Parking

- Make it clear to visitors where to park downtown and provide wayfinding for getting to key destinations from there
- Provide more security presence at the garages, especially at night
- Establish dedicated, discounted off-street parking for downtown employees
- Leverage private lots for other users at off-peak times (example: employee parking during the day, resident parking at night)
- Make it easier to pay for on-street parking with a credit card
- Provide some free pick-up/delivery spaces for restaurants
- Make short visits easier by charging only 25 cents for the first 30 minutes
- Stop ticketing expired inspection stickers when there is no parking violation
- Be clear and consistent with parking hours of enforcement
- Establish a new downtown garage
  - Move bus station and turn it into a garage
  - Deck over the YMCA parking lot

Services & Amenities

- Cleaner streets, sidewalks, pick up garbage
- Snow removal for all sidewalks and intersections
- Better landscaping, more trees and flowers
- Provide more public toilets to serve families, visitors, and the unhoused
- Establish a drop-in facility for the unhoused to be able to access services, charge phones, take a shower
- Provide more social service outreach on the streets to address mental illness, addiction, and homelessness
- Establish a new visitor center, or work with the National Park to provide more local information about businesses and activities
- Allow businesses to store outdoor dining furniture and materials off-season at City/DPW facilities and assist with removal and installation
- Identify appropriate locations for tour buses to drop-off, pick-up, and park

Street Life and Business Activity

- Create one consolidated events calendar and downtown map with businesses and destinations
- Develop walking paths that highlight different themes (i.e. history, culture, fashion, fishing industry, world culture, etc.)
- Maintain consistent opening hours
- Re-establish a downtown farmer’s market
- Attract a small grocery store and full-service pharmacy
- Create more frequent programming bringing people downtown and extend the duration to include more businesses and partners
- Activate vacant ground-floor storefronts
- Encourage more “pop-ups” and art installations
- Provide grants to independent artists and local festivals
- Convene a “downtown reinvention” group to address how to support a stronger retail sector, and how to attract companies downtown
- Extend business hours into evenings and throughout week
    - Have a café open after 4 pm

Policing and Public Safety

- Increase community policing
  - Dedicate at least two beat cops to downtown
  - Bring back bike cops
- Increase security presence and social service outreach in key locations that feel unsafe, including:
  - the bus station
  - Custom House Square
  - in front of the Bank of America
- Improve lighting and visibility in these areas and corridors connecting Purchase Street and lower Union
- Expand police substation at the bus station
- Aggressively enforce local ordinances to address vacant and problem properties

Transportation & Wayfinding

- Establish a free shuttle that loops through the downtown and includes the train station
- Slow down Route 18 for safer pedestrian crossings
- Have buses for UMass-Dartmouth students to visit downtown on weekends, especially evenings
- Make sure all street corners have signs
- Make it easier to find attractions
- Create a system for clearing all sidewalks and intersections of snow
- Better manage street and sidewalk construction
  - Advise businesses and property owners at least 3 months in advance
  - Convene a working group to mitigate local impact
  - Post signs saying that businesses are still open
- Move the bus station to the train station area to create a “multimodal hub”

Housing & Development

- Develop more housing downtown for a mix of incomes
- Promote housing above existing first-floor uses
- Assign a liaison to work with each property owner to work with city departments and abutters on redevelopment projects to smooth process
- Assign a liaison to work with businesses on permitting and other issues
- Avoid surprise fees and requirements with a more consolidated permitting process
- Modernize municipal systems and speed up permits and applications
- Reduce favoritism among developers and property owners
- Support the efforts of smaller developers to access local and state grant funding
- Incorporate artists into the planning and design process for infrastructure improvements

Families & Youth

- Work with local nonprofits and businesses to develop more “drop-in” activities for young people, or time they can reserve for self-directed activities with friends.
- Recruit more family destinations and activities to the downtown
- Support independent artists to work with young people on transforming underutilized spaces
- Make public spaces downtown more family friendly and generate activity that increases foot traffic
- Develop more welcoming green spaces and safe spaces to “hang out”

Waterfront & Connection to Downtown

- Improve the Route 18 pedestrian crossing at Union Street
- Encourage downtown pedestrians to visit the waterfront and vice versa through clear walking paths and signage; make clear where visitors are welcomed and where they should respect active working areas
- Explore feasibility of local marina improvements
- Provide directions and opportunities for visiting downtown to cruise ship visitors
- Work with fishing industry to identify opportunities to tell story of the working waterfront and make it live for visitors and New Bedford residents, especially local youth

Marketing, Branding, Perception

- Create a unified online portal with AHA!, DNB Inc, City Tourism Office and others that provides a “one stop” for event and programming information
- Create itineraries and walking trails through online maps, printed brochures, artist-designed stickers for buildings, QR codes, or painted lines or symbols on sidewalks.
- Market the city via the MBTA to bring more visitors on the train—and make it easier to get from the station to downtown with signage, shuttles, a safe and well-marked pedestrian pathway
- Hire a PR firm to promote positive media stories about New Bedford’s downtown to compete with peer communities like Plymouth and Quincy
- Develop positive shared messaging and materials for all community partners to use
- Take inspiration from places like Portland, Maine

District Management & Coordination

- Establish an integrated email list to share information among all downtown stakeholders
- Hire an experienced full-time professional to manage the downtown effort
- Get more people on the street, whether that is an ambassador program, the police, social workers, or partnerships with local organizations
- Be transparent about what the City already collects in fees and taxes and how that money is spent, and how any new revenue collected would add value on top of that
- Promote better coordination, teamwork, and a positive “can-do” attitude among everyone involved

Top 10 Themes

- Community policing and more street presence around key areas like garages, bus station, connections between Purchase Street and lower Union
- Social service outreach to the street population and facilities for the unhoused
- Cleaning, landscaping, maintenance, pick up garbage
- Better coordination and communication among downtown groups; clear, unified messaging; “one-stop shop” for businesses, residents, clients, visitors; better wayfinding to key locations via maps, signage, and physical trails
- Improve parking solutions; possibilities include simplifying on-street parking rules and payment; designating delivery/pick-up locations; leveraging existing parking assets to meet needs at different times of the day; reducing enforcement costs
- Public restrooms
- Activate first-floor storefronts and reduce vacancies
- Free trolley or shuttle service around the downtown including the train station, waterfront, and parking areas
- Safe, fun spaces for families and youth to hang out and visit
- Teamwork; need a “can-do” attitude up and down the line; better coordination among departments and boards at City Hall

What’s Your Vision?

- What are some words that describe what you would like the downtown to be in the future? What are the values that should be embedded in that vision?