

# City of Danbury

**2023 Plan of Conservation and Development**

**Oversight Committee Meeting #17**

**4/19/22**



**CITY OF DANBURY**  
Plan of Conservation and Development

**RKG**  
ASSOCIATES INC

**FHI**  
studio

# Agenda

1. Review plan introduction section.
2. Review draft Housing and Mobility Sections and Implementation Recommendations.
3. Discuss potential strategies for Land Use and Environmental Resources and Economic Development.
4. Next steps

# Plan Outline

## Introduction

- Developing the Plan
- The Role of the Plan
- Plan Organization
- Plan Vision
- Plan Themes

## Topic Sections

- **Mobility**
- **Housing**
- **Economic Development**
- **Land Use and Environmental Resources**
- Services and Facilities
- Cultural Resources

## Implementation

### Future Land Use

### Appendix

- State and Regional Plan Consistency
- Community Engagement Summary
- Data Summary
- Maps

# Mobility Goal

Improve mobility in Danbury across all modes of travel and improve transportation connections to the region.



# Mobility Strategies and Actions

## Strategy 1

Improve traffic operations across the City.

### *Actions:*

1. Remain engaged in the I-84 Danbury project and advocate for I-84 improvements as a means of improving safety along the corridor and reducing traffic congestion across the City.
2. Improve the City's traffic signal system, including the installation of fiberoptic lines, with the aim of improving reliability and reducing traffic congestion.
3. Advocate for State investment in improvements recommended by the Route 37 Corridor Study.
4. Coordinate with local freight companies to better understand local freight needs and to better manage and accommodate freight movement across the City.
5. Update wayfinding throughout the City with a focus on wayfinding approaching and within the Downtown.

# Mobility Strategies and Actions

## Strategy 2

Strategically improve transportation infrastructure across the City.

### *Actions:*

1. Continue to pursue State and Federal funding for bridge maintenance and repairs.
2. Prepare a consolidated plan for intersection improvements throughout the City and identify and pursue potential funding sources for improvements.
3. Integrate Low Impact Design (LID) measures in transportation infrastructure projects as feasible.
4. Continue to invest in streetscape projects in the Downtown and other commercial areas where warranted.
5. Implement transportation infrastructure recommendations of the 2019 TOD plan.
6. Work with CTDOT's Office of Rail to provide roadway rail crossing improvements to at-grade crossings.

# Mobility Strategies and Actions

## Strategy 3

Improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity across the City.

### *Actions:*

1. Adopt a Complete Streets policy that prioritizes the provision of pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and traffic calming improvements in transportation infrastructure and maintenance projects.
2. Develop a bicycle plan and provide bike lanes and pathways where feasible as a means of accommodating bicyclists.
3. Develop a sidewalk plan and expand and improve the City's sidewalk network as recommended by the plan with an aim of connecting neighborhoods to the Downtown and to schools.
4. Provide improvements to pedestrian crossings as needed including crosswalk markings, signage, signal enhancements, and lighting enhancements.

# Mobility Strategies and Actions

## Strategy 4

Support the expansion and improvement of transit service across the City and region.

### *Actions:*

1. Support and advocate for the Maybrook Line commuter rail service into Downtown Danbury.
2. Advocate for the return of intracity bus service to Danbury.
3. Continue to work towards the colocation of HART's Pulse Point and the Danbury Station as recommended by the 2019 TOD Plan.
4. Work with HARTransit to ensure that the City is providing HART with the support necessary to maintain and expand transit services and access.
5. Continue to support the provision of transportation services to Danbury's aging population.

# Mobility Strategies and Actions

## **Strategy 5**

Accommodate emerging transportation modes and technologies.

### ***Actions:***

1. Plan for the accommodation of ride-share services at the City's transportation hubs.
2. Provide electric vehicle charging infrastructure at City facilities.
3. Review zoning regulations and amend as necessary to require the provision of bicycle parking and electric vehicle charging as appropriate.
4. Transition to an electric and/or alternative fuel fleet of City vehicles.

# Mobility Strategies and Actions

## Strategy 6

Continue to address safety issues across Danbury's transportation system.

### *Actions:*

1. Pursue grant funding, as available, to provide safety enhancements at high-crash areas in Danbury as identified in the WestCOG Regional Safety Plan.
2. Continue to work with CTDOT to ensure that safety enhancements are made to high-crash locations on State highways.
3. Develop a traffic calming toolbox as part of a Complete Streets plan and implement traffic calming measures on local roadways where crash rates could be reduced through traffic calming.

# Mobility Strategies and Actions

## **Strategy 7**

Improve communications with residents and stakeholders regarding transportation conditions across the City.

### **Actions:**

1. Improve use of City website to share information about planned and ongoing transportation projects that will impact traffic conditions and travel choices in the City.
2. Provide multi-lingual (Spanish and Portuguese) communications on the City's website regarding transportation projects.

# Mobility Strategies and Actions

## Strategy 8

Update City regulations and policies to better manage and accommodate transportation needs across the City.

### *Actions:*

1. Review ordinances, regulations, and policies to align with complete street principles.
2. Review Downtown parking regulations, parking supply, and parking usage and amend parking regulations and policies as needed to meet the needs of the Downtown.
3. Update trip multiplier figures and parking requirements in the zoning regulations to align with current standards as published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and other sources.
4. Continue to implement access management standards within the City's zoning regulations.
5. Continue policy and standards for the acceptance of private roads.

# Implementation Plan: Mobility Example

Mobility Goal: Improve mobility in Danbury across all modes of travel and improve transportation connections to the region.											
Adapt	Theme							Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
	Connect	Expand	Focus	Improve	Invest	Partner	Promote				
	●			●	●	●					
	●			●	●	●					
	●			●	●						
	●			●	●						
●	●	●		●	●						
●	●	●			●						
	●	●		●	●						

Assesses strategy and action's alignment with the Plan's themes.

Low, Medium, or High

City Departments, Commissions, Committees, and outside organizations

# Housing Goal

Expand housing supply and housing choice in Danbury and address issues related to overcrowding in the City.



# Housing Strategies and Actions

## Strategy 1

Increase the supply and range of affordable housing in Danbury and maintain an affordable housing inventory in excess of existing supply.

### *Actions:*

1. Monitor existing affordable housing inventory and offer incentives to encourage homeowners to extend affordable housing deed restrictions beyond existing expiration dates.
2. Monitor supply and coordinate with HACD to ensure maximum number of vouchers are assigned and used in Danbury.
3. Partner with institutions to establish affordable housing in Danbury (e.g. partner non-profits and/or health systems).
4. Implement inclusionary zoning (per CGS 8-2i) that requires the provision of affordable units (targeting households earning 50% or less of area median income) in all multifamily developments with ten or more dwelling units and all housing developments receiving tax deferrals. Provide a fee in lieu of payment option that directs fees paid to Danbury's Municipal Housing Trust Fund.
5. Revise zoning regulations as appropriate to relax dimensional standards to support the development of affordable housing units in Downtown zoning districts.
6. Consider removing prohibition of using the Housing Incentive Option on redevelopment under the Housing Redevelopment Option (of the Zoning Regulations).
7. Revise zoning regulations to allow the development of affordable accessory dwelling units in appropriate residential zoning districts.

# Housing Strategies and Actions

## Strategy 2

Maintain and increase the supply of housing designed for or occupied by seniors.

### *Actions:*

1. Explore opportunities to revise the zoning regulations to allow the adaptive reuse of buildings for the development of age-restricted and other forms of housing for Danbury's aging population. Focus on districts near transit and support services.
2. Revise zoning regulations to allow for the development of, or conversion to, multi-generational housing that provides shared living areas for multiple generations of a family in appropriate residential districts.
3. Maintain and promote existing elderly/disabled tax credit program.
4. Provide support services to assist seniors to age in place.

# Housing Strategies and Actions

## Strategy 3

Increase the supply of housing in, and proximate to, Danbury's Downtown with an emphasis on affordable units.

### *Actions:*

1. Develop a TOD Zoning District to replace existing downtown districts and downtown overlay zones with a density incentive for the creation of affordable housing. Consider expanding district north to I-84 and south to South Street.
2. Relax restriction on building height in the CBD/MSHO Zoning Districts to allow increased density for the provision of affordable units.
3. Reduce parking requirements for Downtown residential developments that provide affordable housing.

# Housing Strategies and Actions

## **Strategy 4**

Foster relationships that ensure that the housing needs of the City's most vulnerable residents are met.

### *Actions:*

1. Continue to work with local social service agencies and providers to ensure that the needs of the homeless are met.
2. Advocate for a regional approach to addressing the issues surrounding homelessness.
3. Maintain the mainstream vouchers for the homeless population and continue the homeless preference for all other vouchers.

# Housing Strategies and Actions

## Strategy 5

Administer, educate, and support affordable housing initiatives.

### *Actions:*

1. Direct American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds received by the City towards affordable housing initiatives with a focus on programs that provide support to targeted income levels.
2. Reactivate Danbury's Housing Partnership as a committee that can advocate for the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Plan.
3. Support, with sister organizations and other City departments, a promotional campaign to raise awareness about the need for affordable housing.
4. Track and maintain information regarding State, Federal, and other funding sources available for the development and subsidy of affordable housing.
5. Maintain an inventory of Danbury's affordable and accessible housing stock and provide that information to partner organizations on a regular basis.

# Housing Strategies and Actions

## **Strategy 6**

Increase the number of homes in Danbury that are accessible to those with mobility limitations or other disabilities.

### *Actions:*

1. Add Universal Design provisions to the zoning regulations such as requiring that all units on the first floor of multi-story residential buildings are accessible and that building features are provided to ensure that seniors and disabled residents have adequate and accessible housing options.
2. Continue to strictly enforce building regulations requiring accessible features in new and remodeled housing and track the development of such units.
3. Explore the use of incentives to encourage apartment building owners to convert non-accessible units to accessible units.

# Housing Strategies and Actions

## **Strategy 7**

Review the City's zoning regulations to ensure that the regulations allow for the development of new housing while protecting the integrity of the City's neighborhoods.

### ***Actions:***

1. Revise zoning to allow the development of accessory dwelling units and multi-generational housing.
2. Explore the feasibility of creating additional mixed-use districts in areas close to transit.

# Housing Strategies and Actions

## **Strategy 8**

Improve the condition of Danbury's housing supply and address overcrowding issues in the City's neighborhoods.

### ***Actions:***

1. Increase resources of City departments responsible for code enforcement and blight remediation.
2. Improve communications with property owners, property managers, and residents regarding code requirements and the enforcement of violations. Provide multi-lingual communications.
3. Provide incentives for property owners to maintain and improve multi-family housing.

# Land Use and Environmental Resources

- Recommended Strategies and Actions were developed based upon:
  - Existing conditions findings
  - Discussions with Committee at 9/21/21 meeting
  - Focus Group meeting on open space and environmental resources
  - Interviews conducted with key stakeholders
  - Feedback received from online survey and workshops
  - Consultant team recommendations

# Land Use and Environmental Resources

**Goal:** Direct growth and development to areas of the City that have the infrastructure and services to accommodate that growth while protecting the City's environmental resources and ensuring that future growth does not adversely impact those resources.

- Strategy: Ensure that the City's zoning regulations direct development towards areas that can support development without adversely impacting the City's environmental resources.
  - Maintain the City's low density residential zoning districts as a means of limiting development in environmentally sensitive areas.
  - Revise the City's zoning regulations as needed to accommodate growth and development in the core of the City and in proximity of infrastructure that can support development.
  - Explore the feasibility of adopting ridgeline protection standards within the City's zoning regulations.

# Land Use and Environmental Resources

**Goal:** Direct growth and development to areas of the City that have the infrastructure and services to accommodate that growth while protecting the City's environmental resources and ensuring that future growth does not adversely impact those resources.

- Strategy: Develop an Open Space and Conservation plan with the aims of ensuring the protection and effective management of City-owned open space and identifying open space that may be targeted for acquisition.
  - Consider funding opportunities, through grants, donations of open space, and capital budgeting for the strategic acquisition of open space for the purposes of conservation.
  - Partner with outside organizations such as the Candlewood Valley Land Trust to expand the supply of protected open space in Danbury.
  - Identify critical improvements and maintenance needed at City-owned open space properties and produce a summary and list of needs.
  - Work with the WestCOG to identify grants and other resources that can be pursued by the City to enhance and support stewardship of existing City-owned conservation properties.
  - Consider funding strategies for improving and maintaining City-owned conservation properties based upon the improvement and maintenance recommendations identified by the Open Space plan once completed.

# Land Use and Environmental Resources

**Goal:** Direct growth and development to areas of the City that have the infrastructure and services to accommodate that growth while protecting the City's environmental resources and ensuring that future growth does not adversely impact those resources.

- Strategy: Adopt and implement low impact policies and practices.
  - Review and amend the City's zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure that the regulations encourage or require Low Impact Development (LID) practices in new developments.
  - Work towards the adoption of sustainable practices at City parks and facilities such as capturing rainwater for irrigation use, encouraging use of pervious pavement, reducing water usage, reducing the use of chemicals on athletic fields, improving recycling, and reducing solid waste.

# Land Use and Environmental Resources

**Goal:** Direct growth and development to areas of the City that have the infrastructure and services to accommodate that growth while protecting the City's environmental resources and ensuring that future growth does not adversely impact those resources.

- Strategy: Continue the protection of environmentally sensitive areas.
  - Continue to adequately staff departments and commissions with land use functions and provide sufficient resources to carry out their duties.
  - Review the City's land use regulations including zoning regulations, floodplain regulations, subdivisions regulations, and inland wetland regulations, to ensure that the regulations adequately protect environmental resources and encourage sustainable development. Amend the regulations as necessary, and expand protections as needed, in favor of environmental protection that is fully supportive of the goals of this plan.
  - Work with property owners to permanently protect more sensitive portions of their properties with conservation easements.
  - Encourage participation in the PA-490 tax program.

# Land Use and Environmental Resources

**Goal:** Direct growth and development to areas of the City that have the infrastructure and services to accommodate that growth while protecting the City's environmental resources and ensuring that future growth does not adversely impact those resources.

- Strategy: Actively work towards protecting and improving water quality of the Still River and other waterways in the City.
  - Implement best management practices of the Still River Watershed Plan.
  - Conduct a public campaign to reduce litter and pollution into the City's brooks and rivers.
  - Review the City's zoning regulations for opportunities to include riparian zone requirements and restrictions for developments in proximity of the City's rivers and brooks.
  - Require inspections and reporting on the condition of on-site stormwater management systems in existing and new developments.

# Land Use and Environmental Resources

**Goal:** Direct growth and development to areas of the City that have the infrastructure and services to accommodate that growth while protecting the City's environmental resources and ensuring that future growth does not adversely impact those resources.

- Strategy: Improve stewardship of forests and tree canopy on City-owned open space and right-of-ways.
  - Seek the assistance of a university forestry program to develop a forest management and invasive species control plan for all City-owned open space and forests.
  - Continue to allocate financial resources towards forestry so as to adequately respond to the need for forest and roadside tree maintenance and removal, the need for which has been exacerbated by infestation by invasive species such as Emerald Ash Borer.
  - Continue to enforce tree planting requirements of the zoning regulations and consider flexibility in those requirements to allow tree planting in locations where they would be most beneficial and most likely to thrive.

# Land Use and Environmental Resources

**Goal:** Direct growth and development to areas of the City that have the infrastructure and services to accommodate that growth while protecting the City's environmental resources and ensuring that future growth does not adversely impact those resources.

- Strategy: Continue to promote sustainable stormwater management and floodplain management to be resilient and adaptable to a changing climate.
  - Fully conduct and implement the best management practices of the City's Stormwater management plan.
  - Continue to invest in stormwater infrastructure improvements throughout the City. Emphasis on sustainable, green infrastructure improvements should be prioritized.
  - Review and evaluate the City's Floodplain zoning regulations to ensure consistency with the CT DEEP and FEMA recommended model ordinances.
  - Consider participating in the FEMA Community Rating System (CRS) program, contingent upon adequate staffing, as a means of protecting the City against flooding and lowering flood insurance costs for property owners. Prepare and adopt a comprehensive flood hazard mitigation plan as required by the program.

# Land Use and Environmental Resources

**Goal:** Direct growth and development to areas of the City that have the infrastructure and services to accommodate that growth while protecting the City's environmental resources and ensuring that future growth does not adversely impact those resources.

- Strategy: Improve the management and oversight of the City's land use and environmental resources.
  - Explore the consolidation of boards and commissions as a means of reactivating inactive boards and commissions, filling vacancies, and better staffing boards and commissions.
  - Ensure that boards and commissions are provided with adequate support from the City and that City departments have the staffing and resources needed to adequately support boards and commissions.

# Economic Development

- Recommended Strategies and Actions were developed based upon:
  - Existing conditions findings
  - Discussions with Committee at 11/16/21 meeting
  - Focus Group meeting on economic development
  - Interviews conducted with key stakeholders
  - Feedback received from online survey and workshops
  - Consultant team recommendations

# Economic Development

**Goal: Leverage Danbury's unique assets to support economic development that provides opportunities for all of Danbury's residents.**

- Strategy: Foster an environment that is supportive of economic development and provides opportunities for the growth and development of businesses in the City.
  - Ensure that the Office of Business Advocacy has the resources needed to engage in the strategies of this plan and meet the ongoing needs of economic development in Danbury.
  - Continue to streamline the City's business permitting and licensing processes to be efficient, effective, and expeditious.
  - Work with local banks, SBA lenders, and Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) – such as Housatonic Industrial Development Corporation and Capital for Change - to promote existing small business lending and micro-lending programs.
  - Promote investment in Danbury's Downtown Opportunity Zone.
  - Support the development of shared working spaces, business incubators, and other business support resources in the City.
  - Encourage the expansion of high-speed broadband coverage and gigabit internet access.

# Economic Development

**Goal:** Leverage Danbury's unique assets to support economic development that provides opportunities for all of Danbury's residents.

- Strategy: Consider funding an economic development strategic plan for the City to help define economic development priorities and target industries, workforce development strategies, and assess organizational capacity to undertake economic development programs and initiatives.
  - Assign a committee to guide the plan's development and consider reactivating the Economic Development Commission to guide the plan's implementation.

# Economic Development

**Goal:** Leverage Danbury's unique assets to support economic development that provides opportunities for all of Danbury's residents.

- **Strategy:** Consider extending the Downtown Central Business District north and south, as recommended by the TOD plan, to allow for new, higher intensity growth while protecting Downtown's historic buildings.

# Economic Development

**Goal:** Leverage Danbury's unique assets to support economic development that provides opportunities for all of Danbury's residents.

- Strategy: Continue to invest in Downtown Danbury through infrastructure and streetscape improvements, building façade improvements, public spaces for gathering and events, and marketing and attracting people to the Downtown.
  - Continue to develop zoning regulations that will support outdoor dining.
  - Coordinate with Downtown organizations to bring back outdoor events to the downtown (music, food festivals, food trucks, pop-up retail/restaurant events, etc.)
  - Continue to support housing development in the Downtown as a catalyst for reuse/redevelopment and a built-in customer base for local businesses.
  - Expand and improve access to the Still River riverfront and tributaries as a downtown amenity and leverage the river as an attraction for downtown; pursue grant funding to implement access improvements as recommended in the TOD plan.

# Economic Development

**Goal:** Leverage Danbury's unique assets to support economic development that provides opportunities for all of Danbury's residents.

- Strategy: Develop a campaign and communications that promotes Danbury as a place of innovation and activity.
  - Develop a strategic communications and engagement plan for the City.
  - Provide regular communications and promotion of economic development activity in the City through multiple media platforms.
  - Promote events across the City through the development of a webpage or website that is devoted to promoting activity in the City.

# Economic Development

**Goal:** Leverage Danbury's unique assets to support economic development that provides opportunities for all of Danbury's residents.

- Strategy: Review and update, as appropriate, the City's commercial zone regulations to ensure that the regulations provide sufficient flexibility to allow development that responds to current and future market conditions.
  - Consider new zoning options including the creation of new mixed-use districts to ensure the long-term economic stability and viability of commercial areas. This could include new uses such as medical office, fitness and entertainment, small scale production/ manufacturing, education, etc.
  - Analyze the city's existing industrial zoning districts to determine if allowable uses, building heights, parking and loading requirements, and constraints on building size or footprints are in line with today's industrial/manufacturing/distribution standards.

# Economic Development

**Goal:** Leverage Danbury's unique assets to support economic development that provides opportunities for all of Danbury's residents.

- Strategy: Consider conducting corridor studies or area plans for corridors within the CG-20 and CA-80 districts to help align economic development priorities with needed infrastructure improvements to adequately support future growth.
  - Identify infrastructure enhancements needed in those areas
  - Review zoning regulations to ensure that the regulations support desirable land uses and site design.

# Economic Development

**Goal:** Leverage Danbury's unique assets to support economic development that provides opportunities for all of Danbury's residents.

- Strategy: Strengthen Danbury's marketing to outside businesses and investors highlighting the City's economic strengths including:
  - A growing and diversifying population
  - A robust manufacturing base
  - A robust healthcare industry
  - Partnerships with local colleges and universities
  - Young, active, well-educated, well-trained workforce
  - Access to multiple forms of transportation and regional connectivity

# Economic Development

**Goal: Leverage Danbury's unique assets to support economic development that provides opportunities for all of Danbury's residents.**

- Strategy: Partner with WCSU, NVCC, Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce, and major employers in the City to encourage workforce development, training, employee pipelines, and the potential for innovation or entrepreneurial activity.
  - Hold a quarterly education roundtable that brings together city leadership, staff, and educational institutions (including Danbury Public Schools) to discuss opportunities.
  - Continue to develop early career education in the middle and high school promoting career pathways in the trades (such as the Danbury Career Academy).
  - Work with regional workforce partners to identify skills gaps or employee shortages in the trades and work collaboratively address shortfalls.
  - Work with a partner organization, such as the Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce, to conduct an annual Danbury (or regional) job fair.

# Economic Development

**Goal:** Leverage Danbury's unique assets to support economic development that provides opportunities for all of Danbury's residents.

- Strategy: Explore ways to increase employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for disadvantaged groups in Danbury.
  - Provide translations of all outreach materials related to economic development, business start-ups, licensing and permitting, workforce development, etc.
  - Establish a bilingual economic development and/or business outreach position in the City.
  - Create or expand mentor-protégé programs such as those offered by the SBA or SCORE. Ensure the mentors in the programs represent the diversity of the city.
  - Identify supply chain linkages between large businesses and anchor institutions in the city/region and increase purchasing from local minority and disadvantaged businesses.

# Economic Development

**Goal:** Leverage Danbury's unique assets to support economic development that provides opportunities for all of Danbury's residents.

- **Strategy:** Implement the recommendations of the City's Affordable Housing Plan to ensure workers who want to live in Danbury can find affordably priced housing. The availability housing, particularly affordably priced housing, can be an economic development asset the City could market to prospective employers.

# May's Meeting

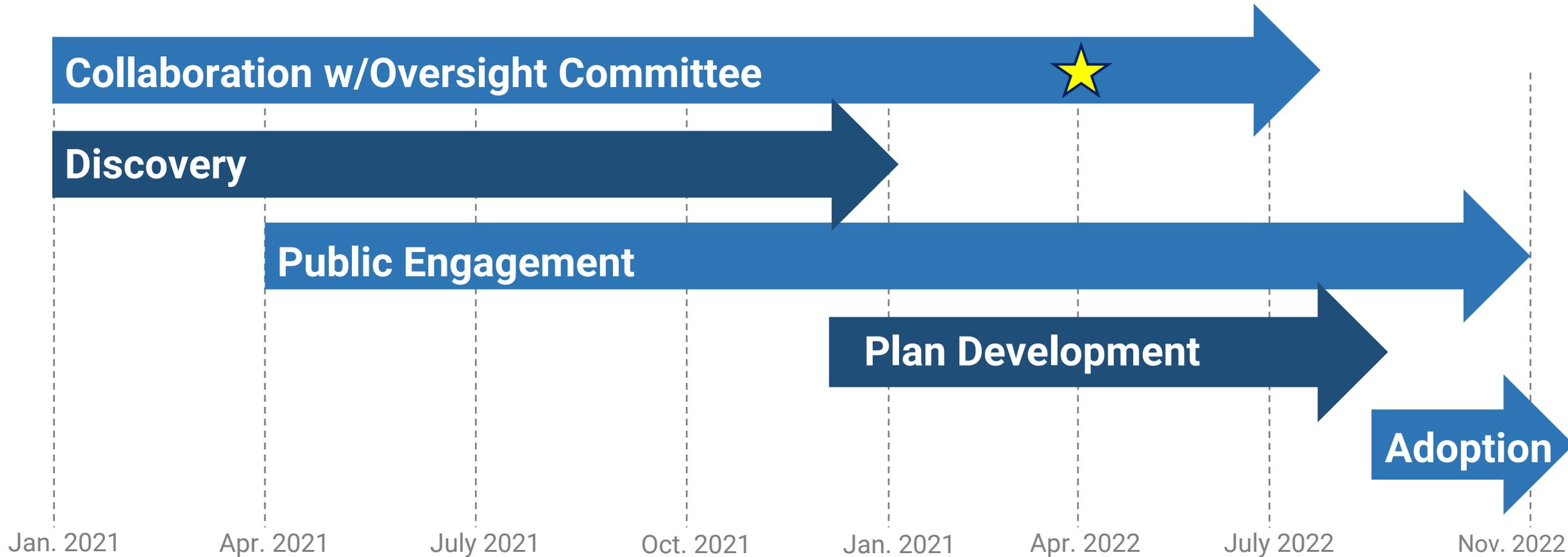
**Services and Facilities**

**Cultural Resources**

# Remaining Project Schedule

- May: Review draft section of plan. Review draft section of implementation plan.
- June: Review draft section of plan. Review draft section of implementation plan.
- July: Review draft section of plan. Review complete draft implementation plan.
- August: Review draft plan and submit draft plan to Planning Commission, Council, and WestCOG for review.
- September: Review feedback received from Commission, Council and WestCOG. Agree upon revisions to Plan as needed.
- October: File plan for public review.
- November: Public hearing for adoption.

# Updated Project Schedule



# Next Steps

1. Refine Housing and Mobility sections of plan
2. Develop implementation plan and document sections for Land Use & Environmental Resources and Economic Development
3. Develop strategies and action items for Services and Facilities and Cultural Resources

# Next Oversight Committee Meeting

- Our next meeting will be  
Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm

2022 MAY						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				