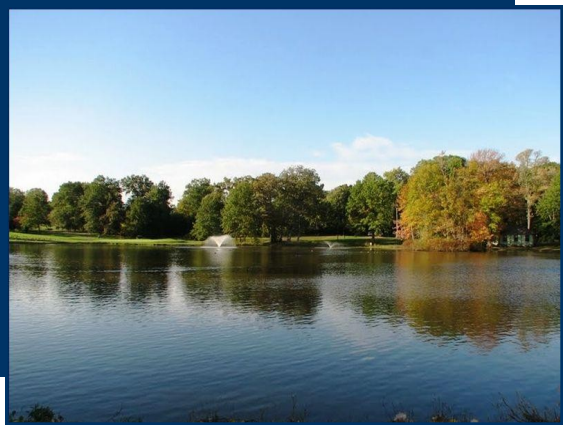
# Planning Themes



KEY TOPICS

- Promote livable and sustainable neighborhoods
- Protect the City's natural and built environment
- Enhance mobility through transit, pedestrian and bike systems city-wide
- Advance downtown's role as the region's center for commerce, culture and city living
- Promote and encourage the integration of sustainable practices



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## Vision Statement

Hartford is home to over 124,000 residents, headquarters for many of the country's largest insurance companies, and the State Capital of Connecticut. Everyone who lives or works in Hartford wants it to thrive. To that end, we envision the Hartford of the future to be:

*"A clean, safe, culturally diverse community where residents can get an excellent education and become a valuable part of the workforce. Families and individuals can find affordable, attractive housing, both Downtown and in vibrant neighborhoods, and have access to efficient transportation. Natural and historic resources are well-protected, and sustainability is at the forefront of all activities. Hartford's government works with residents and the business community to leverage local investments and regional opportunities, and advance downtown's role as the region's center for commerce, culture and city living. "*

## Planning Themes for One City, One Plan

One City, One Plan is guided by five (5) broad planning themes. The themes provide the framework for the plan and are woven throughout the chapters of the POCD, tying together the numerous strategies and goals described in the document. Following is a description of the theme, the goal related to the theme, and list of objectives designed to reach the goal.

### Livable and Sustainable Neighborhoods

Hartford's neighborhoods are vital to the success of the city. This is where the vast majority of residents live, go to school, shop, worship, recreate, and interact. It is important for these places to be livable, with good quality housing, abundant open space and recreational facilities, efficient community services, great school facilities, ample employment, and low levels of crime. They must also be sustainable physically, socially and economically. For instance, neighborhoods must be places where environmental impacts are minimized, resources are used efficiently, the carrying capacity of the infrastructure is not exceeded, diversity is treasured, citizens are engaged and involved, and the local economy is vibrant.

In order to achieve livable, sustainable neighborhoods, diverse sectors must work together. For example, the quality of schools is connected to the quality of housing, which is affected by the quality of transportation options, etc. Activities in these and other areas can have positive effects on the livability and sustainability of Hartford's neighborhoods.

A house located on Allen Place

Frog Hollow Perfect 6's

Tree Planting

The Mark Twain House

Goal: Promote Livable and Sustainable Neighborhoods

- Provide quality housing
- Promote maintenance of housing & neighborhoods
- Ensure affordability of housing
- Revise housing-related regulations
- Improve schools
- Improve community facilities
- Consolidate municipal facilities
- Increase Park programming & educational activities
- Improve communication regarding recreation programs
- Enhance Public Safety
- Emphasize complete streets
- Ensure a skilled workforce
- Improve access to jobs
- Attract new businesses
- Help existing businesses to remain in Hartford

## The Natural and Built Environment

Hartford's visual character is defined by both its natural landscape and its built environment. The City's most notable natural feature is the Connecticut River. There are also 2,000 acres of parkland, the Park River, and several wetland areas. Given Hartford's almost completely developed nature, the visual character of the City is dominated by built form elements. These elements, such as homes, schools, hospitals, office buildings, roads and highways, are the buildings blocks of Hartford's neighborhoods. As one of the oldest continuously settled communities in the United States and with almost four centuries of history, Hartford has a significant number of historic structures and neighborhoods. Protecting the City's natural & built environment has a significant impact on the character of the City and the vitality of the neighborhoods.

Goal: Protect the City's Natural and Built Environment

Parks, Open Space & the Natural Environment

- Update the Parks Master Plan
- Plan for park maintenance and improvements
- Protect existing open space
- Manage the tree canopy
- Improve stormwater management
- Protect the Connecticut River
- Enhance environmental education efforts
- Improve water quality

Built Environment

- Reduce development impacts
- Promote good urban design

Historic Preservation

- Protect historic resources
- Update Historic standards & regulations
- Ensure appropriate redevelopment, restoration and rehabilitation

## Mobility: Transit, Pedestrian and Bike Systems

The City of Hartford is a major transportation

hub due to its role as the State Capital and the region's economic powerhouse as well as its proximity to Boston and New York and other New England locales. The presence of Interstates 91 and 84, Connecticut Routes 4, 5 and 44, train service at Union Station, the path of Connecticut River, a fully developed system of busses and a pedestrian-friendly street grid have all influenced the City of Hartford's transportation system in many ways.

The loose gridiron arrangement of the majority of Hartford's streets provides a strong web of connections that can be utilized by pedestrians, bicyclists, and buses as well as automobiles. These connections should be strengthened by improvements to the streetscapes, pathways and roadways, as well as better integration of transportation systems with land use. For example, the transit oriented development (TOD) planned for the Union Station area will be vital for the success of the planned New Britain Hartford Busway and the NHHS Commuter Rail. TOD around Union Station will help create a vibrant pedestrian friendly Downtown with easy access to mass transit options while enhancing mobility throughout Hartford.

<u>Goal: Enhance Mobility Through Improvements to Transit, Pedestrian and Bike Systems City-Wide</u>

Pedestrian & Bicycle Systems

- Improve pedestrian connections, conditions & level of service (LOS)
- Improve bicycle infrastructure
- Elevate walking and bicycling as modes of choice

Transit

- Implement the New Britain-Hartford Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) plan
- Improve existing bus service
- Improve passenger rail

Roadways

- Improve roadway connectivity, efficiency & safety

Mixed Modes

- Emphasize "Complete Streets"
- Reduce dependence on single occupancy vehicles (SOVs)
- Implement the Hartford Transportation Pathways Strategy & make improvements to the Union Station area
- Make specific corridor and area improvements
- Promote Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
- Improve regional connectivity

**Downtown as the Region's Center for Commerce, Culture and City Living**

Although Hartford has a large workforce (80,000 jobs in Downtown) very few workers reside in Hartford. Downtown Hartford has a relatively small number of housing units when compared

Union Station

Charter Oak Landing

The Hartford Riverfront

Statehouse Square

to downtowns of similar size. Despite recent additions of new housing units, including several high-end apartment complexes, there is still a gap between housing and the employment base. Closing this gap by creating downstairs shopping and entertainment with upstairs living and working creates a diverse, vibrant & attractive atmosphere for resident to work, live & play.

<u>Goal: Advance Downtown's Role as the Region's Center for Commerce, Culture and City Living</u>

Transportation

- Improve pedestrian connections, conditions & level of service (LOS)
- Improve regional connectivity
- Improve Downtown vehicular circulation & connectivity
- Rationalize Downtown parking
- Make specific corridor and area improvements

Housing

- Create new housing units
- Promote mixed use development

Arts, Culture & Entertainment

- Encourage 24/7 activity
- Promote Hartford through coordinated marketing

Redevelopment

- Implement redevelopment initiatives in keeping with the three recently completed redevelopment plans for Downtown North, Downtown West II and Constitution Plaza East.
- Develop urban commercial centers into transit activity. Transit stops should be intensive activity areas.

Commerce

- Develop Hartford's "Creative Economy"
- Diversify Downtown's economic base
- Help existing businesses to remain in Hartford
- Pursue existing economic development activities
- Increase occupancy & improve appearance of existing commercial buildings

**Integrating Sustainable Practices**

Sustainability can be defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." By its very nature, Hartford's urban fabric is much more sustainable than other forms of development. With its high-density development patterns and mixing of uses, the City makes much more efficient use of its land than traditional suburban development or "sprawl" development patterns.

The City of Hartford has been actively working to improve environmental quality and promote sustainable practices, and to identify future strategies for accelerating the "greening" of Hartford. Hartford has recently undertaken a

number of renewable and "green" energy initiatives. Hartford's goal of becoming a greener city will benefit residents and businesses while attracting investors and visitors to the City.

"Sustainable" relates to more than just the Environment and "green" buildings. Economic sustainability is the City's ability to produce a workforce that can meet the employment needs of the current local and regional economy but also be flexible enough to adapt to troubling economic conditions. That is why sustainable education and economic development practices must also be adopted.

Goal: Promote and Encourage the Integration of Sustainable Practices

Energy

- Emphasize clean & renewable energy
- Evaluate the City's Energy Use

Transportation

- Transition

Green Building

- Promote green building practices
- Improve stormwater management
- Promote good urban design
- Promote Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

Waste

- Reduce waste through reduction, reuse, and recycling

Environmental Health

- Enhance environmental education efforts
- Reduce environmental impacts
- Improve air quality
- Improve water quality
- Sustain public health

Economic Development

- Make Hartford the regional energy efficiency capital

Single-stream recycling Downtown

Installation of a Green Roof at the Betty Ruth and Milton B. Hollander Foundation Center