

# Vision & Guiding Principles

---

The City of Flint Master Plan is a blueprint for the future, guiding development and investment in the City for the next 20 years. The Master Plan also articulates a vision of what the community desires to become in the future. This section presents the Master Plan's Vision and Guiding Principles and establishes a framework for planning recommendations, policies, future projects and actions.

## Evolving Discussion

The Vision and Guiding Principles incorporate the main ideas and recurring themes discussed throughout the planning process and are primarily based on the Vision and Goals Workshop conducted on March 9, 2013.

The results of ongoing public outreach efforts were used to create materials and guide discussion during the Vision and Goals Workshop. During the Vision and Goals Workshop participants became part of an evolving discussion where they were asked to help provide potential solutions to the issues facing the Flint community.

The *Vision* and *Guiding Principles* are organized into the main themes that came out of the Vision and Goals Workshop. These include:

- Social Equity & Sustainability
- Reshaping the Economy
- Quality of Life
- Adapting to Change
- Youth
- Civic Life

## A Vision for Flint

The City of Flint has transformed from a lumber center to a carriage town to an auto city. The Master Plan provides the community with a single, united vision and the guidance needed to continue our transformation into a vibrant, sustainable community for residents, workers, students, and visitors.

City government alone is not capable of implementing the Master Plan and must rely upon Flint's greatest asset, its people, to realize the community's desired vision and aspirations. Collectively, the community is working together to make real progress on the City's toughest challenges. Our actions are not bound by today's limitations, but by tomorrow's potential and by *what we imagine Flint can be*.

### We Imagine Flint as a city that...

- *provides for the fundamental needs of all people and responsibly uses and protects our land, water, air, and energy resources.*
- *has a growing and diverse economy that spurs innovation and small business development and prepares our workforce for jobs that offer a livable wage.*
- *is made up of desirable and safe neighborhoods near quality schools, attractive open space, access to fresh food and connected to arts and culture, recreation, and community services by a convenient transportation system.*

- *adapts to change by reshaping our physical environment to be greener and more efficient for a smaller population.*
- *nurtures youth and creates a safe, healthy place for them to learn and thrive.*
- *combines the energy of residents, organizations, and government to proactively address our challenges and share in open and accountable decision-making.*

## **Social Equity & Sustainability**

Past planning efforts failed to deliver equal access and opportunity for all of Flint's residents. The entire Master Plan is rooted in the principles of social equity and sustainability to address clear inequalities between different races and income groups and to care for our most vulnerable people and natural assets.

### **Guiding Principles**

- *Weave social equity and sustainability into all we do.* Pay attention to the actual experiences and outcomes for various social groups based on race, ethnicity, income, age, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, and ability. Shift policies and practices where needed to close gaps in access to education, jobs, health, safety, housing, transportation and involvement in civic and cultural life.
- *Balance and blend social, environmental, and economic needs.* Pursue priorities that reinvigorate the economy, our human connections, and our relationship to the natural environment.

## **Reshaping the Economy**

Flint is industrious and tenacious. We will build upon these virtues to cultivate opportunities from within and ensure that as we attract new employers, we position Flint residents to prosper as well. The City will embrace a creative and entrepreneurial spirit investing in the skills of our people and removing barriers that unfairly limit potential.

### **Guiding Principles**

- *Human development is economic development.* Improve education (early childhood through 12<sup>th</sup> grade), adult literacy, and workforce training. Coordinate resources and initiatives to better prepare Flint residents for locally available jobs.
- *Flint residents can be the drivers of the Flint Economy.* Focus on local small business development by providing access to capital and supportive services and creating incentives to help businesses start and grow.
- *Take advantage of infrastructure, transportation, and vacant industrial brownfields.* Capitalize on our infrastructure and well-connected transportation network to redevelop our brownfield sites and strengthen our position as an employment center.
- *Strengthen existing businesses, attract new industries.* Attract emerging and diverse industries while continuing to support existing businesses.
- *Leverage Flint's education and health institutions.* Foster partnerships between institutions to advance research and create new business opportunities. Increase the economic impact of the growing daytime population by encouraging workers and students to live, play, and shop in Flint.
- *Transform Flint's internal and external image.* Recreate Flint's identity by building upon existing cultural and natural assets and an innovative spirit that embraces the arts, technology, and urban agriculture.

## Quality of Life

Flint will measure success not by the number of residents who call Flint home, but by the quality of life that its residents enjoy. The City will have a thriving downtown and safe, walkable neighborhoods with convenient access to services, arts and culture, recreation, jobs, fresh food, jobs, and transit. Achieving these goals will require community stakeholders – residents, businesses, institutions and non-profits – to work together, fostering a sense of shared ownership for neighborhood projects.

## Guiding Principles

- *Everybody must feel safe everywhere.* Emphasize both enforcement and crime prevention. Offer supportive programming for youth. Promote re-entry programs for ex-offenders. Empower local groups to play a meaningful role in public safety and crime prevention and improve transparency and communication between citizens and the police department.
- *Flint will prosper when neighborhoods succeed.* Invest in stabilizing neighborhoods. Commit to partnering with neighborhood organizations to create neighborhood-specific plans to coordinate resources more effectively.
- *Every person deserves a safe and healthy home and a choice of housing.* Create pathways for home ownership and promote quality rental housing. Provide for a mix of incomes and racially and ethnically diverse neighborhoods. Partner with organizations and programs to combat homelessness, promote home maintenance, and streamline the purchase of vacant lots and homes.
- *Blight elimination is critical to changing Flint's image.* Remove blight in conjunction with targeted investment and crime prevention to improve the City while helping change our image.
- *Flint's neighborhoods need community anchors.* Re-purpose vacant buildings, like closed schools, to create community centers with multiple services under one roof to revitalize neighborhoods.
- *Quality of life is key to keeping our youth here.* Concentrate improvements on quality of life to create an environment where students want to stay and invest in the community.

## Adapting to Change

Declines in Flint's population and economic base present real challenges to City finances and have resulted in uneven patterns of development. These challenges also present an opportunity to reshape our neighborhoods by providing a mix of uses and variety of housing options while rethinking the community's relationship with the natural environment. The Master Plan is a valuable tool in allowing the City to take advantage of these and other opportunities.

### Guiding Principles

- *Flint residents deserve to live in an attractive community.* Work cooperatively with residents, organizations, and government to maintain properties, ensure adequate code enforcement, preserve natural and architectural assets, and promote greening/beautification, repurposing, and demolition.
- *Flint's neighborhoods need to be accessible.* Connect services and community assets such as schools, parks, and employment centers to neighborhoods by pedestrian and bike linkages and public transit.
- *Flint's infrastructure needs to be efficient.* Retool Flint's infrastructure to cut costs and promote long-term sustainability.
- *Achieve cost savings through partnership and alternative funding sources.* Collaborate with organizations to leverage resources and combine services to reduce costs. Actively pursue long-term funding alternatives to create financial stability.
- *Encourage mixed-use development.* Promote higher density around key community assets, public transportation, and along major corridors. Focus on walkability, cycling, and transit when considering new development.
- *Repurpose and reinvent under-populated areas.* Encourage homeowners to assemble property for larger lots in high-vacancy areas. Activate vacant property for productive and innovative uses such as urban agriculture and green infrastructure.

## Youth

Through partnership and coordinated effort and resources, Flint youth will thrive and have the values and guidance to become productive, engaged adults. To support their healthy development, Flint's youth need safe communities, access to healthcare and fresh foods, well-maintained parks and recreation facilities, quality schools and ample after-school programming.

### Guiding Principles

- *Youth are our priority.* Commit to eliminating youth poverty. Provide equitable access to quality education and enrichment programs and jobs. Instill a sense of neighborhood pride among youth through recreation and community service programs.
- *Strengthen intergenerational relationships.* Expand efforts to build trust and communication between youth, adults, and elders through mentorship, sustained participation in youth programs, and closer neighborhood ties.
- *Healthy families raise healthy youth.* Provide family support services, such as daycare and adult education to help parents and caregivers fulfill their roles.
- *Engage youth in civic life.* Listen to youth perspectives and welcome their contributions to the community. Involve youth in decisions that impact them.

## **Civic Life**

There are hundreds of public, private, non-profit, and community groups engaged in efforts to improve the Flint community. The Master Plan can play a key role in coordinating these efforts and encouraging collaboration among all who are interested in enhancing Flint. Implementation of the Master Plan will depend upon open community engagement, efficient use of resources, and accountability. The City's leaders must be held accountable to its people for upholding the Master Plan's values and priorities.

## **Guiding Principles**

- *Base decisions on active public participation.* Maintain open communication and engage citizens throughout the decision making process. Reach out to people and communities likely to be impacted by a decision or whose voices are under-represented.
- *Empower residents to improve their neighborhoods.* Encourage and invest in community problem solving and neighborhood improvement efforts. Build the capacity of community groups to create neighborhood change.
- *Coordination is needed to make good use of resources.* Maximize the impact of limited resources through organized action among public, private, non-profit and community groups.
- *Hold government accountable to the Master Plan.* Make sure city department programs and policies align with the Master Plan and that decisions are based upon the Plan's guidance.