4 ECONOMIC & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES
Master Plan Consultants:

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ECONOMIC & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Economic development is, quite simply, using a community’s human, capital, physical and natural resources to generate marketable goods and services – and in the process create jobs, raise incomes and protect the property tax base. Much of this master plan is aimed at aligning the City of Pittsfield’s resources in such a way as to set the stage for the city’s continued economic revitalization.

Pittsfield has chosen to meld the development of economic, cultural and historic resources into a single element of the Master Plan. This emphasizes the recognition that historic architecture and cultural venues are important assets in an urban place such as Pittsfield. These can be leveraged to enhance the city’s entire economy.

Traditionally, Pittsfield has been a manufacturing community. At one point, General Electric was the biggest private employer. Today the city faces significant economic challenges not uncommon to many old industrial communities. The shift away from manufacturing in the region has hit many cities hard as their locations and their employment bases became less advantageous in the more globalized marketplace.

Another major legacy of heavy industry has been pollution. General Electric, an industrial giant that drove prosperity in the city, reached an agreement with the federal government to clean a portion of the Housatonic River nearest their Pittsfield plant. In addition, GE has agreed to a redevelopment of the brownfields upon which their facilities once stood. The settlement includes a multi-million dollar investment in the city as well as the creation of the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority (PEDA) to oversee the transition of the contaminated land back into income generating property.

Pittsfield has started to transition from a manufacturing focus to a more diversified economy that includes the knowledge and creative sectors. To do this, the city must attract the entrepreneurs and skilled workers that will create and support the 21st century companies that will drive the city to success. To do this, the city has to be prepared to accommodate the preferences and diversity of needs of businesses and their employees.

University of Toronto professor Richard Florida’s widely cited work, “Competing in the Age of Talent: Environment, Amenities, and the New Economy” identified the preferences of knowledge workers.

> Large numbers of active young people
> Wide range of outdoor activities and recreation
> Vibrant music and performance scene
> Nightlife diversity, including many options without alcohol
> A healthy environment and a dedication to sustainability
> A lifestyle which is youth-friendly and supportive of diversity
Pittsfield has an abundance of natural resources that provide residents with the outdoor recreation activities, such as hiking, biking or kayaking. Now the city needs to focus on creating the vibrant downtown and quality neighborhoods that will offer the street life, dining and entertainment opportunities these workers want.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS – ECONOMIC SECTORS**

**Industry Sector Analysis**

Pittsfield’s economy is primarily service-based with relatively few manufacturer left. As shown in the following table, the largest employers in the city in 2005 were in the healthcare and social assistance, retail trade, and accommodation/food services sectors. Approximately 13 percent of employment was in construction, manufacturing, and utilities.

One of the growing areas of economic impact in Pittsfield and the Berkshire region is the creative sector. Traditional economic data sources do not depict this activity in a way that is easy to track.

However, a recent regional project created a benchmark for the creative sector. The Berkshire Creative Economy Project defined the creative sector as the "enterprises and people involved in the production and distribution of goods and services in which the aesthetic, intellectual, and emotional engagement

### EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR IN PITTSFIELD, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Number of Firms</th>
<th>Average Employment</th>
<th>Average Weekly Wage (Gross)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>1,172</td>
<td>$782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>2,506</td>
<td>$1,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>$1,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>$858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>3,433</td>
<td>$482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation / warehousing</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>$719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>$736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and insurance</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1,260</td>
<td>$1,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate / rental / leasing</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>$490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional / technical services</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>1,736</td>
<td>$1,204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of companies</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>$3,285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative / waste services</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1,243</td>
<td>$600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational services</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1,659</td>
<td>$857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care / social assistance</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>5,835</td>
<td>$786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, recreation</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>$344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation / food services</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>1,712</td>
<td>$271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services not public admin.</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>1,089</td>
<td>$397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1,075</td>
<td>$938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsfield (All sectors)</td>
<td>1,538</td>
<td>25,726</td>
<td>$790</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development)
of the consumer gives the product value in the marketplace.” The following table describes the wages found in some of the creative economy occupations.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the total number of workers for all industry sectors in Pittsfield increased by 844 jobs (1.5%) between the 2nd quarter of 2001 and the 2nd quarter of 2006. The architectural and engineering services industry experienced the most employment growth with a total of 1,093 new jobs. This figure represents approximately 19 percent of the total employment growth experienced in the city during this time period.

Other industries in Pittsfield that experienced substantial employment growth during this five year time period include: residential mental health facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Average Weekly Wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architects, except landscape and naval</td>
<td>$1,548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architectural and civil drafters</td>
<td>$817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art, drama, and music teachers, postsecondary</td>
<td>$1,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activists</td>
<td>$780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curators</td>
<td>$772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum technicians and conservators</td>
<td>$857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>$868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library technicians</td>
<td>$451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art directors</td>
<td>$1,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-media artists and animators</td>
<td>$1,149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial and industrial designers</td>
<td>$838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floral designers</td>
<td>$455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic designers</td>
<td>$675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior designers</td>
<td>$770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editors</td>
<td>$885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writers and authors</td>
<td>$1,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcast technicians</td>
<td>$682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographers</td>
<td>$1,104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Berkshire Creative Economy Report)
(506 new jobs), cement and concrete product manufacturing (307 new jobs), office administrative services (261 new jobs) and residential building construction (229 new jobs).

In the same timeframe, the manufacturing industry continued to shed jobs. The sector lost 2,037 jobs, which made up 64.7 percent of all employment losses in the region.

**Availability of Land**

In the current environment, the availability of land for commercial, retail and industrial development and expansion does not seem to be an issue for Pittsfield. The 52-acre William Stanley Business Park and numerous infill opportunities in downtown and in retail areas offer start-ups as well as relocating or expanding businesses a variety of location options. Protecting enough land for these non-residential uses is a priority for the city – taking any land away must be carefully considered, as industrial land is hard to replace. Preservation of industrial land is not simply an issue of protecting the zoning in these areas. The city must proactively plan to prevent conflicts between residential neighborhoods and industrial activity – both are important to the city’s revitalization.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS – EMPLOYMENT**

The City of Pittsfield has experienced a substantial amount of fluctuation in its unemployment rate. According to Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development, the unemployment rate peaked at 11.8% in 1991 and 1992, and then continuously decreased until 2000. Part of the reason for the decreasing unemployment rate may be due to a shrinking labor force over the 1990s. Between 1990 and 1999, the labor force decreased by 9.6%, or nearly 2,300. Since 2000, the unemployment rate has fluctuated between 3.2% and 5.3%. The City of Pittsfield fares well when comparing the unemployment rate to that of surrounding communities, the county and the state.

**UNEMPLOYMENT: 1990 - 2005**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pittsfield</th>
<th>North Adams</th>
<th>Lenox</th>
<th>Lanesborough</th>
<th>Berkshire County</th>
<th>Massachusetts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development)
Employment-to-Residence Ratio
An Employment-to-Residence (E-R) ratio provides an estimate of the jobs-worker balance in a community. An E-R ratio of 1.0 or higher indicates that an area is a net importer of labor; that it tends to be more of an employment center rather than a bedroom community. In 2000, Pittsfield employed 26,551 persons, with 20,846 of those workers also living in Pittsfield. This resulted in an E-R ratio of 1.27, with Pittsfield employing 27%, or nearly 6,000 more persons than its residential population. It is important to note that the E-R ratio does not account for whether or not the resident workers possess the necessary education and skills for the available jobs. While a high E-R ratio is good for the local economy, it also may be indicative of a likely mismatch between available workforce and available jobs in the city.
Household income
As of 2000, the median household income in Pittsfield was $35,655. This figure is higher than North Adams, but significantly lower than Lenox and Lanesborough, as well as both the county and the state. Adjusted for inflation, the median household income has decreased substantially in Pittsfield. The inflation-adjusted median household income in Pittsfield in 1990 was 9.8 percent, or almost $4,000, greater than it was in 2000.

Change in Median Household Income (Inflation-Adjusted), 1990-2000
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Bureau of Labor Statistics)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City of Pittsfield</th>
<th>City of North Adams</th>
<th>Town of Lenox</th>
<th>Town of Lanesborough</th>
<th>Berkshire County</th>
<th>State of Massachusetts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-9.8%</td>
<td>-5.2%</td>
<td>-3.1%</td>
<td>-2.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXISTING CONDITIONS - EDUCATION

Educational Attainment
Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education that a person has achieved, whether it is the highest grade completed or the highest degree received. Employers, especially in the knowledge sectors, need highly trained and educated employees. As of 2000, Pittsfield lagged behind both the county and the state. Pittsfield has a considerably high percentage of its population stopping at a high school degree. Approximately 19.5 percent of the state’s population, and 15.0 percent of the county’s population hold a bachelors degree, but only 12.4 percent of Pittsfield residents do.

Highest Level of Educational Attainment: 2000
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>City of Pittsfield</th>
<th>Berkshire County</th>
<th>State of Massachusetts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No High School Diploma</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or professional degree</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

College Bound Students: 2004-2005
(Source: Massachusetts Department of Education)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pittsfield SD</th>
<th>North Adams SD</th>
<th>Lenox SD</th>
<th>Lanesborough SD</th>
<th>State of Massachusetts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>83%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School District Report Cards

In compliance with the federal No Child Left Behind Act, all school districts create annual report cards based on Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test scores. The following chart compares Pittsfield students who score proficient or advanced with those who do across the state level. The remaining students scored at the “warning/failing” or the “needs improvement” level. College bound students are defined as any high school graduate who plans to attend a 2- or 4-year private or public college. As seen in the following chart, Pittsfield has a higher percentage of college bound students when compared to the state.

Teacher Qualification

The No Child Left Behind Act requires that public school teachers in both reading and math be “Highly Qualified”. In Massachusetts, this includes teachers who hold a state certification and who can demonstrate core academic subject matter (English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics and government, economics, arts, history and geography) competency. Approximately 92.4 percent of the teachers in the Pittsfield School District are deemed Highly Qualified. This is comparable to the statewide average of 93.8 percent.

Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on MCAS 2004-2005
(Source: Massachusetts Department of Education)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
<th>Grade 7</th>
<th>Grade 8</th>
<th>Grade 8</th>
<th>Grade 10</th>
<th>Grade 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Sci &amp; Tech</td>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Sci &amp; Tech</td>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pittsfield School District □ State of Massachusetts
The Hibbard Alternative High School is an alternative means of educating struggling students. The school is focused on encouraging students to complete high school, by providing specialized courses and skills for students who may demand additional help. An inflated dropout rate should be examined in context.

**School District Dropout Rates: 2003-2004**  
(Source: Massachusetts Department of Education)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Dropout Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pittsfield SD</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Adams SD</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lenox SD</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanesborough (Mount Greylock) SD</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Massachusetts</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Drop out rate**  
The drop out rate among high school students in the Pittsfield School District was more than twice the state average and sixteen times higher than in the surrounding school districts. The Pittsfield School District averaged an 8.0 percent dropout rate. The three high schools within the district ranged from having a 6.3 percent dropout rate in Pittsfield High School to a 7.1 percent dropout rate in Taconic High School to a 50.9 percent dropout rate within Hibbard Alternative High School (28 of the 55 students).11

**EXISTING CONDITIONS – CURRENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES**  
Pittsfield has been an active participant in the development of important regional economic development and educational initiatives. The Berkshire Blueprint is a regional action plan that prioritizes strategies for business development and contains a matrix to measure progress in key economic areas. The Berkshire Blueprint consists of the Berkshire Strategy and the Berkshire Creative Economy Project.

The Berkshires Strategy Project (2006) provides a comprehensive snapshot of the region’s economy, a detailed analysis of target industry clusters and recommendations designed to increase the competitiveness of the region. The industries identified as having the strongest competitive position in Berkshire County include Plastics, Financial Services and Hospitality/Tourism, which drove the region’s economic recovery. Continued economic growth, over time, requires that the county become a magnet for entrepreneurs and business leaders, develop a vibrant well-connected community, become a nexus for a variety of firms and not rely just on one, and install a high quality communications infrastructure.

The Berkshire Creative Economy Project (2007) focuses on strategies to identify, enhance, and increase awareness of the creative cluster in the region. The creative economy includes commercial arts, design, visual arts and crafts, the literary and performing arts, and heritage and conservation. Among the many recommendations includes developing a design center as a single home for numerous artists and a design laboratory where non-artists can come to work out ideas or problems.

Another report, the Berkshire Compact for Higher Education, focused on what the community must do educationally to transition from a manufacturing economy to a knowledge-based one. Its four goals are to: raise the aspirations of county
young people to make college education the norm; improve access to education, training and lifelong learning; make Berkshire County a competitive location for the knowledge-based economy; and develop a social contract that promotes learning, earning and civic engagement.

EXISTING CONDITIONS
– CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Historic Resources
The City of Pittsfield has something many other communities around the nation want – historic character and a sense of authenticity. Since appearance is fundamentally linked to economic success, these urban attributes are fundamentally tied to the city’s ongoing revitalization effort. The city recognizes this and wants to move to protect these very important assets. In some cases, historic assets have been preserved and protected by the government or through the efforts of local institutions and citizens. However, these efforts, though devoted, are often uncoordinated and largely dependant on committed individuals.

There are many reasons for preserving historically significant resources and their surroundings. Older buildings provide tangible links to the past; they give us a sense of the continuity of time and place. Just as important, they become part of our own lives – and attract people seeking authentic and interesting areas in which to live. Preservation should not be a reaction to a crisis, but part of the planning process.

In the Master Plan Community survey, protecting Pittsfield’s authenticity ranked as important to almost three-quarters (71.6%) of respondents. Very few people disagreed that historical preservation is important to the city. At the same time a majority of people (58.0%) support making new buildings look like existing ones to protect Pittsfield’s urban and historic character. Very few people (11.3%) oppose such a planning strategy.

The National Park Service maintains the National Register of Historic places, which is the official list of historic and cultural resources worthy of preservation. The register, which was authorized in 1966, includes districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that are significant in American history. Listing in the National Register honors a place, but does not oblige private properties to open their properties to the public, to restore them or even to maintain them, if they choose not to do so.

Listing in the National Register does bestow some benefits including:
> Consideration of impact on the property in the planning for federally licensed or federally funded projects.
> Eligibility for certain tax provisions such as a 20 percent investment tax credit for rehabilitation of structures. Depreciation advantages and other charitable contribution deductions are also available.
Qualification for federal historic preservation grants.

The National Register of Historic Places includes the following places in Pittsfield:
> Allen Hotel – Wendall Avenue
> William Russel Allen House – East Street
> Berkshire Life Insurance Company Building – North Street
> Eaton, Crane and Pike Company Factory – South Church Street
> Samuel Harrison House – Third Street
> Morewood School – South Mountain Road
> Old Central Fire Station – Allen Street
> Old Central High School – First Street
> Old Town Hall – East Street
> Park Square Historic District – Roughly bounded by East Housatonic, South, North and Fenn Streets and Wendell Avenue
> Charles Whittlesey Power House - South Street
> Providence Court - East Street
> South Mountain Concert Hall - New South Mountain Road
> Springside Park – North Street and Springside Avenue
> Upper North Street Commercial District - North Street and Eagle Street
> Wahconah Park – Wahconah Street
> Wollison-Shipton Building - North Street

Hancock Shaker Village, which is located in both Pittsfield and Hancock, has been designated as a National Historic Landmark. National Historic Landmarks are nationally significant historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. Today, fewer than 2,500 historic places bear this national distinction. Working with citizens throughout the nation, the National Historic Landmarks Program draws upon the expertise of National Park Service staff who work to nominate new landmarks and provide assistance to existing landmarks.

The city has two historic districts in the downtown area registered with the National Park Service. The Park Square Historic District centers on Park Square and extends north just past Fenn Street and south almost to East Street. In most cases, it is a block deep to the east as far as Wendell Avenue to the south and Pearl Street further north. The boundaries are shown on the accompanying map. The Upper North Street Commercial District is one property deep on both sides of North Street from Columbus Avenue to Madison Avenue on the west side of the street and from Eagle Street to Maplewood Avenue on the east side.

Cultural Resources
Along with Pittsfield’s architectural heritage, the city boasts a number of cultural resources that enhance the quality of life. Culture builds community and an investment in Pittsfield’s cultural assets is an investment in the city’s future.
In the Master Plan survey more than half of people (58%) rated as good or very good, the cultural opportunities in the city. This is not surprising given the new and traditional institutions in Pittsfield.

The city’s Office of Cultural Development was created to enhance Pittsfield’s quality of life and its role as the cultural hub of the Berkshires by promoting, supporting and initiating cultural activities. The office works closely with the city’s Cultural Development Board and representatives of the city’s cultural organizations, individual artists, teachers, and community members to ensure that arts and culture are accessible to all Pittsfield residents. The Office of Cultural Development has initiated the development of The Pittsfield Cultural Plan, which is designed to serve as a roadmap over the next three years to establish the city as a center of culture, arts, and entertainment in Berkshire County and beyond, to enrich the lives of Pittsfield, residents and to contribute to the city’s momentum toward making Pittsfield a better and more attractive place to live and do business. The following are some of the cultural organizations in Pittsfield.12

### PITTSFIELD VISUAL ARTS

Art Of The Game  
Art.On.No Artist Collective  
Artscape: Public Art in Downtown  
Berkshire Art Association  
Berkshire Fine Handcrafts  
Berkshire Museum  
Berkshire Community College Koussevitsky Art Gallery  
Cormier Art Gallery  
Ferrin Gallery  
Gallery Boreas  
Le Petit Musee  
Lichtenstein Center for the Arts  
Pasko Frame & Gift Center  
Sheeptacular Public Art Project  
Storefront Artist Project  
Pittsfield Literary Arts / History  
Arrowhead, the historic home of Herman Melville  
Berkshire Athenaeum  
Berkshire Family History Association  
Berkshire County Historical Society  
Berkshire Museum  
Berkshire Writers Room  
Hancock Shaker Village  
Pittsfield Elms Vintage Baseball Team  
Rev. Samuel Harrison Society  
Silvio O. Conte National Archives  
Historic Wahconah Park  
Word Street
MASTER PLAN GOALS

In terms of Economic and Cultural Development and Historic and Cultural Resources, the City of Pittsfield has set its sights on the achievement of the following goals. The strategies recommended to achieve these goals are found in the next section of this element.

The Pittsfield Cultural Council is affiliated with and grants funds from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to support community cultural activities. Projects must represent a solid contribution to the vitality of Pittsfield’s cultural life. While in some cases projects originating outside of Pittsfield may be funded, priority is given to those involving Pittsfield residents.

GOAL 1
Promote the growth and expansion of new and existing businesses that support the city’s economic, environmental and social vision. Pittsfield needs to remain active in recruiting and sustaining businesses. The vision of Pittsfield as an economically and environmentally sustainable place requires focusing limited governmental resources on enterprises that will contribute over the long term to the health and vibrancy of the city. Environmental sustainability, including the generation of renewable energy, can promote and create economic development. The city, as part of the Berkshires region, has participated in a number of initiatives aimed at boosting economic growth. As the region’s economic hub, Pittsfield has an important role in promoting that economic development.

GOAL 2
Pursue stable, high-paying jobs and long-term career paths. One of the main reasons people come to, or stay in, a place – and make it grow dynamically – is that they will be able to find work. In Pittsfield, the work needs to be meaningful and pay enough to allow people to live in the city. Pittsfield should be a place that people can come and put down roots and be secure that they can invest and live in the community over the long term.

This is a change in focus for economic development efforts. Traditional strategies have focused on attracting business. Now, the dual thrust is to create a people friendly as well as a business friendly climate that will make Pittsfield a profitable and enjoyable place to do business.

GOAL 3
Transform the Pittsfield Public School System into a center of educational excellence.

Indisputably, the quality and stability of our city schools are major factors in promoting Pittsfield as a desirable place to live, work and visit. Good schools make good citizens and also lead to stable neighborhoods, higher property values, and increased investment by the business sector. One of the most important places that the city can have a direct impact on the future of our workforce is on the city’s public schools. It is here that students are instilled with the skills and the cognitive abilities to work in or create the companies that will propel Pittsfield in the future.
GOAL 4
Expand and capitalize on Pittsfield’s diverse cultural institutions and historic fabric. In the 21st century, creative workers and entrepreneurs want to be in interesting places. Pittsfield is distinctive, in that it is an urban center—a city in the country. It has a rich history that was, and continues to be centered on the arts, recreation and health care. A vibrant cultural scene can attract new business and a highly educated and skilled labor force into the area. The city boasts a multitude of diverse historic, cultural and natural resources—key ingredients to a community wishing to become a hub in today’s knowledge-based economy. We need to ensure the protection and promotion of these valuable assets, so that they can continue to drive Pittsfield’s economy into the 21st century. Expanding the arts and creative businesses will help bring diverse new businesses with good-paying jobs into the City.

GOAL 5
Foster the growth of continuing education and higher education in Pittsfield and throughout the region, including seeking out opportunities to partner with the Pittsfield Adult Learning Center, BCC and/or MCLA to achieve shared community, economic and educational goals. Quality businesses need quality people. Higher education institutions contribute to economic development by producing the human capital that 21st century companies need to succeed. In addition to raising the quality of the local workforce, institutions of higher education increase local economic development principally by increasing local innovative ideas as well as the buying power of the students, staff and faculty.
STRATEGY 1
Build on the Pittsfield-specific action items, recommendations and strategies of the Berkshire Blueprint and Creative Economy reports to foster the expansion of existing businesses and growth of new businesses.

Strategy 1A
Support the growth of burgeoning businesses in the three targeted economic clusters: Creative, Plastics, and Hospitality & Tourism.

Pittsfield economic development efforts should focus on the three sectors identified in The Berkshire Blueprint. According to the report, these clusters were selected due to their substantial impact on the regional economy, competitive position vis-à-vis other domestic and international regions, alignment of strengths with nearby metropolitan areas, and the level of organizational support for a cluster activation strategy.

Strategy 1B
Update the city’s economic development marketing plan to sustain a long-range marketing and communications plan to attract investment and talent to the city and the region.

The Berkshire Blueprint has – and the city should support through its efforts – a marketing campaign that will improve the perception of the Berkshires by emphasizing the region’s assets and the prosperity created by its entrepreneurial economy. Among the current objectives of the marketing campaign are:

> Identify a highly recognized, compelling and unified position and strategy for the Berkshires.

> Communicate to both internal and external stakeholders that the Berkshires have a strong potential for growth in high-value manufacturing and services.

> Sustain a long-range marketing and communications plan to attract investment and talent to the Berkshires.

This work should be coordinated with the Office of Cultural Development and the recommendations of the Pittsfield Cultural Plan. It is essential to continue to develop and expand an integrated marketing strategy to promote Pittsfield as a creative city in which to live, work and play.

> Continue to involve businesses as active partners in cultural programming.

> Actively support smaller and start-up arts and cultural organizations and continue to provide and expand technical assistance in the areas of development, marketing, and governance.

> Develop a cooperative marketing campaign for downtown businesses that complements the progress made in positioning Pittsfield as a cultural center. Create ‘economies of scale’ in publicity, advertising, and information-sharing while building the level of cooperation among downtown
businesses.

> Encourage integration of new and existing arts-related and cultural businesses into Downtown Inc. and its committees.

**Strategy 1C**

*Raise awareness of and financial support for existing businesses in the local and regional cluster building efforts.*

For most communities, the majority of new jobs and capital investment are derived from existing businesses. According to a study conducted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, over 80% of the economic growth for an average American community results from the creation and expansion of locally owned and operated firms.

The retention and expansion of existing businesses is critical to maintaining Pittsfield's existing revenue and employment bases. The city should utilize the resources that are available and not duplicate efforts. The city, should work in partnership with regional organizations such as the Berkshire Economic Development Corporation (BEDC), Downtown, Inc., and the Berkshire Visitor's Bureau. The city should expand and improve its outreach efforts to ensure that successful small businesses receive the recognition that they deserve, and at-risk companies are identified prior to their leaving the area or going out of business.

There are many aspects to retaining and growing local businesses. Some of the more fundamental strategies include:

> Develop a formal Business Retention and Expansion Program (BREP).
> Establish a Business Visitation program to identify and track the progress of local businesses.
> Form an existing business and industry awards program to provide formal recognition to successful area businesses and innovative initiatives.

**Strategy 1D**

*Partner with business, labor and educational institutions to make sure residents are trained in fields that align with regional cluster needs.*

For the past five years, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been tracking the number of job vacancies by community. Both the state report and local reports indicate that approximately 2,200 to 2,500 good-paying jobs go unfilled each quarter because the workforce is not skilled in the right areas. As a result, local businesses have to look outside of the city to find workers with the proper qualifications to fill these positions. This effort to find skilled workers makes Pittsfield a less desirable place to start or relocate a business.

The Berkshire Blueprint contains action steps to better align workforce training with regional employer needs.

> Organize with employers to determine short- and long-term workforce needs.
> Encourage the alignment of institutional research and talent with emerging targeted businesses and clusters.
> Connect educational institutions with employers to develop needed training programs.
Encourage internships and employment recruiting efforts through regional educational institutions.

The Creative Economy Report recommends exploring the potential for locating design-related artists and firms in a single, multi-tenant space/facility. This incubator would allow new artists to share the costs of space and services. In addition, the designers would be concentrated in a collaborative environment in such a way so as to foster their individual growth and the growth of the overall economy. Other components of the Berkshire Design Showcase Initiative that might be housed in the arts incubator include the marketing of design products and services as well as a Berkshire Design Laboratory which would address design problems or opportunities for homeowners, corporations, cultural institutions and public sector institutions.

In order to enhance the relationship between the creative economy and students in the public schools, the Creative Economy report sets out a framework for integration. The initiative has four components:

- Creating a leadership team of artists and educators to draft a plan and a set of strategies.
- Enlisting the Berkshire Compact for Higher Education as the logical organization to oversee and support the initiative.
- Pursuing a higher level of funding for public school arts education programs.
- Establishing new design and preservation degree programs at local institutions of higher education.

The Pittsfield Cultural Plan outlines additional steps and recommendations to expand arts education and cultural offerings to young people to engage them in cultural activities, provide needed creative thinking skills for career success, and fully involve them in the growing cultural community.

**STRATEGY 2**

Generate a highly educated, well-trained workforce to meet the needs of a growing, diverse economy.

A quality school system is essential to any city. Quality schools have a direct correlation with quality of life. Employers are more likely to locate businesses in communities that offer a high quality of life. They are more likely to locate to a community that they want to live in and be a part of, that existing employees will relocate to, and where new recruits will relocate. In addition, quality schools produce a well-trained, quality workforce available to employers.

City schools and training programs need to build a creative workforce that will make sure companies are innovative and successful over the long term. In Pittsfield, the goal is broader than just making sure workers are trained to fill open jobs. Businesses, especially those
with good paying jobs, need to know they will be able to find workers that will help them succeed. In addition, with ever changing technologies and an increasing need to understand and employ “green” technologies the workforce will require continued training to compete. Successful training programs, including Greenfield Community College’s training on green technology, should be offered through continuing education programs at both BCC and MCLA.

It is recognized that these issues can only be addressed superficially, at best, within a municipal master plan. It is the role of the School Department and the School Committee to make sound and effective decisions related to the public school system, which must be supported by the city and the master plan. However, local officials have a crucial role to play in improving public schools, even when they don’t have authority over the school department. At the local level, we need a shared sense of responsibility and accountability from all community stakeholders. Teachers and administrators, community and faith leaders, business leaders, and local elected officials must work together to ensure that there is not a disconnect between the School Department and the city or even from school to school.

The city should bring together educators, administrators, parents, business leaders and other stakeholders to craft strategies to raise the caliber of city schools. The city should advocate for structure and transparency in the school system that builds in mechanisms of checks and balances. In many cities and towns, municipal officials are already using their leadership roles to address the conditions teachers confront in the classroom. Some possible strategies this committee could investigate include:

> Creating a permanent mechanism or committee to facilitate business and other institutional involvement in education. Pittsfield companies already play a role in education, but that role is limited and could be opened to more people if there was a mechanism to communicate back and forth.

> Investigate programs such as Project Lead the Way. This program consists of a series of elective high school courses as well as five stand-alone multi-week units that provide middle school students an overview of engineering concepts and applications, including but not limited to instruction in principles of engineering, an introduction into engineering design, digital electronics, computer integrated manufacturing, civil engineering and architecture, etc. The Project Lead the Way website estimates the cost to high schools (presuming they must purchase all of the equipment and software) at under $100,000 and $50,000 for middle schools. Local businesses could partner to fund those opportunities.

> Expand business-education partnerships such as corporate job shadowing programs and other
mentoring programs. Mentoring programs that expose students to the professions and to careers and opportunities in the business community, especially in the engineering and high technology companies, are an excellent way to expose students to these fields and to the importance of securing a quality education. Job shadowing programs and internships can help students get excited about particular businesses or even help them understand if a particular vocation is not their calling.

> Build additional support systems by bringing together diverse stakeholders to discuss a community-wide vision for schools and to address key priorities and concerns.

> Promote adequate funding for key school improvement strategies and improvements to school facilities.

> Address unmet social services and health needs that can become obstacles to academic achievement and derail existing efforts to promote academic achievement.

> Share information and resources that can contribute to strong city-school partnerships and improved communication between municipal and school leaders.

> Promote adequate funding and expand the array of learning opportunities for both children and adults with disabilities and special needs.

> Expand the array of learning opportunities available to children and youth when they are out of schools. Such as expanding after school programs, keeping schools open beyond the school day, encouraging libraries, museums and city parks to get involved, make non-traditional options more accessible to students who are not succeeding in the traditional programs, and establish and strengthen school-to-career opportunities.

> Promote continuity by establishing longer, staggered terms for school committee members.

**STRATEGY 3**

Ensure the availability of industrially and commercially zoned land to support existing businesses as well as providing diverse opportunities for new businesses to locate in the city without creating unnecessary conflicts with residential areas.

**Strategy 3A**

*Support the mission of the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority (PEDA).*

The Pittsfield Economic Development Authority (PEDA) is a quasi-public agency created by the Massachusetts State Legislature in order to redevelop the 52-acre former General Electric Company industrial facility. The result, the William Stanley Business Park, will be a campus-style park with a strong sense of New England and historic details that reinforces the broader city’s traditional character. Office, industrial and research buildings will be set on tree-lined streets. The Master Plan includes an onsite employee-training center with
shared office space and business support systems. Incentives for businesses in the park include potential tax, training and building assistance grants from local, state and private sources.

The city can support PEDA’s mission in many ways. One possible avenue is to upgrade the streetscape along East Street – and make it a more welcoming gateway to the business park. Other opportunities include making sure that city-owned infrastructure is available and local retail and mixed-use areas are appealing to potential workers.

Strategy 3B
Preserve the integrity of existing industrial areas.
Standard zoning arose as a reaction to the mixing of incompatible uses. The impacts of traditional industry such as noise, pollution and traffic do not mix well with other land uses such as residential areas.

It is not always the residents who suffer. Often the operators of land uses, such as industry or farming with their unavoidable impacts, find themselves in conflicts with local residents. These conflicts can undermine the long term viability of their operations – often forcing them out as more and more residential uses take hold. The city should examine the zoning around existing industrial areas and make sure that it adequately buffers incompatible uses.

Many, but not all, existing industrial areas contain various levels of contamination or are suspected of being contaminated. In some cases, leaving these as industrial areas has the additional benefit of not requiring a complete cleanup of pollution; this means the lands (called “brownfields”) get back into productive use faster.

Strategy 3C
Ensure that there are sufficient appropriately-sized parcels zoned for industrial and commercial uses.

While there may be sufficient land zoned as industrial in Pittsfield, the available or developable land may not be of sufficient size to attract operations. Some of the industrial operations found in the city have had a hard time relocating or expanding because their operational requirements did not fit in the space available.

Land is a finite resource in Pittsfield. The city can make best use of it by working, perhaps with private developers, to consolidate disparate parcels. Other strategies may include the city acquisition of strategic parcels or the identification of other suitable areas for industrial growth and its appropriate rezoning.

Strategy 3D
Identify industrially zoned “Priority Development Sites” that qualify for expedited permitting and funding under state statute – Chapter 43D.

M.G.L. 43D is a state initiative designed to speed up the development
approval process for particular sites within a community while maintaining and enhancing the quality of the development review. The Priority Development Site program provides for:

> A transparent and efficient process for municipal permitting
> Guaranteed permitting decisions within 180 days
> Increased visibility of target development site
> Aggressive marketing and promotion of the site

The initiative provides numerous incentives including $150,000 for professional staffing assistance, local government reorganization, and consulting services as well as priority consideration for other funds and financing.

Once opting into the program, Pittsfield would have 120 days to identify qualifying parcels, obtain owner’s permission, if private, appoint a single point of contact for streamlined permitting as well as amend local rules, regulations and procedures needed for expedited permitting. The city must then be ready to review permits within 180 days of the receipt of a complete application.

STRATEGY 4

Strengthen downtown as a pedestrian friendly, vibrant, mixed-use urban place.

Strategy 4A

Unify the zoning within the Downtown district

The purpose of Pittsfield’s Arts Overlay District is “to enhance the vitality in downtown.” Unfortunately, the disparate zoning districts that underlie the Arts Overlay District do not lend themselves to creating a downtown environment. The setbacks, density and parking requirements, although in some cases modified positively by the overlay district, may not achieve the desired effect.

The zoning within the Downtown District could institute design standards or form-based code within the district that achieve the following:

> Eliminate setback requirements and create build-to lines for all streets. Not all streets need to have the same build-to lines, but walkability requires buildings come up to the sidewalk.
> Reduce or eliminate minimum parking requirements.
> Place parking lots behind or on the side of buildings.
> Make retail development the primary use along the first floor of North Street and South Street within the district.
> Institute minimum heights for

14 City of Pittsfield Zoning Ordinance, Article 23.4.320A
buildings within the district, perhaps two stories or three stories.

> Eliminate maximum lot coverage restrictions (R-G has a maximum coverage.)

> Revise the table of uses to include more pedestrian- and downtown-friendly uses. Eliminate auto oriented uses or include design guidelines to make them pedestrian friendly.

> Orient buildings to front the street and not a parking lot.

**Strategy 4B**

*Investigate the creation of a Business Improvement District*

Pittsfield is striving to create a vibrant downtown. Research indicates that most successful downtown revitalization programs are driven by public/private partnerships. One public/private tool that has been used successfully in over 1,400 communities nationwide is the establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID).

A BID is a not-for-profit organization comprised of businesses and property owners located within a defined geographic area. Property owners located within the designated area agree to a small increase in their property taxes in exchange for a higher level of municipal service. Services can include capital improvements, public assistance, grant writing, business development and recruitment, street and sidewalk maintenance, promotion and advertising, events planning, and street clean up and trash removal.

Downtown, Inc. provides some of these services in the Pittsfield core. The value of transforming that organization into a BID (or creating another) is that it would focus greater resources on their downtown mission. Investigating the creation of a BID would involve educating public officials, property owners, merchants and other stakeholders about the associated benefits, responsibilities and costs of a BID. The formation would eventually require the approval of the city as well as a majority of landowners in the designated area.

**Strategy 4C**

*Create a public safety and visitor assistance program in downtown to build an atmosphere of safety, friendliness and goodwill.*

Downtown Pittsfield is not a very dangerous place. Statistics provided by the chief of police at the Master Plan Public Safety Forum showed that there was not a lot of crime downtown. Still there is that perception by many people that it is not safe. When trying to revitalize an area, the perception of a problem is as important as anything else. In order for downtown to become a shopping destination, people have to feel secure traveling there. Whether or not the perceptions of crime or traffic safety or any other comfort issue are real, they must be addressed.

The following are some strategies that will help overcome some of the issues and help reassure people that downtown Pittsfield is a safe place to live, work, shop and do business. These can
be coordinated by Downtown, Inc., a Business Improvement District or another entity.

1. **Police.** Assigning a foot/bike patrol officer to cover the downtown during the evening and on weekends will enhance the perception and reality of increased public safety. A foot patrol experiment conducted in Newark, New Jersey by the Police Foundation identified, “foot patrol may not reduce crime, but it did reduce citizen fear of crime. Residents see their communities as safer and better places to live, and are more satisfied with police services.”

Police officers are fairly expensive personnel to patrol areas that do not have high crime rates. Still, as the Newark experience shows, it works to make a place feel better. When people feel secure, they are more likely to come to a place and populate the streets – the result will be less crime.

2. **Roving ambassadors.** A less expensive solution might be to have another official presence walking the streets. Jacksonville (Florida), New York City and Atlanta are among the many areas that have paid or volunteer ambassadors. These roving helpers are an official presence that not only cuts down on crime, but they are trained to assist residents and visitors in various ways. Ambassadors are charged to:
   > Provide directions and maps.
   > Escort people to destinations.
   > Help you locate a business or service.
   > Call for medical assistance.
   > Provide information on parking.
   > Provide social services information to people in need.
   > Identify and report hazards.
   > Report cleanliness issues.
   > Share a smile and a watchful eye.
   > Contact the police if needed.

3. **Encourage longer hours from shopkeepers.** After police or ambassadors, the best eyes on the street are shopkeepers and employees. They have a personal and financial interest in keeping a place safe – and their tenure on any block means that they often recognize when things are not the way they should be. At the same time, longer hours means that evenings in downtown need not feel abandoned. Vibrancy is the most important strategy for curbing both the perception and reality of crime. People feel safe when other people are around.

4. **Lights on for Safety.** When shops are closed, their window lights can help other eyes on the street prevent crimes and make a place look safer. Additionally, lit windows create more interesting places for pedestrian-activity. Various incentives, including
the provision of energy-efficient fixtures and bulbs, can help the city encourage lit windows all night long. (For more information on this type of program refer to Strategy 8 under Transportation and Circulation/Public Facilities & Services.)

5. Implement Safescape ideas. There are three factors that must be present for a crime to occur: an offender, a victim and opportunity. During the Master Plan Public Safety Forum walk, it became very clear that there were some very unappealing places in downtown Pittsfield. These may not actually be unsafe, but they increase the perception that a place is unsafe. Safescape involves redesigning the built environment to reduce the opportunities for crime. These could include the installation of pedestrian-style lighting, improved maintenance of sidewalks, landscaping, and traffic calming measures.

6. Maintenance. People, especially visitors, have their brains hardwired to notice things that are wrong. Today, when we see overgrown planters, broken lights, broken windows, dark doorways, empty streets, and overfilled trash barrels then we feel uncomfortable. Simple maintenance of broken and cracked sidewalks and curb ramps can make the difference between whether or not an area is navigable. As soon as something goes wrong in downtown, no matter how small, the city or Downtown, Inc., should move immediately to fix it. It is a simple management strategy, which works effectively in malls and town centers across the country.

STRATEGY 5
Create a technology plan for the city that is integrated into the municipal and regional economic development strategy and undertake a “Wireless Pittsfield” initiative that ensures high-speed wireless Internet access is available throughout the city.

In previous decades, roads, rail, power lines and water pipes were the infrastructure considered fundamental to economic development. Today, communities must add broadband access, wireless, and other communication technology to the list.

The plan should address existing public and private infrastructure, community needs assessment, various technology options (wireless broadband, Voice Over IP, Fiber Optic Cable, etc.), identify collaborative partners, and develop strategic recommendations. The development and implementation of a wireless / universal broadband network will boost the city’s prominence as a location for technology-based jobs, enhance distance learning educational opportunities and provide a vehicle for increased public affairs, safety and emergency communications. Provision of this network can be a public venture,
a private venture or a public-private partnership.

Already in Pittsfield, Berkshire Connect has tried to bring the cost of Internet access to business down by leveraging the purchasing power of over 50 large and small companies. It is also working, in collaboration with others, on initiatives to bring Internet access to less affluent households and laptops to middle school students.

**CASE STUDY**

In Troy, New York the city partnered with local business and building owners to expand its existing wireless network. A private firm worked with building owners to place 26 wireless transmitters in strategic locations. All are backed up with emergency generators to keep the network alive during power outages. The city paid for access to the broadband network. Residents and visitors can either pay for Internet access or connect free if they agree to watch a 30-second commercial every two hours.

**STRATEGY 6**

Develop a tourism marketing plan and a tourism-readiness training program for staff in tourism industries and the community at large.

According to the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), tourism is the world’s fastest growing industry and it is expected to be the world’s largest industry by the year 2020. Tourism has a number of potential benefits to the economy. Tourism provides entry-level jobs where young people and others can learn the skills needed for other more lucrative employment. It provides families with a second or third income if needed to make ends meet. Tourism is also being recognized as an opportunity for entrepreneurs to start tourism-related companies. Another advantage is the marketing that tourism can provide for a place. Although not quantified, one could imagine that a business owner might consider moving or expanding operations if he or she has a pleasant tourism experience.

**Strategy 6A**

*Develop a Tourism Marketing Plan*

The city should support the development of a Tourism Marketing Plan to increase the number of travelers to Pittsfield and promote tourism spending within the city. The plan should: 1) promote the city’s natural, cultural and historic assets; 2) support and expand the efforts of the Berkshire Visitors Bureau; 3) support the regional growth of the Hospitality and
Tourism Cluster; and 4) invest in existing cultural and arts organizations.

The Marketing Plan should, at a minimum, inventory and assess local attractions, venues and facilities; assess the city’s current advertising materials and advertising efforts; identify target markets; and develop promotional goals and strategies.

Funding the plan’s strategies is crucial to its success. One method of raising the funds is capturing a fixed percentage of the city’s annual lodging tax revenues that should be designated for tourism marketing, advertising and attraction development activities. Monies could also be used to fund tourism marketing and development of staff positions.

**STRATEGY 6B**

*Develop a Tourism Readiness Campaign*

It is very welcoming when a visitor learns from their waiter or hotel clerk about a park, gallery or favorite coffee shop. Making that connection is like upselling a customer, but on a municipal level – “You have had a pleasant experience with us. You should check out what Pittsfield has to offer down the street.”

The city should work with the Berkshire Visitors Bureau to offer training seminars including two primary components. The focus of the first round of seminars should be to educate government leaders and general managers of local businesses about the economic impact of tourism on a community and the benefits of providing customer service training for frontline staff. The second series of training sessions will focus on hospitality and tourism marketing, community organization, and improving service quality.

**STRATEGY 7**

*Promote existing arts and cultural organizations.*

*Strategy 7A*

*Create an Artisans Trail Map to promote artisans and craftspeople.*

One way to stimulate tourism and to showcase Pittsfield’s original works of art is by establishing an Artisans Trail. A self-directed driving or walking trail can be created that will guide visitors to area art galleries, studios, retail centers, and...
even locally owned restaurants and bed & breakfast inns that feature products native to the city. An Artisans Trail tour offers visitors opportunities to enjoy Pittsfield’s historic architecture, museums, heritage and cultural events, shops and studios. It is something that might be continually available or promoted as a special event.

**Strategy 7B**

*Partner with the Historic Commission to update existing walking and architectural tours of historic places within Pittsfield.*

For history buffs, a well-constructed tour illuminates stories from the past. It needs to be well researched so that buildings and places can be tied to national or local historic events, periods of architecture, or community character. A short brochure should be crafted to tell the best of these stories and entice people to further explore Pittsfield.

Walking tours can also be an opportunity to educate residents about the value and the role of history in the city’s economic development. In conjunction with the tours, other outreach efforts could include:

> Work with the local newspaper to run a continuing series on the benefits of historic preservation, or spotlight a different local building or landmark each week.

> Incorporate historic preservation into the public school curriculum as a way to educate and increase awareness of historic preservation among younger residents.

> Encourage owners of historic properties to become involved with the Historical Commission.

A financial plan should be enacted, listing various funding mechanisms that can assist in implementing these strategies. Examples to consider include the direction of a portion of room occupancy taxes (currently 9.7% of the room rate), and payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) toward arts, cultural and historical programs throughout the city. Additional funding opportunities are available for the production of architectural and historical tour brochures through the U.S. Department of the Interior through the Certified Local Government Program.

**STRATEGY 8**

Protect historic buildings and neighborhood character.

**Strategy 8A**

*Craft zoning language to protect the historic character and buildings within the historic district.*

The city has two historic districts in the downtown area registered with the National Park Service. The Park Square Historic District centers on Park Square and extends north just past Fenn Street and south almost to East Street. In most cases, it is a block deep to the east as far as Wendell Avenue to the south and Pearl Street to the north. The boundaries are shown on the accompanying map. The Upper North Street Commercial District is one property deep on both sides of North Street from Columbus Avenue to Madison Avenue on the west side and from Eagle Street to Maplewood Avenue on the east side.
This listing gives the area federal recognition as an important historic place that should be preserved. The designation opens the door to various types of federal benefits (e.g., federal grants, tax incentives, etc.). However, the National Register listing does not provide protection, or even review, during projects that do not involve federal funds or permits.

The city should strengthen its working relationship and use of the Pittsfield Historical Commission when making land use decisions involving potentially or known historic resources and within historic districts. Over time, the city may wish to explore the benefits of establishing a historic district commission to administer historic district design standards to protect the properties and landmarks in these areas. The criteria for review should be set out in the code, but it should focus on maintaining the historic character of the area. Design guidelines could be provided for:

- Basic building elements including roofs, porches, windows, doors, cornices, lighting, walls, decorative trim, and fences
- Massing, including height, setback and major dimensions
- Construction materials (masonry, metals and wood)
- Landscaping
- Signage
- Streetscape
- Garages and storage buildings

**Strategy 8B**

*Become a Certified Local Government.*

The “Certified Local Government” program is a grant and technical assistance program for communities to promote and plan for historic preservation. “Certified Local Government” is a status conferred to local governments by the Massachusetts Historical Commission in partnership with the National Park Service. This is contingent upon local preservation laws and a qualified citizen body to administer the law, among other stipulations.

Certified communities become eligible for assistance and funds from the National Park Service through the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Typically, awards include grant money used as seed money to initiate studies and protect historic buildings and neighborhoods. Over twelve hundred local governments have benefited and continue to participate in the preservation efforts.

**Strategy 8C**

*Create a citywide inventory of historic and cultural resources.*

The inventory should identify significant historic and cultural properties and sites that are of local and national significance. Once the inventory has been completed, the city should work with the Massachusetts Historical Commission, Berkshire County Historical Society and Pittsfield Historic Commission to conduct public outreach activities that emphasize to residents and businesses the value of
preserving Pittsfield’s historic character as well as steps residents can take to maintain and renovate their homes and business structures.

The city could create its own landmarks program to protect historic properties throughout Pittsfield. At a minimum, such a program could recognize buildings in good repair that contribute to their neighborhood’s historic character. If wanted, such a program could also offer enhanced zoning protections for landmarked buildings.

**Strategy 8D**
*Increase involvement of the Pittsfield Historic Commission in development decisions.*

The city could revise development review to allow for formal input from the Pittsfield Historic Commission for buildings that contribute to historic character or for those within the designated historic district. Depending on the community’s needs, the Commission could render binding or advisory opinions on development proposals before the Community Development Board or variance requests before the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Historic Commission’s jurisdiction could be limited to the external appearance and siting of new buildings or modifications of existing ones. Further, the Historic Commission could review demolition applications for all buildings and structures deemed historic or important to the city’s historic character.

**CASE STUDY**

The Historic Albany Foundation recognizes private buildings that retain their original character, are in a good state of preservation, and contribute to the historical or architectural nature of their neighborhood. The program, initiated and paid for by individual property owners, bases eligibility on the Secretary of the Interior’s standards for rehabilitation. For a $300 fee, the Foundation carefully researches the date of construction, first owner, architect, and/or other pertinent information concerning the origin of the building and includes them on with the 7” x 10” cast aluminum or bronze plaque, which can be posted on the building. The voluntary program offers no extra protections for the building.
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1. Build on the Pittsfield-specific action items, recommendations and strategies of the Berkshire Blueprint and Creative Economy.

A. Support the growth of burgeoning businesses in the three targeted economic clusters: Creative, Plastics, and Hospitality and Tourism.

B. Update the city’s economic development marketing plan to sustain a long-range marketing and communications plan to attract investment and talent to the city and the region.

C. Raise awareness of and financial support for existing businesses in the local and regional cluster building efforts.

D. Partner with business, labor and educational institutions to make sure residents are trained in fields that align with regional cluster needs.

2. Generate a highly educated, well-trained workforce to meet the needs of a growing, diverse economy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>5. Foster the growth of higher education in Pittsfield and throughout the region, including seeking out opportunities to partner with BCC and/or MCLA to achieve shared community, economic and educational goals.</td>
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3. Ensure the availability of industrially and commercially zoned land to support the existing businesses as well as providing diverse opportunities for new businesses to locate in the city without creating unnecessary conflicts with residential areas.

- A. Support the mission of the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority (PEDA).
- B. Preserve the integrity of existing industrial areas.
- C. Ensure that there are sufficient appropriately-sized parcels zoned for industrial and commercial uses.
- D. Identify industrially zoned “Priority Development Sites” that qualify for expedited permitting and funding under state statute – Chapter 43B.
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Strengthen downtown as a pedestrian friendly, vibrant, mixed-use urban place.</td>
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<td>Breakfast the zoning within the Downtown district.</td>
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<td>Investigate the creation of a Business Improvement District.</td>
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<td>Create a public safety and visitor assistance program in downtown to build an atmosphere of safety, friendliness and goodwill.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Create a technology plan for the city that is integrated into the municipal and regional economic development strategy and undertake a “Wireless Pittsfield” initiative that ensures that high speed, wireless Internet access is available throughout the city.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Develop a tourism marketing plan and a tourism-readiness training program for staff in tourism industries and the community at large.</td>
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## Economic and Cultural Development / Historic and Cultural Resources - Goals & Strategies

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<td>7. Promote existing arts and cultural organizations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Create an Artisans Trail Map to promote artisans and craftspeople.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Partner with the Historic Commission to update existing walking and architectural tours of historic places within Pittsfield.</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>8. Protect historic buildings and neighborhood character.</td>
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<td>A. Craft zoning language to protect the historic character and buildings within the historic district.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Become a Certified Local Government.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Create a citywide inventory of historic and cultural resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Increase involvement of the Pittsfield Historic Commission in development decisions.</td>
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