Maldonado, Representative Frank Moran, James Patrick O'Donoghue, Gary Sidell, Anita Worden.

Public Celebrations and Unity Committee: Co-Chairs Eileen Bernal, City Councilor for District E, and Sara Saldana, Treasurer of Semana Hispana and Lawrence resident. Committee members: Jim Beauschesne, Ray Difiori, Yanilo Duran, Walkiria Manzueta, Marisa Melendez, Mary O'Brien, Evan Silverio, Pura St. Hilary, Phyllis Tyler.


The transition committees were aided in their work by the following individuals: Steve St. Arnault, Economic Development Consultant, Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council; Lori Howe, Associate Director, Family Services of the Merrimack Valley; and Sandra Gutierrez, Administrative Assistant, Neighbors in Need. Our sincerest thanks also go to Austin Carroll for his IT support and assistance with the transition website, and Susan Grabski and the staff at the Lawrence History Center for creating an archival record of the transition process.

In addition to Committees Co-Chairs and members, the following people provided valuable insight and guidance to the transition planning process: Honorable Mark Newman, Associate Justice, Essex County Juvenile Court; Bob Nunes, Fiscal Overseer for the City of Lawrence; Shalimar Quiles, Scholars Re-engagement Manager, Lawrence Public Schools; Jeff Riley, Receiver for the Lawrence Public Schools; Chet Sidell, Lawrence mill owner; and Bill Traynor, Partner at Neighboring First and former Executive Director of Lawrence CommunityWorks. Last but certainly not least, we are grateful to all of the individuals who took the time to contribute ideas and suggestions through the transition website.

Cover photo: Campagnone Common looking towards City Hall, 2013. Image courtesy of Chad Montrie.
January 3, 2014

Honorable Daniel Rivera, Mayor
City of Lawrence
200 Common Street
Lawrence, MA 01840

Dear Mayor Rivera:

It is with great pleasure that we present this transition report to you and your administration. The report is intended to serve as a guide for your first 100 days in office and throughout your tenure as Mayor. We thank you for having entrusted us with this important task, and hope that you will find the report and the recommendations contained herein useful. It has been tremendously rewarding for us to work with all of the talented and enthusiastic people who contributed to this process.

As you know, the transition planning process has drawn on leaders from the community who bring deep subject matter expertise and a serious commitment to Lawrence. The fundamental goal of the transition process was to begin a community conversation about making Lawrence better. It has created new opportunities for people who are living, working, investing, and raising families in the city to brainstorm, contribute their ideas, and be part of the change.

To prepare this report, ten committees were assembled to address the various functions of city government. Each committee met at least twice during November and December to discuss ideas, identify strategic objectives, and provide feedback about implementation. We are especially grateful to the 20 Committee Co-Chairs and more than 100 Committee members for participating in these conversations and bringing their expertise, knowledge, and love for the community to the process. Their enthusiasm and spirit was contagious. We also wish to thank all of the individuals who submitted ideas and opinions through the transition website. In total, approximately 1000 volunteer hours have been dedicated to the transition plan. Throughout this process, people have come together in new ways, sending a message of unity and collaboration in a city that has long been viewed as divided.

Most importantly, we wish to thank you, Mayor Rivera, for your leadership in creating a transition process that has given all those who live, work, and invest in the city an opportunity to have their voices heard and to help make Lawrence better. We hope this transition report will serve as the guiding tool your administration needs, and we stand ready to assist you in the coming months and years. We are honored to have had the opportunity to serve and wish you and your administration every success.

Respectfully yours,

Maggie Super Church and Zoila Gomez, Transition Team Co-Chairs
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Executive Summary

Overview

Mayor Daniel Rivera has noted that the people of Lawrence “work hard every day to make Lawrence a home and a place to do business.” That simple phrase might also serve as a guiding principle of this report. The pages that follow can be seen as the Transition Team’s advice for the new Administration about how City government, working closely with members of the community, can make Lawrence the best home and place to do business that it can be.

The ten chapters of this report divide the Transition Team’s work into topics that reflect the ten broad topic areas of the Transition Committees. Each chapter includes strategic objectives and innovative ideas for the topic. These objectives and ideas range from highly specific to broad and overarching, from quickly achievable to long-term goals, and from moderate advances to citywide game-changers.

While each chapter is written about a broad topic area, it is important to recognize that the work itself is all interrelated. For example, continuing “to use and implement best practices for the city budget” (Budget and Finance Committee) is necessary to support the police department’s ability to “improve quality of life by reducing crime in city’s toughest neighborhoods” (Public Safety Committee), which in turn is critical to jobs and economic development, because “the need to improve safety is both a reality and a perception that keeps businesses from considering a Lawrence location and challenges local business growth” (Jobs and Economic Development Committee), and so forth. In other words, success in any one of these areas is dependent on success in all of them. While each objective will have an “owner” and a natural focal point, in reality the work is cross-cutting, and progress will depend on the united strength and efforts of the City government and the community.

Common Themes

Beyond the common structure of each chapter (introduction, strategic objectives, innovative ideas, etc.), there are some common themes that appear throughout this report. Among these are improving communications, increasing the use of data and information technology, developing strategic plans, refreshing organizational structures, expanding the use of partnerships, and searching for new or untapped resources.

The communications theme actually contains two sub-themes: communication within Lawrence and communication with those outside Lawrence. In terms of communication within Lawrence, most of the chapters that follow recognize the need to improve communication within City government, between City government and related institutions, and between City government and Lawrence residents, neighborhoods, and businesses. Communication with those outside Lawrence means improving the image of the City by increasing communications about the
Positive aspects of Lawrence and by developing marketing and communications plans to support that work. Both kinds of communication underpin all of the other work discussed.

The need for greater information technology (IT) and use of data are two more related critical themes. Not only is IT central to the communications themes noted above, but it is essential for the use of data in budgeting, policymaking, evaluating, and celebrating success, which is another common thread running throughout this report. Taken together, these needs underline the importance of paying more attention to IT across the City.

A further theme noted in most chapters is the need for developing more formal plans. In some cases, these chapters themselves can serve as the first seeds of those plans. In other places, plans may have to be written from scratch. In both cases, drafting new strategic plans on many of these topics will provide the opportunity for the new administration to continue to develop its vision and goals for the City and the community.

Related to the development of new plans is a review and possible reform of some City organizational structures. Many chapters include the recognition that the work being proposed will necessitate new or restructured committees, positions, or even departments. In some cases, this is due to the lack of a critical entity or person to work on or implement some critical need; in other cases, this is simply due to the changing needs of the City and the population.

Another theme is the strength generated from working together for a common purpose and the need to expand the use of partnerships. No single organization, including the City government itself, can solve the challenges facing Lawrence. For that reason, there is a critical need to build new partnerships and collaborations around a wide variety of topics.

One final theme worth noting throughout this report is the critical need to search for new or untapped resources. Any potential opportunity to bring new funds or resources in the City must be located, assessed, and seized. The needs are so great across so many different areas that no opportunity to bring in outside assistance can be ignored or overlooked.

At the same time, above and beyond all these themes is one perhaps even more essential: Lawrence has great strengths and assets. Although the bulk of the report focuses on what needs to improved, the Transition Team recognizes that Lawrence has some extraordinary assets. For that reason, the work starts from a premise and a position of hope and strength.

**Strategic Objectives from Each Chapter**

Following is a condensed summary of Strategic Objectives from each chapter. Given the complexity of the topics and the detail provided within each chapter, these should be considered in the context of the chapters themselves.
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Arts and Culture:
- Create an Arts and Culture Department for the City of Lawrence and hire a Director;
- Host an Arts and Culture Summit;
- Create a calendar of events on website/social media; and
- Investigate state and federal resources to support arts and culture.

Budget and Finance:
- Be the “Technology Mayor” to improve the city’s operational efficiency;
- Increase revenue to become more self-sufficient;
- Save money where we can without reducing quality of services; and
- Continue to use and implement best practices for the City budget.

Community Engagement:
- Organize a group of Neighborhood Liaisons to assist with the dissemination of information;
- Make City Hall an information hub for the community;
- Organize community meetings in spaces accessible and available to residents; and
- Communicate information from the administration to residents in an effective manner.

Education and Youth:
- Collaborate with youth organizations and agencies, and establish a Youth Task Force;
- Develop a city-wide youth center for evening activities, and enhance public library operations and services;
- Increase parental involvement with the Schools and use Family Resource Center to engage parents and connect the community to needed resources;
- Empower residents to have a voice in governance of the City and the schools; and
- Promote the growth, development, and retention of young educators, professionals, leaders, mentors, and recent college graduates from Lawrence.

Health and Wellness:
- Endorse and support the Mayor’s Health Task Force, and endorse and follow-through on the mandates of the Healthy Active Living Resolution;
- Expect collaboration from all City departments in health;
- Support a meaningful healthy workplace policy and wellness program for City employees;
- Adopt a Complete Streets Policy, and renew focus on enforcement of quality of life ordinances in the City;
- Create a process for Health Impact Assessments for development projects and other major initiatives in the City;
- Support local policies to encourage healthier food choices, attract a distribution center to support improved options and pricing for local small grocery stores/bodegas, adopt reform to zoning and animal control statutes that support urban agriculture; and
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- Help support a positive environment at the state Department of Transitional Assistance.

**Housing:**
- Implement a comprehensive housing study;
- Prioritize regular communication, data sharing and data-driven decision-making, and collaboration among all City Departments and Boards that deal with housing;
- Improve the quality and quantity of high-quality rental housing stock in the City;
- Promote sustainable homeownership;
- Promote and utilize housing development as a driver for economic development; and
- Support the development of high-quality supportive housing with comprehensive wrap-around services.

**Jobs and Economic Development:**
- Initiate a multipronged campaign to jumpstart economic development based on a revised management structure, hiring of professional staff, and production of a marketing/branding plan;
- Develop and promote a Business Development Program to attract new businesses and grow existing businesses;
- Connect with local small businesses to help foster their success, and attract new businesses through incentives and network creation;
- Promote Smart Development;
- Create a Plan for the Downtown Core that seeks a diversity of uses, continue to grow the cultural focus in the mill district, build upon the expansion of the NECC Campus, and promote the growth of health institutions, services and companies;
- Support the emerging plan for four-year colleges/universities in Lawrence and increased expectations for a variety of Post-secondary plans for all LPS students;
- Coordinate development efforts to provide a walkable, livable, healthy city to live, work and play; and
- Develop an outreach strategy to understand workforce needs in the community, job readiness programs, and job training programs.

**Public Celebrations and Unity:**
- Establish clear, written guidelines for all Public Events;
- Create and maintain a web-based Calendar of Community Events that is easily accessible for event organizers, as well as the general public; and
- Reduce the “base-cost” for hosting events in the City (i.e., Police details, Fire, and DPW).

**Public Safety:**
- Reduce crime and improve quality of life in City’s toughest neighborhoods;
- Improve Lawrence Police Department morale;
- Build new Police Department headquarters and upgrade/rehabilitate firehouses;
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- Review whether to keep the Emergency Management System (ambulance service) private or bring in-house; and
- Focus on reducing car theft and armed robbery.

Quality of Life:
- Improve communication from City Hall to residents;
- Enhance Parks & Recreation through public-private partnerships that emphasize stewardship and programming;
- Address Code Enforcement, Policing, and Litter; and
- Support Community Development and Improve City’s Image.

(Pictured from Left to Right): Transition Committee Co-Chairs Victor Perez, Quin Gonnell, Brenda Rozzi, Pedro Torres, Zoila Gomez, Eliana Martinez, Marc Laplante, Jessica Andors, David Tibbetts, Mayor Daniel Rivera, Manny Gonzalez, Dr. John Raser, Kristen Harol, Jim Blatchford, Wander Morel, Mary Guerrero, Maggie Super Church, and Efrain Rolon.
**Arts and Culture Committee:**

Co-Chairs Mary Guerrero, owner of Café Azteca and El Taller restaurant and bookstore, teacher at the Oliver School and Lawrence resident, and Victor Perez, Company Director of the Hacha Y Machete dance company and Lawrence resident.

*Committee members:* Mory Espaillat, Lisette Gora, Rich Gorham, David Meehan, Gabriela Perez Fiato, Dick Purinton, Elissa Salas, Linda Siegenthaler, Pam Yameen.

**A. Introduction**

The Mission Statement of the Arts and Culture Committee is to enrich the lives of the citizens of Lawrence, develop our artists, promote our city and provide business and employment opportunities.

**B. Strategic Objectives**

1) **Strategic Objective #1: Create an Arts and Culture Department for the City of Lawrence and hire a Director.**

The Director will organize an annual Arts and Culture summit in order to gather and coordinate available community resources, artists and other state and federal resources. The director will maintain a website with a unified calendar of Cultural and Art events in the city. All events will be shared using various social media and languages in order to communicate with all ages and backgrounds. The Director will coordinate a list of Lawrence artists working both in the city and beyond.

The Director will be informed by a City Culture and Arts board composed of citizens representing various constituents (youth, non-profit, business...).

The Director will support economic development by encouraging art entrepreneurship and the utilization of available space by established businesses in the Arts.

The Director will develop and apply for an Arts and Culture district designation from the state.

   a) **Short List:**

      (i) **Conduct a review of the following websites:**

      a. Creative Haverhill ([www.creativehaverhill.org](http://www.creativehaverhill.org))

      b. Cool– Cultural Organization of Lowell/culture is cool ([www.cultureiscool.org](http://www.cultureiscool.org))
c. Discover Pittsfield ([www.discoverpittsfield.com](http://www.discoverpittsfield.com))

(ii) Investigate investment in the Arts and Culture in the following cities:

a. Lowell
b. Lynn (Lynn Arts)
c. Haverhill
d. Gloucester
e. Somerville

(iii) Investigate possible allocation of funds and grants towards the hiring of an Arts and Culture Director.

b) Data Needs

(i) Investigate possible funding sources

(ii) Create a budget

c) City Boards, Departments and Commissions

(i) Lawrence Historic Commission

(ii) Planning Board

a. Design Review Board
b. Lawrence Cultural Council
c. Lawrence Public Library
d. Lawrence Public Works
e. Lawrence Community Development
f. Zoning Board

d) Community Resources:

e. Reference List of People/Places
   
   (i) Other communities who have done similar work successfully: Lowell (COOL at cultureiscool.org), Haverhill (creativehaverhill.org), Newburyport, Somerville, Gloucester, Lynn (Lynn Arts), Pittsfield (Discover Pittsfield)

Strategic Objective 1 encompasses other high priority objectives. If Strategic Objective 1 is taken off the table, then these other objectives should be pursued using similar immediate actions, data needs, city departments, board and commissions, community resources and reference lists.

2) Strategic Objective #2: Arts and Culture Summit
3) Strategic Objective #3: Calendar of events on website/ social media
4) Strategic Objective #4: Investigate state and federal resources

C. Innovative Ideas

1) Create an arts facility similar to the Firehouse in Newburyport (gallery, restaurant, and theater) – see attached investigation conducted by Dick Purinton
2) LHS Facilities for Arts use
3) Showcase Cinema as Art Space
4) El Taller on a larger scale
5) Promote local artists
6) A call for professional artists from Lawrence to return and share experiences
7) Create a hashtag for Lawrence Arts and Culture
8) Bring White Fund Paintings to Lawrence
9) Create a professional museum
10) Protection of mills and landscape/cityscape
11) Arts festival celebration/ city open house/ Lawrence first night
12) Paying it forward: high school students learn to dance then teach younger students

D. Questions

1) LHS Theater – is it available and underutilized?
2) What is the role of NECCO in Lawrence and the new construction? Will they bring arts to Lawrence or will it stay at the Haverhill campus?

E. Appendix

Notes from Dick Purinton:
Firehouse started 22 years ago. It is owned by city on a 99-year lease. The cost of rehabbing old firehouse was 1.5 million. State gave 800k. Local funded most of balance. It is operated by The Society for Developing the Arts in Newburyport. Management Income is 1/3 rent from
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restaurant, 1/3 public funding, and 1/3-ticket sales. It needs a broad base of usage to please grantors i.e. music, plays, dance etc. Income derived 3 ways: co-pro split 50/50 with user or take all profits and rental fees. 20k people attended this year. Seats 195 a figure determined by the fire dept. A very preliminary review of possible Lawrence sites found an initial 3 possibilities
1. The Holy Rosary elementary school on Summer St. owned by city: great facade for an art center but needs repairs big time and very little parking. 2. Old Dye Works at eastern end of Union Crossing parking lot (a big plus) owned by LCW. Jess is very anxious to work with us in modifying the building. One major project is removal of many columns. 3. One of the buildings of the window mfg co further east of the dye works. Another site might be the old Lawrence High School or a site on Water Street. Dick Purinton will continue to investigate.

Notes from Linda Siegenthaler:
Economic Impact
Why invest in the arts and culture: creative industry?

“Massachusetts defines the creative industries to include sectors that center on providing creative services such as advertising, architecture or creating and promoting intellectual property products such as arts, film, computer games, multimedia, or design.”

Massachusetts Housing and Economic Development website - data from the Massachusetts Cultural Council show significant jobs related to the creative economy in Massachusetts:

“The creative economy last year accounted for 27,000 full-time, part-time, and independent contractor jobs and pumped $1.2 billion into the state’s economy through direct spending.”

Adams-funded projects leverage the assets of the creative sector – artists, cultural organizations, and arts-related businesses – to generate real income. Communities as diverse as Boston, Haverhill, Lowell, New Bedford, and Fitchburg have used Adams funds to more fully utilize these assets to benefit residents and visitors alike.

Data on employment in the creative sector in Lawrence are not readily available and need to be developed. Let’s grow the creative economy in Lawrence.

Creative Industries
http://www.mass.gov/hed/economic/industries/creative/jobs.html

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Lawrence Heritage State Park and its Visitors’ Center is a cultural space with a renovated gallery and community space and open seven days a week. Its assets and events need to be better linked to the community overall and it should be linked to the calendar/website.

Priorities

Look at existing major festivals and events to analyze audience and marketing.

Link the arts to Community Development priorities.

Consider making downtown parking free on Saturday to attract visitors.

Engage neighborhood representatives and youth in cultural planning.

Notes from Rich Gorham:

"Gallery 37" is a program that originated in Chicago and has been replicated in other cities. It is a jobs program that hires Teaching Artists to train Apprentice Artists (ages 14-21) in various programs. They have a space downtown, a shop that sells art, and various displays in public places throughout the city. They partner with the city government, the schools and businesses for funding, locations to work and locations to display art. Their Mission: "...provide meaningful employment and training in the arts to Chicago's youth, without regard to gender, race, family income level or physical ability; to create a mentoring program between youth and established artists; to increase public awareness of the importance of the arts and arts education; and to foster cultural awareness." They have four Essential Goals: "providing meaningful employment; providing professional mentoring; creating visibility and building community outreach; and promoting integration." Here is their wiki page: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallery_37
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Budget and Finance Committee:
Co-Chairs Kristen Harol, Vice President of the Life Initiative and Lawrence resident, and David Tibbetts, President of the Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council and Senior Advisor for Workforce Development at Northern Essex Community College and Middlesex Community College.

Committee members: David Abdoo, Rachel Concepcion, Dennis DiZoglio, Bob Halpin, Mark Ianello, Danissa Lembert, Andrew Maylor, Gladys Mencia, Maria Silva, and Councilor Kendrys Vasquez.

A. Introduction
The Budget and Finance Transition Team met twice-on December 4th and 11th, 2013-and identified greater municipal self-sufficiency as a primary goal. This includes four areas for immediate attention by the incoming mayoral administration. These are: 1) operational efficiency, 2) increased revenue, 3) cost savings, and 4) best budgeting practices. Operational efficiency in the city will be greatly aided by a wide-ranging commitment to making Mayor-elect Rivera the “Technology Mayor.” One important and specific step toward this end is full implementation of the MUNIS accounting system. A sustained increase in municipal revenue will happen through economic development that expands the tax base. An immediate action to generate more income is consultation with legal counsel for expediting collection of real estate taxes and tax takings as well as developing an inventory of tax title properties. Significant cost savings for Lawrence will come from a thorough review of the structure of the Department of Public Works. This should begin with improved operation and revenue collection in the parking division, and an expansion of citywide recycling which could recover significant funds. Finally, we recommend the continued use and adoption of the best practices in budgeting that have resulted in a bond rating increase and a budget balanced without reserves for four years in a row. An immediate action to pursue is the creation and adoption of a 3-5 year capital plan.

We explain all of these recommendations in more detail below.

B. Strategic Objectives

1) Strategic Objective #1: Be the “Technology Mayor” to improve the city’s operational efficiency. All city departments should be fully trained to use the MUNIS accounting system. We have paid for a good, appropriate ERP system but it is not fully utilized throughout the city departments and not all appropriate modules and functions are being used, particularly the public works functions.

- Fully utilize the MUNIS accounting system
- Implement new time management software throughout all departments
- Use software systems to analyze and prioritize road repair needs
a) Immediate Actions:
   (i) Find a champion/owner of the problem in each department
   (ii) Develop a 6 month training program in January 2014
   (iii) Evaluate need for a MUNIS coordinator or chief administrative officer

b) Data Needs:
   (i) Budget for training each department on the ERP system

c) City Departments, Boards and Commissions
   (i) Budget and Finance
   (ii) DPW
   (iii) School Department
   (iv) City Council

d) Community Resources:

e) Reference List
   (i) Transition team meeting minutes 1 and 2, and MUNIS subcommittee minutes
   (ii) Fiscal Overseer’s presentation
   (iii) City of Lawrence 2014 budget

2) Strategic Objective #2: Increase revenue: Long term goal is to become more self-sufficient, which will happen with economic development that increases the tax base and taxes collected and that brings jobs to the city. In the short term we can become more self-sufficient by collecting what is due. Within the first 100 days, analyze all revenue collection points for efficiency, specifically:
   - Establish a coordinated and efficient process across city departments for utilizing existing grant funds and securing additional grants
   - Collect the delinquent property and excise taxes
   - Extend “Pay and Display” parking initiative to garages and lots
   - Collect delinquent parking fees (see 6/17/13 memo, page 4)
   - Create a strategy to build the tax base
   - Evaluate the tax levy increase
      a) Immediate Actions
         (i) Implement a systematic, citywide approach to securing grants through the Mayor’s Office
         (ii) Hire lawyers to speed up the collection of real estate taxes and tax takings
(iii) Inventory remaining tax title properties, then move to RFP or auction

(iv) Develop the tax base: Economic Development strategy to develop underutilized buildings—a long-term goal that should be prioritized in the first 100 days

(v) Evaluate increasing the tax levy: 2 ½% is the maximum, but smaller amount is possible.

(vi) Maximize revenues at parking lots: consider a ‘fraud’ or efficiency audit to look at controls, cash management and systemic weaknesses in revenue collection

(vii) Build the economic development toolkit: best practices to spur development of underutilized properties and to promote high value, high impact development. Tax tools, density bonuses and other best practices

b) Data Needs

(i) Map of current grant writing systems: who is writing the grants in what departments

(ii) Inventories of city owned property that could be sold, tax title properties, and tax-delinquent properties

(iii) City of Lawrence Department of Revenue Pro Forma tax levy calculation, estimated levy limit

(iv) Review the Fiscal Oversee’s parking memo

(v) Obtain independent outside audit of parking and cash management systems

c) City Departments, Boards and Commissions

(i) Mayor’s Office

(ii) City Attorney

(iii) Budget and Finance

(iv) All departments—grant procedures

(v) Department of Public Works (Parking)

(vi) Economic Development

(vii) City Council—Budget and Finance committee

(viii) Planning Board

d) Community Resources

e) Reference List

(i) Parking Memo, 6/17/2013
3) **Strategic Objective # 3: Expenses: Save money where we can without reducing quality of services, make fair and rational expenditures and implement the following cost savings:**

a) **Immediate Actions**
   
   (i) Increased recycling citywide including Housing Authority
   
   (ii) Review leases, specifically don’t rent space for the community development department if we have city owned buildings available
   
   (iii) Transition to LED lighting, working with National Grid
   
   (iv) Solar: Investigate purchasing/joining the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
       
       a. Regional consortium.
   
   (v) Outsource functions where possible, begin with reviewing facilities maintenance
   
   (vi) Evaluate police and fire department staffing with outside, third party management study

b) **Data Needs**
   
   (i) Leases for any city department not occupying city property
   
   (ii) MVP Commission regional consortium net metering solar agreement
   
   (iii) Evaluation of facilities maintenance function in the city
   
   (iv) Proposal from National Grid for LED lighting
   
   (v) Best practices from similar cities for recycling

c) **City Departments Board and Commissions**
   
   (i) DPW
   
   (ii) Housing and Economic Development
   
   (iii) Merrimack Valley Planning Commission

d) **Community Resources**

e) **Reference List**
   
   (i) Presentation by the Fiscal Overseer
   
   (ii) Meeting notes 1 and 2
4) **Strategic Objective #4: Budgeting**: Continue to use and implement best practices for the city budget that have resulted in an improved bond rating and a budget balanced without reserves for 4 years.

   a) Immediate Action
      (i) Present capital plan and budget to Mayor and Council
      (ii) Continue to accumulate free cash
      (iii) Establish comprehensive city-wide financial policies
      (iv) Create a stabilization fund
      (v) Build upon continued successful fiscal practices to increase city bond rating

   b) Data Needs
      (i) 2015 draft budget
      (ii) Bond rating reports from Moody’s and Standard & Poor’s
      (iii) Outside audits of city finances, 2011-2013

   c) City Departments Board and Commissions
      (i) Budget & Finance
      (ii) DPW
      (iii) School Department

   d) Community Resources

   e) Reference List
      (i) Most recent 3 year capital plan presented in 2011
      (ii) 2014 City budget

**C. Innovative Ideas:**
1) Research best practices for DPW functions such as inspectional services, parking and facilities, which in many communities are stand-alone functions

2) Analyze and review structure and function of DPW, which in Lawrence oversees a vast range of city functions, such as inspectional services, parking and facilities.

3) Explore joint (school/city) facilities department

4) Economic development strategy that includes plan for high impact development to increase the tax base and bring jobs to the city

5) Consider adopting “CitiStat” performance monitoring and management system (used in Amesbury and Somerville, among other communities) (see [http://www.somervillema.gov/departments/somerstat](http://www.somervillema.gov/departments/somerstat))

6) Increase transparency of the city budget (have community input, create charts and graphs that are easy to read and helpful as part of the city budget)
Community Engagement Committee:

Co-Chairs Jim Blatchford, Lawrence School Committee member for District F, and Francina Victoria, Operations Manager at Community Day Arlington Elementary School and Lawrence resident.

Committee members: Councilor Sandy Almonte, Pedro Ayala, Spencer Buchholz, Yoed Cameron, Javier Chalas, Ansia Galva, Wayne Hayes, Joan Kulash, Annia Lembert, Ana Luna, Angel Rivera, Pastor Susan Santos.

A. Introduction

The purpose of the Community Engagement Committee is to create a system in which individuals, community leaders, for-profit and non-profit organizations, departments and government can build and sustain relationships utilized for the benefit the community as a whole. This is a group of committed individuals who understand that organizing a community is a process that brings together visionary leaders to build a grassroots movement to steer people into sustainable change. The goal of this committee is to engage the community in an effective and productive manner. Conversations among city leaders offered a number of lessons and reflections.

Diversity was a stated priority of the community engagement plan, ensuring that the people involved in the process were representative of the social, economic, ethnic and racial diversity of the Lawrence population as a whole. Some of the communication suggestions included bilingual gatherings and online tools, special events to attract youth and younger families, working with the school system to conduct outreach efforts to attract participants and host meetings, PTA meetings and churches. These individuals also reflected on the array of tools used throughout the process, from in-person meetings to surveys to online and social media efforts.

In order to bring the committee to a consensus on the strategic objectives needed to move the city forward, we practiced a number of strategies, including but not limited to voting and small group presentations. These activities helped us determine our goals, develop engagement strategies, prioritize those activities, identify stakeholders, create a system to streamline the implement of the progress, and lastly sustain the relationships made from this new engagement plan.

This Committee was composed of eleven individuals who have, in one way or another, been involved with for-profit and non-profit organizations, unions, neighborhood groups, local government, educational institutions, local business, religious groups and youth leadership activities. The diversity of the group opened the door to a variety of ideas and discussion regarding the lack of communication between the city and its residents. We also discussed the
different factors that have contributed to the demise of the city’s pride and resident involvement.

The group has compiled a series of strategic objectives for the administrations’ first one hundred days. The following are Strategic Objectives with Immediate Actions, Data Needs, City Departments, Boards & Commissions, Community Resources and a Reference List.

B. Strategic Objectives

1) Strategic Objective #1: Organize a group of Neighborhood Liaisons to assist with the development and dissemination of information in each respective neighborhood.

This group of individuals would be either selected by the administration or by the newly created neighborhood association. If a neighborhood association already exists in the area, this liaison would provide the necessary tools to enhance the membership, outreach and effectiveness of the group. This liaison would be a resident of the area, someone who has either been greatly involved or wants to participate in the area’s betterment.

a) Immediate Actions
   (i) Meet with Community Development Department and have a conversation regarding the city’s most development and underrepresented areas.
      a) Identify the key players in the Department, their role and their work over the past years.
   (ii) In the first few months of the year, attend all neighborhood meeting and meet with neighborhood leaders and representatives.
      a) The Community Development Department should, along with the Mayor’s Office, meet with area organizations and obtain information regarding their client’s involvement and needs.
   (iii) The administration could utilize area organizations to assist with the recruitment and creation of these positions.
      a) Once eligible candidates are identified, they would be trained and educated Community Development Department on useful and effective practices along with information to support them on this new position.
   (iv) Neighborhood Liaisons would be the eyes and ears as well as the voice of their area.

b) Data Needs
   (i) Create a community survey of about 7-10 questions asking residents about their ideas, concerns and level of involvement.
      a) This survey would come directly from the Mayor’s office and would be distributed to all organizations, neighborhood associations, and businesses.
b) Youth and other volunteers can be utilized to go door to door to fill out this survey. (Neighbor to Neighbor- Let your voice be heard campaign)

(ii) Obtain information from the Community Development Department on neighborhood participation and outreach.

(iii) Gather data from local organizations need and desire to get involved.

c) City Departments, Boards & Commissions

(i) The Community Development Department would be a big part of this movement, along with the Economic Development Department.

a. These two city departments, along with the for- and non-profit organizations and neighborhood groups, would work as a united front to distribute information and engage residents to better them and the community.

(ii) Mayor’s Office for the creation of these positions and the promotion of their benefit to the community.

(iii) Cultural Council along with the Human Rights Commission.

d) Community Resources

(i) As previously noted this strategic objective would rely heavily on the assistance of local organizations and their volunteers.

(ii) The educational institutions in and around the city can assist with the gathering of data, organizing and analyzing the survey and engagement plan.

e) Reference List

(i) Northern Essex Community College, Cambridge College, Merrimack College, University of Massachusetts Lowell, Middlesex Community College and Merrimack College. These educational institutions have programs focus on community development and sustainability. We need to utilize their expertise and past research on the city.

(ii) The City of Lowell has done a tremendous job with their neighborhood planner. Many organizations have partaken in the efforts to unite and engage its residents. Specific areas such as The Acre can be taken as examples.

2) Strategic Objective #2: Make City Hall an information hub for the community.

Access to information about one's community and having a welcoming environment to receive it in is the hallmark of any entity. These items are some of the starting points to help provide much needed information and services to all who need it.

a) Immediate Actions

(i) Open a City Hall welcome desk on first floor so there is someone to direct visitors where to go and to answer general questions.
(ii) Make sure there is a visible updated City Hall directory on every floor as well as a main phone number so you are able to call and get a directory verbally over the phone in both English and Spanish and other languages if possible.

(iii) Make sure all official information (i.e. budgets, website, master plans, etc.) that comes out of city hall is minimally bilingual in English and Spanish if not multilingual including but not limited to Khmer, Creole, and Vietnamese.

(iv) Make sure the city website is user friendly and add to the current website;

(v) A search bar to locate information without having to look through multiple pages

(vi) A community calendar so you can see all board/commission/council meetings in one place online and publicly at city hall.

(vii) Make sure all city departments that take in visitors’ money are able to accept credit cards and online payments to make services easier for residents to pay fines, fees, and bills.

(viii) Conduct a Personnel review and training for all city employees to go over best customer service practices to make sure community members feel welcome and informed when visiting any city department.

b) Data Needs

(i) Demographic information on the percentage of languages spoken in community and which languages are most widely spoken.

(ii) Collection of all updated meeting times for boards, commissions, councils, and committees.

c) City Departments, Boards and Commissions

(i) To achieve these strategic objectives the majority of the work will be done through the Mayor’s office, the Personnel department and the Department of Public Works.

   a. Every department and board/commission, after the initial implementation, will need to update and review information from and about their specific department/board.

(ii) To coordinate volunteers we can utilize the Veterans Services Department as well as the Council on Aging; these residents can help with staffing the welcome desk.

d) Community Resources

(i) To receive the best practices of customer service and customer feedback the city should engage with private business and nonprofits in Lawrence
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and the surrounding area and compile these best training techniques for city employees to utilize for the current administration as well as all future administrations.

(ii) Volunteers and interns should be utilized at the welcome desk. Disabled veterans, retired elderly, and youth can staff the desk for possible college credit, a small stipend or a possible reduction on a property tax or water bill depending on the city’s resources.

e) Reference List

(i) Examples of these websites can be found in the other cities in Massachusetts i.e. the Cities of Somerville and Lowell.

(ii) The local towns in this area have very welcoming town halls as examples of appearance and ease of navigation, either because of a welcome desk attendant or easily accessible directories.

(iii) The best example for translation of official documents and communications comes from cities such as New York City or the City of Boston.

   a. Lawrence does some translation but these examples can be used to improve upon the city’s current practices.

3) Strategic Objective #3: Organize community meetings in spaces accessible and available to residents.

Community building and place making are essential when creating an environment to satisfy human desires for homes, jobs, recreation, social interaction and access to the natural world. Healthy and prosperous neighborhoods and communities nurture a public spiritedness that can sustain a place across generations. Resources featured in public meetings will showcase local snapshots that highlight efforts to strengthen and improve communities.

a) Immediate Actions

(i) Identify key locations to hold open meetings. (Library, Lawrence Public Schools, Senior Center, Neighborhood “Hotspots”, City Hall)

   a. Public Library- This is a location that is underutilized and underserviced.

   b. Organize a meeting with the leadership to bring forth some ideas to enhance funding and participation from the community.

   c. There are a number of vendors that could be brought to the Library and contracted under certain guidelines to benefit the library’s appearance. (Look at libraries in higher education institutions and emulate their appeal)

(ii) Work closely with the schools and their administration to conduct outreach efforts to parents and guardians.
(iii) Identify Neighborhood “Hotspots” and host neighbor meet and greets along with pop-up informational booths on street corners bringing information directly into neighborhoods.

b) Data Needs

(i) Utilize the Community Survey listed in objective 1. Along with this proposed survey, we may reach out to various departments within the city to assess the number, schedules and accessibility of these proposed locations.

c) City Departments, Boards & Commissions

(i) Lawrence Public Library, Lawrence Public Schools, Mayor’s Office, and the Community Development Department.

d) Community Resources

(i) For this objective we found it particularly important to know what organizations are involved in the city and what their purpose is. These organizations have great insight and are able to gather large crowds at any given time. Research list and make it available to residents and community leaders.

e) Reference List

(i) National League of Cities [http://www.nlc.org/] Here you will find very useful information regarding planning, implementation and sustainability of community engagement and development efforts.

(ii) TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES (CLEVELAND - GASTON CEDS PROJECT : CORPORATION FOR ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT) [http://www.unc.edu/depts/econ/PlantClosure/cfed_transform.pdf]

4) Strategic Objective #4: Communicate information from the administration to residents in an effective manner.

Communication is essential for any organization to succeed and prosper. The City of Lawrence in the past has been plagued with negative stories while many of the good stories have been buried underneath. The public image of the City of Lawrence affects house values, economic development, and even possibly the performance of its students. Some of these suggestions are direct communications to residents while others are public relations in general.

a) Immediate Actions

(i) Hire a Public Relations Liaison to be the point person for all information coming out of City Hall.

   a. This will give a place for all news sources but also community members to go and get one clear message so there are not multiple places where
information is coming from and possibly confusing information about events or schedules.

(ii) Start a Mayor’s weekly address for a set time every week so the Mayor can address the resident of Lawrence and give them information about what is happening in the community that week and where to get more information about things happening in the future.

a. This can be one recorded message and it can be put out on radio, community television, and as an online video.

b. This is also an effective avenue to put out a positive story weekly about what is going on in Lawrence.

(iii) Have a City Hall newsletter that goes out in print media and is emailed to residents.

a. This can address many of the same topics as the Mayor’s weekly address but in more detail and possibly with less frequency, making it a bi-weekly or monthly newsletter.

(iv) Create a social media presence for the City so that residents who don’t use traditional media sources have a place to receive information for and about the City of Lawrence.

(v) Utilize corner stores, barber shops and cab/taxi services for PSA information and other community announcements.

b) Data Needs

(i) Information from all departments, boards, and commissions about events and initiatives they are working on.

(ii) Direct communication with local businesses and non-profits about activities and celebrations they may be hosting or planning.

c) City Departments, Boards and Commissions

(i) Council on Aging and the Senior Center can be used to help give information to seniors about upcoming events and important information from City Hall.

(ii) The School Department can be used to get information to parents and children about important deadlines within the city and how to contact the right departments if there are any problems or concerns.

(iii) Lawrence Housing Authority can utilize its community boards and meetings to disseminate inform to its residents.

d) Community Resources
(i) LCAT and other community television stations are extremely underutilized. This resource should be constantly tapped as a way to disseminate public information.

(ii) Social media is a free, easy, and quick way to publicize community activities and announcements. It is also a great way to publicly archive these events and announcements.

(iii) Local Radio Stations and hosts willing to allow broadcast of Mayor’s address.

(iv) Utilize electronic signs and place them in the neighborhoods the event or activity is happening so the community knows where and when events are taking place.

e) Reference List

(i) Every week the President of the United States does a weekly address to bring his message directly to the American public. One perception of Lawrence is that there are only negative stories, and this is an effective way to constantly show the positive perception of the City of Lawrence.

(ii) The City of Lowell has a very effective social media presence. The city manager has his own twitter account as well as the Mayor’s office, and both also have blogs.

(iii) In New York City every taxicab has a television where there are community announcements, weather advisories, and general news. This is an effective way for the City of Lawrence to utilize a service used by many in the community.

C. Innovative Ideas:

Some problems can be fixed with current resources and other ideas and initiatives are needed to improve the services currently being provided to the community at-large. These are a few the Community Engagement Committee felt would be worthwhile to pursue.

1) Create an opt-in system for resident and other community members to receive community announcements, weather alerts, emergency announcements, and other communications from City Hall through email, text message, or recorded phone message.

2) Create a reporting system like New York City or Somerville’s 311 reporting service where any community member can report and potholes, graffiti, broken street lights, etc.

3) Extend hours at City Hall: make services available at least one day out of the week past 5:00 pm, and/or on one weekend day per month. The City Hall work day could start at a later time so that residents can access city services outside of the usual working hours, i.e. 9am-5pm.
**Education and Youth Committee:**

Co-Chairs Quin Gonell, teacher at Lawrence High School, founding member of the Greater Lawrence Young Professionals Network and Lawrence resident, and Eliana Martinez, teacher at Lawrence High School and Lawrence resident.

*Committee members:* Sheila Balboni, Aliali Belkus, Lou Bernieri, Dianne Domenech Cruz, Laureini Guerrero, Jorge Hernandez, Steve Kelly, Gary Mannion, Misael Martinez, Frank McLaughlin, Josh Miner, Rhadames Nova, Raymond Nunez, Myra Ortiz, Councilor Estela Reyes, Howard Sticklor, Ed Warnshuis.

**A. Introduction**

As the transition team prepares the way for a seamless start to the Rivera administration, the Youth and Education Committee met twice to identify priority areas and outline a strategy for addressing them in the first few months of 2014. We considered input from committee members, as well as proactive residents who contributed ideas online. Among the key recommendations are: the establishment of a Youth Task Force and city-wide youth center, the development of a Family Resource Center, increased parental involvement in the schools and resident involvement in city governance, the development and retention of young professionals, and a comprehensive approach to literacy. Also raised were the need for expanded early childhood education, access to recreational opportunities, and the swift resolution of pending collective bargaining agreements.

Committee Members present at one or both of the meetings: Josh Miner, Ed Warnshuis, Jorge Hernandez, Howard Sticklor, Aliali Belkus, Lou Bernieri, Frank McLaughlin, Brian LaPierre, Misael Martinez, Sheila Balboni, Laureini Guerrero, Rhadames Nova, Myra Ortiz, and Gary Mannion.

**B. Strategic Objectives**

1) **Strategic Objective #1:** Collaborate with organizations and agencies that serve the city’s youth to establish a Youth Task Force and city-wide youth center for evening activities.

   a) Immediate actions: First, we need to assemble a list of the local entities that could serve as parties to this initiative. Next, we host meetings of a planning board or steering committee with representatives from each organization. Their charge would be to determine logistics and organizational details of the Youth Task Force and youth center, including (but not limited to) setting a timetable, writing a mission and vision for the task force, finding a location for the youth center.
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b) Data Needs: Each organization would need to provide a comprehensive list of their youth-specific services and resources (maybe not disclosing their entire operational budget, but still with transparency.) Additionally, rosters and attendance materials can help identify youth that are currently being served, so that the steering committee can then focus on the underserved youth. The city can provide information about existing spaces that could house the youth center, as well as the contact information of the property managers or proprietors.

c) Departments, Boards and Commissions: The Community Development Department and the Recreation Department (Adelante Youth Center, Summer Programs, etc.) can both be key players in this process.

d) Community Resources: The organizations involve would include Boys and Girls Club of Lawrence, Youth Development Organization (YDO,) the YMCA and YWCA, Movement City and others. We can also tap into programs based directly out of schools, such Upward Bound at the high school and intramural sports league for the middle schools.

e) Reference List: Movement City, Youth Development Organization, Essex Art Center, Boys and Girls Club, Lawrence Public Schools, Skate Land, Lazer Craze, Skyzone.

2) **Strategic Objective #2: Increase parental involvement within the schools.**

a) Immediate actions: Each school should assemble a resource manual with faculty and staff contact information, an overview of the curriculum and assessments, forms to complete (lunch forms and contact info sheet, etc.) This manual should also incorporate a “Guide to Helping Your Student Succeed,” which include tips for supporting student learning (e.g., creating an environment at home that is conducive to quiet study, setting a nightly reading time) and for responding to various student needs. It can also include an invitation from the PTO to be a member or to participate by attending open houses, family fun nights, and the like.

b) Data Needs: Schools should be encouraged to produce parent sign-in sheets from past events and to track their progress in actively engaging families in school functions.

c) Departments, Boards and Commissions: The Central Office of the Lawrence Public Schools will be pivotal in communicating this and subsequent plans. Creating the resource manual can be the first of a series of parent outreach efforts. Schools can tailor it to their individual needs as they see fit, which is compatible with Superintendent Riley’s approach to the district’s turnaround.

d) Community Resources: Parent Teacher Organizations and community outreach specialists within the schools will coordinate the distribution of materials and
main

Maintain contact with families. Moving forward, the Lawrence Public Library can host family literacy events.

e) Reference List: Dr. Erik Champy of 21 Montrose Avenue of Lawrence has extensive experience working with all grade levels and is currently President of the Massachusetts PTA and State Director for the National Education Association. He can be reached at 978-689-5915.

3) Strategic Objective #3: Empower residents to have a voice in governance of the city and schools.

a) Immediate actions: First, conduct a survey (online, on social media, in print) of residents’ current awareness of how local governance works. Then launch a “civic education campaign” to give basic information about the structure and function of city council, the school committee, and the public school system. In the future, we can target other municipal agencies in which increased understanding could yield greater civic engagement.

b) Data Needs: A team will need to process and analyze the survey responses from our initial assessment. In order to measure gains in the area of civic engagement, we will need to first consider how many different individuals are currently attending city council and school committee meetings, or viewing them on the public access television channel.

c) Departments, Boards and Commissions: The Information Technology Department can help us make use of the city website and of social media.

d) Community Resources: The Adult Education Center and other institutions for adult learning can contribute to this initiative. Lawrence Community Works can partner with the city to conduct the survey via telephone or in person with city residents. Local media (Eagle Tribune, El Rumbo, The Valley Patriot etc.) can help distribute information. Lawrence Public Schools may also serve as a partner to streamline information to parents.

e) Reference List: Jessica Andors, Nelson Butten, Bill Traynor and local political leaders can be consulted to share ideas and strategies on this.

4) Strategic Objective #4: Promote the growth, development and retention of young educators, professionals, leaders, mentors and recent college graduates from Lawrence.

a) Immediate actions: The Greater Lawrence Young Professionals Network can host a Kick-Off aimed at bringing together young professionals and recent college graduates that have never attended a GLYPN event before. The event can serve as a mixer and a discussion about the future of young professionals in the city. A representative from the Community Development Department could be present to field questions and glean valuable feedback from the discussion.

b) Data Needs: GLYPN can reach out to its data base to market the initiative and then the City would be free to request data from event attendees. An effort
should be launched to identify and draw out the young professionals of the city. By collecting data, the local government can learn new ways to engage young professionals and college graduates.

c) Departments, Boards and Commissions: The Community Development Department would work in conjunction with GLYPN to implement this initial step. They would continue a collaborative relationship throughout the lengthier process of welcoming young professionals back and retaining those already here. The Economic Development Department may also be party to an ongoing conversation about the employment opportunities that are available to young professionals.

d) Community Resources: GLYPN—According to the website, “The purpose of the Greater Lawrence Young Professionals Network is to attract, retain, and engage young professionals in the Greater Lawrence area. By building and maintaining a wide support network of local young professionals, GLYPN works to empower and engage young professionals in a way that would ultimately improve the overall quality of life in the Greater Lawrence Area.”

e) Reference List: Quin Gonell

5) Strategic Objective #5: Utilize Family Resource Center to its full potential to engage parents and connect the community to needed resources.

a) Immediate actions: Once we have secured a grant to finalize the Family Resource Center, its central and satellite locations must be housed in or near schools at accessible points throughout the city. The Center must promote its location and services broadly and consistently year-round to all families.

b) Data Needs: Collect data in neighborhoods to identify what are the most important needs of the community.

c) Departments, Boards and Commissions: Planning and/or Purchasing Departments will oversee the building and equipping of the Family Resource Center.

d) Community Resources: The Lawrence Public Schools, the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center and the Division for Children, Youth and Families will all be invaluable partners in the development and operation of the Center.


6) Strategic Objective #6: Enhance public library operations and services.

a) Immediate actions: Extend the Lawrence Public Library’s evening and weekend hours at its main site and at the South branch.

b) Data Needs: If it is available, it would be helpful to generate a report demonstrating the need for the library expanded services (e.g., students that
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rely on time before and after school, or during lunch, to have access to computers).

c) Departments, Boards and Commissions: Budget and Finance Department must allocate funds for extended hours of operation and other services at the library.

d) Community Resources: Lawrence Teachers Union may be interested in contributing to initiatives or improvement and outreach efforts.

e) Reference List: Maureen Nimmo, Director of the Lawrence Public Library would be the best person to consult in order to make the most effective decisions about the library’s capacity and increased usage.

C. Innovative Ideas

1) Multi-Faceted Pro-Literacy Campaign, including:

a) A "One Story/One Book" project for the City of Lawrence (the whole community reads a single book or story and there are events to discuss it and signs advertising it.)

b) Promotion and outreach to help residents access and be aware of Early Intervention and Head Start.

c) Library programming for children, teens and parents.

d) Pro-Literacy billboards and public service announcements on the radio

e) Provide mentorship opportunities to all grade levels to forge intergenerational relationships and expose youth to trade careers.

D. Appendix – Other Ideas

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

1) Expand access to Pre-Kindergarten education: Identify a location for a new Head Start facility in a neighborhood that is currently underserved but in high need.

RECREATION

2) Use a vacant commercial space for laser tag, arcade, roller skating, rock climbing and other fun activities. The target clientele would be youth, and it would specialize in supervised Friday and Saturday recreation.

3) Allow broader community use of the Veterans Memorial Stadium and the Performing Arts Center at Lawrence High School.

CITY EMPLOYMENT

4) Support efforts to resolve city and school employee contract disputes (namely, public school faculty and staff).

5) Expand YouthBuild or a similar work preparation program to allow teens more work opportunities that instill city pride.

SUGGESTED GOALS THAT WOULD BE MORE SUITED FOR OTHER COMMITTEES:
Launch a comprehensive public relations campaign to attract new businesses and residents; support job training and attainment efforts; infuse the arts into public city life in order to create a hallmark and to foster pride.
Health and Wellness Committee:
Co-Chairs: Dr. John Raser, MD, family physician, Director of Community Medicine at the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, member of the Board of Health and Lawrence resident, and Wander Morel, physical fitness expert, Owner of Anos Fitness and Lawrence resident.

Committee members: Sandy Almonte, Imanni Grullen, Steve Ives, Vilma Lora, Heather McMann, Victor Ng, Vidal Primiterio, Stacy Seward, Liz Sweeney, Martha Velez, Linda Zimmerman.

Note: Due to the time table, not all members of the committee were able to attend both meetings, and the final version of this report was not reviewed and by the entire group. Dr. Raser was primarily responsible for compiling group notes to create this report.

A. Introduction

Lawrence, Massachusetts is a city with unique assets and challenges related to health. Our city is young, with 28.8% of our residents under age 18 and 8.7% over age 65, compared to 20.8% under 18 and 13.7% over 65 in the state. 72.9% of us are Latino and 74.6% speak a language other than English at home, overwhelmingly Spanish. Our financial challenges are reflected in a poverty rate of 26.9% (3.5x state average) and 2012 unemployment rate of 11% (60% above the state)(2). These demographic, language, and financial realities significantly influence our health challenges. The committee recognizes that significant improvements in the health of our city must incorporate economic development, improved early childhood through adult education, and public safety as key social determinants of health in our city.

Several chronic diseases disproportionately affect our residents. Rates of obesity are 31% in adults compared to 22.7% in the state, and our people have significantly lower rates of regular exercise and adequate intake of fruits and vegetables compared to the state. Diabetes affects 10.9% of Lawrencians compared to 7.9% in the state. Residents of Lawrence are also affected disproportionately by childhood asthma, hypertension, mental health disorders, and teen pregnancy. On the other hand, rates of hospitalizations for heart attacks, strokes, cancer, and substance abuse are at or below the state average (though regional drug trafficking indirectly affects the health of many our city). Our smoking rate is above the average for the state, while our binge drinking rates are slightly lower. For detailed health information, see the Community Health Assessment reports from Lawrence General and Holy Family Hospitals, conducted and published in 2013 and 2012, respectively (3,4).

Fortunately, our assets position us well to address health challenges. Our city has a dense, historic, and beautiful urban center. Our city was built on a human scale, offering the option of a sustainable, active lifestyle that is unavailable in surrounding suburban communities that
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were constructed largely to accommodate motorized vehicles. Our natural resources include three rivers and canals that offer beauty, open space, and recreational opportunities. Our population includes many new Americans who bring new ideas, hope, and a strong sense of community. We have a dynamic and growing fitness industry and dance culture. We are a center for Latino culture in New England. We have two hospitals, a strong community health center, several mental health providers, and a connected network of other health-related non-profit organizations that are continually bringing new services to our city. A vision for a healthier Lawrence must take full advantage of these unique strengths.

Results of Committee Meetings and Public Input

Introduction: Suggestions for health and wellness related improvements in Lawrence from our committee and the public website largely fell into four major themes, though the reader will recognize that the themes overlap in some areas. We have made an effort to identify specific strategic objectives within these themes.

Theme #1: Creating and sustaining a culture of collaboration for health throughout city government.

B. Strategic Objectives

1) Strategic Objective #1: Endorse and support the Mayor’s Health Task Force (MHTF).

Many of the issues and initiatives in this report are being actively tackled by the Mayor’s Health Task Force (MHTF). The MHTF, which also functions as the MA Department of Public Health Community Health Network Area 11, has become a vital and vibrant forum for collaboration among public, non-profit, and private stakeholders to improve health in Lawrence.

a) Immediate Actions

(i) Create a plan to sustainably fund the infrastructure of the Mayor’s Health Task Force. Include in the plan a plan for sustaining the SALSA (Supporting Active Lifestyles for All) brand as a tool to promote health in Lawrence after the completion of the REACH grant at the end of 2014.

b) Data Needs

(i) Budget of MHTF, including external sources of funding. REACH sustainability plan for SALSA campaign

c) City Departments

(i) Community Development, Budget

d) Community Resources

(i) Over 90 community agencies, businesses, public departments, and other groups are already engaged in the MHTF. Funding sources include academic partners, grants, department of public health, and local hospital community benefit plans. REACH grant is administered by the Merrimack Valley YMCA
2) **Strategic Objective #2: Endorse and follow through on the mandates of the Healthy Active Living Resolution.**

Many of the themes and specific recommendations that are part of this report are also addressed by the Healthy Active Living Resolution. The resolution is an example of a “health in all” policy for city business, and is based on many evidence-based health promotion strategies supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Our version originated from the Mayor’s Health Task Force Healthy Active Living Working Group, the resolution was signed by the Board of Health and Mayor Lantigua in 2013. Plans for compliance with the resolution were requested by Mayor from various city departments and support of this ongoing work should be an immediate priority of the incoming Rivera administration.

   a) **Immediate Actions**

   (i) Confirm Mayor Rivera’s support for the resolution. Set/confirm due date for report and/or compliance from relevant departments in city government

   b) **Data Needs:** n/a

   c) **City Departments/Boards/Commissions**

   (i) Personnel, planning, purchasing

   d) **Community Resources:** many

   (i) Reference List: See attached

3) **Strategic Objective #3: Expect collaboration from all City departments in health.**

A spirit of collaboration to improve health in Lawrence has been strong in recent years. However, several departments who are actively working in areas vital to public health have not participated actively. While the committee recognizes that many departments are underfunded and understaffed, this closed stance in city government limits potential for expanding the reach of our limited public resources through collaboration.

   a) **Immediate Actions:**

   (i) Call an annual forum, organized by the Mayor’s Health Task force, for representatives of all related city departments to learn about ongoing health initiatives and how their departments can play a part. Non-profit and business stakeholders and board/commission members may be invited to part of the forum.

   (ii) Consider consolidation of administration of smaller departments. One example was combining work of the senior center, which runs very successful exercise programming for adults and participates in many community partnerships, with the recreation department.

   (iii) Consider contracting out to community agencies to fulfill some of work of city departments. This model is currently being used successfully by our
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...school department to program its expanded extended day and enrichment activities.

b) Data Needs: department budgets, institutional hierarchy

c) City Departments/Boards/Commissions: Community Development, Planning, Zoning, Permitting, Conservation, Recreation, Council on Aging, Inspectional Services, Housing Department, Economic Development, Police, Schools, Animal Control, Veterans Services, Commission on Disability, Board of Health, etc.

d) Community Resources: MHTF, member organization

4) **Strategic Objective #4:** Support a meaningful healthy workplace policy and wellness program for city business and city employees.

A city wellness plan is one of the mandates of the Healthy Active Living Resolution. The health of city employees is not only of importance in itself, but has symbolic, city budget, and public safety implications. Acting now would help support momentum behind SALSA campaign.

a) Immediate Actions:

   (i) Sign on to healthy workplace commitment as part of the SALSA campaign.

   (ii) Follow through on city employee wellness policy as mandated by the Healthy Active Living Resolution, including 100% healthy vending contracts on city property.

b) City Departments/Boards/Commissions: Personnel, Purchasing, Police, Fire.

c) Community Resources: Años Fitness, Fitness Appeal/Canal St Gym, YMCA, MHTF Healthy Active Living Group, Senior Center.

**Theme #2: Creating an environment that provides greater access to healthy active lifestyles.**

5) **Strategic Objective #5:** Adopt a Complete Streets Policy.

Many residents of Lawrence face financial challenges that do not allow them to prioritize physical activity for the sake of health. Lawrence must strive to make physical activity safe and convenient for our residents as part of their busy daily lives. Improving non-vehicular and public transportation options would increase physical activity while also decreasing transportation costs, decreasing congestion and noise, improving safety of our streets, improving quality of life (particularly of youth, the disabled, and other vulnerable groups), and improving air quality. This policy would also highlight Lawrence’s competitive advantage as an environmentally sustainable, walkable place to live and work. A local policy would complement the 2013 policy statement by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Transportation for all state-funded transportation projects. This would also build on our new Spicket River Greenway, planned developments that are part of our open space plan (rail-trail, riverwalk, etc.), activities such as the proposed “ciclovia” Sundays, and ongoing programs such as Safe Routes to School.
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a) Immediate Actions: Identify a model policy that has worked in a similar municipality and adopt proposal to Lawrence.

b) Data Needs: Currently proposed transportation projects.

c) City Departments/Boards/Commissions: Planning, Economic Development, Redevelopment Authority.

d) Community Resources: Groundwork Lawrence, Merrimack Valley Planning Board, MVTA, DOT/Safe Routes to School.

6) Strategic Objective #6: Renew focus on enforcement of quality of life ordinances in the city to improve public health and safety.

Safety and quality of life concerns were some of the most consistently voiced by members of our committee and the public as barriers to health. Youth, parents, and elders all voiced concerns. Specific concerns were raised that existing ordinances are being inconsistently enforced in different neighborhoods. Safety is a prerequisite for mental health and physical activity.

a) Immediate Actions: Create plan with Police Department and other stakeholders to more consistently enforce quality of life ordinances (litter/dumping, noise, snow removal, etc.).

b) Data Needs: Current fine policies and procedures for violations, police and DPW staffing plans

c) City Departments/Boards/Commissions: Police, DPW

d) Community Resources: Neighborhood Associations, Lawrence CommunityWorks, Groundwork Lawrence.

7) Strategic Objective #7: Create a process for Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) for development projects and other major initiatives in the city. HIAs are mandated by state law, but committee members have the impression that implementation has been unclear and/or inconsistent.

a) Immediate Actions: Identify or create a local city policy for implementation of the HIA mandate

b) Data Needs: More information about implementation of state law.

c) City Departments/Boards/Commissions: Redevelopment Authority, Planning, Economic Development.

d) Community Resources: Groundwork Lawrence, state DPH, local universities.

Theme #3: Improving Access to Healthy Food

8) Strategic Objective #8: Support local policies to encourage healthier food choices.

As with physical activity, financial realities make healthy eating especially challenging for many Lawrencians. Issues of cost, physical access, social norms, and education all come into
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play. The city can support policy reforms and other initiatives to increase prevalence of healthy food and drink choices. Improvements in public health in Lawrence and throughout the country were realized when smoking was restricted. Many of the smoking restrictions started at the level of local health departments. A trans-fat ban has been pending for several months as part of state-funded regional health department collaboration with Methuen and Haverhill. A public forum and health board vote, however, has not been scheduled. Other possible policies are pending discussion (restricting sugar sweetened beverages, restricting fast food establishments, billboard advertising, tobacco packaging, etc.).

a) Immediate Actions: Pass Trans-Fat Ban. Ensure Board of Health is has city support to allow regular meeting to consider other pending regulation.

b) Data Needs: Depending on proposed policies.

c) City Departments/Boards/Commissions: Inspectional Services, Board of Health, City Council

d) Community Resources: Massachusetts Public Health Association and association of health boards, MHTF member organizations (education and promotion of policies).

e) Reference List: see hospital health assessments, Behavioral Risks Factor Surveillance data for Lawrence data on unhealthy food consumption, tobacco use, and other risky health behaviors.

9) Strategic Objective #9: Attract a distribution center to support improved options and pricing for local small grocery stores/bodegas.

a) Immediate Actions: Review preliminary plans/discussion notes of MHTF/REACH team.

b) Data Needs: current distribution channels

c) City Departments/Boards/Commissions: Economic Development, Community Development.

d) Community Resources: Local grocers, distributors, and other business owners, REACH team, Latino Chamber of Commerce.

10) Strategic Objective #10: Adopt reform to zoning and animal control statutes that support urban agriculture.

Access to fresh, healthy food is limited by finances for many Lawrencians. We already have a growing network of official public community and school gardens, as well as private urban growers. Urban agriculture has the potential to improve access to healthy food, beautify our environment, create community, help educate youth, and engage the skills of immigrants with agricultural experience. Many regulations restricting agricultural activities are legitimate to protect health, but others are outdated and in need of reform.
a) Immediate Actions: Ask for report from zoning board on proposed revision to include urban agriculture.

b) Data Needs: current relevant zoning as sanitation code.

c) City Departments/Boards/Commissions: Zoning, Planning, Animal Control, Health.

d) Community Resources: Groundwork Lawrence, UMASS extension.

Theme #4: Improving Mental Health

The theme of mental health was frequently discussed by the committee and commented on by the public at large. The committee recognized the need for improved access to mental health services. We recognized a new sense of collaboration between agencies through the Mental Health Working Group of the Mayor’s Health Task Force. We also recognized that the changing landscape of health policy will necessitate greater integration of primary medical care and mental health services, which will affect this area greatly. Addiction and substance abuse services were seen as particularly lacking in Lawrence. Adequate number of bilingual/bicultural clinicians was also identified as problem. Service to veterans and the homeless in particular were of particular concern, especially with the limited number and physical status (particularly daybreak) of our current shelters.

Above and beyond mental health counseling and psychiatric services, the committee recognized that mental health is inseparable from overall health and wellness. Prevention of mental health problems overlaps with youth development, public safety, and promotion of physical activity to a great extent. In the area of at-risk youth, ongoing support of the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative/Lawrence Youth Team was encouraged.

Despite the prevalence of this theme, the committee did have difficulty formulating specific strategic objectives in this thematic area.

11) Strategic Objective #11: Help support a positive environment at the state Department of Transitional Assistance.

The services of the state Department of Transitional Assistance are seen as vital to the health of many of our most vulnerable neighbors. Several on the committee and in the public identified the DTA as a potential point of intervention. Suggestions included working with DTA to improve customer service/experience, as many are frustrated and/or intimidated by the current system. Offering easier access to educational and asset building resources to DTA clients, health screening at the office, and engagement in community volunteer work was suggested. The point was also made that helping more Lawrence residents receive SNAP benefits when they are eligible would help alleviate food insecurity while increasing net financial resources to local grocers.

a) Data Needs: n/a

b) City Departments/Boards/Commissions: financial development

c) Community Resources: GLCAC, Lawrence CommunityWorks (financial stability center).
C. Innovative Ideas

These ideas do not fit neatly in the above, but were considered of merit:

1) Support installation of public musical instruments in public places. Instruments such as xylophones have been used as interactive public art, and foster community and creativity.

2) Keep ice skating rink on common all winter, and plow out the parking lot Den Rock Park to allow for outdoor recreational activities including snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and hiking.

3) Offer recycling also for businesses.

4) Get Lawrence General Hospital involved with the Healthier Hospital Initiative. http://healthierhospitals.org/about-hhi

5) Comprehensive sex education in Lawrence Public Schools.

6) Joint use agreements for public school facilities (for community members/groups to use for activities/recreation).

D. References:

2) Massachusetts Department of Public Health
3) Community Health Needs Assessment, Lawrence General Hospital, 2013
4) Holy Family Hospital Population Health Improvement Report, 2012
5) City of Lawrence Healthy Active Living Resolution, 2013
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Housing Committee:

Co-Chairs Jessica Andors, Executive Director of Lawrence CommunityWorks and Lawrence resident, and EfRAIN Rolon, Deputy Director of the Lawrence Housing Authority.

Committee members: Councilor Oneida Aquino, Jim Barnes, Larry Curtis, Jose Estrella, Evelyn Friedman, Yesenia Gil, Rachel Heller, Mary Marra, Sean McDonnell, Jordany Peña, Ana Rodriguez, Bridget Shaheen, Larry Sharp.

A. Introduction

The Housing Committee of the Mayor-Elect’s Transition Team met twice to discuss strategic priorities for City housing. Members attending included Jess Andors, EfRAIN Rolon, Jim Barnes, Jose Estrella, Yesenia Gil, Sean McDonnell, Evelyn Friedman, Mary Marra, Larry Sharp, and Bridget Shaheen. Additional feedback was obtained from Rachel Heller in a separate communication. Based on these discussions, the Committee has evolved the following recommendations for the Rivera administration. Please note that these recommendations do not encompass every issue that was discussed by the group; see the attached individual meeting notes for a sense of the full range of discussion items.

Please also note that the first Strategic Priority is intended—and committee members believe is necessary—to inform the development/implementation of the remaining Strategic Priorities.

General Framework of our guidance: Listen, identify, collaborate, and act to set a higher bar for planning and implementation that leads to improved housing quality for everyone in the City.

B. Strategic Objectives

1) Strategic Objective #1: Implement a Comprehensive Housing Study that can inform local housing and economic development efforts.

a) Immediate Actions

(i) Convene/continue a Housing Advisory Committee whose first charge will be creating the scope of work for a housing study

(ii) Leverage the $15K set-aside existing within the Community Development Department to raise an additional $35K to support the study cost

(iii) Identify and reach out to prospective funders

(iv) Create an RFP for the study

(v) Identify and reach out to experienced consultants who can respond to the RFP and undertake the scope of work; choose one

b) Data Needs: The Study’s Scope of Work must be fully defined, but preliminary thoughts on topics to cover (and MAP) include a census of existing stock.
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characteristics (unit size, condition, ownership, etc.); opportunities for new development (vacant lots, abandoned/empty buildings); housing market and needs regionally and locally; strengths that exist and can be attracted to city. The study should address existing capacity and current need for affordable, market-rate, homeless/supportive housing, goals for production, potential standards for development (for larger developers), and zoning issues/ barriers/opportunities for development. Existing data to draw from includes (but is not limited to):

(i) City Consolidated Plan
(ii) GLCAC Community Service Plan
(iii) 2009 Arlington Neighborhood Plan
(iv) 2013 North Common Neighborhood Plan
(v) U.S. Census, 2000 and 2010; American Community Service
(vi) MVPC and WIB Reports

c) City Departments, Boards and Commissions Necessary: please see Strategic Priority #2. Community Development should play lead role but multiple Departments must be involved.

d) Community Resources available:

(i) CHAPA
(ii) Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
(iii) MIT
(iv) MACDC
(v) Lawrence Housing Authority
(vi) Nonprofit Developers / Housing Agencies: LCW, Habitat, Bread and Roses, AHF, GLCAC, Lazarus House

e) Reference List

(i) Somerville has a good comprehensive plan: http://www.somervillema.gov/spotlights/comp-plan. The City did a good job involving the community and hitting the key points for planning for growth.

(ii) Talk to Ann Houston/ The Neighborhood Developers re: Box District in Chelsea

(iii) Look at Boston’s “Leading the Way” plan

2) Strategic Objective #2: Prioritize regular communication, data sharing and data-driven decision-making, and collaboration between and among all city Departments and Boards that deal with housing (Assessor’s office, Tax Collector’s office, City Attorney's
office, Community Development and Planning, Inspectional Services, Zoning, Police and Fire, etc.) to better serving the housing (and other!) needs of the community.

a) Immediate Actions

(i) Purchase an identified low-cost but highly effective GIS database system available through the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission that creates a platform for mapping of relevant data (e.g. from Inspectional Services, Planning, Community Development, Police, Fire, Assessor’s, DPW, etc.) to inform strategic decision-making and be both a useful tool in itself and a means of building the habit of better coordination between City Departments

(ii) Train City Department heads and staff on database use

(iii) Designate a lead person to spearhead database implementation and coordinate training

(iv) Begin convening Departments regularly to discuss cross-cutting issues (including but not limited to housing); set target date for review of data provided by system and use as a discussion tool at this meeting (e.g. looking a map of ISD violations overlaid with police calls)

(v) Explore development of basic minimum criteria, or mandatory training, for City Board service/membership (Zoning, Planning, ConCom, etc.) and a basic interview/assessment process

b) Data Needs: The system in question has been assessed by Community Development and is in use in other communities to good effect. It provides a platform that can accept data from separate Departmental systems and integrate it. However, an evaluation of the separate data systems (if systems exist!) of each Department may be needed to assess quality/availability of data to feed this system.

c) City Departments, Boards and Commissions Necessary: See above.

d) Community Resources available

(i) MVPC, the Metro Area Planning Commission can support this endeavor

(ii) The MA Smart Growth Alliance can be helpful here as well

e) Reference List: The mapping software is called MIMAP, and a link to the description can be found here: http://mvpc.org/programs/gisinformation-technology/web-based-mapping/

3) Strategic Objective #3: Improve the quality, and the quantity, of high-quality rental housing stock in the City to promote a healthy density citywide that can support increased commercial/retail activity, meet current needs for healthy housing for Lawrence residents, visually improve the City’s neighborhoods, contribute to statewide goals for increased housing, and catalyze other private investment.
a) Immediate Actions

(i) Conduct meetings with all large and medium-sized local developers (non-profit and for-profit) – spend a couple of hours/ an afternoon with each one to understand what they are already doing and have accomplished, major strengths and challenges, and vision for further or potential development (list includes but is not limited to LCW, Habitat, B&R, AFH, Winn, Trinity, Peabody, Alberto Nunez, etc.)

(ii) Expand the City’s receivership program to include more than one receiver and have a wider range of capacity to deploy in addressing known or emerging problem properties.

(iii) Meet with Mill Cities Community Investments to understand their Rehab loan product and the strengths and challenges of implementing such a product on a broader scale.

(iv) Meet with Greg Bialecki and Aaron Gornstein (MA EOHED / DHCD) to form relationship and indicate City’s new strategic focus on improved housing

(v) Implement the Study to inform development of this Priority!

b) Data Needs: See Housing Study above

c) City Departments, Boards and Commissions Necessary: as above.

4) Strategic Objective #4: Promote sustainable homeownership in order to build resident assets and financial resilience, and contribute to neighborhood stabilization and revitalization.

a) Immediate Actions

(i) The Study!

(ii) Possibly: Meet with neighborhood associations and homeowner groups to understand owners’ challenges; meet with Homebuyer and Homeowner Education groups (LCW, ACT, MVHP) to understand trends and issues.

b) Data Needs: homeownership levels, geographic distribution, resources available to support homeownership (down payment assistance, rehab loans, education/training, etc.) – see The Study.

5) Strategic Objective #5: Promote and utilize housing development as a driver for economic development, to support commercial vitality, increase the tax base and improve City services, and support the current and potential workforce needs of local/regional employers. This should include a variety of housing types serving all income levels.

a) Immediate Actions, First 100 Days

(i) The Study.

6) Strategic Objective #6: Support the development of high-quality supportive housing with comprehensive wrap-around services for families, adults and young people, to
address the varied needs of homeless and other at-risk residents dealing with the multiple challenges induced by poverty and ill health.

a) Immediate Actions
   
   (i) The Study.

C. Innovative Ideas

1) Utilize the Community Preservation Act to create a pool of state-matched funding to support housing, open space, and historic preservation. Don’t introduce this idea in the first 100 days or even year, because it would involve a small tax surcharge for residential and commercial properties. This could have substantial benefit but would have to be balanced against what residents can appropriately bear.

2) Create a Master Plan for the City.

3) Create a Master Plan for the Mill District that coordinates the strengths and needs of the City and property owners, and combines housing and economic development goals.

4) Activate the Lawrence Redevelopment Authority to assist with larger-scale development implemented as part of a comprehensive plan that speaks to economic development needs and involves housing, open space, commercial investment, and infrastructure development.

5) Create or implement a database of available housing (web-based, linked to GIS) – a rental housing clearinghouse – that provides a central resource for current or new residents seeking housing.

6) Create a central clearinghouse of information for potential homebuyers/builders, to provide better customer service around development/rehab for private citizens and small developers (new development, additions, major rehab), so the process can be streamlined, and we can support good development.

7) Develop a much bigger pool for down-payment assistance for Lawrence homebuyers, tied to education and tenure, and augmented by private/foundation/bank funding.

8) Identify and recruit an academic partner to support accountability / evaluation on progress toward housing goals post-Study: e.g., Boston Foundation and Northeastern University have a Housing Report Card that is presented annually that promotes accountability to benchmarks.

9) To increase homeownership rates – identify ways to use the weak markets homeownership provision of the Housing Stabilization Fund, which focuses on homeownership in small multifamily developments; work with local non-profits to provide homebuyer outreach, education, and support to first time homebuyers, including down payment assistance.

10) Create more mixed use developments near commuter rail station/downtown. New funds could be available for the commercial space development through the CATNHP program.
Jobs and Economic Development Committee:

Co-Chairs: Marianne Paley Nadel, Owner and General Manager of the Everett Mills in Lawrence, and Julia Silverio, Owner and CEO of Silverio Insurance Agency and Lawrence resident.

Committee members: Dianne Anderson, June Black, Cesar Camargo, Benny Esquallat, Wendy Estrella, Lane Glenn, Franly Gomez, Rafael Guzman, Hamlet Hidalgo, John Lavoie, Rosa Lopez, Sal Lupoli, Councilor Modesto Maldonado, Representative Frank Moran, James Patrick O’Donoghue, Gary Sidell, Anita Worden.

A. Introduction

Vision

The City of Lawrence should have a positive, proactive economic development strategy designed to encourage small business growth and start-up ventures, attract new companies and retain growing local businesses, create job opportunities for residents and in the region, and expand the commercial/industrial tax base of the City. The City should have a clearly defined and accessible set of resources, incentives, and technical assistance programs to help businesses. We should strive to be creative, flexible and can-do. We should strive to promote our strengths including our location, employment base, and diverse space opportunities. Lawrence is a City of Promise!

Background

Currently, the City's Economic Development is managed by an Economic Development Coordinator, appointed by the Mayor, and staff reporting to the Community Development Director. In addition, there is a Planning Director (a position vacant for an extended period) that manages the areas of land use planning, the Clerk of Boards, and property disposition, each having a strong bearing on a robust Economic Development program. In addition, there are several emerging cross-sector partnerships and resources including the Lawrence Partnership, Working Cities Collaboration, and Lawrence Public School Family Resource Center eager to promote the City and address workforce development challenges.

Many cities focus economic development efforts around the following broad types of initiatives that should be part of an emerging plan:

C. Business friendly permitting processes

D. Removal of barriers to development and redevelopment of existing building stock
E. Role of the commercial tax rate as incentive for locating businesses

F. Strategic development of gateway areas, transit development centers, cultural districts, education and/or medical anchors, and walkability districts
   - Small business support including targeted, operational support, storefront improvement, business loans and technical assistance for business planning
   - Workforce development programs

Each of these areas of initiatives were discussed by the Transition Committee and several exciting ideas emerged from our work, but there was broad agreement that the Mayor plays a key role in supporting existing local businesses, attracting new businesses and forging cross-sector partnerships to enhance job creation and development. Lawrence’s image needed to be positively projected both within and outside the City, and structural change bringing Economic Development, Planning and Community development together should be strongly considered.

A clean, safe and educated city is the foundation for economic progress. Over the past several years much progress has been made in keeping the City clean, responding to graffiti, improving parks, and repairing streets. This work should continue and stewardship initiatives should be fostered. The need to improve safety is both a reality and a perception that keeps businesses from considering a Lawrence location and challenges local business growth. Changes in the education landscape are underway and should be supported ranging from the efforts of the Superintendent of the Lawrence Public School system, a network of well-regarded Charter Schools, expansion of NECC, and affiliations among NECC, Suffolk University and Cambridge College. Efforts to excel educational reform from pre-school through four year options in the City will bolster all workforce development efforts and long term economic development opportunities.

B. Strategic Objectives

1) Strategic Objective #1 – Setting the Stage

Initiate a multipronged campaign to jump start Economic Development in the City based on a revised management structure, hiring of professional staff in the areas of Economic Development, Planning and Marketing, and production of a marketing/branding plan.

   a) Immediate Actions

      (i) Consideration should be given to revise the Management structure of the Economic Development staff to provide coordination among Economic Development, Community Development and Planning. This coordination should support enhanced planning initiatives that consider a vision for the City that draws on our resources and addresses challenges.

      (ii) Hire professional staff for Economic Development Director, fill the vacant Planning Director position, and create and fill a Marketing Manager position. In addition, a Business Development Coordinator position could be considered to work specifically with small businesses, cultural activities, and programming.
(iii) Prepare a branding campaign to promote the City’s assets that can and should be built on, including the strong health care sector, our educational resources and “College Town” potential, and network of small businesses. This campaign should both address local pride through radio and word-of-mouth programs, and attract outside interest.

(iv) A reinvigorated Planning Department should utilize its Boards and Commissions to contribute to an overall economic development strategy including, Design Review, Historic Commission, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals.

(v) Serve the City – promote participation on boards and commissions to Lawrence residents. Offer public information sessions on the roles and responsibilities of boards, transparency of the public process, and opportunities.

b) Municipal resources

(i) The Mayor’s Office, City Council, and existing Community Development Department will play an active role in this Strategic Objective.

(ii) MV Planning Commission

c) Community Resources

(i) The Lawrence Partnership intends to provide resources for public relations, marketing, and data.

2) Strategic Objective #2—Lawrence is Open for Business!

Develop and promote a Business Development Program to attract new businesses, and grow existing business across the City.

a) Immediate Actions

(i) Initiate a Business Development Program. Organize existing resources and build a structure that offers the following assistance with easy on-line resources, as well as designated personal in City Hall as a lead contact:

a. Find a location – Develop a data base of all available commercial space in the city, and keep it current, so companies looking to locate or expand can access a comprehensive list and get strategic advice.

b. Become a One-Stop-Shop for permitting and licenses - Publish a guide to requirements, offer a help desk in City Hall, and improve coordination among the Health Department, Inspectional Services, and the Building Department.

c. Develop a guide to financing options available as well as resources for referral - Work with the local banks, LCW Financial Stability Center, and local lending agencies to help businesses secure loans and grants.

d. Enhance partnerships with the MV Small Business Center to offer assistance in preparing Business Plans.

e. Encourage and assist Woman and Minority Business Owners through
continued partnerships with the SBA and State Office of WMBO.

(ii) Assist business and micro-enterprise owners with developing business plans and marketing.

(iii) Expand and utilize the City’s facade program.

(iv) Promote and embrace the thriving health care community in the city – Marston Street, LGH, GLFHC, Pentucket Medical, etc. – and highlight the quality care from Boston area doctors that is available here now.

(v) Create new marketing brochures highlighting local businesses and increase the communication of good news through radio, TV, electronic and social media, print.

(vi) Promote underdeveloped buildings

(vii) Promote HUB Zone and State incentives available to Lawrence businesses.

(viii) Host a brokers showcase to promote available commercial/industrial space in the city.

b) Municipal resources

(i) City Economic and Community Development staff working in conjunction with the Mayor’s office.

(ii) Planning Staff to manage planning processes and assess site selection.

(iii) MassDevelopment, MA Office of Business Development, state and federal delegation for data development, site locator resources, funding resources, outreach to potential businesses.

c) Community Resources

(i) Lawrence Partnership – resources, vision, flexible structure for facilitation.

(ii) Major Institutions including LGH, NECC, Cambridge College, Suffolk University, New Balance to promote efforts, host business events, and support City marketing efforts.

(iii) GLCAC, LCW, North Canal Coalition.

(iv) MV Chamber of Commerce.

3) Strategic Objective #3— Small Businesses Help Lawrence Grow!

The small business sector has the most opportunity to grow the City economy and impact increased prosperity for residents. Efforts should focus on connecting with local businesses to help foster their success, and attract new businesses through incentives and network creation. Programs to link the City’s employment base to opportunity in this sector should be a high priority.

a) Immediate Actions

(i) A Mayor-led delegation should reach out to local small businesses in clusters, i.e. auto shops, bodegas, barber shops, to engage owners. Building an association of owners through social gatherings and group talks can help improve safety on Lawrence’s main retail strips, address the look and feel of stores, and promote a sense of place.
a. Issues to be considered include a crime reporting hot line, pro-active police engagement and community policing meetings with business owners and retail clusters.

(ii) Micro Latino Business Development – develop a program to work with Latino Businesses to assist in business plan creation, finding bridges to resources, and accessing funds for capital improvements to facilities and retail locations. Resources may be available through local MBA programs including Southern New Hampshire University and Suffolk University to match students to businesses for internship experience.

(iii) Initiate and market a “3-5 Growth Campaign” to attract and support small businesses starting out with 3 to 5 employees (a sector that generally grows quickly and hires new workers) by offering free rent at selected participating commercial spaces, micro-loan assistance from the City, network of resources including the MV Sandbox, and free Chamber of Commerce membership.

b) Municipal resources

(i) Mayor’s Office, Office of Economic and Community Development
(ii) Police Department
(iii) Mass. Office of Business Development, MassDevelopment

c) Community Resources

(i) Lawrence Partnership has interest in façade improvement programs.
(ii) Mill City Community Investments, MV Small Business Center, MV Sandbox
(iii) Neighborhood Associations

4) Strategic Objective #4 – Mix It Up Downtown!

Create a Plan for the Downtown Core that seeks a diversity of uses including additional restaurants, retail, professional services, Pop-Up events and stores. Continue to grow the cultural focus in the mill district including El Taller, Lawrence Heritage State Park, Lawrence History Center, Essex Arts Center, Acting Out!, and new artist live and work spaces.

a) Immediate Actions

(i) Foster a series of pop-up events in various empty storefronts.
(ii) Undertake a process to identify specific types of uses for Essex Street locations that would provide entertainment, services, and goods.
(iii) Build relationships with building owners in the downtown to solicit their input for redevelopment and leasing of their properties, willingness to make improvements to facades, and ability to attract targeted uses.
(iv) Develop a financial incentive package for new retail uses to minimize start-up risk.
(v) Utilize a creative campaign to attract the identified uses – host events on Essex Street, window presentations, marketing promotions.
(vi) Eliminate empty storefronts; focus on bringing agencies and businesses
back to the downtown.

(vii) Find suitable, central and appropriate sites for non-profits, food pantries, etc. whose use does not correlate to a business district; use incentives to encourage the move.

b) Data Needs

(i) Look at Best Practices and Programs for successful downtowns – Lowell, Brockton, Salem, and Quincy.

c) Municipal resources

(i) Mayor’s Office, Office of Economic and Community Development

d) Community Resources

(i) Lawrence Partnership, NECC Downtown Campus

(ii) Local branches of banks and community institutions in the downtown

5) Strategic Objective #5—Lawrence College Town!

Tremendous opportunity exists to build upon the expansion of the NECC Campus including the new Health and Technology Center offering Community College degrees and certificates and to become a center for professional development for health care providers across Merrimack Valley. Efforts should be made to promote and support the emerging plans for 4-Year colleges/universities in Lawrence (“College Town”), and increased expectations for a variety of Postsecondary plans for all LPS students.

a) Immediate Actions

(i) Support the recently received Mass Development Planning Grant of $80,000 to plan a new Education and Public Safety Zone, New police station, and potential police and fire training academies.

(ii) Support and facilitate the Mass Works Grant for Alleys and “Connector” of $900,000 to “Connect” NECC campus to Essex Street business district and Improve alleys between campus/Essex Street.

(iii) Continue to support the LPS Turnaround Plan, and expand the capacity of Greater Lawrence Technical School (e.g., Advanced Manufacturing, Automotive Technology—especially partnership w/ NECC)

(iv) Initiate a study for Housing Development in the downtown area – need for a mix of opportunities including workforce housing for NECC, colleges, health care workers, and teachers.

(v) Encourage incentives to locate market rate housing in the city.

b) Data Needs

(i) Housing study for workforce housing to serve teachers, health care workers and municipal workers. Also consider market rate and diverse housing options.

c) Municipal resources
6) Strategic Objective #6—Lawrence Health Matters!

Promote the exciting developments in the growth of Lawrence General Hospital, Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, Marston Medical Center, Pentucket Medical, a significant number of physician practices, NxStage Medical, and Elder Services, and MV Visiting Nurses.

a) Immediate Actions
   (i) Marketing and co-promotion of health resources
   (ii) Seek input on how the City can support this sector from a variety of institutions and companies.
   (iii) Assess potential complementary industries for business development.
   (iv) Seek workforce training opportunities in this strong sector. LGH is one of the largest employers in the City with many opportunities for entry level employment, job growth and advancement.

b) Municipal resources
   (i) Mayor’s Office
   (ii) Mayor’s Health Task Force

c) Community Resources
   (i) LGH, GLFHC, Physician Practices
   (ii) Groundwork Lawrence

7) Strategic Objective #7—Promote Smart Development

Lawrence has a rich heritage as a planned Industrial City that, with coordinated development efforts, can provide us with a walkable, livable, healthy city to live, work and play. The downtown core has an increasing number of residential alternatives in beautiful mill conversions, diverse retail and commercial spaces are available, and an improved transportation network.

a) Immediate Actions
   (i) Create a cultural support coalition, like the Lowell COOL efforts
   (ii) Engage ENEL in a serious discussion of expectations for the improvement of the North Canal in concert with the North Canal Coalition to utilize this under-realized resource.
   (iii) Consider actions suggested in the Partnership for Public Spaces Report to activate public spaces in the downtown and mill district.
   (iv) Consider redevelopment suggestions from the recent Urban Land Institute
b) Municipal resources
   (i) Planning and Economic Development

c) Community Resources
   (i) North Canal Committee
   (ii) LCW
   (iii) Groundwork Lawrence

8) Strategic Objective #8—Lawrence Works!

While the workforce development needs are challenging, the potential for the City’s workforce is very high. The strategic objective should include an outreach strategy to understand workforce needs in the community, job readiness programs, and job training programs. There is a need to foster an awareness of the “ladders of opportunity” present for education and training, and we should strive to match education and training to jobs: advanced manufacturing; apprenticeships; co-op learning; machine programs; robotics and IT.

a) Immediate Actions
   (i) Mayor’s Office should meet and strategize with the Workforce Investment Board and Career Center to assess success, seek areas for improvement and provide enhanced access for services.
   (ii) Compile resource database for English as a Second Language programs.
   (iii) Create a Job Bank of employment opportunities to encourage local workforce placement. Provide a robust website and outreach plan with radio, print and social media.
   (iv) Create a Youth Employment Initiative! Investigate programs in Lawrence and new initiatives interested in locating in the city, including The Possible Project, NDCR programs of job sharing and internships, and mentor programs with local businesses.
   (v) A youth employment initiative for Lawrence could involve in-school and out-of-school programs that equip students with technical career-oriented skills that prepare youth for careers in areas that reflect labor market needs. These skills include, among others, the ability to design and develop websites and use digital fabrication equipment such as laser cutters, 3D printers and CNC routers. Additionally, a youth employment initiative could impart an entrepreneurial skill set to young people, such that they will enter the workforce not only with the ability to be great employees, but with the capacity to convert their skills into a small business of their own.
   (vi) Provide after hours training, night classes, and a manufacturing resource center for workers – perhaps paid in part by local manufacturers, etc. – and transportation to the classes.
(vii) Create pre-requisite at high schools for each student to have a post-secondary plan, developed over time with assistance from Guidance Depts.
(viii) Need to raise self-confidence in students through exposure to wider opportunities in arts, culture, science, etc. as well as mentorship programs, which will help them to see examples of success.
(ix) Support the NECC Education and Public Safety Zone initiative.

b) Data Needs
(i) Analyze recent report on Youth Employment and Education

c) Municipal resources
(i) WIB and Career Center
(ii) Office of Community and Economic Development
(iii) Lawrence Public Schools Family Engagement Center

d) Community Resources
(i) NECC, Suffolk, Cambridge College, UML, Salem State Univ., Lawrence HS and Lawrence Vocational Technical HS Working Cities/Lawrence Public Schools Family Engagement Center
(ii) LCW Financial Stability Center
(iii) Compass for Kids

C. Longer Term Initiatives and Innovative Ideas
1) Planning work should focus on Lawrence’s many gateway districts to help shape the character of the area, promote new development and re-use of existing commercial and industrial spaces. Areas include:
   a) Retail center on Route 28 at the General Cinema – consider an entertainment/youth focus with arts, experience, education resources.
   b) Nassar Ford – industry, food production space, furniture/design district with maker space
   c) Arlington Mills – mixed use residential area with educational and training resources
   d) Lower Tower Hill – industrial area potential for upgraded locations, improved streetscape, and variety of uses to link to residential areas.
   e) Mill District – Reviviendo II, and the progress of the mixed use district.

2) Focus on Broadway, Route 28 – Streetscape improvements have begun to create a sense of place on Broadway, but safety, facades, business stability and diversity of uses should be addressed with local input.

3) Developer Showcase – a coordinated effort to identify uses for key gateway development sites, market and host a developer showcase for redevelopment of the sites. Look at the Lowell process for the development of the Hamilton Canal area, Somerville’s Assembly Square, and other local best practices.
Public Celebrations and Unity Committee:

Co-Chairs Eileen Bernal, City Councilor for District E, and Sara Saldana, Treasurer of Semana Hispana and Lawrence resident.

Committee members: Jim Beauschesne, Ray Difiori, Yanilo Duran, Walkiria Manzueta, Marisa Melendez, Mary O’Brien, Evan Silverio, Pura St. Hilary, Phyllis Tyler.

A. Introduction

The “Celebrations and Unity Sub-Committee” is comprised of numerous individuals who are active in the current festivals and ethnic celebrations that occur in the City of Lawrence. The objective of the committee was to review these events and help identify the strengths and weakness in the planning, organization and execution of these festivals, and identify common obstacles that these events encounter in an attempt to create a system within the municipality that is more “user friendly” to these types of events, provide support for the events we already have and remain open and welcoming to new events which may arise.

B. Strategic Objectives

1) **Strategic Objective #1: Establish clear, written guidelines for all Public Events.**

Whether it is true or not, there is a perception that certain festivals in the city are run differently and receive different treatment from the municipality, or are asked to follow different requirements. In an effort to eliminate that perception while also making the process for hosting a festival much more user friendly, it is the objective of the Committee to create an easy to understand pamphlet or small booklet that any organization hoping to have a festival in the City of Lawrence could refer to and follow.

Identify which municipal agencies need to sign off for which venues and what fees are involved, if any.

a) Immediate Actions – identify all of the festivals in the city, specifically ones that have occurred repeatedly in the last 2 – 3 years.

b) Data Needs –City Departments, Boards & Commissions

   i) Identify the Departments as well as the Boards and Commissions that need to sign off on festivals and events located within the city.

Currently ten (10) departments sign off on a Special Event Park Permit for festivals. These are:

- Recreation Department
- Building Inspector
- Licensing Board
Several times on the Special Event Park Permit document it states, “It is the responsibility of the applicant to secure all necessary City of Lawrence permits,” but nowhere on the document does it list what permits may be required. Providing a list of all possible permits and then allowing the applicant to determine which ones are and are not necessary may be better starting point.

Similarly, the Special Event Park Permit states that an insurance binder is required that shows the City of Lawrence as an additional insured, but it does not state what the coverage requirements for this binder are. The required terms for the insurance provisions should be stated up front. If a one page pamphlet is created, this could easily be provided in two or three bullet points.

(ii) Identify City Departments that need to provide support to festivals and events as they occur.

During the sub-committee meeting, the festival planners all identified these three departments as the ones which the festivals repeatedly work with:

- Police Department **
- Fire Department
- Electrical Inspector

** The cost for Police support is outlined in Objective #3

In the discussion process the group was made aware that one festival (Semana Hispana) was required to hire a city electrical inspector and have him remain on site for the entire three day festival. This expense exceeded $18,000. Another festival (Feast of the Three Saints) was required to show that their own electrician was fully licensed and insured, but they could have their own electrician do their work, and simply pay a much lower fee to have the city’s electrical inspector review and OK the work performed by that private electrician. Their total cost for hiring two private electricians, have them on-site during the festival, and have their work inspected by the city was under $8,000 which is substantially different. Establishing a clear guideline for exactly what is required from each department for a large festival, up front, would eliminate this kind of disparity.

Part of this final pamphlet would also include a current list of appropriate personnel in each department that the event sponsors can reach out to – perhaps with an e-mail address and/or phone #.
2) **Strategic Objective #2: Create a common, web-based calendar for City events.**

Creating and maintaining a common, web-based calendar for events in the City of Lawrence which event organizers can use to verify availability and possibly avoid conflicting events. Similarly, if the site is maintained, residents would begin to rely on this site as a resource for what is happening in the community.

   a) Immediate Actions –
      
      (i) identify the festivals already occurring in the city on a re-occurring basis
      
      (ii) identify the web-based infrastructures that already exist
   
   b) Data Needs
   
   c) City Departments, Boards & Commissions –
      
      (i) DPW Office Secretary and
      
      (ii) City Council Office Secretary

Prior to Council approval, all events are scheduled via a calendar showing general availability of a venue which is maintained by the secretary in the DPW office. Similarly, the secretary in the City Council Office would be aware of what events have been approved by the Council. Having either or both of these two individuals either input the information onto the web-based calendar or provide it to whoever will be maintaining the calendar would be a logical step.

The final calendar should include a contact name with their information, i.e. a phone #, e-mail address and/or web-link.

3) **Strategic Objective #3: Reduce the base-cost for hosting events in the City.**

The cost for required municipal services at city events has become cost prohibitive. Several festivals spend in the range of $20,000 to maintain a police presence over a 2 – 3 day festival. This amount is a base cost before any of the other ancillary costs of a particular event are even considered. This fee has caused several groups to stop having their events altogether (i.e. the St. Patrick’s Day Parade) and caused other groups to severely modify their event (i.e. there is no longer a free, outdoor concert on the Common at the Feast of the Three Saints, as the police detail for the show could not be absorbed and still have a successful event.)

   a) Immediate Actions – identify other communities that deal with this in a more cost effective manner. These communities tend to host more events because it is more feasible for the organizers.
   
   b) Data Needs – actual costs spent in last 3 years by the two largest festivals:

      Semana Hispana and the Feast of the Three Saints (i.e. their 2011, 2012 and 2013 fees) on police, and other related city services, such as on electrical inspections, fire fighter at “tented” sections, etc.
   
   c) City Departments, Boards & Commissions –
(i) Police; Fire; DPW with regard to the nature of the services provided and the related costs;

(ii) City Council’s Ordinance Committee - do any ordinances need to be modified?

d) Community Resources –

Review contracts for communities such as Methuen where Department Heads for departments such as Police and DPW are required to anticipate the needed overtime to support major festivals and parades in their annual operating budget.

4) Strategic Objective #4: Better support festivals and events.

Certain factors in the city deter events. The on-street paid parking is one factor that should be looked at. Certain sections of Common Street are eliminated from the on-street parking requirements during the Feast of the Three Saints. There is no fee for on-street parking on Sundays and holidays, but perhaps eliminating it on Saturdays for events over a certain size would assist those events too.

a) Immediate Actions – Review the contract with Standard Parking to determine who controls if and when parking fees can be waived and what penalty exists for the city, if any, aside from the direct revenue loss for that day.

b) Data Needs – Identify the approximate number of attendees for the larger festivals to set that threshold size as the determining factor of when meter use can and should be waived.

c) City Departments, Boards & Commissions –

(i) Office of the Mayor and/or Economic Development Director: Currently this Standard Parking contract is managed directly by the Mayor’s office. This measure would require their input

(ii) DPW - this office maintains the current calendar of when city parks and facilities are available. Their input in determining which festivals would be appropriate for the waiver would be helpful.

Other Ideas Discussed–

C. Longer Term Concepts

These ideas were discussed by the group. They were seen as important, but these were not deemed to be part of the three most important priorities.

1) Forming and maintaining a 501(c)(3) that several of the City’s festivals and committees could use as a pass through.

   a) Background: The Feast of the Three Saints was petering out in the late 1980’s – early 1990’s. They really refocused for their 75th Anniversary and the changes they made that year changed the nature of their Feast. The biggest thing that they did was establish a recognized, not-for-profit corporation, an IRS 501(c)(3),
which made it easier for them to raise money with larger donations as the
donations were tax deductible. Forming a 501(c)(3) is relatively easy and
inexpensive. The issue for most not-for-profits is that there are three required
annual filings: with the Secretary of State, the Attorney General and the IRS.
These are not expensive, but they often fall through the cracks when an
organization is comprised completely of volunteers. One concept that was
discussed briefly but not thoroughly flushed out by the Celebrations and Unity
Committee was the formation of ONE (1) not-for-profit 501(c) (3) that several
organizations could use.

2) Review related ordinances.
   a) One expense that several events face is the need to hire a Firefighter if the event
      is in an outdoor tent. This is expensive and it is not a requirement in several
      neighboring towns. As part of the approval process at the City Council level it
      seems more feasible to require that the tent be put up by a party that is in good
      standing with the Secretary of State and is fully insured and provide proof of
      insurance (i.e. a binder) for the tent for that date. If the tent is put up correctly
      and is adequately insured, there should be no need to retain a firefighter at an
      event.

3) Create a “Lawrence” event that celebrates the city as opposed to a specific ethnic
group.
   b) As one of the themes of our committee is UNITY we discussed having a citywide
      event that celebrates Lawrence as a whole. In the 1970’s there was a “Homeland
      Festival” that was sponsored by the YWCA and the International Institute, but
      this is not something that the City has done historically on a consistent basis.
      Also, traditionally the City hosted its 4th of July Celebration on July 3rd. As that is
      not held on the actual 4th, perhaps making some of that event more about a
      celebration of BOTH the city and the country might be a way to get it started.

D. Community Input
The committee received the following e-mails from members of the general public during the
transition period:

1) Idea: One way to bring in Unity to city of Lawrence is to have a culture fair to celebrate
    people’s cultures by making foods from their country, wearing clothes from their native
    country, bringing in music from their country, and other artifacts having arts and crafts
    projects for the children so, they can learn about other people’s cultures, etc.

Another idea, is to have Holiday party in the month of December! People bring in
decorations, food, music, and other stuff. So, that way people can to learn about other
people’s customs and traditions during the holiday season. There are 3 holiday’s in the
month of December Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, Ramadan (falls on the 9th month in the
Muslim calendar) What a great way to bring Unity to Lawrence and get to know your
community. Let’s celebrate the festival lights with our neighbors. Let’s bring back the true
meaning of the Holiday's. We could have arts and crafts projects for children, read books to children relating to the different holiday's in the month of December.

Then have a holiday celebration in the spring/summer --Easter, Passover, Ramadan (this year Ramadan falls in July and August)

(Another idea) is to have a holiday assembly in each of the schools celebrating diversity during the holiday seasons and bringing in special guest to talk about their traditions and customs during the holiday season.

Another idea is to have an assembly in each of the schools to discuss the importance of tolerance and also; incorporating the subject matter around bulling and cyber bulling that would include having activities dealing with the subject matter that is appropriate for each age group. This would definitely bring unity! Tolerance is major issues along with bullying and cyber bullying.

2) Idea: As you know Lawrence has many wonderful public celebrations, and while they are open to all and enjoyed by all, many are ethnic-specific... which is fine and as it should be, but they by definition are not celebrating all of Lawrence and all Lawrencians. Some non-ethnic celebrations, like the 4th of July, are not Lawrence-specific. To my knowledge the only Lawrence-specific, broadly multi-cultural event is the Bread & Roses Festival. (Full disclosure... I've been an organizer of Bread & Roses for many years!) Although the Bread & Roses Heritage Committee actively reaches out to Lawrence's newer, mostly Latino residents, it is understandable if, for many, it is not felt as theirs, since it commemorates a 1912 event, long before their or their ancestors' arrival here. So while I would love to see this committee suggest to the new administration to focus support on the Bread & Roses Festival as a unifying event, I understand the challenges.

Another idea is to create a new event, a "Lawrence Day" celebration, similar to city/town-founding events that are commonplace in Latin America. I must credit LHS teacher and fellow Lawrence History Center board member Whimmper Barahona for this idea. Lawrence was incorporated as a town in April of 1847. April may be a little early in the year for what would likely be a mostly outdoor event, but the idea is worth considering. Maybe we could find a founding event on a more weather-friendly time of year. (start of construction in 1845? incorporation as a city in 1853?) The advantage is that such a "Lawrence Day" would be a specifically Lawrence event that everyone could get behind. The disadvantage is trying to create a whole new event... it's hard enough for us event organizers even when we have years of experience and goodwill! We could all use more city support.
3) Idea: MY simple idea is ...that meetings of the council that are transmitted on local TV channel 8, BE TRANSLATED TO SPANISH in small print as they do with movies. Perhaps in that way, those who do not understand English can bring other ideas to solve the problems of the city, BECAUSE THIS TRANSLATION SERVICE can motivate the call their councilors. Because they are well aware of the problems that affect us all.

4) Idea: Families UNited is an idea to help bring back the family atmosphere through FUN. The purpose of Families UNited is to bring families closer with various events throughout our city, throughout the year and show everyone all the good things we have to offer. This is not only an opportunity for families to enjoy together but a very important time for all of us to close the gap between inequalities. With the help of sponsors, vendors, volunteers and demonstrations we can reach out to parents and guardians in our city and beyond to show we have a lot to offer. Whether it is free movie nights, concerts, bonfires...YES it is possible!! How about ice skating, introducing new sports like soccer or lacrosse or many other ideas like a public safety display of all the vehicles used in everyday life. Using valuable outdoor resources like the stadium, Spicket River Greenway (cool ideas here), our Commons, neighborhood parks and canals. Events will not only bring our community closer but offer families a chance to meet, care, clean, protect and have great pride in a city we call home. Let's make our surrounding towns envious that we will not only change our image but offer events they would love to participate and enjoy!! I would like the opportunity to present my ideas as a chance to get Families United!!

5) Idea: As all of us know the old fountain at the intersection of S. Union and S. Broadway is in great need of care/replacement. The largest part of this project would be to remove the old fountain. It would be great (and possibly inexpensive) to put in place a simple green with a few trees and maybe a few 3D sculptures from the EAC??
Public Safety Committee:

Co-Chairs Manny Gonzalez, Lawrence Firefighter and resident, and Marc Laplante, City Councilor for District F.


A. Strategic Objectives

1) Strategic Objective #1: Reduce crime and improve quality of life in city’s tough neighborhoods.

Lawrence has areas that have more criminal activity than others. A key to improving the city’s overall quality of life issues is to crack down on areas with high crime incidents. This will lead to improvements city-wide.

   a) Immediate Action:

      (i) Until CompStat is operational, anecdotally and historically determine where the crime hot spots are located.

      (ii) Expand the “Text-a-tip” program that allows citizens to anonymously provide tips on crime to police. Go door-to-door with a simple flyer providing information on the program with a message from the Police Chief and Mayor.

      (iii) Engage Mayor in radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs) where he promotes a message of community and encourages neighbors to report crimes and tips. In battling crime, residents’ assistance is instrumental.

      (iv) Work with LMCC to organize stakeholders in the problem areas, and have Public Safety leaders and Mayor join these individuals to offer support to public safety issues in that area.

      (v) Begin and grow relationships with stakeholders such as faith-based groups. Use Community Development’s neighborhood planner to start making these connections.

      (vi) Re-start the Police Athletic League and provide open gyms for youth. (Re-establishing program would cost about $100k and could possibly be funded from community policing grants)

      (vii) Eliminate the Deputy Chief position until force is fully staffed – apply savings to add more rank and file officers.

   b) Data Needs:
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(i) Re-install CompStat (a program where crime location and trends are chronicled). This will more clearly identify the areas that need greater resources and attention.

c) Long term Action:
   (i) Need more police officers on the force. Currently 117 officers, need to ramp to at least 145.
   (ii) Expand special operations/re-instate specialty units that focus on specific elements of crime: drugs, domestic violence, auto theft, etc. These units provide progressive policing rather than reactive policing.
   (iii) Advocate with the state legislature and governor’s office that greater resources should be provided for public safety.

2) Strategic Objective #2: Improve LPD morale.

The Lawrence Police Department faced deterioration in morale over the last four years. While the LPD is a professional force, the challenges it had to overcome with layoffs, demotions, and the perceived lack of support from political leaders, made performing its mission more difficult. Improving morale will lead to more energetic policing that will translate into a force more dedicated to serving our citizens, rather than simply protecting them.

   a) Immediate Action:
      (i) Stop pay for indicted police officers
      (ii) Keep applying for PD grants to hire more officers
      (iii) Grant is currently available to hire 10 new police officers, and enter them into the academy within the first 100 days
      (iv) Hire a qualified individual for director of support services (budget/grant writing position)
      (v) Invite decision makers (including mayor and city councilors) to take advantage of the opportunity to “ride-along” with fire and police personnel. Experience firsthand their challenges and listen to their concerns and suggestions.

   b) Long Term Action
      (i) Re-establish specialty groups/task forces so that police are proactive rather than reactive.
      (ii) Provide more training opportunities so police can sharpen their skills.
      (iii) Acquire new police cruisers. (Capital expenditures or grant funding)
      (iv) Build a new police station.

3) Strategic Objective #3: Build new police headquarters and upgrade/rehabilitate firehouses.

The Lawrence Police Station was built over 40 years ago, and was undersized immediately after construction. It is inadequate to house police operations, because of its small size and
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poor condition and is a drain on public resources with stopgap and temporary fixes. Modern day policing requires modern facilities, and Lawrence PD is stuck in a 1960s building. Northern Essex Community College is developing a police/fire curriculum with a police/fire academy component. This would be housed in a new police/fire complex. Currently, Fire Houses are also in disrepair.

a) Immediate Action
   (i) Continue to work with Northern Essex Community College to build a regional lock-up facility.
   (ii) Have Essex County Sheriff provide incarceration/holding cell facilities for LPD arrested individuals.
   (iii) Target an unoccupied city owned property to house a lock-up facility.
   (iv) Work with Essex County Sheriff for providing booking and custody service of LPD crime suspects.

b) Long term Action
   (i) Continued advocacy with state leaders and partnering with regional leaders to apply for funding that will create the college’s program and infrastructure.

4) Strategic Objective #4: Provide the finest emergency and medical response. More quickly provide emergency and medical response. Provide a less expensive way to provide EMS service. Allocate any savings to maintain or increase the number of firefighters.

Lawrence has a $0 contract with the existing ambulance service. With the contract expiring this year, the city has an opportunity to make substantial changes to its Emergency Management System (EMS). The Committee examined bringing EMS services entirely in house with the Fire Department or engaging in another private contract that is more advantageous for the city and its residents.

a) Immediate Action
   (i) Convene a working group to more fully examine and provide Mayor with a recommendation on Lawrence EMS.
   (ii) Part of the review should examine regionalizing EMS for both police and fire.

b) Why bring EMS in-house with LFD?
   (i) Firefighters respond to all calls anyway
   (ii) Natural fit for FF to do this exclusively
   (iii) The City does not benefit financially from the existing private contract
   (iv) FF have more medical experience than EMS personnel

c) Why contract EMS services with private company?
   (i) Have dedicated company focus on medical emergencies
   (ii) No start-up costs (ambulance purchases, etc.) – infrastructure already present
(iii) City assumes no personnel, training or pension costs
(iv) City is not exposed to workers compensation claims
(v) Enter into a contract where the city receives revenue

The point in dispute is whether there is a net savings from going to a private company or whether bringing these services in house will be a revenue generator to hire new Firefighters.

5) Strategic Objective #5: Focus on reducing car theft and armed robbery.

Beside the drug trade, the top crimes in Lawrence are car theft and armed robbery.

   a) Long Term Action

      (i) Create and fund a task force dealing with car theft and armed robbery.
      (ii) Use CompStat to guide use of resources.
      (iii) Partner with the Schools with educational materials and police presence to form stronger relationships so information on crime can be exchanged between police and schools.

B. More comments brought up by Committee members and the public.

1) Inspectional Services Department:

   a) Tighter enforcement of night clubs’ occupancy violations, fire codes violations for egress, tax violations, and closer overall review by the Licensing Board. Need better coordination between the Licensing Board, Fire Department, and ISD.

   b) More strict examination by Licensing Board of bar and night club liquor licenses renewals and new licenses. Owners with previous violations should be questioned more intensely.

   c) Greater enforcement of Inspectional Services Department related ordinances (health codes, building codes, trash and litter, etc.). Provide benchmarks to indicate whether progress is being made.

   d) Increase staff size of ISD, and have ISD officers also work non-traditional hours (weekends).

   e) Clean up the illegal dumping spots and have cameras to catch those who are dumping. Cite the violators. Placing trash cans throughout the city especially on streets that have middle schools. Have the kids be part of designing them, and maybe they will be willing to keep Lawrence clean.

   f) Use cameras to catch graffiti violators.

   g) Advocate the Lawrence Home Rule petition in the Legislature that will increase the fines for illegal dumping and create a dedicated illegal dumping fund for penalties accrued.

3) Snow Removal

   a) City sidewalks need to be shoveled to allow students to walk to school in safety.

   b) Enforce snow parking ban violations (including lack of sidewalk snow removal). Ticket and tow during each storm event.

   c) Maximize the use of sidewalk snow removal equipment (Housing Department, Schools, and DPW) throughout the city.
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4) Police
   a) Lawrence runaways and missing youth is an under-reported epidemic. Greater partnerships are needed between police, schools, courts, and third party groups.
   b) Moving vehicle violations, especially speeding, needs to be enforced. Perhaps use speed bumps?
   c) More crossing guards to help alleviate traffic problem near schools.
   d) Better painted crosswalks and repair the broken electronic crossing signals.
   e) Increased police patrols will provide more police visibility and therefore a reduction in crime.
   f) Return Traffic Control Officers back to the LPD. It is a natural place for their placement rather than DPW.
   g) Many of the buttons that activate the WALK signals at corners do not function. Inform Lawrence educators from Head Start and Kindergarten through High School that crosswalks and crossing lights are an important part of safe living in Lawrence.
   h) Support the creation/revitalization of neighborhood watch programs.

5) Fire Department
   a) Fix the automatic traffic signals at major intersection that allow for Green Lights for emergency vehicles crossing the intersection.
   b) Have the Fire Department provide CPR certification classes for a fee.
Quality of Life Committee:

Co-Chairs Pedro Torres, General Manager at Napolitano Marble and Granite and Lawrence resident, and Brenda Rozzi, President of the Sacred Heart/ Brookfield Street Neighborhood Association.


A. Introduction

Webster defines Quality of Life as, "Personal satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with the cultural or intellectual conditions under which one lives (as distinct from material comfort)." This committee defines Quality of Life as the general well-being, both physical and emotional, of the individual residents, cultures and businesses within Lawrence. It also includes frameworks to create, build on, and preserve the City's assets and resources that create safe and healthy living for the residents of Lawrence.

This committee was convened to address matters of overall Quality of Life in the City of Lawrence and to report back to Mayor-Elect Daniel Rivera on our discussions and findings and make suggestions for immediate tasks and long-term goals for the improvement of the Quality of Life for all residents of Lawrence.

In a word, "pride" in one's city captures the goal that this committee sought to achieve. In this report, we offer a personal perspective on the Lawrence we once knew and the many wonderful memories that we hold of this city as well as the Lawrence that we believe can be restored to instill a sense of pride and well-being in all residents and a pride that is also visible to all those who visit our great City. Additionally, we offer the perspective of those who are newer to the City of Lawrence and expressed more general ideas about how the quality of life could be improved.

For ease of discussion, this committee divided the general topic of Quality of Life into the following categories:

1. Communication
2. Parks and Recreation
3. Code Enforcement, Policing, and Litter
4. Community Development / Improve City’s Image

Transition committee discussions were heartfelt and lively as all members felt a sense of inclusion and respect for all of the ideas and opinions expressed. There is no doubt that the common thread in all committee members is their fondness for the City of Lawrence and strong desire to improve the quality of life of all of its residents.

Background

This committee is proud of Lawrence’s past and its future. Several members had their own special memories of growing up in Lawrence, while some have been in the city a shorter time but still remember how wonderful it was and can be. Some remembered the Rag Man, others reminisced about the shopping opportunities and the restaurants on Essex Street. And you can’t forget “Theater Row” on Broadway, which proudly housed the Broadway, Palace, and Strand Theaters. Then there was The Warner and Star not far away. On your way to see a movie you would stop at Louie Pearls for penny candy.

The City of Lawrence is known as an “Immigrant City.” There were jobs in the mills: Everett, Wood, Pacific, Ayer, and of course, Malden Mills now home to Polartec. You can’t forget our waterways and rivers that provided activities and energy; the Merrimack, Spicket, Shawsheen, and our canals.

Essex Street provided lots of quality shopping stores; Woolworth, Russems, Cherry and Web, McCarthy, Nazarian’s Jewelers, Kaps, Dukes, Gentry and more. Then, the local restaurants and bakeries: Blue Bonnet, Morins, Tripoli’s, Doc Pizza and Silversweet. You also can’t forget the ones just around the corner like Bishops, Cedar Crest, and Lawtons.

There was every type of religion with Roman Catholic being the primary, including St. Patrick’s, Sacred Heart, St Mary’s, St Lawrence’s, and St Ann’s churches. Each neighborhood had distinct nationalities, languages, cultures, religions and extended family networks. Through the years, the ethnic heritage of Lawrence has evolved, but the City still takes pride in being known as the “Immigrant City.”

This City has given families job opportunities and helped make their dreams come true. Families have worked together to continuously improve and revitalize Lawrence. Like many other cities; such as Chelsea, Haverhill, and Lowell, Lawrence has had its difficulties. It’s time for Lawrence to be proactive; where all shall come together, work as a team and start the healing and revitalization process.

Lawrence still has many resources within the Mills, the waterways, Cambridge College and Northern Essex Community College and a wonderful network of open spaces. The North and South Commons offer plentiful open spaces and each neighborhood is blessed with distinct parks. Some parks require a little help, while others are in awesome condition and are being utilized every day.

B. Strategic Objectives

The general consensus of this committee is that there is a lot to be done and this administration brings new life to the city and its residents. The committee met twice to discuss
recommendations and also reviewed ideas submitted by the public via the internet. The committee recommends the following strategic objectives:

1) **Strategic Objective #1: Improve Communication**

   Improved communication from City Hall to the residents is strongly desired. Residents really want to know about the services and benefits provided by the city.

   a) **Immediate Actions**

      (ii) The city needs to diversify its communication strategies to reach all audiences.

      (iii) City leadership attendance at neighborhood association meetings.

      (iv) Improve the City's website.

      (v) Build the capacity of existing neighborhood associations.

      (vi) Create meaningful access to City services by providing variable hours at City Hall.

      (vii) Create a municipal departmental listing of contact information.

   b) **Data Needs**

      (i) How do most residents receive information from the City?

      (ii) Do residents use the internet to learn about City services?

      (iii) Will improving the City’s website increase economic development and residential satisfaction?

      (iv) What neighborhood associations are working at a high level? Can they expand their territory or should new ones be developed in underserved areas? What are the needs of neighborhood associations?

      (v) Do union contracts stipulate a 9 to 5 work day? Would the community be better served if City offices were open late or opened early one day a week?

   c) **City Departments and Boards**

      Budget and Finance, City Clerk, Community Development, Economic Development, Information Technology, and Personnel

   d) **Community Partners**

      Neighborhood Associations, Lawrence CommunityWorks, Arlington Community Trabajando, Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Lawrence Methuen Community Coalition, Groundwork Lawrence.

2) **Strategic Objective #2: Enhance Parks & Recreation**
Residents believe the City has an excellent park system and more should be done to realize the potential of these assets through public-private partnerships that emphasize stewardship and programming.

a) Immediate Actions

(i) Enhance the City's recreational and educational opportunities for all age groups.

(ii) Improve stewardship of parks by developing strong public-private partnerships.

a. Improve the sports pitch at O’Neil Park.

b. Renovate the fountain and park at the corner of Union and Winthrop Streets.

c. Build on the efforts of City Councilor Twomey to have open spaces adopted by private partners.

 d. Partner with recreational leagues to encourage stewardship of sports fields.

 e. Request leadership of DPW to outline where help of the public sector is required.

 f. Establish a resident committee to clean up West Street Park and the rail corridor.

 g. Evaluate neighborhood playgrounds to identify and eliminate safety hazards.

 h. Develop and follow a capital improvement plan.

(iii) Investigate opportunities to create new revenue streams to address these issues, including but not limited to the Community Preservation Act.

b) Data Needs

(i) What sports leagues are growing and contracting?

(ii) What partnerships exist and can be expanded?

(iii) Identify gaps in services provided by DPW. Where can private sector efforts best help DPW?

(iv) Extent of dilapidated conditions at neighborhood playgrounds.

(v) Review City and Public School Capital Improvement Plans.

(vi) To what extent would Community Preservation Funds benefit affordable housing production, historic preservation (Holy Rosary School), and park improvements? Is this program appropriate for Lawrence?

c) City Departments and Boards
Budget and Finance, City Council, Public Works, Community Development, Recreation, Economic Development, Senior Center, and Planning, Lawrence Public Schools.

d) Community Partners

Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, Lawrence General Hospital, New Balance, Neighborhood Associations, Lawrence CommunityWorks, Arlington Community Trabajando, Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Lawrence Methuen Community Coalition, Central Catholic High School, Northern Essex Community College, Beyond Soccer, Groundwork Lawrence.

3) Strategic Objective #3: Address Code Enforcement, Policing and Litter

Residents believe the City of Lawrence is beautiful. But poorly maintained properties, litter, drug dealing and prostitution are major problems that significantly impact quality of life.

a) Immediate Actions

(i) Enforce code violations at underutilized properties such as the Merrimack Paper Site, Newark Paper, and the North and South Canals (including infrastructure over the canals).

(ii) Work with State legislative delegation to pass home rule petition (Bill H03729) to increase municipal fines for illegal dumping.

(iii) Enforce building code violations.

(iv) Enforce noise ordinances.

(v) Eliminate after-hours parties in residential areas.

(vi) Fix broken street lights.

(vii) Drug dealing and prostitution in the public realm needs to addressed immediately. The following corridors were highlighted as problem areas: Broadway, West Street, South Union Street, and the Manchester Lawrence Branch Rail Line.

b) Data Needs

(i) To what extent is Inspectional Services enforcing code violations? What types of violations are most prominent?

(ii) What resources does Inspectional Services require to increase code enforcement?

(iii) Where are the hot spots for drug dealing and prostitution?

(iv) What resources are available to address drugs and prostitution?

(v) To what extent is the police department able to address noise violations and after hours parties?
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(vi) Which lights are the City’s responsibility and which lights are the responsibility of National Grid?

(vii) How can underutilized properties such as Merrimack Paper and the Manchester Lawrence Branch Rail Line be repositioned as assets for the City of Lawrence?

(viii) Who owns the failing infrastructure over the North and South Canals?

(ix) Why is there no water in the North Canal?

c) City Departments and Boards:
   City Council, Inspectional Services, Fire Department, Police Department, Public Works, Community Development, Recreation, Economic Development, and Planning

d) Community Partners:
   Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, Lawrence General Hospital, New Balance, Neighborhood Associations, Lawrence CommunityWorks, Arlington Community Trabajando, Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Lawrence Methuen Community Coalition, Groundwork Lawrence.

4) Strategic Objective #4: Support Community Development and Improve City’s Image

There is a strong desire to develop opportunities for all Lawrencians to come together as a united city through creative festivals that utilize all the City’s resources. The goal is to work together to understand all cultures living in Lawrence and develop a stronger understanding of our diversity.

a) Immediate Actions

   (i) Publicize "Positive Lawrence," i.e. the Stadium, Heritage State Park, Community Boating, high school auditorium, Spicket River Greenway, colleges, Farmers’ Market, and existing restaurants.

   (ii) Bring people together through festivals and events that activate the City throughout the year. This includes leveraging and building on the existing festivals with events such as movies at the Commons followed by community discussions.

   (iii) Personal Approach by the Mayor

      a. Hosting a once a month activity (i.e. brunch) with residents

      b. Cultivate business and political leaders as well as local and national press outlets.

b) Data Needs

   (i) What existing resources are available to help promote Positive Lawrence?

   (ii) What Positive Lawrence stories are viable in different press outlets?
(iii) How can the existing Festivals in Lawrence become professionalized to increase attendance and year round offerings?

c) City Departments and Boards:
City Council, Senior Center, Cultural Council, Community Development, Recreation, Economic Development, and Planning

d) Community Partners:
Semana Hispana, Lawrence Heritage State Park, Friends of the Lawrence Heritage State Park, Lawrence History Center, Essex Arts Center, Northern Essex Community College, Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, Lawrence General Hospital, New Balance, Neighborhood Associations, Lawrence CommunityWorks, Arlington Community Trabajando, Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Lawrence Methuen Community Coalition, Groundwork Lawrence.

C. Proposal for the Transition Committee to Remain Viable:

All Transition Committee members agreed that theirs is a very involved, long-term task. Their commitment to the success of the City of Lawrence and to this Administration leads them to propose the following:

This Transition Committee would like to remain viable as a volunteer Quality of Life Task Force with the mission of continuing to offer suggestions to the newly elected Mayor Rivera on issues affecting the Quality of Life of Lawrencians and all who visit this great City.

The Transition Committee has discussed meeting on a monthly basis as the Quality of Life Task Force.

D. Conclusion:

Quality of Life is a fluid standard subject to the life’s experiences of the observer. The Quality of Life Transition Committee is honored to have offered suggestions on capturing this standard and drawing a universal blueprint for Mayor-Elect Rivera’s consideration. Whether a simple matter of tidying up one’s own front yard to instill a sense of neighborhood pride and beauty or a more complex undertaking involving community development, we are confident that there is a strong level of commitment to accomplish these objectives that will undeniably lead to a more satisfactory and fuller quality of life for all Lawrencians.

We stand behind our newly elected Mayor and are ever-ready to follow this blueprint to completion.
## Strategic Objectives at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Lead Agency/Department*</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Culture</td>
<td>Create an Arts and Culture Department for the City of Lawrence and hire a Director.</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts and Culture</td>
<td>Host an Arts and Culture Summit.</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts and Culture</td>
<td>Create a calendar of events on website/social media.</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Culture</td>
<td>Investigate state and federal resources to support arts and culture.</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget and Finance</td>
<td>Be the “Technology Mayor” to improve the city’s operational efficiency.</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget and Finance</td>
<td>Increase revenue: Long term goal is to become more self-sufficient, which will happen with economic development that increases the tax base and taxes collected and that brings jobs to the city. In the short term we can become more self-sufficient by collecting what is due.</td>
<td>Economic Development and Assessor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget and Finance</td>
<td>Expenses: Save money where we can without reducing quality of services, make fair and rational expenditures and implement cost savings.</td>
<td>Mayor's Office and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget and Finance</td>
<td>Budgeting: Continue to use and implement best practices for the city budget that have resulted in an improved bond rating and a budget balanced without reserves for 4 years.</td>
<td>Budget and Finance and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>Organize a group of Neighborhood Liaisons to assist with the development and dissemination of information in each respective neighborhood.</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>Make City Hall an information hub for the community.</td>
<td>City Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>Organize community meetings in spaces accessible and available to residents.</td>
<td>City Clerk</td>
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</table>
## Making Lawrence Better

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Engagement</th>
<th>Communicate information from the administration to residents in an effective manner.</th>
<th>City Clerk</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health and Wellness</td>
<td>Endorse and support the Mayor’s Health Task Force (MHTF).</td>
<td>Mayor’s Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and Wellness</td>
<td>Endorse and follow through on the mandates of the Healthy Active Living Resolution.</td>
<td>Mayor’s Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and Wellness</td>
<td>Expect collaboration from all City departments in health.</td>
<td>Mayor’s Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and Wellness</td>
<td>Support a meaningful healthy workplace policy and wellness program for city business and city employees.</td>
<td>Health Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and Wellness</td>
<td>Adopt a Complete Streets Policy.</td>
<td>Mayor’s Office and City Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and Wellness</td>
<td>Renew focus on enforcement of quality of life ordinances in the city to improve public health and safety.</td>
<td>Police Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and Wellness</td>
<td>Create a process for Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) for development projects and other major initiatives in the city.</td>
<td>Health Department and City Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and Wellness</td>
<td>Support local policies to encourage healthier food choices.</td>
<td>Health Department and City Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and Wellness</td>
<td>Attract a distribution center to support improved options and pricing for local small grocery stores/bodegas.</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Wellness</td>
<td>Adopt reform to zoning and animal control statutes that support urban agriculture.</td>
<td>Planning Department and City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Wellness</td>
<td>Help support a positive environment at the state Department of Transitional Assistance.</td>
<td>Mayor’s Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Implement a Comprehensive Housing Study that can inform local housing and economic development efforts.</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Prioritize regular communication, data sharing and data-driven decision-making, and collaboration between and among all city Departments and Boards that deal with housing.</td>
<td>Mayor’s Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Improve the quality, and the quantity, of high-quality rental housing stock in the City.</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Promote sustainable homeownership.</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Promote and utilize housing development as a driver for economic development.</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Support the development of high-quality supportive housing with comprehensive wrap-around services for families, adults and young people.</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs and Economic Development</td>
<td>Initiate a multipronged campaign to jump start Economic Development in the City based on a revised management structure, hiring of professional staff in the areas of Economic Development, Planning and Marketing, and production of a marketing/branding plan.</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs and Economic Development</td>
<td>Develop and promote a Business Development Program to attract new businesses and grow existing business across the City.</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs and Economic Development</td>
<td>Connect with local small businesses to help foster their success and attract new businesses though incentives and network creation, and link the City’s employment base to opportunity in this sector.</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs and Economic Development</td>
<td>Create a Plan for the Downtown Core that seeks a diversity of uses including additional restaurants, retail, professional services, Pop-Up events and stores. Continue to grow the cultural focus in the mill district including El Taller, Lawrence Heritage State Park, Lawrence History Center, Essex Arts Center, Acting Out!, and new artist live and work spaces.</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs and Economic Development</td>
<td>Build upon the expansion of the Northern Essex Community College Campus, including the new Health and Technology Center, and become a center for professional development for health care providers across Merrimack Valley. Promote and support the emerging plans for 4-Year colleges/universities in Lawrence and increased expectations for a variety of Postsecondary plans for all Lawrence Public Schools students.</td>
<td>Economic Development and School Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs and Economic Development</td>
<td>Promote the exciting developments in the growth of Lawrence General Hospital, Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, Marston Medical Center, Pentucket Medical, a significant number of physician practices, NxStage Medical, and Elder Services, and Merrimack Valley Visiting Nurses.</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jobs and Economic Development</td>
<td>Coordinate development efforts to provide a walkable, livable, healthy city to live, work and play.</td>
<td>Economic and Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs and Economic Development</td>
<td>Develop an outreach strategy to understand workforce needs in the community, job readiness programs, and job training programs.</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Celebrations and Unity</td>
<td>Establish clear, written guidelines for all Public Events.</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Celebrations and Unity</td>
<td>Create and maintain a web-based Calendar of Community Events that is easily accessible for event organizers, as well as the general public.</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Celebrations and Unity</td>
<td>Reduce the “base-cost” for hosting events in the City (i.e., Police details, Fire, and DPW).</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Celebrations and Unity</td>
<td>Better support festivals and events.</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>Reduce crime and improve quality of life in city’s tough neighborhoods.</td>
<td>Police Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>Improve Lawrence Police Department morale.</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>Build new police headquarters and upgrade/rehabilitate firehouses.</td>
<td>Mayor's Office and City Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Safety</th>
<th>Provide the finest emergency and medical response. More quickly provide emergency and medical response. Provide a less expensive way to provide EMS service. Allocate any savings to maintain or increase the number of firefighters.</th>
<th>Mayor's Office and Fire Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>Focus on reducing car theft and armed robbery.</td>
<td>Police Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of Life</td>
<td>Improve communication from City Hall to residents.</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of Life</td>
<td>Enhance parks and recreation through public-private partnerships that emphasize stewardship and programming.</td>
<td>Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Life</td>
<td>Address code enforcement, policing and litter.</td>
<td>Inspectional Services and Police Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Life</td>
<td>Support community development and improve city's image.</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth and Education</td>
<td>Collaborate with organizations and agencies that serve the city's youth to establish a Youth Task Force and city-wide youth center for evening activities.</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth and Education</td>
<td>Increase parental involvement within the schools.</td>
<td>LPS Receiver and School Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth and Education</td>
<td>Empower residents to have a voice in governance of the city and schools.</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth and Education</td>
<td>Promote the growth, development and retention of young educators, professionals, leaders, mentors and recent college graduates from Lawrence.</td>
<td>LPS Receiver and School Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth and Education</td>
<td>Utilize Family Resource Center to its full potential to engage parents and connect the community to needed resources.</td>
<td>LPS Receiver and School Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth and Education</td>
<td>Enhance public library operations and services.</td>
<td>Mayor's Office</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* For a full listing of collaborating agencies/departments needed to achieve objective, see specific committee reports.
References

The following reference documents were provided and/or recommended as background material by the Transition Committees. Copies of these documents are available upon request.

**Budget and Finance Committee:**
Fiscal Overseer Transition Team Presentation 12-11-13
Lawrence Three-Year Operating and Capital Financial Plan, August 20, 2010

**Community Engagement Committee:**
Transforming Communities, Cleveland-Gaston CEDS Project: Corporation for Enterprise Development, 2003

**Health and Wellness Committee:**
Community Health Needs Assessment: Lawrence General Hospital, 2013
Holy Family Hospital Population Health Improvement Report, 2012
City of Lawrence Healthy Active Living Resolution, 2013
The Best Complete Streets Policies of 2012: Smart Growth America and the Complete Streets Coalition, April 2012
Partners in Prevention- How “Non-Health” State Agencies are Advancing Public Health in Massachusetts: Massachusetts Public Health Association, December 2013

**Housing Committee:**
SomerVision: Somerville’s Comprehensive Plan 2010-2030
Leading the Way: City of Boston’s Comprehensive Housing Strategy, April 2011
City of Lawrence Consolidated Plan 2010-2015
GLCAC Community Action Plan 2012-2014
2009 Arlington Neighborhood Plan
2013 North Common Neighborhood Plan
U.S. Census, 2000 and 2010, American Community Survey

**Public Safety Committee:**
Police/Fire Training Academy Summary, May 2013
Challenges of Starting Fire-Based EMS: Big Decisions LLC