

# Envision Mount Vernon



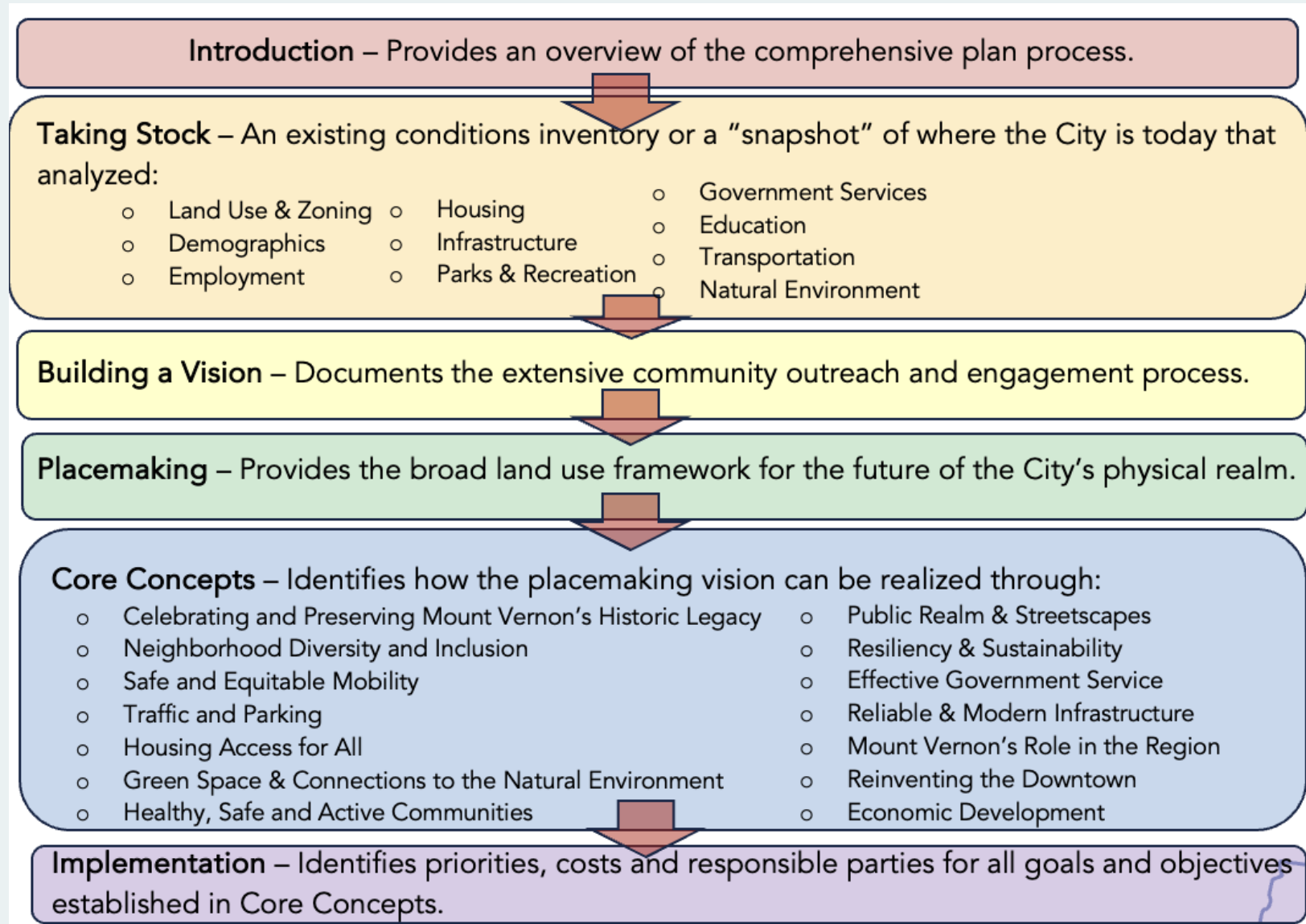
October 8, 2025

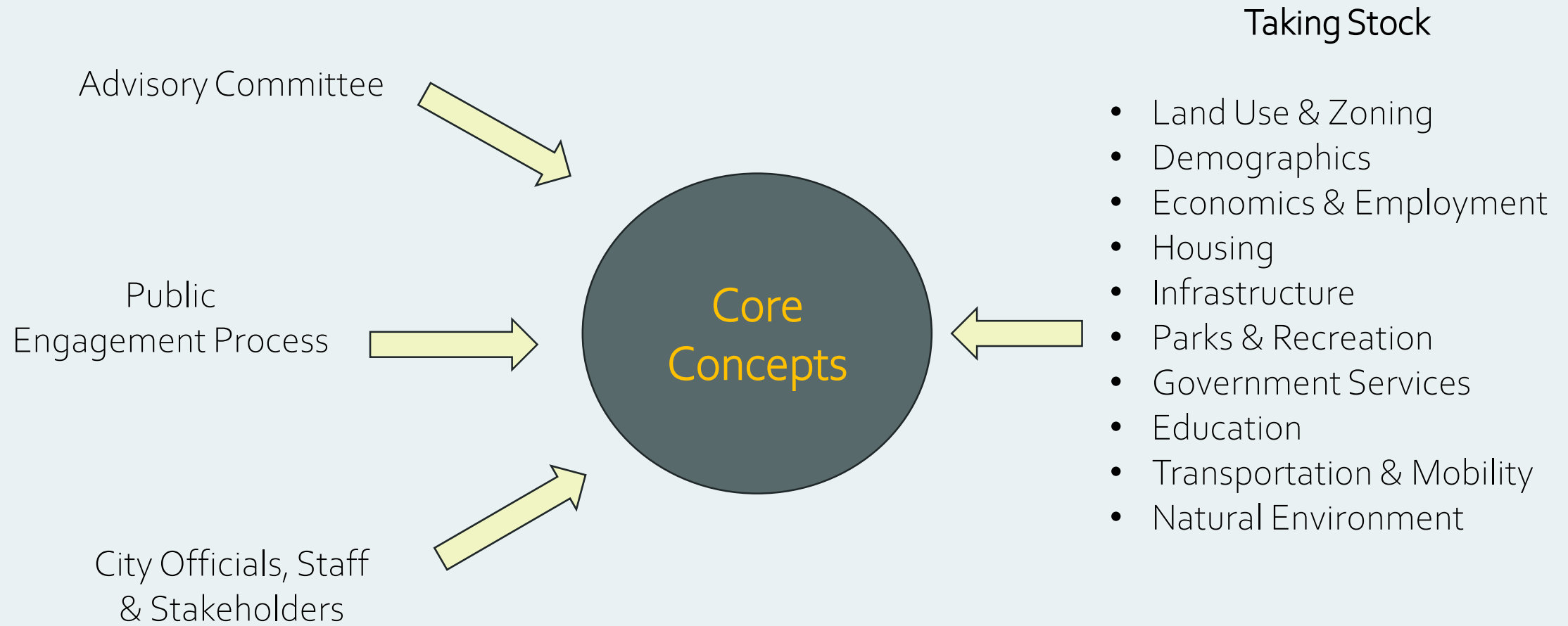
## Project Team

City of Mount Vernon – Planning & Community Development

- Cleary Consulting
- AKRF
- Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress
- BRS, Inc.
- Creative Urban Alchemy, LLC

# Organization of Envision Mount Vernon





## Public Engagement Process

- Phase 1 Public Engagement – Fall 2022 – Winter 2023
- Phase 2 Public Engagement
  - ✓ Youth Engagement Conversations – August – September 2024
  - ✓ Senior Engagement Conversation – November 7, 2024
  - ✓ Spanish Language Workshop – December 5, 2024
  - ✓ City-Wide Engagement Conversations – January 11 & 15, 2025
  - ✓ Industrial Sector Engagement Conversation – January 29, 2025

BRS, Inc.  
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## Core Concepts

- Mount Vernon's Role in the Region
- Celebrating & Preserving Mount Vernon's Historic Legacy
- Neighborhood Diversity & Inclusion
- Safe & Equitable Mobility
- The Public Realm & Streetscapes
- Housing Access for All
- Green Space & Connections to the Natural Environment
- Healthy, Safe & Active Communities
- Resiliency & Sustainability
- Economic Development
- Reliable & Modern Infrastructure
- Effective Government Service

## Mount Vernon's Role in the Region

### Why:

As Mount Vernon pursues the goals and strategies in the comprehensive plan, it is important to focus on broader aspirations that frame the city's role in the region.

### What:

- ✓ **City of Homes v2.0**
  - Capitalize on Mount Vernon's exceptional transit access to honor Mount Vernon's historic identity of the City of Homes while building a thriving and inclusive future. Through housing growth across a broad range of typologies and price points, Mount Vernon will realize new economic and community benefits.
- ✓ **A Thriving Center for Creative and Cultural Excellence**
  - The city's legacy of producing influential figures that shaped the cultural and artistic landscape of America should be celebrated. It should also be utilized to train, spotlight, and develop the next generation creative and cultural leaders.
- ✓ **A Regional Destination to Play and Compete**
  - Critical mass of sports facilities in Mount Vernon and Pelham should be leveraged to tap into a \$40 billion youth sports economy.
- ✓ **Manufacturing with Access to Key Markets**
  - A well-supported manufacturing sector offers a key opportunity to support a high-value industry cluster of regional importance while strengthening the Mount Vernon economy.

## Celebrating & Preserving Mount Vernon's Historic Legacy

### Why:

Mount Vernon has a rich historic legacy that has helped to shape the community both physically and culturally. Planning for the future must respect, celebrate, and in some instances redress this legacy.

### What:

- ✓ **Preserve the integrity of the historic character of the City.**
  - Assess specific opportunities in each of the City's 15 neighborhoods preserve structures and sites of historic or cultural importance, consider the establishment of historic districts in 6 specific neighborhoods, develop neighborhood character design guidelines for 5 specific neighborhoods
  - Adopt a historic preservation ordinance along with a Historic Preservation Commission.
  - Modify zoning provisions to facilitate the renovation of historic properties.
- ✓ **Preserve Mount Vernon's cultural heritage through the principles of inclusion, diversity, equity and access**
  - Erase the stigma of the railroad cut by improving all bridges and exploring capping the cut to accommodate redevelopment above
  - Modernize and update all historic and cultural markers, signage, exhibits, etc.
  - Work with marginalized communities to ensure their voice is heard
- ✓ **Integrate historic and cultural preservation efforts into economic development policies**
- ✓ **Integrate historic and cultural preservation efforts with green building and long-term sustainability programs**

## Neighborhood Diversity & Inclusion

### Why:

A fundamental principle of Envision Mount Vernon is that all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, disability status, age or socioeconomic background, have a right to live, work, and play in a Mount Vernon that is safe and inclusive. It provides a blueprint for investment and development in a way that makes meaningful progress toward equity and inclusion.

### What:

- ✓ Address environmental justice inequities in decisions relating to density, traffic, infrastructure, pollution and health disparities.
  - The majority of Mount Vernon is designated as a Disadvantaged Community (DAC) by New York State. Leverage this designation to secure grant and technical assistance to help with the implement Envision Mount Vernon
  - Implement New York State's Environmental Justice Law to support DAC initiatives
  - Historic redlining
- ✓ Identify hidden exclusionary zoning provisions and revise.
- ✓ Address climate vulnerability in at-risk neighborhoods.
- ✓ The benefits of new development should be shared by all, and adverse impacts should not burden vulnerable communities.
- ✓ Ensure all neighborhoods have equitable access to government and emergency services and health care.
- ✓ Ensure anti-discrimination in housing.
- ✓ Foster an equitable workforce ecosystem.

## Safe & Equitable Mobility

### Why:

Equity, sustainability, livability, economic growth

### What:

- ✓ Complete Streets
- ✓ Safe, efficient, accessible options for moving within City
  - Sidewalks, crossings, pedestrian signals
    - Cost-sharing programs for sidewalk repair, curb extensions & bump outs, visibility
  - Target corridors with highest safety issues. Detailed recommendations provided for:
    - E/W Grand St (Locust St to Gramatan Ave, Fleetwood MNR station)
    - E Prospect Ave (N 5<sup>th</sup> Ave to Park Ave: City Hall, Petrillo Plaza, Mt. Vernon East MNR)
    - 5<sup>th</sup> Ave (Stevens Ave to W 1<sup>st</sup> Street)
- ✓ Bicycle access and usage
  - Infrastructure (bike lanes, shared use paths, bicycle racks)
  - Bicycle network connecting residential to transit to commercial to parks to schools
- ✓ Expand mobility options
  - Bike or scooter share for last-mile (MNR stations, Petrillo Plaza, etc.)
  - Microtransit (flexible shuttle; fixed-route or demand response)

## Safe & Equitable Mobility Efficient Parking

### Why:

Parking is large cost of new development, making housing more expensive

Amount of parking in downtown multifamily housing is strong influence on demand

Existing off-street parking requirements exceed those of other Westchester cities

### What:

- ✓ Right-size off-street parking requirements for new development
- ✓ Recognize different needs in different parts of City
- ✓ Encourage shared parking (private and municipal)
- ✓ Increase fee-in-lieu
- ✓ Re-allocate curbside space to allow for delivery vehicle parking
  - Reflect modern use patterns, improve safety (i.e., double parking)

## The Public Realm & Streetscapes

### Why:

Community feedback: safer and more attractive streets, celebrate local history and identity, improve walkability, enhance maintenance, create more vibrant public spaces.

### What:

- ✓ Enhance neighborhood corridors (Lincoln Ave, East Sandford Blvd, Columbus Ave, MacQuesten Parkway, East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street)
  - District signage and art, neighborhood design standards
- ✓ Reconnect Gramatan and South 4<sup>th</sup> with a unified identity
  - Build on recommendations from Downtown Vision Report (open streets program, public art)
- ✓ Improve streets, sidewalks, and pedestrian infrastructure
  - Sidewalk repair/maintenance, pedestrian furniture, pedestrian experience, cleanliness
- ✓ Integrate cultural placemaking throughout the City
  - Public art, signage, murals (framework in Arts, Culture & Heritage Master Plan, Downtown Vision Report, S. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor Plan)
  - Temporary or permanent uses of vacant parcels
- ✓ Regulate storefronts & signage, design guidelines, phase out solid roll-down gates
- ✓ Detailed call-out on East Sandford Blvd & Canal Village, with specific recommendations

## Housing Access for All

### Why:

Mount Vernon's future depends on housing policies that allow the city to grow and preserve its housing stock, support its current residents, welcome new neighbors, compete economically, promote affordability, and offer a high-quality life for its residents.

### What:

- ✓ Elimination of exclusionary zoning provisions throughout the City.
- ✓ Increase homeownership opportunities by allowing smaller homes, multi-family ownership (such as co-ops) and other options throughout the city
- ✓ Encourage housing near train stations and in the heart of Mount Vernon's downtown to support transit options, provide a customer base to local business, and "feet on the street"
- ✓ Take steps to meet the demand for market-rate senior housing
- ✓ Prevent displacement and promote affordability through the adoption of an inclusionary zoning policy
  - "Set ratio" and "sliding scale" options are both outlined in the comprehensive plan
- ✓ Allow density bonuses for developers who incorporate affordable units into new projects
- ✓ Streamline the review and permitting process for housing
- ✓ Bring duplex and triplex conversions into compliance, so long as they comply with building safety standards. Focus on safety, health, and anti-displacement in all actions.

## Green Space & Connections to the Natural Environment

### Why:

Define character of City, critical to livability, recreation, relaxation, personal & social health, and provide connections to nature and each other

Community consistently emphasized desire to restore and enhance connections to natural environment, particularly along the Hutchinson River, and increase green space in neighborhoods where it is lacking

### What:

#### ✓ Improve and connect existing greenspaces

- Hutchinson River Parkway – potential for linear greenway, public amenities and access. Pair with development controls and ecological restoration.
- Bronx River Reservation – signage and lighting improvements at Oak Street Loop entrance and other key locations (Midland Ave, Laurel Ave, etc.)
- Hunts Woods Park – enhance signage and key entry points, limited interior wayfinding, dog-friendly infrastructure (dog runs?)
- Hartley Park – improve sidewalk access, lighting, maintenance. Create community stewardship program
- Improve access, lighting, signage as New City Parks continues its park rehabilitation

## Green Space & Connections to the Natural Environment

### What:

- ✓ **Integrate greenery into the Public Realm**
  - Urban forestry initiative (part of Complete Streets, sustainability, environmental justice)
  - Identify priority streets for greening and canopy extension
  - Repurpose (temporarily or permanently) vacant lots for green spaces
  - Advocate for and build partnerships for vegetated sound barrier in select locations proximate to the Cross County Parkway
  - Incorporate green design elements into municipal facilities
- ✓ **Strengthen the City's Tree Ordinance and Advisory Board**
  - Clarify role, criteria, and process
  - Stronger enforcement tools
  - Clearer landscape plan standards for new development and ensure adequacy of fee-in-lieu

## Healthy, Safe & Active Communities

### Why:

A healthy, safe and active community is one that prioritized the well-being of its residents which will lead to a stronger, more resilient, equitable and prosperous City.

### What:

- ✓ Create complete neighborhoods through mixed-land use
- ✓ Prioritize active transportation modalities
  - Complete Streets
  - Functional bike lanes
  - Improved sidewalks
  - Improved crosswalks
  - Deploy traffic calming techniques
- ✓ Minimize environmental influences that adversely impact public health
  - ✓ Pollution, traffic, heat island
- ✓ Increase access to healthy foods
- ✓ Ensure healthy housing
  - Facilitate universal design, improve indoor air quality, limit VOC's, require detectors

## Resiliency & Sustainability

### Why:

Climate change, equitable access to resources, improved recovery from disasters, quality of life

### What:

- ✓ Preserve existing natural landscapes
- ✓ Preserve existing trees
  - Inventory publicly-owned and maintained trees, systematize maintenance, partner with community groups
- ✓ Revitalize the Hutchinson River waterfront
  - Together with economic development, incorporate ecological restoration, public education, mobility corridor
- ✓ Reduce heat-island effect
  - Street trees, public space design upgrades, incentives for specific design features
- ✓ Improve flood resilience
  - Green infrastructure, enhanced flood damage regulations, rain barrel/cisterns, demonstration project for an area of urban (non-riverine) flooding, similar to NYC “Cloudburst” program
- ✓ Improve sustainability of City Operations
  - Building energy efficiency (in-house, capital, NYPA), renewable energy (solar leasing), greening City fleet, composting, obtaining Bronze certification in Climate Smart Communities Program, sustainable building materials, incorporating climate risk into building and infrastructure projects

## Economic Development

### Why:

Improve the social and economic well-being of people in Mount Vernon through job attraction and growth; workforce training; investments in infrastructure, transportation and housing; and the promotion of investment and competitiveness.

### What:

- ✓ Utilize the RFEI process to solicit development proposals for city-owned properties throughout Mount Vernon
  - Full process outlined in great detail in the comprehensive plan
  - Promising and immediate opportunities to jumpstart economic momentum and revitalization
  - Huge public benefits for local business, housing, public realm, neighborhood revitalization
  - Mount Vernon has control to gets the public what it wants
  - Applicable to school buildings that are slated for closure
  - Appropriate role for the nimble powers of the URA
  - City-owned parcels located within the city's only federal opportunity zone
  - Excellent examples in Peekskill, Croton-on-Hudson, Pelham, Middletown, and beyond
  - The city – and its residents – are in control of what they want and what they receive
  - Reduce the land acquisition cost + speed up the review time for best results
  - Pair with required updates to the public realm or public amenities

## Economic Development

### What:

- ✓ Collaborate with MTA and Westchester County to develop underutilized parking at Mount Vernon East
  - MTA currently doing this in Beacon and Poughkeepsie; village project in Croton
- ✓ Work with a professional marketing company to establish a unified brand for Mount Vernon, and an asset map for business attraction and growth
- ✓ Grow the city's unique manufacturing base
  - "Hub and spokes" model with existing manufacturing businesses for attraction of supply chain
  - Zoning must allow traditional manufacturing and "light" manufacturing (breweries, maker spaces)
  - Advertise opportunities for green tech / clean tech to NYPA, NYSERDA, other partners
- ✓ Adopt an appropriate vacancy ordinance that requires temporary activation or advertising of space through a licensed realtor
- ✓ Collaborate with Westchester County on a unified plan for property along the Hutchinson River
- ✓ Ensure the zoning code responds to the public's desire for family recreation, entertainment, social gathering spaces, cafes, and more

## Reliable & Modern Infrastructure

### Why:

Mount Vernon can only survive and thrive if infrastructure is maintained in a state of good repair. This is vital to the protection of public health, environmental quality, and connectivity.

### What:

- ✓ Comply with the current consent order and finish all sewer inspections and repairs
- ✓ Invest more in asset management systems and create a 10-year capital plan for water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure
- ✓ Investigate Mount Vernon's growing proportion of non-revenue water
  - Focus on leak detection and concepts from the 2017 WaterDM report
  - Stay under the NYC water supply entitlement consumption threshold to avoid huge bills
- ✓ Pursue opportunities for water efficiency
  - Re-engage with NYCDEP on grants; toilet replacement; industrial solutions
- ✓ Help developers by mapping water service capacity and the progress of sewer work
- ✓ Strengthen partnerships that can get laptops, tablets and other devices into the hands of residents who lack internet access for jobs, education, healthcare, etc.

## Effective Government Service

### Why:

Effective government service turns policy intentions into real-world results by aligning public employees, processes, and resources in pursuit of the public good.

### What:

- ✓ Require a mission statement for every city department to avoid duplication and give employees a sense of unified purpose
- ✓ Develop written tasks and standards for every city employee, including an annual performance review
- ✓ Establish a quarterly training program on topics related to all city employees, and allow budget for specialized training
  - Cybersecurity, budgeting, customer service communication, professional licenses, etc.
- ✓ Establish an economic development cabinet that meets monthly to coordinate and expedite projects that would expand jobs, build housing, or involve the pursuit of grants
- ✓ Create SOPs for key tasks → from building permits and fleet maintenance to the tracking of work orders and resident complaint intake, tracking and response
- ✓ Establish a citywide data group with an eye toward unified data systems
- ✓ Require an annual Mayor's Management Report with trackable metrics to show the public how the government is working (or not) on its behalf

# Envision Mount Vernon



Thank You!