

## THE LOWELL PLAN

### Objective:

The Lowell Plan is a blueprint for the return of Lowell to a position of pre-eminence.

It is based on an existing set of circumstances, some of which are generic to older cities, others of which are peculiar to Lowell. These circumstances provide the conditions necessary for a revitalization effort historic in its implications.

This effort requires nothing less than a total community investment into Lowell's physical plant for two years. It requires a great deal of time, money, sweat, and, above all, pride in our community.

### Re circumstances:

The circumstances existent in Lowell today are uniquely favorable, in sharp contrast to the situation that has prevailed for decades.

Some of these circumstances relate to Lowell as an older community:

1. The energy crisis is causing city living, close to mass transit, to be both desirable and necessary.
2. The inflation rate is causing new construction of homes to be so expensive as to make housing values in Lowell very attractive, both in terms of cost and in terms of size of the unit.
3. The historic preservation theme of older cities is increasingly attractive to young professionals as contrasted to suburban living.

### Lowell in 1979:

1. Lowell has the first urban national park in the country and several federal agencies have a stake in its success and will be willing to be supportive. The park also provides a source of pride, a basis of significant economic stimulus, and most importantly, a sense of theme, a sense of destination.
2. The State Heritage Park is the prototype for state parks in Massachusetts and thus enjoys the same commitment by state agencies that it should succeed.

3. The merging of Lowell Tech and Lowell State College into the University of Lowell has created an economic and cultural basis for unparalleled contribution to the community.
4. The industrial base of the city, Wang Labs, Prince, Courier-Citizen, Raytheon, Joan Fabrics, etc., is sound and provides the wherewithal for economic stability.
5. The return of the Merrimack River as a natural resource has added a new dimension to the livability of Lowell. It will become increasingly usable for boating, fishing (salmon and shad), and swimming.
6. The governmental leaders at all levels are committed to Lowell's resurgence.
7. The private sector is now prepared to support a broad-based reinvestment in Lowell -- a process that has already begun.

This set of circumstances is such that, with an appropriate mechanism, Lowell can become -- dare we say it -- a truly great city.

Invitation:

This plan is your invitation to participate in this great venture. We are asking you to participate fully, to participate as a believer that, together, we can achieve a quality of life in Lowell that previous generations would not have thought possible.

The ingredients are all in place -- except one. The collective will of our people. This plan seeks to give expression to that collective will.

The Plan:

The Lowell Plan seeks to have each component of the community undertake a project or projects so that these efforts collectively will form the mosaic of the new Lowell.

Target date:

In order to focus these efforts, a date in late spring (June) of 1981 will be chosen as the weekend of formalities commemorating our efforts. This weekend festival (the first annual Lowell Festival) will build upon and draw from the experience of the Regatta Committee activities, and will mark the target date for completion of all related activities.

Invitations for that weekend will be extended to all relevant national and state leaders:

The President of the United States; the Secretaries of Interior, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, and Commerce; the Governor and Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts; heads of urban, historic preservation, retail, commercial, labor, and industrial organizations. In addition, the national news media will be invited. It is also our intent to interest major academic institutions to join with the University of Lowell in chronicling this effort as a national blueprint.

The Federal Role: The Federal government, as represented by Senator Tsongas and Congressman Shannon, will seek to accomplish the following:

1. Full funding on a yearly basis of the National Park Service appropriations request for Lowell.
2. Full funding on a yearly basis of the Park Commission appropriations request for Lowell.
3. Commitment to and construction of the Lowell Transportation Terminal.
4. Completion of the various Section 8 residential rehabilitation housing efforts, including the Wentworth Building, the Robertson Building, the Father John Building, and most importantly, the Lowell Manufacturing Building on Market Street.
5. Cooperation in the completion of the Market Street parking garage.
6. Assistance with UDAG grants to assist in private development projects such as the proposed Warren Street hotel.
7. continued funding at appropriate levels of CDBG monies.
8. Whatever transportation and highway assistance monies required.
9. Cooperation of other agencies such as SBA, Commerce, EDA, as required.



The State Role:

The State government, as represented by the State legislative delegation, will seek to accomplish the following:

1. Full funding of the State Heritage Park.
2. Completion of the Merrimack River improvement projects.
3. Appropriate assistance and funding of projects related to highway and mass transit into Lowell, most specifically, the major access routes (Sampson Connector, Route 38, Nesmith and Andover Streets, etc.).
4. Appropriate decisions related to the location of states offices in downtown Lowell.

The City Role:

The Local government, as represented by City Manager Tully, Mayor Rourke, and the City Council, will seek to accomplish the following:

1. Completion of the Market Street parking garage.
2. Completion of cobblestone streeting, gas street lighting and brick sidewalk of the entire downtown area, using CDBG funds. Obviously, it is crucial that the CDBG Advisory Committee share the goals of the Lowell Plan.
3. Provide the funding on a sharing basis of the Lowell Replanting program as listed below.
4. Complete zoning and building code standards and criteria as called for by the Lowell National Historical Park legislation.
5. Provide staff assistance in carrying out the Lowell Plan.

The Role of the Banks:

The eleven Lowell banks will pledge to undertake serious restoration projects in downtown Lowell. Some have already begun this, i.e., the Lowell 5¢ Savings Bank and the police station; some have already evidenced an interest; and some have pledged cooperation without a specific commitment. Each bank will undertake a project commensurate with its resources, and such projects shall be viewed as investments in the community and not necessarily as profitable endeavors, even though downtown investments have to date been shown to be economically feasible.

The banks shall commit to refund the Lowell Development and Financial Corporation for a second round of financing, based on the proven record of LDFC success.

The banks shall also continue to cooperate in financing local development efforts of private individuals.

The Role of the LDFC:

The Lowell Development and Financial Corporation shall pledge to continue its efforts in downtown Lowell.

It shall also undertake to fund the restoration, rehabilitation and sale of abandoned or substandard structures in Lowell, even if not profitable, especially those structures along major routes into the city, i.e., the home at the corner of Andover and Nesmith Streets.

The Role of the Major Corporations:

Each corporation in Lowell shall undertake a major project in the city -- such project to be decided upon in cooperation with the city manager.

The Role of the Service Clubs, Church, Schools, Labor organization, and Other Civic organizations:

Each service club, school, church, labor organization, and civic organization shall undertake a project in the city -- such project to be decided upon in cooperation with the city manager.

The Role of the Garden Club:

The Garden Club shall undertake to oversee the following:

1. The choosing of the weekend in June of 1981 as the target date weekend.
2. The date shall be chosen so as to coincide with the flowering of a tree, appropriate to our climate; such tree to become the official Lowell Festival Tree, not unlike the cherry blossom as the anchor of the Washington Festival.
3. The choosing of a shade tree appropriate to Lowell's streets to complement the flowering tree. This will involve a major tree planting and reforestation program for Lowell.
4. Overseeing, with the possible joint effort of the State, Conservation Commission, a corporation, service club, church group, etc., of the Lowell Major Access Routes Beautification Plan. This will involve turning the Lowell Connector, the major tourist route into Lowell, into the most attractive stretch of urban highway in New England and improvements to other major access routes, Route 38, Nesmith, Andover, Church, and East Merrimack Streets.



The Role of the University: The University of Lowell and the Lowell School System in cooperation with service clubs and other organizations, shall submit a plan for the development of cultural activities of the Lowell Festival. Included herein will be such groups as the Lowell Museum, the Lowell Regatta Festival Committee, the Merrimack Regional Theatre Group, the Lowell Opera Club, and Human Services Corporation.

The Role of the School System: The school system will designate appropriate projects for the students of the city.

The Role of Downtown Property Owners: Each owner of property in the downtown area of Lowell will be asked to submit a letter of intent to the city as to his plans to restore and rehabilitate his property. Every effort shall be expended by the city, the LDFC, and the Park Commission to assist in the planning and funding of such efforts.

The Role of the Regatta Committee: The Regatta Committee will oversee the recreational activities of the June 1981 Lowell Festival with special emphasis on river-related events.

The Lowell Plan needs to be directed. The Advisory Committee to the City Manager shall seek a private sector honorary chairman of this effort. This chairman will receive assistance from staff assigned to the city. Steve Joncas of Senator Tsongas' office and Paul Sheehy of Congressman Shannon's office will provide liaison.

Staff in addition will provide the criteria for awards to be given out on the June 1981 weekend for:

1. Best housing restoration/rehabilitation efforts.
2. Best commercial/retail restoration/rehabilitation efforts.
3. Best bank project.
4. Best corporation project.
5. Best church project.
6. Best service club project.
7. Best school project.
8. Best civic organization/labor project.
9. Best overall project.

This Plan, if fully supported, will result in a June 1981 Lowell that will warrant national attention, state emulation, and local pride.

All it needs is your advice and your commitment.

Will you help us?

B. Joseph Tully  
City Manager of Lowell

Paul E. Tsongas  
United States Senator