

# District 2

MAPLE HIGH-SIX CORNERS,  
OLD HILL, UPPER HILL,  
FOREST PARK

FEBRUARY 28, 2012

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>01</b>
<b>Community Driven Process</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>Vision Statement</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>Guiding Principles</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>Major Moves</b>	
<b>Transform Housing</b>	<b>08</b>
<i>Key Initiative:</i> Coordinated Housing Strategy	10
<i>Key Initiative:</i> New Infill Housing	16
<i>Key Initiative:</i> Preservation as a Revitalization Tool	26
<b>Expand Economic Opportunity</b>	<b>34</b>
<i>Key Initiative:</i> Job Training and Small Business Support	36
<i>Key Initiative:</i> Enhanced Neighborhood Businesses	44
<i>Key Initiative:</i> Promotion and Marketing of the Community	56
<b>Invest in Quality Neighborhoods</b>	<b>62</b>
<i>Key Initiative:</i> Streetscape Improvements	64
<i>Key Initiative:</i> Reuse of Vacant Lots	70
<i>Key Initiative:</i> Property Maintenance for Homeowners and Renters	78
<i>Key Initiative:</i> Safe and Convenient Transit	84
<b>Strengthen Community Through Education Institutions</b>	<b>90</b>
<i>Key Initiative:</i> Quality Schools as Community Anchors	92
<i>Key Initiative:</i> Collaborative Partnership Between Colleges and Neighborhoods	102
<b>Promote Safe and Healthy Living</b>	<b>108</b>
<i>Key Initiative:</i> Community Safety	110
<i>Key Initiative:</i> Integrated Healthy Food System	114
<i>Key Initiative:</i> Healthy Lifestyles	124
<b>Build Community Capacity</b>	<b>134</b>
<i>Key Initiative:</i> Capitalizing on an Engaged Community	136
<i>Key Initiative:</i> Coordination of Community Services	142

## Appendix

### Photograph References

A4

### Neighborhood Overview

*Demographics*

A6

*Land Use*

A6

*Services and Amenities*

A7

*Infrastructure*

A7

*Housing*

A8

*Employment*

A10

*Public Safety*

A11

*Public Health*

A11

*Education*

A12

*Post-Tornado Conditions*

A12

*Needs and Opportunities*

A13

### Community Meeting Results

*October 12, 2011 Meeting*

A14

*November 15, 2011 Meeting*

A20

*December 14, 2011 Meeting*

A23

### Previous City and Neighborhood Plans

A30

### Partnership / Stakeholder Organizations

A34

### Rebuild Springfield Town Hall Website Results

A38



# Introduction

With the same determination, resiliency, and spirit that defined the community's response in the aftermath of the June 1st tornado, the people of Maple High-Six Corners, Old Hill, Upper Hill, and Forest Park have come together to undertake a critical dialogue about the future of their neighborhoods and city.

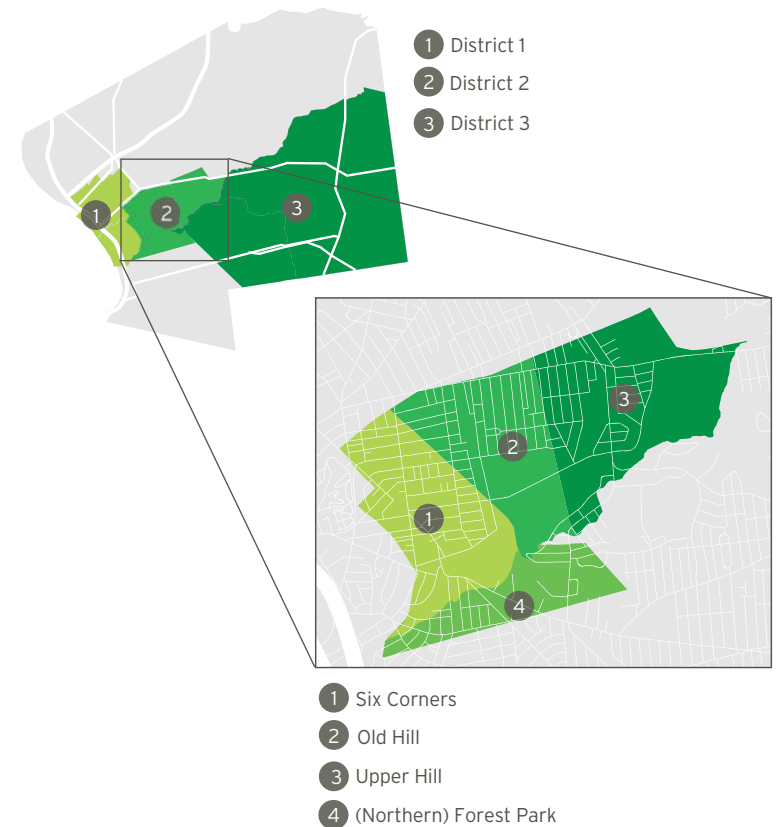
It is challenging to think about long-term planning while immediate rebuilding needs are so pressing, but Springfield's citizens have responded with a powerful shared vision for how they can rebuild in a way that strengthens their communities for the future.

The neighborhoods of Maple High – Six Corners, Upper Hill, Old Hill, and (northern) Forest Park make up planning District 2, a richly diverse section of Springfield. Because only the northern area of Forest Park was damaged by the tornado, our analysis includes only a small portion of this neighborhood (the two Census tracts bounded by Mill River and Watershops Pond to the north, Belmont Ave, Sumner Ave, and the old Highland Division rail line). Many challenges faced District 2 neighborhood even before the tornado struck: abandoned properties, substandard housing, low homeownership rates, higher than average crime and poverty, and low educational attainment. With this context, the conversations in District 2 have been intense and complex, but consistently hopeful and resolute to achieve something better.

In District 2, perhaps more than anywhere else in the city, there is an opportunity for the rebuilding process to have a transformative impact. The scar of the tornado's path in this part of Springfield revealed the challenges and allowed them to air. What emerged from these dialogue sessions is a strong commitment to rebuild stronger than before, an engaged community newly energized to improve their community, and a recognition of how District 2's vibrant diversity could become the backbone upon which to rebuild.

There is hope and energy in District 2, and it should be channeled into the implementation of the plan, the next stage of this work. There is room within each of the initiatives described in this plan for every resident and stakeholder to contribute to a better future.

To quote one District 2 stakeholder: "To rebuild the community, you need to rebuild the mind set of the people."





## Community Meetings

Three community meetings were held in District 2 over the course of three months, allowing residents and stakeholders to be in dialogue with each other as they responded to questions posed by the planning team. Common themes emerged in these sessions, and powerful report backs from each table set the tone for how this community's energy would frame a new vision. The energy and passion exhibited in these meetings was critical to developing initiatives that matter on the ground in the neighborhood. This same spirit will be critical to maintain in the implementation phase as well.

## Face to Face Conversations

Beyond participation in the three district meetings noted above, many stakeholders in the community shared valuable time and input by meeting in person with representatives from the planning team. Held in various venues around the city, these conversations provided specific insight on particular issues – ranging from in-depth knowledge or visionary input for particular buildings and properties in the district, to broad conversations about education and economic vitality in the community, with much more in between.

## Social Media

Dialogue did not end at the conclusion of public meetings. MindMixer, Facebook and other social

media served as a 24-hour-a-day public forum for participants to continue the conversation with each other about the rebuilding of their community.

## Existing Plans

This plan was informed by the good ideas and thoughtful analysis from a variety of perspectives and stakeholders, and builds upon the planning and visioning work that already exists, including City plans, reports and studies from a variety of agencies, and neighborhood visioning documents that demonstrated the proactive participation of District 2 residents in planning for the future. Refer to the Appendix for a comprehensive look at the plans reviewed.

## Guidance by Rebuild Springfield Advisory Committee

An appointed group of volunteers acted as an Advisory Committee. Over the course of the planning process, the Advisory Committee provided a sounding board for many items, and offered high level feedback to guide the plan recommendations.

## Economic and Real Estate Analysis

The recommendations of this plan are grounded in an economic analysis that reflects the unique needs and opportunities in Springfield. HDR provided analysis and forecasting based on an

intimate knowledge of economic and workforce development in Springfield and the Pioneer Valley. Byrne McKinney & Associates conducted an in-depth real estate market analysis, as well as an examination of the potential funding resources necessary to implement the varied recommendations of this plan. These analyses guide the recommendations and resource opportunities throughout this plan. More detail can be found in the appendix.



## Vision Statement

Build on strong relationships and neighborhood pride to proactively reinvest in our community. Leverage our balanced diversity and unleash the potential of our historic neighborhoods to create beautiful, safe, and thriving communities.



# Guiding Principles

## Guiding Principle 1

Build on the strong commitment and pride in the neighborhoods to support communities and organizations that are **connected, engaged, and working together**.

## Guiding Principle 2

Improve quality of life and provide new opportunities for residents by enhancing the **health, safety, and vitality** of the community.

## Guiding Principle 3

Preserve and promote the **history and character** of the neighborhoods as an amenity that enriches quality of life and attracts new residents and businesses.

## Guiding Principle 4

Achieve a sustainable and equitable **balance** of owners and renters, incomes, housing types, land uses, employment opportunities and services that meets the needs of residents while positioning the community to thrive and flourish in the future.

## Guiding Principle 5

Value the **diversity** of people, cultures, and activities and recognize this diversity as a source of resilience, creativity, learning, empowerment, and collaboration that strengthens the neighborhoods.

## Guiding Principle 6

Demonstrate public and personal commitment, improve perceptions, and attract new energy and investment through neighborhoods that are **attractive and well-maintained**.

## Vision and Guiding Principles >> Major Moves >> Initiatives

- The **Vision** and **Guiding Principles** represent the **high-level values and aspirations** of the community and inform the Major Moves.
- The **Major Moves** represent the **big ideas and transformative actions** that together are necessary to achieve the community's vision. The Major Moves are supported by Key Initiatives and provide the framework to organize those Key Initiatives.
- The **Key Initiatives** identify **specific projects, policies, and programs** that support the Major Moves, with information on the partners, resources and action steps necessary to successfully implement the recommendations.

# Major Moves

The vision and guiding principles reflect the identity, values, and priorities of District 2 residents and stakeholders, and paint a picture of the future to which they aspire. From this compelling vision, six Major Moves emerged – six broad actions that will transform District 2 neighborhoods if implemented successfully. Each major move is supported by several Key Initiatives. For each Initiative, a brief description is provided, along with suggestions of who can push forward the implementation of the initiative, potential Stakeholders and Partners, possible Resource Opportunities, thoughts on Prioritization, and recommended Action Steps towards implementation. In some cases, the initiatives include Implementation Opportunities, which are specific locations or projects where the recommendations of the initiative can be undertaken as part of the rebuilding process.

Transform Housing

Expand Economic Opportunities

Invest in Quality Neighborhoods

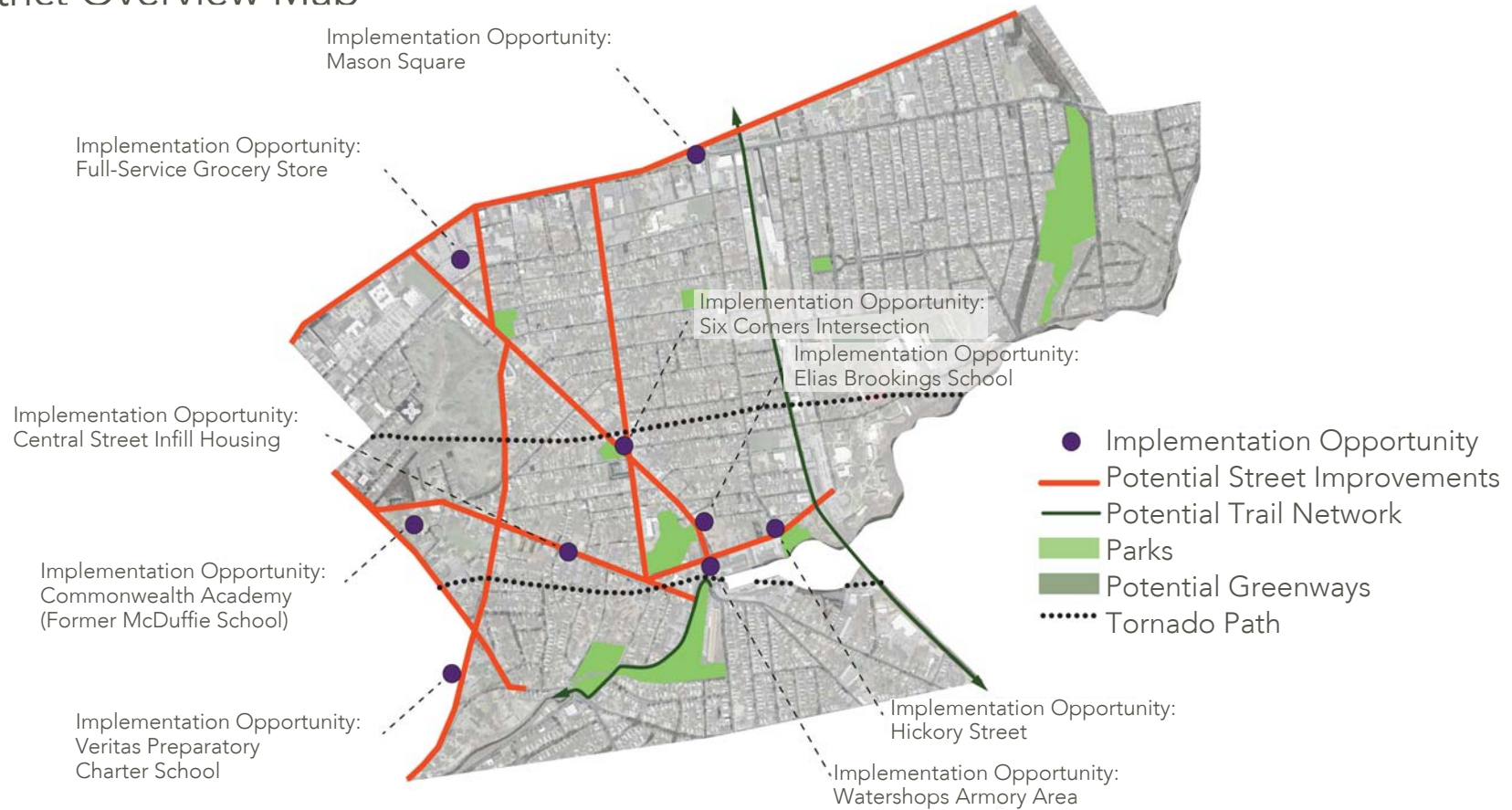
Strengthen Community through Educational Institutions

Promote Safe and Healthy Living

Build Community Capacity

Key Initiative	Priority (1-5)	Domain					
		 Cultural	 Physical	 Economic	 Organizational	 Educational	 Social
<b>Transform Housing</b>							
Coordinated Housing Strategy	5		✓	✓	✓		✓
New Infill Housing	4		✓	✓		✓	
Preservation as a Revitalization Tool	2	✓	✓				
<b>Expand Economic Opportunity</b>							
Job Training and Small Business Support	5		✓	✓	✓		
Enhanced Neighborhood Businesses	4		✓	✓			
Promotion and Marketing of the Community	2	✓		✓	✓		✓
<b>Invest in Quality Neighborhoods</b>							
Streetscape Improvements	3	✓	✓	✓			✓
Reuse of Vacant Lots	3		✓	✓			
Property Maintenance for Homeowners and Renters	5		✓	✓			✓
Safe and Convenient Transit	4		✓	✓			
<b>Strengthen Community Through Education Institutions</b>							
Quality Schools as Community Anchors	5		✓		✓	✓	✓
Collaborative Partnership Between Colleges and Neighborhoods	3		✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Promote Safe and Healthy Living</b>							
Community Safety	4		✓		✓		✓
Healthy Lifestyles	3		✓		✓	✓	✓
Integrated Healthy Food System	4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Build Community Capacity</b>							
Capitalizing on an Engaged Community	3				✓		✓
Coordination of Community Services	5			✓	✓		

# District Overview Map



## Implementation Opportunities

### Coordinated Housing Strategy

- Hickory Street

### New Infill Housing

- Central Street

### Integrated Healthy Food System

- Full Service Grocery Store

### Enhanced Neighborhood Businesses

- Six Corners Intersection
- Watershops Armory Area

### Promotion and Marketing of the Community

- Mason Square

### Quality Schools as Community Anchors

- New Brookings School
- Commonwealth Academy (Former MacDuffie School)
- Veritas Prep Charter School

### Healthy Lifestyles

- Mill River Trail
- Highland Division Rail Trail

### Capitalizing on an Engaged Community

- Churches as Anchors

# Major Move 1

## Transform Housing

This Major Move focuses on strategies to support healthy, viable neighborhoods with well-designed, high-quality housing that meets resident needs, expands opportunities, attracts new investment, and positions the community to thrive in the future. A successful housing strategy must provide the right amount of housing in the right location, and carefully integrate new housing to strengthen neighborhoods and reinforce a sense of community. Coordinating housing development with associated public investments in streets, transit, community spaces, and public facilities helps to focus energy and leverage scarce resources for maximum impact. By supplementing housing with capacity building efforts to promote education, training, skill development, and self-sufficiency, housing programs can help to support and maintain neighborhoods over time.

### *Key Initiatives*

## Coordinated Housing Strategy

- Bring partners together to develop a coordinated strategy to:
- Provide higher quality housing that is better integrated into the community
- Provide the right amount and type of housing in the right locations
- Coordinate with public investments in infrastructure, facilities, and programs
- Supplement housing programs with capacity building efforts to promote education, training, skill development, and self-sufficiency

## New Infill Housing

- Broaden the impact of successful programs
- Explore pilot projects in heavily damaged areas
- Streamline infill housing development with vacant lot management strategies

## Preservation as a Revitalization Tool

- Increase advocacy for preservation with the City and the general public
- Establish a revolving loan fund for preservation
- Supplement traditional preservation resources with programs for weatherization, energy efficiency, and green building for all homes
- Develop an emergency weatherization and stabilization program



## Transform Housing

# Coordinated Housing Strategy



The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.

- **Provide higher quality housing that is better integrated into the community**
- **Provide the right amount and type of housing in the right locations and support expanded homeownership**
- **Coordinate with public investments in infrastructure, facilities, and programs**
- **Supplement housing programs with capacity building efforts to promote education, training, skill development, and self-sufficiency**

District 2 neighborhoods face a balancing act for housing. On one hand, there is a need to provide adequate affordable housing to those in need, while avoiding concentration of poverty and the negative impacts this can have on a community. On the other hand, there is a need to attract new market-rate housing, and create neighborhoods that are viable and self-sustaining in the long-term. This balancing act creates challenges for the District, but within these challenges is the greatest opportunity for transformation. In District 2, there are a multitude of agencies and organizations working to address different aspects of the housing challenge, including construction of new homes, supportive services that assist new homeowners, strategies to return vacant properties to viable use, employer incentives to attract new residents, and many other efforts. These are important undertakings that are having a positive impact, but to have a transformative impact at a community scale, these efforts need to be coordinated and working toward a common vision for a sustainable, healthy, equitable community.

Crafting a strategic and coordinated plan for housing initiatives and projects has the potential to maximize the tremendous effort of existing agencies in Springfield. An agreed upon strategy helps to prioritize efforts, increase the effectiveness of grant applications and most importantly can improve the impact of projects. A





shared framework for public entities, non-profits, and developers will address housing needs in a comprehensive and systematic way to provide higher quality housing that is better integrated into the community. This includes understanding and capitalizing on emerging market and demographic trends, providing the right amount and type of housing in the right locations, coordinating with public investments in infrastructure, facilities, and programs, and supplementing housing programs with capacity building efforts to promote education, training, skill development, self-sufficiency.<sup>1</sup>

The creation of a coordinated housing strategy would:

- Identify housing needs and establish an appropriate balance
- Introduce new housing types
- Identify specific sites and projects
- Prioritize needs and projects
- Identify funding sources
- Identify capacity of housing stakeholders
- Coordinate partnerships and project responsibilities

<sup>1</sup> A preliminary analysis of the market and demographic trends can be found in the financial analysis section of the Citywide Appendix

- Support existing programs
- Allow housing implementation to happen at the community scale
- Organize and integrate all of the above in a bold new vision that embraces and transforms the future

The development of a strategy is critical for rebuilding efforts in District 2, and is also fundamental to success of Springfield as a community. Reinvestment and attention to current housing challenges are at the core of the creation of stronger neighborhoods and thriving communities. The tornado rebuilding process presents an unprecedented opportunity to take a fresh look at the entire housing picture and tackle the District's housing challenges. Damaged and destroyed housing needs to be rebuilt, and there is a brief window where energy, attention, and resources are focused in a way that makes a shared housing strategy possible. The rebuilding of tornado-impacted housing represents the first step of a long-term coordinated strategy and will be most successful if undertaken with a long-term integrated strategy in mind, including coordination with other efforts to build capacity, improve quality of life, support homeownership, and expand economic opportunity.

### Partnerships / Stakeholders

- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Housing
- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Neighborhood Services
- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Planning and Economic Development
- Springfield Housing Authority
- Springfield Redevelopment Authority
- HAP Housing
- Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services
- Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity
- Home City Housing
- Private Developers
- Neighborhood Councils
- Non-Profit Services
- Area Churches
- Springfield College
- American International College

### Resource Needs

- The development of a coordinated housing strategy is not primarily a matter of financing, but of organization, vision, and a comprehensive approach
- Housing needs, program needs, and resource shortfalls would be identified as part of a comprehensive strategy

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- Various agencies and organizations are providing housing development and programs with existing resources. At a minimum, a coordinated plan can focus and leverage existing resources and efforts for maximum impact and movement toward a long-range vision for housing in the area. It is very likely that a powerful new integrated vision would create new funding potential from public and private sources.
- Gateway Plus Action Grants. This State sponsored program for Gateway cities provides \$1.35 million in funding to cities for planning activities that expand housing opportunities and support the revitalization of neighborhoods to enhance economic vitality and the quality of life for all residents.

### Action Steps

- Bring partners together to commit to the creation of a housing strategy
- Identify needs, capabilities, and resources
- Create a shared comprehensive long-term strategy for housing that meets needs, strengthens neighborhoods, and outline available and sustainable future.
- Support, create, and expand partnerships and programs to address housing needs in a coordinated way at a community scale

### Priority



- Identify specific sites, projects, development opportunities and coordinate with other public investments (infrastructure, schools, community facilities) to have a transformative impact on the community
- Explore new and creative financing tools to promote quality housing

### Project Location

While a coordinated housing strategy would address housing needs and opportunities throughout the District (and potentially city-wide), the urgent focus of a strategy should be along the Hickory Street and Central Street Corridors, which were both heavily damaged in the tornado, but which also have great potential to implement a new approach to housing in the District. Walnut Street, the northern sections of Old Hill, as well as vacant, abandoned, and city-owned property throughout the District also present opportunities for new infill housing development as part of a coordinated strategy.





## Precedents

### A Comprehensive Housing Strategy for Washington D.C.

This 2006 plan began with the creation of a task force representing a cross section of stakeholders. This task force developed a housing vision focused on increasing residential development and preservation throughout the city, and established recommendations for the amount of housing at various price points, target homeownership rates, and other measures. This task force eventually evolved into a standing oversight committee to implement the strategy and report regularly to the Mayor.

Recommendations of the plan included:

- Encouraging development of “new neighborhoods” on large privately- and publicly-owned vacant and underutilized sites, particularly along transit corridors.
- Supporting the formation of community land trusts run by public, private, non-profit, or community-based organizations, which would acquire and hold land and provide long-term leases to developers.
- Modifying or revising zoning restrictions to allow development of affordable or mixed-income housing, particularly on vacant or underutilized parcels

- Providing pre-development, acquisition, and rehab subsidies to developers for acquisition and renovation of existing buildings to preserve or provide affordable housing, and augmenting funds to facilitate the purchase of land and other properties at greater scale in lower-income areas.
- Expanding the District’s employer-assisted housing program for city government workers by increasing the amount of awards for down payment and closing cost assistance, and encouraging private employers to develop employer-assisted housing programs.
- Targeting and leveraging housing investments by coordinating use of public money in areas with complementary support for developing schools, jobs, and other services and coordinating housing policy with the work of other departments and agencies.
- Increasing the City’s homeownership rate by providing a tax credit to low-income, long-term homeowners to help with home maintenance

[http://www.housingpolicy.org/building\\_a\\_strategy/faqs/washington\\_profile.html](http://www.housingpolicy.org/building_a_strategy/faqs/washington_profile.html)

# Implementation Opportunity

## Hickory Street

The areas along Hickory Street were among the most severely damaged by the June 1st tornado. Several factors make Hickory Street a particularly important opportunity for rebuilding. First, a number of residential homes and complexes were heavily impacted and need to be rebuilt, including the Hill Homes housing cooperative. Second, the corridor includes a concentration of vacant and underutilized property that can accommodate new uses and redevelopment. Finally, the street is anchored by a variety of important uses that together have the potential to catalyze new development and transform the area. Springfield College is located at the east end of Hickory Street, while the historic Watershops Armory building, a neighborhood commercial center, Brookings School, and Ruth Elizabeth Park are important amenities located at the western end of the street.

As part of the Rebuild Springfield planning process in District 2 many stakeholders in the area, including Hill Homes, Springfield College, Spring Hill, and the City of Springfield, have engaged in dialogue and formed relationships to begin to define a new redevelopment strategy that would transform the Hickory Street area into a community hub for living, working, shopping, and learning. While these talks and partnerships are still preliminary, they represent an important model for how a coordinated, collaborative strategy shared by residents, institutions, developers, can have significant

long term impact on the vitality and long-term sustainability of an area.

Many recommendations for improved housing, streetscapes, job opportunities, and schools are put forth in this district plan. For these initiatives to be successful, a fully-integrated approach is needed. Rebuilding after the tornado presents a unique window of opportunity to implement this catalytic redevelopment strategy. This new approach must move forward with a diverse, coordinated effort and be predicated on new and innovative partnerships, housing types, and land ownership patterns. The physical result is a combination of mixed-income housing units, attached and multi-family housing, infill housing built on vacant lots scattered throughout the neighborhood, mixed-use development that activates the area while supplying retail and services for residents and students, and well-maintained and –utilized parks and open space. Most importantly, this new strategy results in a more healthy, vital, and vibrant area.

The following redevelopment proposal is one potential scenario for Hickory Street, and illustrates how various physical elements

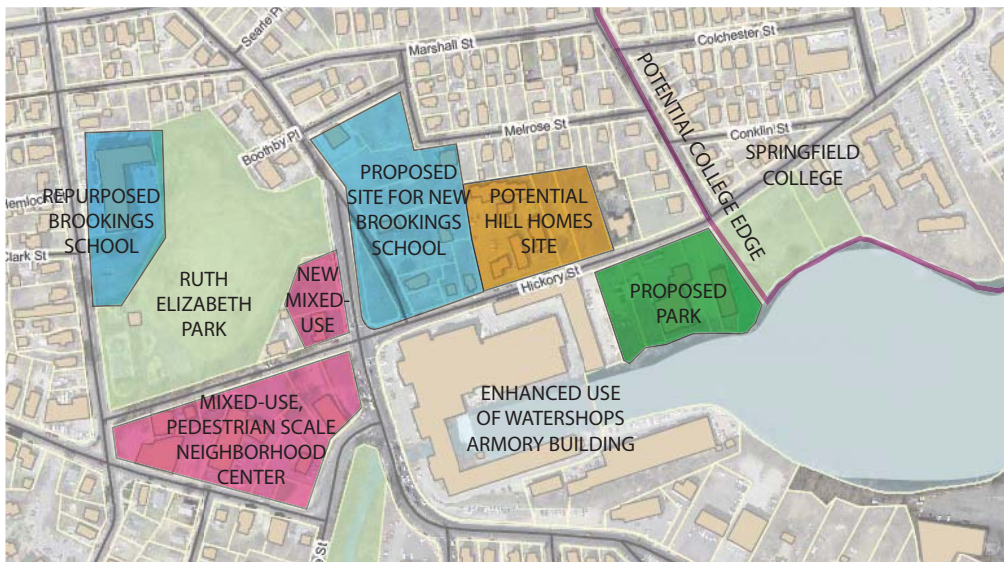
and stakeholders can work together to achieve a transformative outcome. While this concept must continue to be refined as dialogue and negotiations between stakeholders continue, potential components of redevelopment on Hickory Street are described below:

*Repurposed Brookings School building* – After the tornado the Springfield School District determined that renovation of this building for re-use as an elementary school is not ideal. The cost of upgrades required per code is significant and would still not yield a facility that will meet school building standards. However, with its high ceilings, historic architecture, and floor plan, this building would be an ideal space for studio, one, and two-bedroom residential units.

*Development of a new Elias Brookings School* – A new community-based school at the corner of Walnut and Hickory Streets would provide a strong anchor for the entire district. The new location could also create a link with Springfield College and further promote more involvement of the schools within the community and vice versa. A new school site would allow for the development of a protected outdoor space for student activities while also accommodating a shared community facility such as a gym (see the “Quality Schools as

## Potential Hickory Street Redevelopment Concept

Dialogue is ongoing between a variety of stakeholders to create a final redevelopment scenario



Community Anchors” recommendation for further description of Brookings). The new location would also help connect public space along Hickory from Ruth Elizabeth Park to improved park land along Watershops Pond.

*Relocated Hill Homes* – Many units of the Hill Homes cooperative were damaged in the tornado and must be rebuilt. By rebuilding in a new location along Hickory St. residents could build better quality housing while maintaining access to the waterfront via improved park space. Residents would also have the opportunity to rent or own in either attached or detached structures interspersed throughout the neighborhood. This allows the cooperative to forge new relationships with the surrounding community and educational institutions while living near the services and retail that are also proposed.

*Park and Open Space Improvements* – Residents at the community and stakeholder meetings identified this park as unsafe because of the illicit activity that takes place there. Redesigning and activating this park is crucial for the vitality and safety of the area. The integration of community gardens, better lighting, higher levels of police/ neighborhood watch patrolling, and more activity from the nearby recommended mixed use

structure will create more activity in and around the park. The Park also represents an important amenity for a repurposed Brookings school building, a new Brookings School located across the street to the east, and to new residential development in the area, including Hill Homes. The land just east of Watershops Armory has certain restrictions that make redevelopment of the parcel difficult. This site is ideal for new parkland and would link to an existing park to the east to provide continuous parkland and greater access to the waterfront. This site would also afford residents a unique view of the historic Watershops Armory.

*Retail and mixed use* – Creating mixed-use and retail structures near the Watershops Armory would provide quality living options for workforce housing and serve as another key anchor in redevelopment of the area. The residential component of mixed use developments help ensure vitality and activity while new retail would provide needed amenities and healthy lifestyle options for current and new residents. This additional activity would also help to strengthen the Watershops Armory building as a community anchor.

*Potential expansion of Springfield College’s western boundary* – Available land for expansion is a common concern among many colleges across the country. Springfield College is confined to the south and east and owns scattered parcels just west of their campus. The future expansion needs of the college must be included in the redevelopment strategy discussion of the Hickory Street area. A robust dialogue and partnership between Springfield College, area residents, and the City can ensure that expansion of the college is integrated into the neighborhood in a way that mutually benefits both the college and residents.

*Streetscape Improvements* – Streetscape improvements along Hickory Street, including a reconfiguration of intersections at Allen Street and Central Street, can provide a unifying link for this key area functioning as an amenity for new housing, neighborhood retail, a new Brookings school, the Watershops Armory building, and Springfield College.

Existing Conditions



Potential Redevelopment



## Transform Housing

# New Infill Housing



Cultural



Physical



Economic



Organizational



Educational



Social

The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.

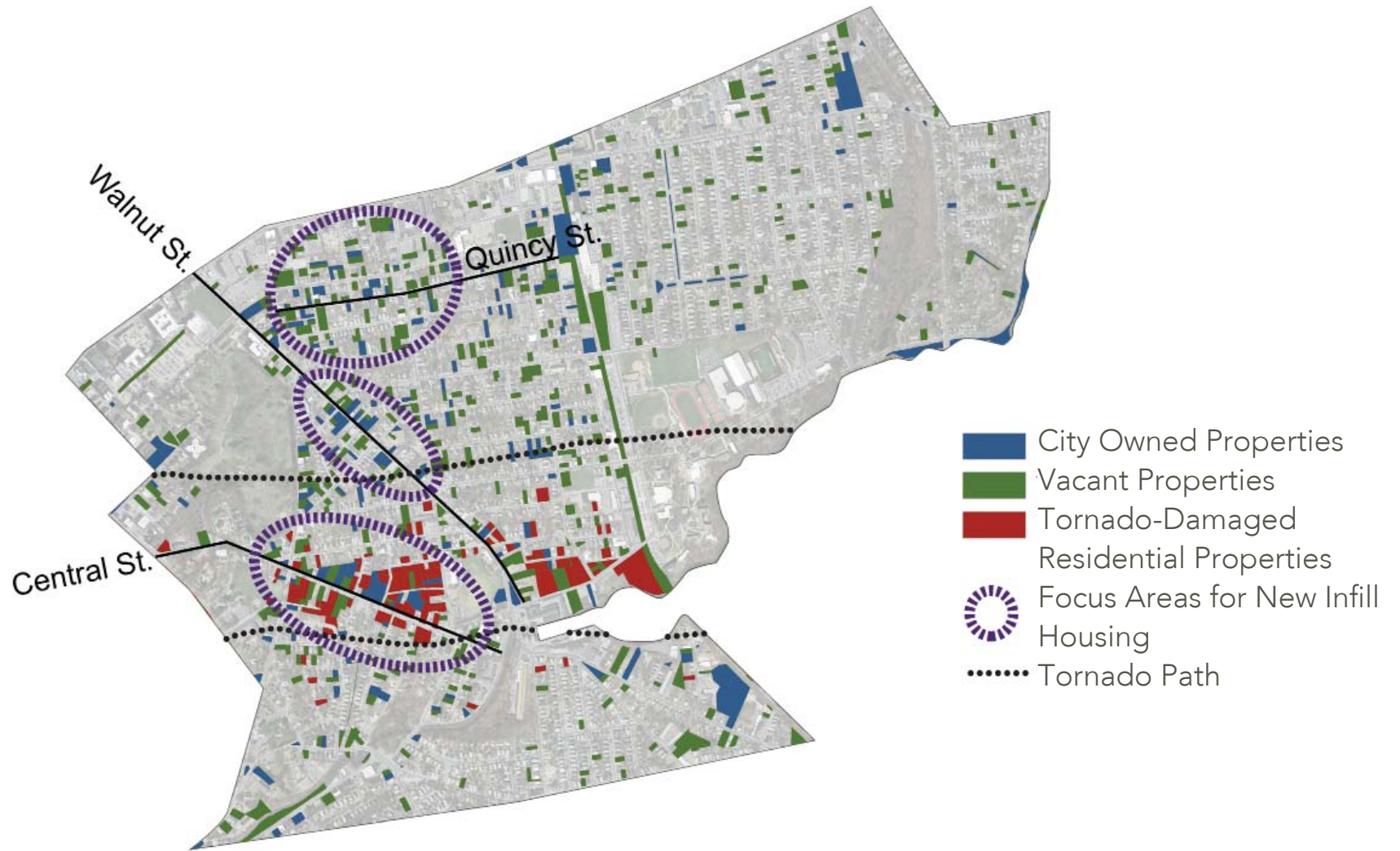
- Broaden the impact of successful programs
- Explore pilot projects in heavily damaged areas
- Streamline infill housing development with vacant lot management strategies

District 2 has a large number of vacant and city-owned lots, and also faces challenges with abandoned, blighted, and foreclosed properties. The June 1st tornado has further exacerbated these issues, with many more properties damaged or destroyed, particularly along Central Street, Walnut Street, Hickory Street, and surrounding areas. District 2 also has a very low homeownership rate in comparison with the rest of the city, state, and nation, and faces challenges with maintenance and code enforcement due to inattention from absentee investors and landlords.

Together these factors speak to the need and opportunity for new, quality infill housing to rebuild what was lost, attract new investment, increase ownership, and meet the housing needs of area residents while making the neighborhood more healthy, vital, and sustainable in the long term.

There are already a number of organizations doing very successful and important housing work in the neighborhood, including some collaborative partnerships that are potential models for broader efforts in the community. For example the Old Hill Neighborhood Council, Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services, Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity, and HAP Housing are partnering to develop one hundred new or rehabilitated energy-efficient homes for owner occupants in the Old Hill neighborhood, and are supported by a loan fund guaranteed by Springfield College that allows the collaborative to acquire property at below-market rates.





New Infill Housing

The City has been a critical partner in this effort, providing funding and residential vacant lots for homeownership development.

There is also a range of other successful programs to support homeownership and infill housing construction and maintenance that could have a more transformative impact with greater resources and participation, and as part of a coordinated strategy for housing in the District. These programs include financial resources for new residents, such as employer incentives to locate in the City of Springfield, and in particular neighborhoods, and support for long-time homeowners to improve their property through grants for energy-efficiency and curb appeal improvements. These programs also include educational and support resources such as financial fitness education that helps prospective owners identify and overcome financing obstacles, foreclosure assistance, and new homeowner workshops.

The goal of this initiative is to support additional homeownership, home rehabilitation, and new infill housing development by:

- Continuing to build on and enhance the partnership and collaboration between area housing, neighborhood, and service organizations

- Broadening the impact of successful existing program geographically and in terms of residents benefitted
- Identifying additional resources to support successful programs
- Reinforcing the tight-knit community fabric of District 2 neighborhoods by supporting homeowners that are engaged and invested in the neighborhood and discouraging absentee landlords and investors
- Closing the gap between what it costs to build or renovate a home and the price it can command. As the neighborhood strengthens and values rise, this gap will shrink and investment and development activity will become self-sustaining

All of these efforts should be implemented as part of a coordinated housing strategy that is looking at the needs of the entire community with a comprehensive approach to create viable, sustainable neighborhoods with the full range of support systems necessary to make homeownership successful.

Even before the tornado, areas along Central Street included a concentration of vacant and city-owned lots. In the aftermath of the tornado, the Central Street corridor was particularly hard hit, creating a large swath of vacant, damaged, and destroyed property. However, this corridor

has also seen recent successful single-family owner-occupied infill housing development, and is home to faith-based institutions committed to revitalization of their surrounding community. The need and opportunities in this location make Central Street a primary focus for new infill housing development (The “Central Street Corridor” Implementation Opportunity describes the potential for this area in greater detail).

There are also concentrations of vacant and city-owned lots in District 2 along Walnut Street, and in the northern section of Old Hill where housing organizations are already partnering to focus new infill housing development. Both of these locations represent opportunities for expanded infill housing development efforts, as do many sites scattered throughout the District.

Areas where vacant, damaged, blighted, and destroyed properties are concentrated as a result of tornado damage (including Central Street) present opportunities to develop pilot housing developments that can provide quality housing and while illustrating new ways to approach housing development more broadly in the District (and throughout Springfield). These developments could illustrate energy efficiency and water conservation features to reduce housing costs; construction methods that are durable, safe, healthy, and sustainable



while remaining affordable; creative approaches to maintenance, property management, and financing; sweat-equity strategies, and other features. In the aftermath of disasters in other communities, and in response to a compelling vision for a better future, organizations and creative developers such as Full Spectrum of New York, Enterprise Community Partners, the Salvation Army's EnviRenew program, the Make-It-Right Foundation, and others with national resources and profile have invested in other disaster-affected communities through the development of such pilot projects in coordination with local partners.

The process that the City uses to return City-owned lots to private owners for development has improved over the past several years, with greater use of the Request for Proposals process in lieu of property auctions, to ensure that capable and committed buyers follow through on infill housing development in a thoughtful and coordinated way. While the City's Office of Housing, Springfield Redevelopment Authority, and other agencies are already engaged in the process of acquiring vacant, abandoned, and tax delinquent property, holding it, and reintroducing it to private ownership and development, proactive identification, acquisition, and land banking of vacant and abandoned properties to facilitate investment and redevelopment in a

deliberate and coordinated way would help to streamline new infill housing development. Land banking also enables consolidation of property in strategic locations that can make it easier to develop at a scale that can attract more private investment, accommodate a broader range of redevelopment financing strategies, and have a more transformative impact on District 2 neighborhoods than would be possible with an approach that focused solely on scattered sites passively acquired within an area. Other strategies to address abandoned properties can also disincite ownership of vacant properties, and encourage action to actively reuse and redevelop vacant sites for a variety of uses including infill housing (See "Reuse of Vacant Lots" initiative for more information on how potential vacant lot management strategy may help facilitate new infill housing development).

### **Partnerships / Stakeholders**

- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Housing
- Springfield Housing Authority
- Springfield Redevelopment Authority
- Rebuilding Together Springfield
- HAP Housing
- Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services
- Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity
- Home City Housing
- Private Developers
- Neighborhood Councils
- Non-Profit Services
- Area Churches
- Area Employers
- Springfield College
- American International College

### **Resource Needs**

- Subsidy to cover gap construction costs for developers until property value increases can better support market rate rehab and development
- Grants, donations, and other support to expand and scale up successful programs such as employer incentives, curb appeal programs, energy efficiency upgrades, and others
- Materials and sweat equity

## Potential Resource Opportunities

### Local

- CDBG and HOME funds support the “American Dream Downpayment Initiative” (ADDI) through HAP Housing for up to \$10,000, and the “Downpayment Assistance Program” through Springfield Office of Housing for up to \$2,500
- Rebuilding Together Springfield: A nonprofit agency that provides free rehabilitation and critical repairs to the homes of low-income homeowners, by using volunteer labor and donated materials. The local agency is one of 200 affiliates nation-wide
- City of Springfield Emergency Homeowner Repair Program: Provides technical assistance and non-interest bearing deferred payment loans to assist eligible low and moderate-income households within the City of Springfield
- Buy Springfield Now - Employer incentives for homeownership in Springfield and specific neighborhoods
- Curb Appeal Program. This program sponsored by Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company (MassMutual) provides funding to improve the exterior appearances of homes in neighborhoods along Springfield’s State Street corridor

### State

- Housing Stabilization Fund: A state funded bond program that assists in the production and preservation of affordable housing for low-income families and individuals. HSF monies may be used for the acquisition and/or rehabilitation of existing structures for sale to income-eligible first-time homebuyers, including distressed or failed properties, or the new construction of homeownership projects. In recent years, Massachusetts has used these funds for activities other than supporting homeownership; Springfield will need to advocate with the state to change this policy.
- Housing Innovation Fund: A state program that provides funding for the creation and preservation of alternative forms of affordable housing. While these funds can be used for affordable homeownership, Massachusetts has not used the funds for this purpose in recent years. Springfield will need to advocate with the state to change this policy.
- The Soft Second Loan Program: A joint initiative of the public and private sectors to increase affordable housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income homebuyers combining a conventional first mortgage with a subsidized second mortgage to help low- and moderate-income households to qualify for a mortgage and purchase a home for the first time.
- Housing Development Incentive Program: The

HDIP is designed to increase residential growth, expand diversity of housing stock, support economic development, and promote neighborhood stabilization in designated Housing Development Zones within Gateway municipalities, such as Springfield. It provides tax incentives to developers to rehabilitate multi-unit properties for sale or lease as market rate units: a local-option property tax exemption and a new state tax credit for qualified rehabilitation expenses.

- State Historic Tax Credits
- Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation Debt and Equity Financing. MHIC provides financing to nonprofit and forprofit sponsors of affordable housing and commercial real estate (in low-income communities). MHIC finances both large and small developments -- including rental, SRO, ownership, assisted living, cooperative, commercial, and senior-housing units.

### Federal

- Federal Disaster Funds
- HUD Community Planning and Development office and HUD Choice Neighborhood funding
- Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- New Markets Tax Credits
- Federal Historic Tax Credits
- CDBG funds can support homeownership through:

- Emergency repair
- Pre-purchase counseling budget management, credit counseling for renters and buyers
- Infrastructure and streetscape improvements around new developments
- Contracts with non-profits to provide assistance navigating home repair and application for recovery resources
- The recovery from many other natural disasters has been facilitated by a special federal appropriation. These funds, often channeled through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, provide funds for gap financing and needed public improvements.
- HOME Investment Partnerships. Eligible activities include home purchase or rehabilitation financing assistance to eligible homeowners and new homebuyers, as well as assistance for building or rehabilitate housing for rent or ownership
- Neighborhood Stabilization Program funding

#### *Energy Efficiency / Renewable Energy*

- Rebuild Western Massachusetts Program: Sponsored through the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources; Promotes energy efficient building practices for new construction and repairs of residential and commercial structures, including grant and zero interest construction loan funds.

- State income tax credit for renewable energy: 15 percent up to \$1,000 for installation of a renewable energy system in a home, including solar, photovoltaic, solar space heating, solar water heating, or wind
- Federal Tax Credits: 30 percent with no upper limit for geothermal heat pumps, solar energy systems, solar hot water heating, and small wind turbines. Particularly in larger redevelopment areas, a district geothermal system would be particularly attractive as a cost effective solution
- An Energy Efficient Mortgage (EEM) is a mortgage that credits a home's energy efficiency in the mortgage itself. EEMs give borrowers the opportunity to finance cost-effective, energy-saving measures as part of a single mortgage and stretch debt-to-income qualifying ratios on loans thereby allowing borrowers to qualify for a larger loan amount and a better, more energy-efficient home. EEM's are now more easily available through Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and available through FHA.

#### *Other*

- Center for Community Progress (Land Bank Expert)
- Enterprise Community Partners (in particular the Green Communities group) provides capital solutions and policy advocacy for local housing, community development and greening efforts

- Federal Home Loan Bank's Affordable Housing Program provides grants to support specific development projects serving a wide range of neighborhood needs including seniors, the disabled, homeless families, first-time homeowners and others with limited resources. The Federal Home Loan Bank System is the largest single funding provider to Habitat for Humanity.
- Full Spectrum of NY, LLC is the national market leader in the development of mixed use and mixed income green buildings in emerging urban markets.
- EnviRenew is a program supported by The Salvation Army that seeks to address the glaring discrepancy between good quality, sustainable homes and their high purchasing and occupancy costs. EnviRenew aims to establish a replicable model for affordable housing while at the same time establishing community capacity so that communities can grow even stronger than before.
- Make It Right builds safe, sustainable and affordable homes for working families. Make it right emphasizes high quality design, while preserving the spirit of the community's culture.

(See the Citywide Appendix for more detailed information on housing resources, including sample pro formas that illustrate potential construction costs, values, and financing gaps for various types of housing.)

### Action Steps

- Determine which existing programs are the most successful with the most potential to expand and scale up
- Create a narrative that can be used to tell about exciting successes and raise new funds
- Target grant monies for existing housing organizations to pursue as a consortium in support of existing successful programs
- Identify specific sites or a collection of sites (within the above identified corridors) to implement a pilot infill housing development project and solicit organizations at a national scale who are interested in bringing energy, innovation, and resources to the recovery effort
- Tie housing work, priorities, and needs with other volunteer programs to identify sweat equity opportunities
- Develop a public method to monitor and share progress to build ownership in the investment and shape a confidence in positive change

### Land Banks:

- Determine legal authority necessary to acquire, manage and dispose of property, and support other functions a land bank might provide
- Identify funding, including potential self-supporting revenue sources through land bank activities.
- Establish organizational structure
- Identify critical policy goals

### Project Location

- With a concentration of vacant, abandoned, and city-owned properties, as well as properties with significant tornado damage, the Central Street corridor represents the primary focus for new infill housing development as part of the rebuilding effort
- Although not directly impacted by the tornado, the Walnut Street corridor and northern sections of the Old Hill neighborhood are also important areas to focus new infill housing, both because of the available infill development opportunities in these areas, and existing housing partnerships focusing efforts here
- Vacant, abandoned, and city-owned properties are scattered throughout District 2 and present opportunities for new infill housing development

### Priority



### Precedents

#### Make it Right, New Orleans, LA

Make it Right began in December 2007 in response to the lack of progress made in rebuilding the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans, following Hurricane Katrina. Make It Right set out to be a catalyst for redevelopment by building a neighborhood comprised of safe and healthy homes with an emphasis on high quality design, while preserving the spirit of the community's culture. In addition to building 150 new homes in the Lower 9th Ward, Make it Right engaged in innovative efforts to repair and improve the infrastructure, storm-preparedness, and the beauty of the neighborhood. Through May of 2011 75 homes have been completed.



# Implementation Opportunity

## Central Street

The adjacent map indicates both the urgent need and great potential to transform Central Street through new infill housing development in coordination with other public improvements and rebuilding efforts. Vacant and abandoned properties along with property maintenance and street appearance issues presented challenges for this corridor before the tornado. Compounded by a high concentration of tornado-damaged properties in this area, the need for transformation along Central Street is great.

The recent private development of six single-family homes on the south side of Central Street has been a welcome change in trajectory for the corridor, and the consolidated collection of vacant and city-owned property along the corridor present immediate development opportunities that can continue to fill the gaps along the street, bring interest and activity to the area, and provide quality housing that strengthens the neighborhood while meeting resident needs.

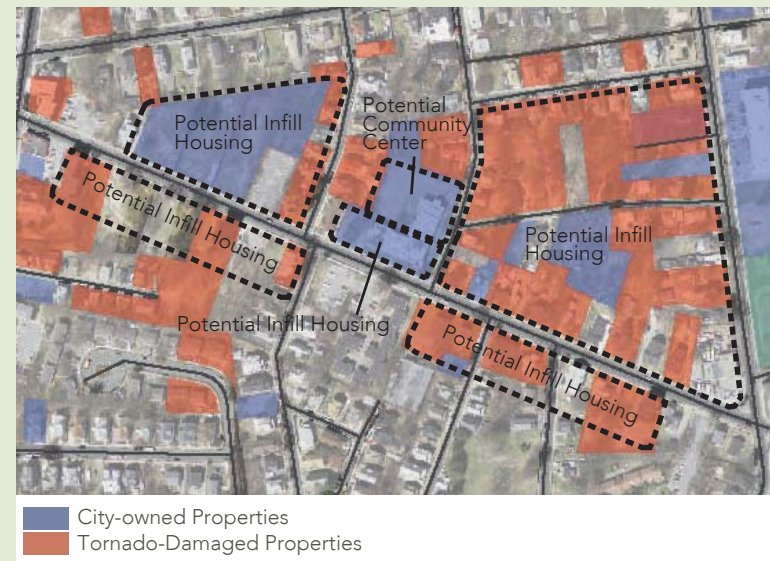
There is space and potential on Central Street for a coordinated model neighborhood development of multiple homes that could demonstrate innovative techniques in home construction, financing, maintenance, and resident support, with potential application and benefits throughout the tornado-impacted areas, and the City.

The New Hope Pentecostal Church is located on Central Street and has expressed interest in an expanded mission to support the surrounding neighborhood, including the potential development of a community resource center. Nearby on Florence Street, the S.R. Williams Resource and Development Center is also actively planning to expand its services to



improve the quality of life for area residents. With strategic coordination, these faith-based institutions can play an integral role in the total revitalization of Central Street, supplementing physical improvements along the corridor with capacity building and support for residents that is critical to a vital, healthy neighborhood over time.

New infill housing can be supported by revitalization of neighborhood-scale activity centers along Central Street. The “Watershops Armory” Implementation Opportunity in the “Enhanced Neighborhood Businesses” initiative describes the potential public improvements and redevelopment opportunities in the activity center located just to the west of the historic Watershops Armory building. The intersection of Central Street and Pine Street also has potential to function as a small neighborhood node serving surrounding residents. The apartment building at the northeast corner of the intersection is currently under renovation for residential use. District 2 residents have repeatedly identified the nuisances and negative impacts of a package store on the adjacent corner. The redevelopment or reuse of this site as a community space in combination with the renovation across the street provides an opportunity to create a vital neighborhood anchor in this location that serves the surrounding neighborhood. Toward this end, the City should work to acquire the property where the existing package store is located for redevelopment.



## Before / After: Conceptual Rendering of Central Street Improvements

Infill Housing on Central Street: Central Street is one of the areas most heavily-impacted by the tornado, and includes a concentration of vacant, city-owned, and tornado-damaged lots. There is an opportunity to transform Central Street with new infill housing, streetscape improvements, and community facilities.



1. New Infill Housing 2. Streetscape Improvements 3. Replacement of Street Trees 4. Community Facilities 5. Reuse of Vacant Lots (Community Gardens)

## Transform Housing

# Preservation as a Revitalization Tool

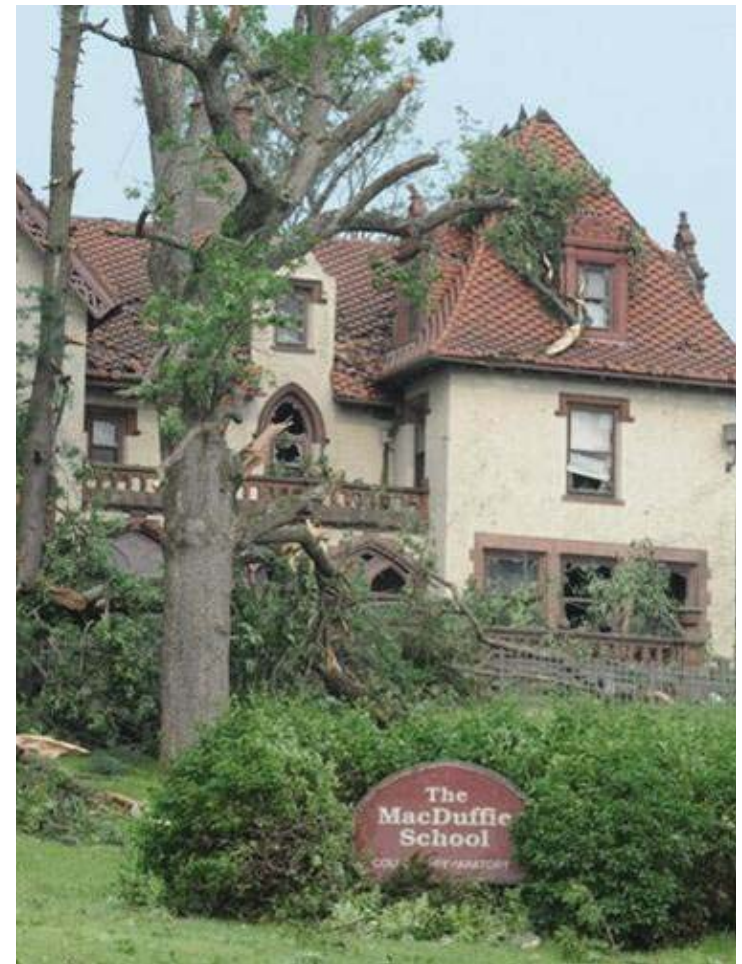


The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.

- **Increase advocacy for preservation with the City and the general public**
- **Establish a revolving loan fund for preservation**
- **Supplement traditional preservation resources with programs for weatherization, energy efficiency, and green building for all homes**
- **Develop an emergency weatherization and stabilization program**

Preserving and renovating damaged structures, rather than demolishing them, was one of the most strongly supported ideas that emerged from community input during the Rebuild Springfield planning process. The historic structures and neighborhoods in District 2 are assets that make the area a unique and interesting place to live. As Maple High- Six Corners, Old Hill, and Upper Hill rebuild from the tornado and seek ways to strengthen their communities by attracting visitors, new residents, and new investments, the historic character and architectural quality of the neighborhoods are an important part of that effort. Well-preserved, well-maintained homes can also instill a sense of pride and ownership in an area, enhance public safety, and begin to strengthen property values, making market –driven reinvestment in the area more viable.

The City has established a number of historic districts, and locally and nationally designated historic places. The City’s Historical Commission and the Springfield Preservation Trust do important work, but even with these efforts, there is a need for additional financial and organizational resources, and recognition that there are important historic and architectural assets throughout the tornado-affected area whose preservation and renovation can support the recovery efforts and long-term vitality of the community. This initiative recommends a number of measures to reflect the importance of preservation as a neighborhood revitalization tool for designated





historic homes and districts, but also for District 2 neighborhoods in general. This initiative also identifies strategies to bring new resources to the City's preservation efforts.

### **Increase advocacy for preservation with the City and the general public**

Based on the importance that residents have placed on preservation in community meetings, and wealth of historic resources in the community, stronger advocacy for preservation with the City and the general public can increase the awareness and impact of preservation efforts. This advocacy should include expanded technical assistance, outreach, education, and events, as well as proactive identification of creative resources to support preservation efforts. Focused advocacy could also help to more effectively secure limited, competitive, state historic tax credits. While it is difficult to focus City staff attention on preservation efforts when the City faces budget challenges, increased advocacy could include some combination of City staff, an expanded role for the City's Historical Commission and a more robust partnership between The Springfield Preservation Trust and the City.



Preservation as a Revitalization Tool

### **Establish a revolving loan fund for preservation**

A revolving loan fund is a tool employed by many communities to support historic preservation efforts, and is useful for the preservation of owner-occupied residential properties, where historic tax credits are not available, and can be coordinated with programs and resources offered through local housing and community service organizations to support neighborhood revitalization in a coordinated and integrated manner. To maximize the impact of revolving fund investments, loans can be targeted in areas where residents have the greatest need, and historic resources are most at risk. The Providence Preservation Society Revolving Fund is a successful local example of a revolving loan fund designed to support neighborhood revitalization efforts. The fund was initially capitalized with the help of CDBG funds, corporate and foundation grants, loans from the State Historic Preservation Office, and local banks.

### **Supplement traditional preservation resources with programs for weatherization, energy efficiency, and green building for all homes**

While District 2 includes several signature historic properties (including the Watershops Armory building and the former MacDuffie School), the overall historic character of its residential

neighborhoods also represent an important asset for the area – an asset that benefits existing residents and can also be marketed to potential new residents and visitors. However, economic trends, housing markets, and other factors have contributed to a gradual degradation of the quality of the housing stock in District 2 over time, including a number of properties that are now vacant or have serious maintenance challenges.

State and federal historic tax credits are available to support historic preservation, but requirements for these incentives to be used for income-producing properties limits their potential impact in largely residential areas. The existing housing challenges in District 2 are evidence that these incentives alone are not enough. This initiative recommends a deliberate strategic effort to restore and maintain District 2's historic housing stock through creative resources that can supplement traditional historic preservation efforts. These resources could include federal, state, and local programs, private fundraising and donations, grants and incentives for weatherization, energy efficiency, and green building, and other sources. The community of Lowell, Massachusetts is a local example of such an approach. In partnership and with seed funding from the U.S. Department of Energy's Better Buildings Neighborhood Program, Lowell

is implementing a neighborhood-scale energy efficiency program targeting the city's historical buildings. Identifying and securing creative resources to support historic preservation would be one of the expanded roles of a historic preservation advocate as described above.

### **Develop an emergency weatherization and stabilization program**

Where resources for preservation are limited, it is sometimes not financially feasible to restore properties that have fallen into disrepair. Residents have emphasized the importance of addressing property maintenance issues in the District, and the City is actively working to address vacant and abandoned properties that have fallen into disrepair through its blight reduction program. In some cases, homes can be made safe and structurally sound for a fraction of the cost of full restoration, and sometimes for less cost that it would require to demolish the structure. While demolition is a necessary tool to address blight and abandonment in the District, this initiative recommends developing a program that can provide emergency weatherization and stabilization for properties of particular historic value as a stopgap measure until these properties can be fully restored.



### Partnerships / Stakeholders

- Springfield Preservation Trust
- Springfield Historical Commission
- Massachusetts Historical Commission
- Preservation Massachusetts
- National Park Service (through Springfield Armory National Historic Site)
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Springfield Development Services Division - Office of Planning and Economic Development
- Springfield Development Services Division - Office of Housing
- Neighborhood groups
- Community organizations
- Housing developers
- Corporate and private donors

### Resource Needs

- Capital for the revolving loan fund will need to be raised from a combination of public and private sources that could include corporations, foundations, local banks, state and federal historic preservation programs, CDBG and HOME funds, and other resources
- Financial and organizational capacity to increase advocacy for preservation
- Funding to support home improvements focused on short-term stabilization, plus long-term weatherization and energy-efficiency measures

### Potential Resources Opportunities

- While a revolving loan fund would require a source of initial capital, operating income for the fund could be derived in part from loan fund interest
- Grants and private donations
- State and federal historic tax credits
- Massachusetts Historical Commission administers a federally funded, reimbursable, 50/50 matching grant program for planning and survey work.
- Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund. This State sponsored program supports preservation through a State-funded 50% reimbursable matching grant program.

*The following programs and resources help homeowners with home repairs and improvements for historic and non-historic homes:*

- City of Springfield Emergency Homeowner Repair Program: Provides technical assistance and non-interest bearing deferred payment loans to assist eligible low and moderate-income households within the City of Springfield.
- City's Heating System repair / replace program: Provide emergency heating system repair, pays for the cost of an annual inspection of a fuel burning system, or pays for the replacement of the system, if needed. The program is intended

to assist homeowners whose household income does not exceed 60 percent of the area median income.

- Rebuilding Together Springfield: A nonprofit agency that provides free rehabilitation and critical repairs to the homes of low-income homeowners, by using volunteer labor and donated materials. The local agency is one of 200 affiliates nation-wide.

*A variety of energy-efficiency programs that may be aligned with preservation efforts:*

- Mass Save Major Renovations Program: Provides homeowners who are renovating, remodeling or making other home improvements the opportunity to increase the energy performance of the home, including technical support, financial incentives, and other offerings.
- Mass Save Energy Assessments: Mass Save works with certified Energy Specialists, Home Performance Contractors (HPCs) and Independent Installation Contractors (IICs) to provide high-quality Home Energy Assessments and weatherization installations.
- Rebuild Western Massachusetts Program: Sponsored through the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources; Promotes energy efficient building practices for new construction and repairs of residential and commercial structures, including grant and zero interest construction loan funds.

- Federal tax credits for residential insulation, windows, heating and cooling systems and water heaters.
- Weatherization Assistance Program: Funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) enables low-income families to permanently reduce their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient. In Springfield, the program is administered through Springfield Partners for Community Action.

### Action Steps

*Increase advocacy for preservation with the City and the general public*

- Identify staff and volunteer capacity to support expanded technical assistance, outreach, education, and identify creative preservation resources
- Advocate for projects in tornado-impacted areas eligible for competitive state historic tax credits
- Fill vacant appointments to Springfield Historical Commission

*Establish a revolving loan fund for preservation*

- Establish a capital pool and source of operating income
- Create an oversight structure
- Develop and formalize partnerships with neighborhoods, housing developers, and community organizations
- Define criteria for eligibility to maximize impact and support long-term goals

### Priority



*Supplement traditional preservation resources with programs for weatherization, energy efficiency, and green building*

- Identify available resources
- Compile and advertise available resources as potential preservation tools

*Develop an emergency weatherization and stabilization program*

- Develop criteria to identify properties with historic value outside of existing designated historic districts
- Work with Springfield Preservation Trust to identify properties especially at risk for demolition
- Review legal requirements and policies to determine where and how available resources can support interim stabilization and weatherization for at-risk properties

### Location

The Springfield Historical Commission has identified areas where needs are most urgent following the tornado, including areas in District 2: damaged buildings in the Maple Hill Historic District including the MacDuffie campus and 210 Maple Street, and damaged historic but undesignated buildings throughout the Six Corners neighborhood.

## Precedents

### Providence Preservation Society Revolving Fund - Providence, RI

“Rebuilding Community - A Best Practices Toolkit for Historic Preservation and Redevelopment”

Since 1980, the nonprofit Providence Preservation Society has worked to preserve Providence’s architectural heritage and stimulate community revitalization through advocacy, low-interest loans, technical assistance, and development. To that end, the Providence Preservation Society Revolving Fund (PPSRF) manages a capital pool that is used for rehabilitation loans to homeowners and to acquire abandoned property for development and resale in targeted low and moderate income historic neighborhoods. The capital pool was raised from public and private sources and includes loan funds from the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission and Bank Rhode Island. Operating income is obtained from interest, development fees and other fees for services, memberships, and grants from public and private sources.

To maximize its impact, the PPSRF targets its resources to specific low and moderate income historic neighborhoods that are in need of revitalization and partners with neighborhood steering committees and community-based organizations to tailor strategies to meet the

needs of the area. In its 20 year history, the PPSRF has loaned in excess of \$2.5 million for 146 restoration projects, including the renovation of 39 previously abandoned buildings.

PPSRF treats housing as a component of a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy that includes neighborhood organizing, infrastructure improvements, promotional activities, overall design enhancement, and economic development initiatives.

### Historic Energy Efficiency Program, Lowell, MA - U.S. Department of Energy

With \$5 million in seed funding from the U.S. Department of Energy’s Better Buildings Neighborhood Program, Lowell is implementing a neighborhood-scale energy efficiency program targeting the city’s historic commercial and multifamily buildings. The city created BetterBuildings Lowell Energy Upgrade (BLEU) in partnership with the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the National Park Service to demonstrate how energy efficiency upgrades can be achieved in commercial buildings while also adhering to historic standards.

Historic buildings often show the years of wear and tear—especially when it comes to energy efficiency. Windows are often old or cracked. There is little to no insulation, and doors lack

weather stripping. BLEU has developed a suite of solutions, to show property owners how energy efficiency upgrades can go hand-in-hand with historic preservation:

- To ensure energy efficiency measures won’t conflict with preservation standards, the city enlisted historic preservation specialists to provide technical assistance to property owners implementing efficiency upgrades.
- Because property owners may be concerned about the financial feasibility of addressing both preservation and efficiency standards, the city is providing incentives to owners through grant and loan programs, as well as direct install rebates.
- Lowell plans to implement outreach and marketing efforts such as direct mail and blast emails to property owners to help combat a general lack of awareness of how historic preservation and energy efficiency can co-exist.

[http://www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/betterbuildings/neighborhoods/lowell\\_profile.html](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/betterbuildings/neighborhoods/lowell_profile.html)

## Major Move 2

# Expand Economic Opportunity

Expanding economic opportunity includes addressing the need for jobs in the community through a combination of support for existing and startup businesses, and strategic use and tailoring of available job training and workforce development resources. Supporting businesses in District 2 both spurs job creation and enhances the retail and services available to District 2 residents. This Major Move also focuses on the development of vibrant neighborhood activity centers through a combination of supportive land use policies, incentives to promote local businesses, and strategic infrastructure improvements to catalyze private investment. Finally, building upon the existing historic, cultural, and institutional assets in District 2 can improve the quality of life for existing residents, while promoting District 2 neighborhoods to new resident and visitors.

### *Key Initiatives*

#### Job Training and Small Business Support

- Small Business and Entrepreneur Support for Startups and Existing Businesses
- Connecting Employers, Workforce Training, and Employees

#### Enhanced Neighborhood Businesses

- Clustering Around Activity Centers
- Strategic Public Investments to Support Neighborhood Businesses

#### Promotion and Marketing of the Community

- Neighborhood Events
- Public Realm Improvements and Programming
- Support and Shared Promotion of Local Businesses



## Expand Economic Opportunity

# Job Training and Small Business Support



The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.

- **Small Business and Entrepreneur Support for Startups and Existing Businesses**
- **Connecting Employers, Workforce Training, and Employees**

While District 2 neighborhoods are primarily residential and do not include the number or scale of employment uses found in Springfield’s downtown and other parts of the city, there are areas such the State Street Corridor, and to a lesser degree Walnut and Hancock Streets, with higher concentrations of businesses. District 2 residents have emphasized the need for employment and job training opportunities in general, as well as support for neighborhood businesses that can employ local residents and are conveniently accessible to surrounding residents. District 2 also includes several institutions such as Springfield Technical Community College (STCC), Springfield College, American International College, and other resources that are important for supporting long term job growth and skill development not only for District residents, but for the entire city.

Employment is an issue that was raised in all Districts and at every community meeting during the planning process, and is an issue with a scale and importance that necessitates city- and region-wide solutions. The Citywide section of this plan addresses employment through its recommendations to “Streamline the investment process and provide creative incentives and policies to encourage economic development and entrepreneurship” and “Expand career/workforce development and educational partnerships to provide all residents with an opportunity to meaningfully contribute to Springfield’s economy and meet the needs of employers.” Within District 2 there are opportunities to improve small business and entrepreneur support for startups and existing businesses and to continue to enhance workforce training resources.





### **Small Business and Entrepreneur Support: Startups**

With a variety of businesses, small business support organizations, and workforce development initiatives, the 15 acre STCC Technology Park represents the region's most significant set of small business resources. This Park includes the Springfield Business Incubator at the Scibelli Enterprise Center, the Western Massachusetts chapter of SCORE (the nation's largest volunteer business counseling service), and the Western Regional Office of the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center (providing advice to small businesses). Located in the former Springfield Armory complex on State Street, these considerable resources are located right at the doorstep of District 2 neighborhoods. Affordable lease space, free advisory and on-site business consulting services, networking opportunities, mentoring, access to supportive local lenders and links with STCC's academic programs are all available through the Scibelli Enterprise Center .

Greater awareness and access to available small business resources for District 2 businesses and entrepreneurs, and strategic efforts to align these resources with small business needs in the surrounding neighborhood can maximize the impact of these resources for the District, where economic challenges are particularly

acute. Local chambers of commerce can play an important role in connecting entrepreneurs to resources, including increased coordination and outreach to Latino / Hispanic entrepreneurs through the Massachusetts Latino Chamber of Commerce. The Springfield Chamber of Commerce administers a Technical Assistance Program that provides grants of up to \$5,000 for a variety of business services, and has expressed interest in offering expanded technical assistance (such as accounting or banking services) to small businesses.

### **Small Business and Entrepreneur Support: Existing Businesses**

While assisting startups is often the focus of small business efforts, helping existing businesses expand is a component of small business support that should not be overlooked. The first step in a strategy to support existing businesses in the district is conducting an outreach effort to identify what existing small businesses need to be more competitive and expand. This includes determining needs for financing, staffing, marketing, or other assistance. As with startups, the STCC Technology Park is a significant potential resource to address these needs or gaps for existing businesses. Another resource for existing District 2 businesses is the Western Massachusetts Development Collaborative

(WMDC), a non-profit development corporation that works with minority and women-owned businesses to provide access to financing, procurement opportunities, training and education, and a variety of business services.

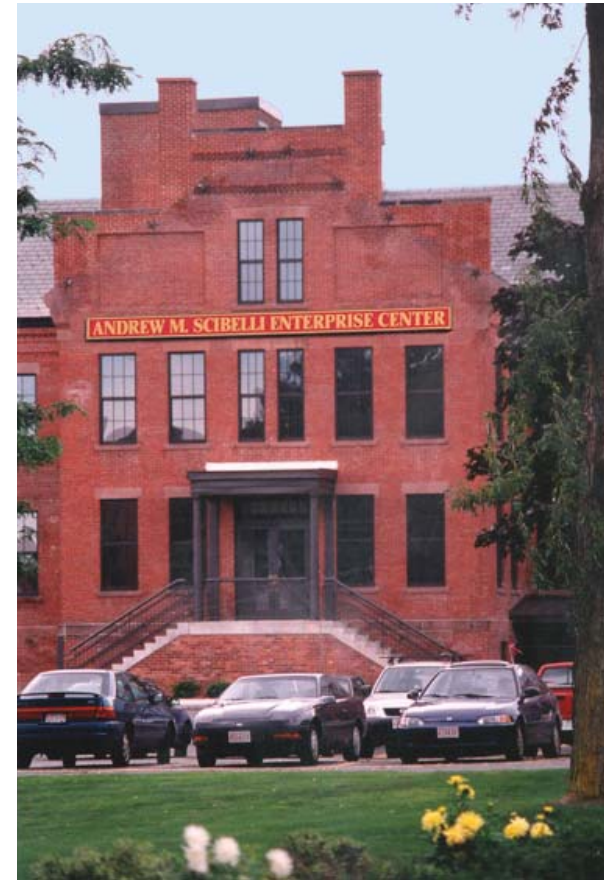
Small investment façade and shop window improvement programs can benefit neighborhood businesses and enhance the visual appearance of streets within the District. DevelopSpringfield operates a successful Corridor Storefront Improvement Program that provides grants of up to \$10,000 for improvements including restoration of architectural details, painting, window and door replacement, signage, lighting, and other facade work. Currently this program is limited to Main Street and State Street, but with supplemental funding this model could potentially be expanded to other corridors in District 2, particularly in tornado-impacted areas. The City of Springfield also offers a storefront improvement program that offers grants of up to \$10,000 through CDBG funding.

Beyond physical improvements, capital and advisory support for existing businesses is critical. The City's Office of Planning and Economic Development provides a Small Business Toolbox that compiles a range of grants, loans, incentives, and resources to assist small businesses, including

tax increment financing, state tax credits, and Section 108 loans (funded through CDBG) that could support job-creating development activities in District 2 and citywide. New tools to support existing businesses in the District and throughout the City could include a multi-day seminar to help existing businesses scale up, expand, and become vendors to the City's large businesses (Mass Mutual, Baystate Health, area colleges, etc.). In 2011, a similar program organized by the Affiliated Chambers of Commerce of Greater Springfield and Baystate Health with facilitation by Next Street, a Boston-based company, was very successful. The Scibelli Center at STCC or other higher education institutions could potentially offer such a program, with assistance/sponsorship from a local major employer. The program could be competitive, structured, focused on existing businesses, and emphasize "buy local" in terms of linking larger businesses with local vendors. Additional private sector resources to support small businesses and help them grow include several emerging private sector angel-investing and mentoring programs (such as River Valley Investors and Valley Venture Mentors) that are largely based in Springfield and focused on support for innovative businesses.

### **Connecting Employers, Workforce Training, and Employees**

Employment for District 2 residents can be supported by continuing to improve the connection between employers and potential employees through workforce training efforts. Various initiatives to do this already exist in Springfield, including a recently revitalized effort by STCC and Holyoke Community College to reach out to area businesses and better tailor curriculum and training programs to business needs. STCC has also been proactively forming workforce training partnerships with regional and national companies, particularly in the telecommunications sector. The MassGREEN initiative through STCC provides energy efficiency workforce training programs to help ensure that the state has the workers and businesses necessary to achieve ambitious energy efficiency goals. FutureWorks is a career center operated in support of Regional Employment Board of Hampden County (REB) efforts to address workforce development for the entire region. Located at the STCC Technology Park, FutureWorks is well located to serve District 2 residents, and provides a variety of classes, workshops, advisory services, and employment resources.



A range of adult “job readiness” and literacy programs is also critical. Located in District 2’s Educational Corridor, the Massachusetts Career Development Institute (MCDI) offers training to out of school youth and adults who want to learn a skill for job placement, with the capability to train up to 1800 students per year. MCDI provides career counseling services, job seeking skills and services, and internship programs. MCDI also provides a youth program to re-engage disconnected youth through vocational training, work experience, and life skill workshops. Organizations such as YouthBuild and ETS Career Services are also located in District 2 and provide a variety of training, skill development, and employment services.

FutureWorks, MCDI, and the many other workforce training and employment assistance services could increase their impact on District 2 neighborhoods with greater visibility and awareness of their resources for area residents. Increasing awareness of existing resources includes better disseminating knowledge of many resources available, and providing assistance in navigating the multitude of offerings available. (The “Coordination of Community Services” initiative recommends strategies, including the

development a community resource network, that may help improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and awareness of existing workforce development programs.)

Job training efforts that focus on growing economic sectors where Springfield maintains competitive advantages in comparison to other regions, such as financial services, medical and nursing professions, and precision manufacturing, can help to maximize the long term benefit and opportunity for District 2 residents, and support the City’s economic development goals. Companies including Baystate Health, Liberty Mutual, and Smith and Wesson have undertaken training and development programs in Springfield. With continued focus on key industries, there is potential with successful programs to simultaneously enhance opportunity for job seekers, strengthen Springfield’s major employers and growth engines, and position Springfield for long-term economic competitiveness.

There is an opportunity to better match high school and college students with the city’s successful companies through mutually beneficial internship and training opportunities. Linking

students to potential employers requires a partnership between businesses and education institutions where businesses communicate their skill needs with area colleges, and colleges respond with curriculum and career development programs to prepare students to meet those needs. The relationship between business and education institutions is addressed in the Citywide section of this plan, but the presence of major education institutions, career training resources in District 2 and the particular need for quality jobs for area residents makes this effort particularly critical in District 2.

### Partnerships / Stakeholders

- Springfield Technical Community College (STCC)
- STCC Technology Park
- Scibelli Enterprise Center
  - Springfield Business Incubator
  - Western Mass Regional Small Business Development Center
  - Western Massachusetts SCORE
- Regional Employment Board
- FutureWorks career center
- Springfield College
- University of Massachusetts
- American International College
- Massachusetts Career Development Institute
- Western Massachusetts Development Collaborative (WMDC)
- Massachusetts Office of Business Development
- YouthBuild Springfield
- Springfield Chamber of Commerce and Affiliated Chambers of Commerce of Greater Springfield
- Massachusetts Latino Chamber of Commerce
- Develop Springfield
- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Planning and Economic Development
- River Valley Investors
- Valley Venture Mentors

- Local businesses (from small entrepreneurs to major corporations)
- Local banks

### Resource Needs

- Resources to promote and increase awareness of available small business and workforce development services
- Resources for physical improvements to businesses
- Resources for existing businesses to scale up and expand
- Sponsorship for potential small-business seminar
- Skills and training for District residents to compete and find employment
- Internship opportunities

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- The City's Economic Development Incentive Program combines local TIF financing and property tax abatement with a suite of state incentives including 5 percent state investment tax credit and 10 percent abandoned building tax credit
- Section 108 is a loan guarantee provision of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program that provides communities with a

source of financing for physical and economic revitalization projects. Section 108 allows cities to transform a portion of the CDBG funds into federally guaranteed loans that can provide resources and confidence for private investment.

- CDBG Small Business Loan Program: Typically \$1,000 to \$10,000 to support job creation and elimination of blight
- Scibelli Enterprise Center and Small Business Incubator: Low-cost space, advisory services, classes, lending support, networking
- Futureworks: Classes, workshops, advisory services, employment assistance
- Technical Assistance Program: Up to \$5,000 for a variety of business services
- Corridor Storefront Improvement Program (if expanded): Up to \$10,000 for façade improvements
- Neighborhood Storefront Improvement Program: up to \$10,000 for façade improvements
- Massachusetts Career Development Institute (MCDI) provides out of school youth and adults career counseling services, job seeking skills and services, internship programs, and a youth program to re-engage disconnected youth.
- Baystate-Springfield Educational Partnership



between Baystate and Springfield Public Schools

- The Big Y supermarket chain operates a program called the Springfield Work Scholarship Connection that links students with mentors, called youth advocates, starting at the transition between the 8th and 9th grade. Students apply for summer jobs at the Big Y and receive on-the-job coaching. Students also participate in workshops and other learning opportunities.
- The Martin Luther King Jr. Center (located in the Old Hill neighborhood but serving all of Springfield) receives funding to help a small number of young adults tap workforce opportunities while earning a stipend. The young adults find jobs at community-based organizations in the area that are willing to hire former offenders and provide them with the opportunity to learn on-the-job skills
- YouthBuild Springfield is located in District 2 along State Street and offers job training, education, counseling and leadership development opportunities to unemployed and out-of-school young adults between the ages of 17 and 24.
- The MassGREEN Initiative at STCC was established in July 2009 to develop and deliver

energy efficiency workforce training programs under the state's Energy Efficiency and Building Science Initiative and help ensure that Massachusetts has the quality and quantity of workers and businesses needed to achieve the state's ambitious energy efficiency goals.

- The New England Business Associates (NEBA) Business Consulting Center provides entrepreneurial training and support to individuals with disabilities, from the development of a business concept and the writing of business plans, to the implementation of the business. Business support services also include individualized consultations and sales assistance.
- Common Capital (CC), formerly the Western Massachusetts Enterprise Fund, helps individuals and small businesses finance their business needs through loan programs and also provides technical assistance through collaboration with regional organizations.
- U.S. Small Business Administration. Property owners impacted by the tornado are eligible for special disaster recovery loans from the Small Business Administration (SBA). Approved loans can be increased for protective measures to

lessen similar future damages. Additionally, small businesses and most private nonprofit organizations can obtain loans for unmet working capital needs.

- MassDevelopment. MassDevelopment provides real estate and equipment financing with higher advance rates and low interest rates to help for-profit and nonprofit organizations grow their businesses. With financing tools including development funds, tax-exempt bonds, loans, and guarantees, they can provide financing at any stage of a project – from predevelopment to permanent financing.

### Action Steps

#### *Small Business and Entrepreneur Support: Existing Businesses*

- Improve awareness, understanding and ease of access of the many existing small business resources available to District 2 businesses and entrepreneurs by increasing outreach into the neighborhoods.
- Address the acute employment challenges in District 2 by identifying the small business needs in District 2 neighborhoods and strategically aligning programming and resources to meet those needs

- Work with local chambers of commerce (including the Massachusetts Latino Chamber of Commerce headquartered in Springfield) to expand their role in connecting entrepreneurs to resources

#### *Small Business and Entrepreneur Support: Existing Businesses*

- Conduct an outreach effort to identify what existing small businesses need to be more competitive and expand. This includes determining needs for financing, staffing, or other assistance
- Explore potential to expand Corridor Storefront Improvement Program to other corridors in District 2, particularly in tornado-impacted areas
- Hold a seminar to help existing businesses scale up, expand, and become vendors for Springfield’s large businesses

#### *Connecting Employers, Workforce Training, and Employees*

- Organize partnerships between businesses and education institutions where businesses communicate their skill needs with area

### Priority



colleges, and colleges respond with curriculum and career development programs to prepare students to meet those needs

- Increase the impact of existing workforce development programs through efforts to increase awareness and visibility for District 2 residents

### Project Location

Employment and business development are critical for residents and business owners throughout the District. The Scibelli Enterprise Center, Springfield Business Incubator, and FutureWorks Career Center are all located at Springfield Technical Community College, making this an important location for job training and small business support for the District.

## Precedents

The Watershops Armory building located at 1 Allen Street already functions as an informal business incubator in District 2. The following precedents provide examples of how the use of this facility could be enhanced to transform what is already a community asset into a truly unique anchor that strengthens the area economy and adds vitality to the surrounding activity center:

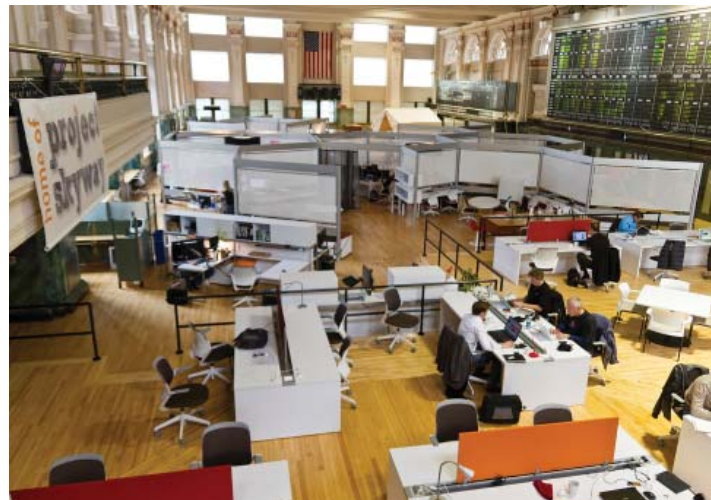
### **Nashville Entrepreneurship Center, Nashville, TN**

Nashville's Entrepreneur Center helps individuals start businesses through events, mentorship, training, resources, and access to investors. The center is located in downtown Nashville, and benefits from the area's lively atmosphere. The center is a non-profit 501c3 organization and is funding through sponsorships, partnerships, donations, and grants

### **CoCo (Coworking and Collaborative Space), Minneapolis, MN**

CoCo is a coworking and collaborative space for entrepreneurs, freelancers, and other solo and remote workers. This open office space is located in the historic Minneapolis Grain Exchange building. CoCo provides office amenities and a chance to collaborate for workers who do not have offices.

CoCo (Coworking and Collaborative Space)



## Expand Economic Opportunity

# Enhanced Neighborhood Businesses



The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.

- **Clustering Around Activity Centers**
- **Strategic Public Investments to Support Neighborhood Businesses**

District 2 residents have identified the need for enhanced neighborhood-oriented businesses, including greater access to basic retail and services to meet everyday needs. Residents seek a greater quality and variety of businesses that are convenient, walkable, and accessible within the neighborhood. In addition to concerns about commercial properties that are run-down or vacant, residents have also expressed concerns about the proliferation of certain businesses such as liquor stores and payday loan establishments.

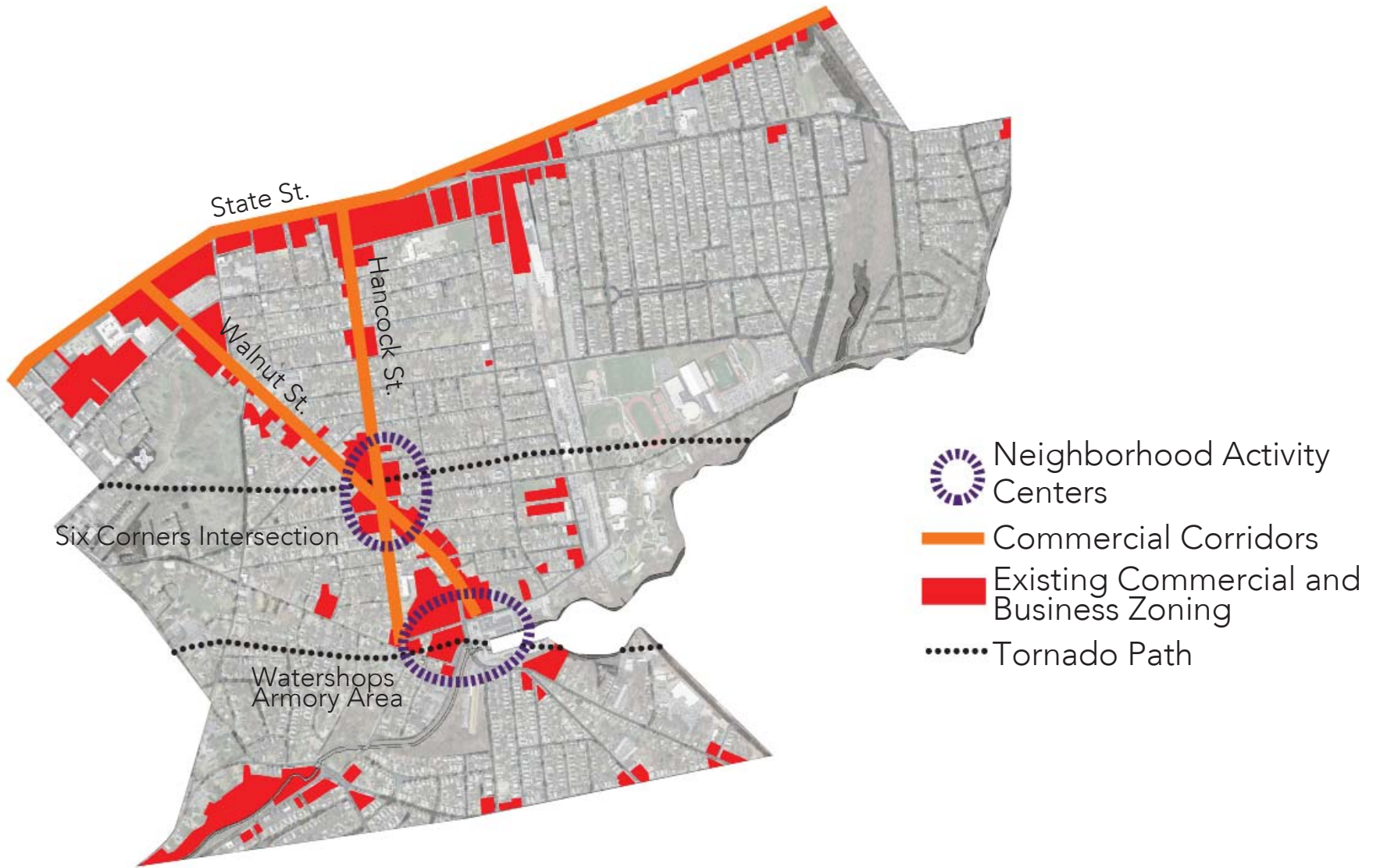
The rebuilding process presents an opportunity to enhance neighborhood businesses to better meet resident needs, attract visitors, and provide local jobs. A mix of supportive land use policies, incentives and tools for neighborhood businesses, and strategic infrastructure improvements can together help to create vibrant, attractive, walkable neighborhood activity centers. These transformed activity centers can in turn better attract and support the neighborhood establishments that residents desire.

### Clustering Around Activity Centers

With the exception of the State Street corridor, at the northern edge of District 2, commercial uses in the district are neighborhood scale. Walnut Street, Hancock Street, and to a lesser extent Central Street are eclectic corridors with a mix of residential and commercial uses. These corridors are products of historical development patterns not found in newer development elsewhere in the city, and are important assets in creating the vibrant, complete, urban neighborhoods residents envision for the District.







Existing Commercial Corridors and Activity Centers

There are centers of activity where these corridors converge within the tornado-affected areas at the Six Corners Intersection and the Watershops Armory area. Clustering new uses, investment, and development around these activity centers is important to focus energy and resources, and create a critical mass of interest and activity. Focusing on these activity centers also maximizes the impact of targeted infrastructure investments such as streetscape improvements, and helps to create identifiable destinations that are attractive and inviting to surrounding residents and visitors alike. Established, healthy, pedestrian-scale activity centers can begin to have positive spillover impacts on surrounding corridors and residential areas in terms of perception, interest, and investment. Areas in close proximity to the Six Corners Intersection, Watershops Armory Area, Springfield College, and other anchors also happen to be areas heavily impacted by the tornado, where new interest and investment is most needed.

It is important that the appropriate zoning is in place to focus activity around key neighborhood centers, permit interesting, eclectic mixed use corridors while managing impacts on residential uses, and elevate the design quality of commercial development within the district. The City's proposed zoning ordinance is generally well-positioned to accomplish those tasks. Most of

the commercial corridors and activity centers are proposed to be zoned as "Business A" districts which are described as pedestrian oriented shopping districts with residential allowed. Some corridors include "Commercial A" districts, which are intended for small scale retail and services, while some locations include "Commercial B" districts intended for more intense uses than allowed in Business A. All of these districts permit the commercial, residential, and mixed uses that together create the unique urban character of District 2 corridors, and the proposed zoning code establishes a system of design review that allows greater scrutiny for more intense uses with greater potential impacts on the neighborhood. For example, while the "Business B" district permits a variety of automotive uses that may not be compatible with the existing neighborhood character, these uses require a Special Permit Review by City Council, ensuring that there is an opportunity evaluate whether or how such uses might be developed on a particular site.

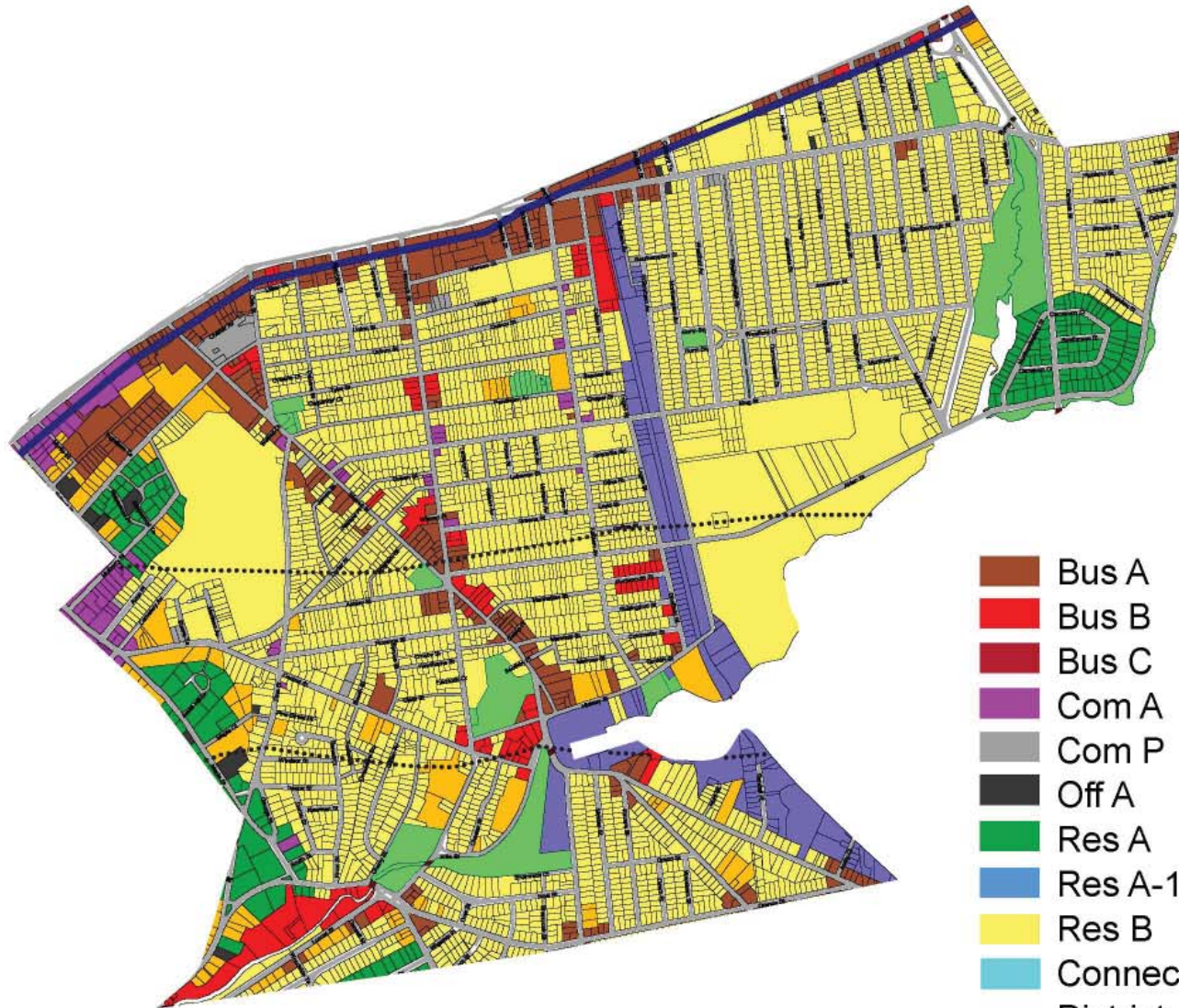
The proposed zoning code creates a "Neighborhood Commercial Overlay District" which includes design standards intended to create a human scale place with pedestrian amenities, sign rules, window requirements, and other features. While such an overlay district is not currently proposed for the tornado-impacted areas, this may be a tool to enhance the design




















and appearance of key activity centers in the District, including the Six Corners Intersection and Watershops Armory area. The proposed zoning code also creates a new "Mixed Use Industrial" district intended for sites with a variety of compatible uses including light industrial, residential, services, retail, and office. This new district may be appropriate for a re-envisioned Watershops Armory site at 1 Allen Street (see Watershops Armory Implementation Opportunity).

### **Strategic Public Investments to Support Neighborhood Businesses**

In areas that were experiencing a lack of investment even before the June 1st tornado, the rebuilding process provides a chance to change the existing economic trajectory by creating vibrant, attractive, walkable places that are more likely to spur private investment. Demonstrating public commitment to these areas through infrastructure, facility improvements, and other public investments is a powerful tool to attract a higher quality, more diverse mix of businesses within the District.

Physical improvements are the most visible public investments in the community. In the public realm these investments could include infrastructure upgrades such as streetscape improvements, sidewalk repairs, or enhancements to transit stops. Public investments could also include



- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  Bus A                             |  Res C          |
|  Bus B                             |  Res C-2        |
|  Bus C                            |  Ind Park      |
|  Com A                           |  Ind A        |
|  Com P                           |  Bus D        |
|  Off A                           |  Bus B-1      |
|  Res A                           |  Ind MU       |
|  Res A-1                         |  Open Space   |
|  Res B                           |  Tornado Path |
|  Connecticut Riverfront District |  |

Springfield Zoning Districts under Proposed Zoning Ordinance

facility improvements such as the construction of a new Brookings school (See “Streetscape Improvements,” “Safe and Convenient Transit,” and “Quality Schools as Community Anchors” Initiatives). Public investment in physical improvements also comes in the form of grants, loans, and other resources that assist private businesses and property owners with upgrades to their property (see the Job Training and Small Business Support Initiative for a summary of available façade and business improvement programs).

The City’s Blight Reduction Program to remove vacant, abandoned, or structurally unsound structures, and the temporary activation of storefronts with arts, educational, and other creative uses are two other examples of programs that can have a visible impact and improve the appearance of commercial areas. In addition to physical improvements, land use and zoning policies that set expectations for higher quality development, and small business tools that help neighborhood businesses to be successful also represent important public commitments to creating more vibrant places.

### Partnerships / Stakeholders

- Springfield Development Services – Office of Planning and Economic Development
- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Neighborhood Services
- Springfield Department of Public Works
- Springfield Chamber of Commerce and Affiliated Chambers of Commerce of Greater Springfield
- Massachusetts Latino Chamber of Commerce
- DevelopSpringfield
- Springfield Redevelopment Authority
- 1 Allen Street
- Local Businesses

### Resource Needs

- Appropriate zoning tools to focus activity in key neighborhood centers, permit eclectic mixed use corridors, mitigate negative impacts, and elevate design quality; while the City’s proposed zoning ordinance is generally well-positioned to accomplish these goals, targeted rezoning or overlay districts may be helpful
- Financing for infrastructure improvements to support neighborhood activity centers, including streetscapes, transit stops, public facilities, and others
- Resources for commercial building improvements, small business support, storefront activation, and blight removal at targeted locations

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- The City’s Economic Development Incentive Program combines local TIF financing and property tax abatement with a suite of state incentives including 5 percent state investment tax credit and 10 percent abandoned building tax credit
- Section 108 is a loan guarantee provision of the CDBG Program that provides communities with a source of financing for physical and economic revitalization projects. Section 108 allows cities to transform a portion of the CDBG funds into federally guaranteed loans that can provide resources and confidence for private investment.
- New Markets Tax Credits
- CDBG Small Business Loan Program: Typically \$1,000 to \$10,000 to support job creation and elimination of blight
- Corridor Storefront Improvement Program (if expanded): Up to \$10,000 for façade improvements
- Neighborhood Storefront Improvement Program: up to \$10,000 for façade improvements
- U.S. Small Business Administration. Property owners impacted by the tornado are eligible for special disaster recovery loans from the Small Business Administration (SBA). Approved loans can be increased for protective measures to lessen similar future damages. Additionally,

small businesses and most private nonprofit organizations can obtain loans for unmet working capital needs.

- MassDevelopment. MassDevelopment provides real estate and equipment financing with higher advance rates and low interest rates to help for-profit and nonprofit organizations grow their businesses. With financing tools including development funds, tax-exempt bonds, loans, and guarantees, they can provide financing at any stage of a project – from predevelopment to permanent financing
- Resource Opportunities for Targeted Public Improvements:
  - Capital Improvement Plan financing
  - MassDOT (for arterial streets)
  - PVTAs for transit stop upgrades
  - Private developer contributions to streetscape improvements for adjacent new development projects
  - Cooperative funding and maintenance agreements with adjacent property owners interested in improving the quality of the public spaces adjacent to their property
  - The recovery from many other natural disasters has been facilitated by a special federal appropriation. These funds, often channeled through the CDBG program, provide funds for gap financing and needed public improvements.

- Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants for public infrastructure that is required to leverage private investment

### Action Steps

#### Policy Actions

- Adopt and implement the new zoning ordinance
- Explore potential and appropriateness of Neighborhood Commercial Overlay Districts for District 2 activity centers (Six Corners Intersection and Watershops Armory area), and Mixed-Use Industrial zoning for Watershops Armory building at 1 Allen St.
- Emphasize creating vital activity centers and corridors as part of development review in tornado-impacted commercial areas

#### Public Improvements

- Identify specific public improvements to support and coordinate with private investment in neighborhood activity centers, including potential streetscape improvements, street realignments, transit stop upgrades, storefront activation programs, and blight removal activities
- Phase construction, identify funding sources, and develop final design

### Priority



#### Business Support

- Reach out to property and business owners to identify where available business support resources can assist building improvements, expansion, or other business needs (and where new programs might have significant impact).
- Reach out to property and business owners, particularly those considering rebuilding projects or new investment in tornado-impacted neighborhoods, to identify where and how public improvement projects can support and coordinate with private investments
- Consider a retail analysis to identify underserved sectors within District 2 (and potentially other tornado-impacted areas), in order to target public energy and resources

### Project Location

Within District 2's tornado impacted areas, the Six Corners intersection and Watershops Armory area are key activity centers, while Hancock Street, Walnut Street, and to a lesser extent Central Street are important neighborhood mixed-use corridors.

# Implementation Opportunity

## Six Corners Intersection

The Six Corners intersection at the convergence of Hancock, Walnut, Alden, and Ashley Streets is a major crossroads within the District providing cross-town connections to Downtown Springfield, the Watershops Armory and neighborhood to the east, State Street, and Springfield College. While the intersection includes a collection of gas stations, dining, and service establishments, the area is underutilized. A combination of reconfigured streets and public realm improvements could help to transform the area into an attractive, walkable, easy-to-navigate destination and catalyze private investment and development that would provide a greater quality and variety of retail and services to the neighborhood and give pass-through traffic a reason to stop. Improvements to the Six Corners Intersection could also capitalize on the potential of Alden Street as an important gateway that connects through Six Corners and Springfield College with opportunities for new retail and services to serve students and residents. Specific improvements could include:

*Reconfigured intersection* – Reconfiguring this intersection as a roundabout could improve the circulation and traffic flow, improve safety, and highlight the intersection as an identifiable destination around which activity can be focused.

*Streetscape improvements* – In coordination with a reconfigured street alignment, streetscape improvements would improve the visual appearance and safety of the intersection, supporting an attractive, walkable, vibrant destination.

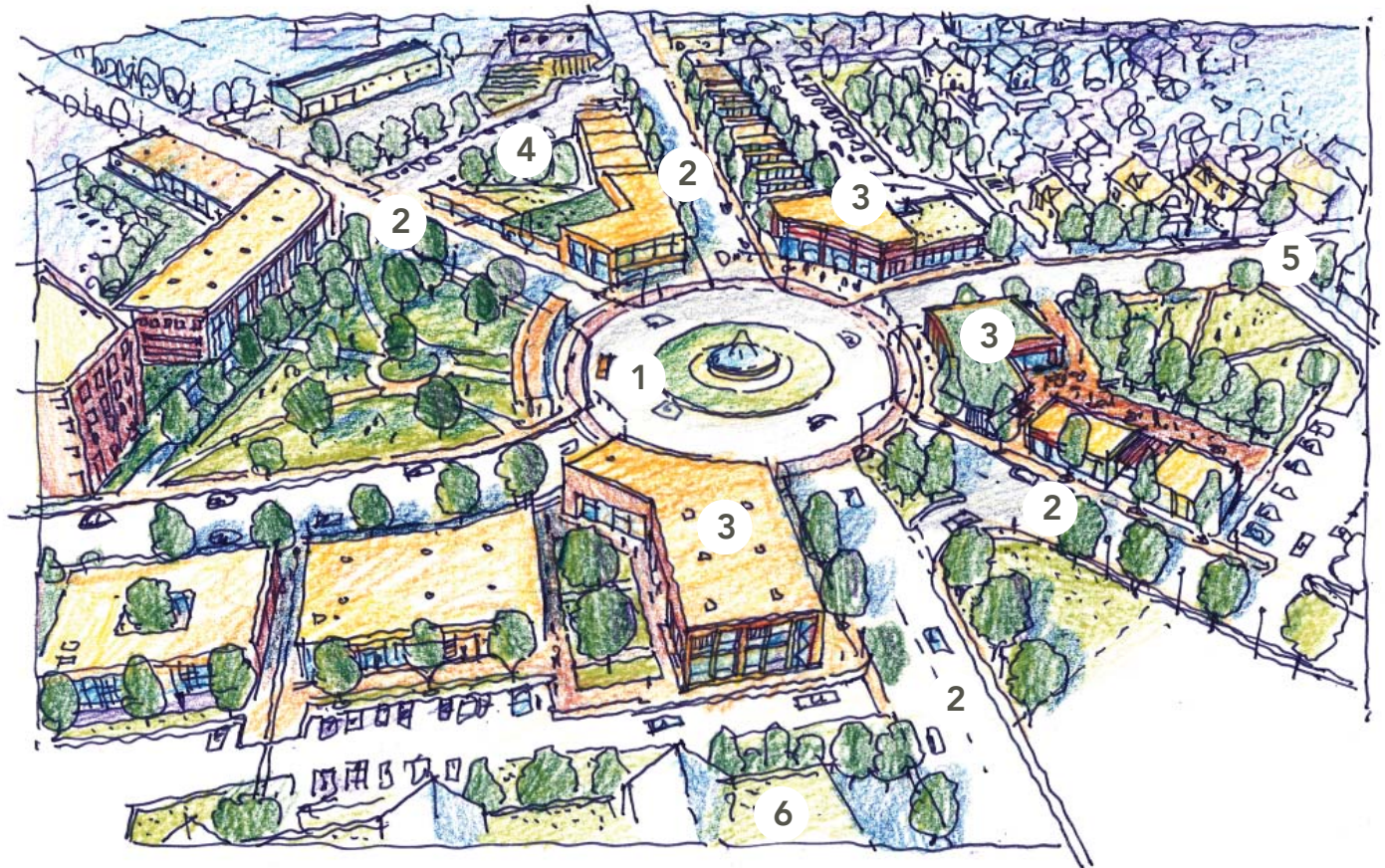
*Active green space* – There is an opportunity to better integrate the existing public green space at the intersection as an amenity that can encourage activity and accommodate a range of neighborhood events and activities.

*Community facilities* – The proposed S.R. Williams Resource and Development Center at Florence and Hancock Streets could provide valuable neighborhood services and meeting space in a new facility that supports a more active and vibrant Six Corners activity center.

*Quality new development* – A combination of infrastructure improvements, small business programs, development incentives, and careful design review can promote new pedestrian-scale development, attractive signage, and inviting storefronts at the intersection that set new expectations for design and quality.

Concept for Six  
Corners Intersection

1. Reconfigured intersection with new roundabout
2. Streetscape improvements
3. Enhanced retail and services for residents and visitors
4. Community garden
5. Alden Street as gateway and connection to Springfield College
6. Potential community facilities



# Implementation Opportunity

## Watershops Armory Area

A variety of existing anchors and rebuilding opportunities make the commercial activity center just west of the Watershops Armory building a major opportunity to create an interesting and vibrant destination, better connect District 2 neighborhoods, and help a variety of retail, service, and industrial enterprises to flourish. The citywide plan also emphasizes the importance and further potential of the Watershops Armory building by recognizing it as a priority project for economic development.

*New Street Alignments and Streetscape Improvements* – District 2 residents identified the Allen Street intersections at Hickory and Rifle Streets as particularly unattractive and unsafe for pedestrians. These intersections, along with the intersection further west of Hancock, Hickory, and Central Streets could be reconfigured so that Hickory Street flows directly into Central Street. This would simplify traffic movement through the area and enhance safety. Streetscape improvements focused around these intersections, and along Hickory and Central Streets could help to support an attractive, walkable destination for this activity

center, and create a continuous improved corridor along the tornado path linking Springfield College, the Watershops Armory area, Maple High, and downtown Springfield further west.

*Reconfigured and Revitalized Commercial Area* – The existing street alignments result in an inefficiently utilized commercial area located between Allen, Rifle, Central, and Hancock Streets. In conjunction with street realignments and streetscape improvements, the commercial area could be reconfigured as an attractive, walkable, mixed use neighborhood center that provides a variety of retail and services, and functions as a convenient and desirable destination for surrounding residents and visitors. Rehabilitation of the vacant Lincoln Hall building, that suffered significant damage in the tornado, could be integrated into the revitalization of this area, adding an element of architectural interest and historic character to potential redevelopment.

*Connections to Ruth Elizabeth Park and the Mill River* – There are two major opportunities to deliberately integrate open space and recreation as amenities that support the activity center. A reconfigured Hancock Street would place new



Existing Conditions



Existing Conditions





Existing Conditions



In conjunction with creative new uses and tenants the Watershops Armory building could be enhanced with facade improvements and landscaping

emphasis on Ruth Elizabeth Park to the north, and allow this open space to interact with the neighborhood commercial uses as well as surrounding residential areas and a new Brookings School. The “Healthy Lifestyles” initiative includes recommendations for a trail along the Mill River that could connect the Watershops Armory area with Johnny Appleseed Park and other parts of the neighborhood.

*Connections to a New Brookings School* – The “Schools as Community Anchors” initiative and the “Hickory Street” Implementation Opportunity in the “Coordinated Housing Strategy” initiative describe the potential for a new Brookings School to become a multi-faceted anchor for residents and the community. A new Brookings School could potentially locate on the vacant site at the northeast corner of Hickory and Allen Streets, providing a catalytic amenity that strengthens the Hickory Street corridor and the entire neighborhood. A new Brookings School could be designed to embrace the street and surrounding uses, and provide recreational or community facilities that serve area residents in addition to students.

*Enhanced Use of the Watershops Armory Building* – The Watershops Armory Building at 1 Allen Street is a distinctive landmark for the surrounding activity center and neighborhood. A nationally designated historic structure located astride a dam of the Mill River that creates Watershops Pond, the Watershops

Armory Building contains a diverse mix of businesses and industries. In District 2, where access to jobs and economic opportunity is such an important issue, the Watershops Armory functions as an informal incubator and light-industrial facility that includes enterprises ranging from workforce development programs to precision airline part manufacturing.

While the Watershops Armory building is nearly fully occupied, the appearance of the building masks the value of the enterprising activities that occur inside. A new roof and other structural repairs have been completed as part of repairs to tornado damage, but the building could better project its importance and potential with improvements to the exterior façade and surrounding site, including long-deferred maintenance, landscaping, reconfigured parking, and other features. In coordination with other street improvements and surrounding development, upgrades to the Watershops Armory building could help to transform the appearance and perceptions of the area.

The Watershops Armory Building currently serves a critical role in the neighborhood, by providing a venue to accommodate a variety of quality manufacturing jobs. However, there

is potential for this site to do much more. As an anchor for a revitalized activity center, the armory site could become a unique venue that mixes creative activities, manufacturing, workforce development, startups, and other enterprises in a deliberate way. The site could function as a generator of jobs, ideas, and products that supports the District and the City. The historic appearance and location on the water contribute to long-term potential for The Watershops Armory to incorporate office or residential uses as well, potentially housing the creative and innovative entrepreneurs who might work there.

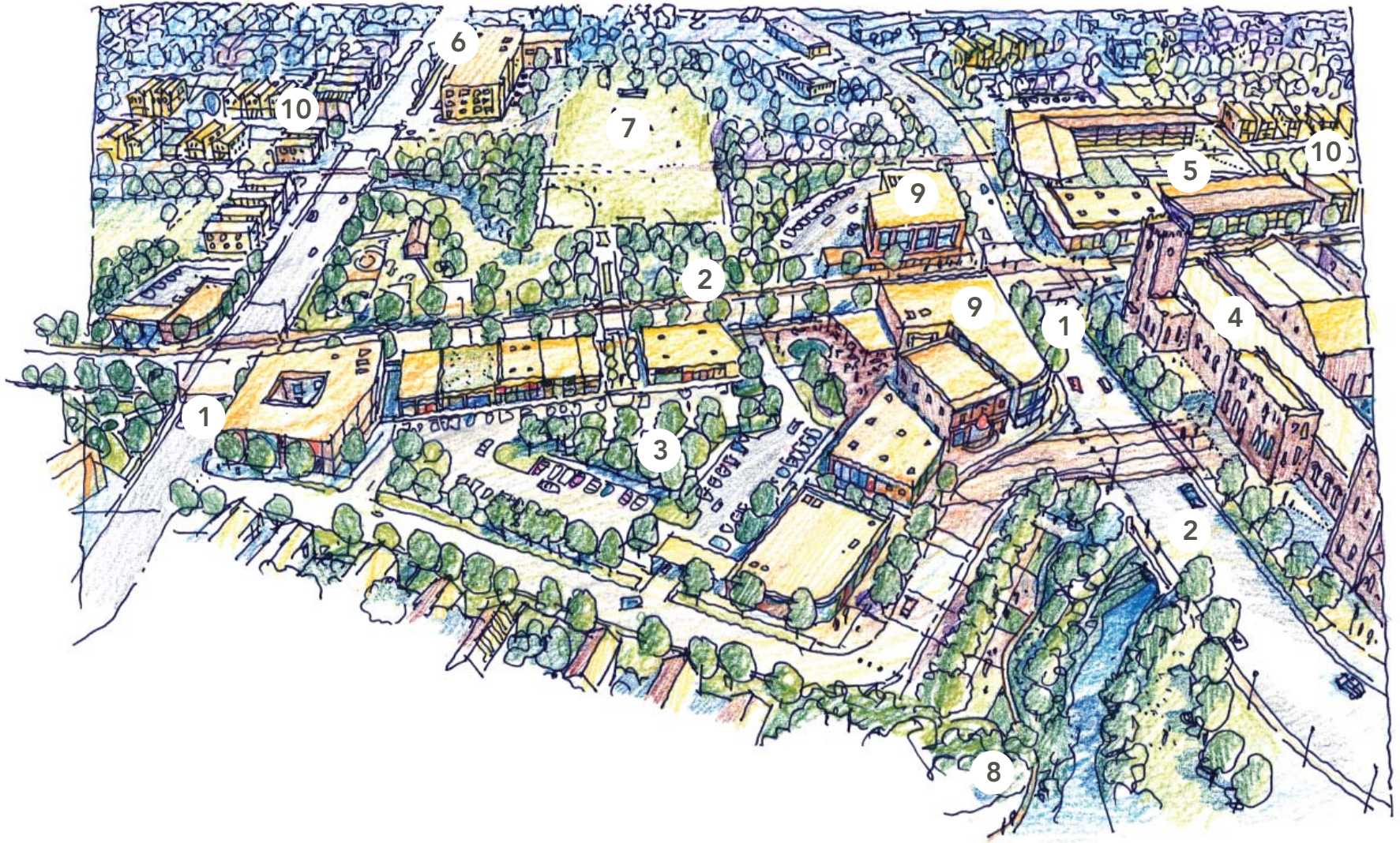
The dam of the Mill River that sits beneath the Watershops Armory building is owned and maintained by the City of Springfield and in need of repair. As part of the City's assessment of necessary repair and maintenance, it is exploring the potential for hydro power at the facility, hearkening back to the original purpose for the dam and siting of the Watershops Armory building. Tenants of 1 Allen Street have indicated a need for additional power, and there is opportunity to integrate a unique renewable energy component with other improvements to the site.

#### Concept for Watershops Armory Area

1. Reconfigured intersection to connect Hickory and Central Streets
2. Streetscape improvements
3. Enhanced retail and services for residents and visitors
4. Enhanced uses at Watershops Armory building
5. Potential site for new Brookings School
6. Repurposed existing Brookings School building
7. More active use and programming of Ruth Elizabeth Park
8. Potential Mill River trail connection
9. New mixed use development
10. New infill housing

(The recommendations listed above are located on the map on the following page)

Concept for Water Shops Armory Area



## Expand Economic Opportunity

# Promotion and Marketing of the Community

- **Neighborhood Events**
- **Public Realm Improvements and Programming**
- **Support and Shared Promotion of Local Businesses**

As community members have come together to envision a better future for their neighborhoods, they have identified the diversity and history of the area as defining characteristics and important strengths. The tornado rebuilding effort provides an opportunity to promote and market the cultural diversity and historic character of neighborhoods in this area and build upon these strengths to attract new residents, visitors, and investment that are essential to creating vital, sustainable, and connected neighborhoods.

Marketing the area's unique local businesses, cultural enrichment opportunities, and historic housing stock to the wider community can help to attract new residents and encourage people to visit. People are naturally curious about the changes occurring in their community through the rebuilding process and the extra attention can help jump start new interest and investment in the district. The Citywide section of this plan recommends engaging the City, Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Greater Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau, banks, realtors, and other organizations to promote and sell the City of Springfield. There are also some ongoing citywide marketing efforts including the "Make it Happen City" campaign, and volunteer efforts such as "Choose Springfield Mass." All of these citywide efforts also provide venues to integrate neighborhood-focused promotional activities and capitalize on new energy and attention in tornado-affected areas to positively transform perceptions of the district.



The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.



## **Neighborhood Events**

Neighborhood events are one tool to promote District 2 neighborhoods. Historic homes tours can advertise to potential homebuyers and future residents while bringing attention and focus to broader preservation efforts that strengthen historic housing stock as a neighborhood asset in the long-term. The existing Buy Springfield Now program is another means in promoting Springfield and District 2 neighborhoods to potential homebuyers. Community celebrations such as cultural festivals can promote the diversity of District 2 neighborhoods, provide cultural enrichment opportunities for residents, and attract people from the wider community to the area. Other events such as neighborhood cleanups or community gardening activities provide opportunities to improve the appearance of the neighborhood, enhance neighborhood pride, and encourage social interaction. The 2006 Urban Land Institute (ULI) report also recommends holding fairs, festivals, and parades to celebrate the City's cultural diversity and help reshape community attitude.

## **Public Realm Improvements and Programming**

Promotion and marketing of the community can include improvements to the public realm that give each neighborhood a consistent feel or theme through signage and iconic features. For example, themed banners along highly visible corridors can advertise community strengths, while gateway elements or public art can mark entrances to neighborhoods. Themed street lights, paving, and street furniture could be incorporated as part of streetscape improvement projects. See the 'Streetscape Improvements' initiative for a more detailed discussion of infrastructure elements that improve the public realm.

## **Support and Shared Promotion of Local Business**

District 2's unique neighborhood businesses reflect the area's diversity and present an opportunity to promote that diversity as an asset to attract new visitors, residents, and investment. District 2 retail, dining, and service businesses can capitalize on their unique offerings through shared

events, shared marketing and branding, and shared organization to support these activities. With a minimum of organization, a set of businesses could offer discounts on a certain day of the week, collaborate on an annual sidewalk sale, offer a "taste of the neighborhood," or other events. These events can be branded in a way that incorporates the neighborhood's identity. Where such events can be coordinated with attractive, pedestrian-friendly destinations, such as those described in the "Enhanced Neighborhood Businesses" initiative, the impact of these events for the promotion of the community is even greater.

District 2 businesses could benefit through shared marketing that advertises neighborhood offerings to college students, local employees, and others (special discounts for college students, or 24 hour delivery, for example). A merchant's association or other organizing structure could help to coordinate shared events and activities, develop and drive promotional efforts, and identify opportunities for collaboration between neighborhood businesses that strengthen the entire District.

### Partnerships / Stakeholders

- Springfield Chamber of Commerce
- Massachusetts Latino Chamber of Commerce
- City of Springfield (particularly for incorporating neighborhood marketing into Citywide promotional efforts)
- Local businesses
- Neighborhood Councils
- Residents
- Neighborhood organizations
- Arts and cultural organizations
- Area churches
- Springfield Preservation Trust (to promote the District's historic assets, organize historic home tours, etc)
- Mason Square Farmers Market
- Area colleges

### Resource Needs

While funding would be necessary for streetscape improvements, lighting, gateway elements, and other physical improvements, the major resource needs for this initiative are not financial, and relate to organization and leadership

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- Capital Improvement Program funds for physical improvements
- While the predominantly residential character

- and challenging business environment in District 2 make the implementation of a traditional Business Improvement District challenging in District 2, there is potential for District 2 businesses to organize and pool resources for a very narrow and focused set of shared promotional, marketing, and event expenses.
- There are a range of small business resources available that could potentially be used promotion and marketing. See "Job Training and Small Business Support" initiative for a more detailed description of small business resources
  - Grants and Foundations

### Action Steps

- Incorporate neighborhood marketing into citywide promotional efforts
- Work with area businesses, Neighborhood Councils, arts and cultural organizations, and area colleges to plan and organize cultural events that celebrate the District's creativity and diversity
- Work with Springfield Preservation Trust to organize historic homes tours to promote the District's architectural heritage
- Integrate neighborhood branding or theming into physical improvements (i.e. banners, signage, gateway features)

### Priority



### Business coordination

- Identify simple- to-organize events where it is easy for businesses to participate and cooperate.
- Build trust, cooperation, and shared interest through ongoing coordination of District businesses for a variety of shared promotional activities
- Explore merchants association or other neighborhood business association that can formalize shared goals and responsibilities for promotion of neighborhood businesses

### Project Location

Promotion and Marketing should include a District-wide approach. However, the Maple High Historic Neighborhood, State Street, and Mason Square are specific locations where promotional efforts could support ongoing activities and investment. Neighborhood activity centers including the Six Corners intersection and Watershops Armory area are other potential locations for promotional efforts, particularly if coordinated with improvements to enhance the appearance, walkability, and vibrancy of these areas.

## Precedents

### **The Taste of Wheaton, Wheaton, MD**

The Taste of Wheaton in Wheaton, Maryland, a highly diverse suburb of Washington DC, is an annual event that brings together dancing, music, and ethnic cuisine from local African, Italian, Latin American, and other eateries. Local nonprofits and businesses also have booths. The event draws thousands of people from Wheaton and surrounding areas to celebrate the unique culture of Wheaton.

### **Gallery Night Providence, Providence, RI**

Gallery Night Providence, is a monthly excursion into the local art scene of Providence, Rhode Island. Tours, a free bus loop, and free art classes bring art to the residents and have helped brand Providence as a "Creative Capital."

Taste of Wheaton



# Implementation Opportunity

## Mason Square

Mason Square is a gateway to the neighborhoods that comprise District 2 and forms the boundary between the Old Hill and Upper Hill neighborhoods. Significant public investment has already been made in the infrastructure and amenities in Mason Square, and there is an opportunity to take advantage of that investment to promote redevelopment, increase active use of the square, and promote the surrounding neighborhoods. This “square” at the intersection of Wilbraham and State Streets is comprised of green space, bus stops, a basketball memorial public art installation, as well as a significant number of civic, religious, health and educational institutions, namely the Mason Square branch library, a fire station, several churches and schools, and active seasonal flea and farmers markets. The square is also a major transfer point from the State Street bus service to routes that serve East Forest Park, other Mason Square neighborhoods, and other points west.

The square’s configuration, with a central “green” and wide sidewalks, makes it compact and walkable. Mason Square currently functions with a mix of service, retail, and office uses, and there are very few vacancies. However, there is an opportunity to enhance the vitality and activity of the area while

capitalizing on the activities and tenants in and around the square to promote the surrounding neighborhoods and attract both area residents and outside visitors.

The Mason Square Farmers Market takes place in a parking lot adjacent to the Fire Station Saturday mornings during the season. Similarly, the Mason Square Flea Market occurs just south of the Square. In addition to bringing activity to public spaces in the District, the Farmers Market and Flea Market are venues to promote the surrounding neighborhoods and advertise local businesses to outside visitors. The green itself could become a small pocket park with seating, chess and checker tables that incorporates the National Basketball Hall of Fame Memorial as a place-destination within the square.

The Mason Square library branch, which recently re-opened, is surrounded by green space, as are the faith-based organizations that flank it. The Library should consider utilizing the exterior space for library related events, activities and programs that could even take place when the library is closed. For example, a moveable cart of free books located outside would create a lending library where patrons could voluntarily contribute and borrow books. During the nicer weather, after school activities for young people could

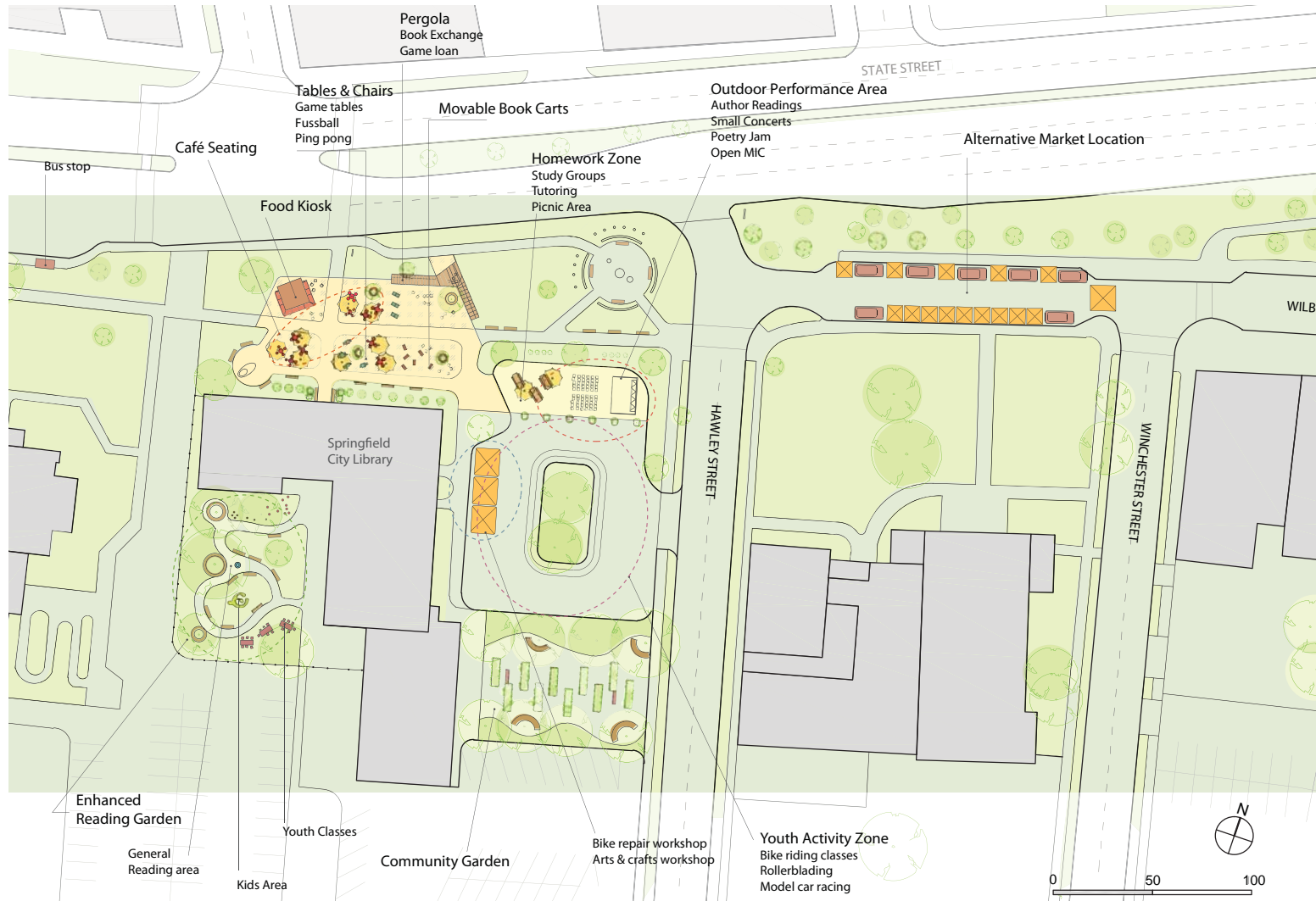
take place outside, such as homework clinics, arts, crafts and web-based projects. There is tremendous opportunity for the library to turn itself inside out and to activate the public spaces around it to help create a safe and lively place in the neighborhood.

Improvements to Mason Square also provide an opportunity to better connect to the nearby American International College. A more active and vibrant area can serve students, and there is even opportunity to coordinate activities and events with the college. The college is the preferred developer of the vacant fire station and adjacent Indian Motorcycle building, and redevelopment of these buildings can provide additional anchors that support increased activity and vitality of the Square.

There are already events, activities, and interested organizations focused on the area, and there are a variety of physical places that each have a myriad of possibilities for more active public use. Mason Square has the potential to be the “front yard” for the District – a gateway and showpiece that brings the best of the neighborhoods to the forefront for the entire City to experience and enjoy.



The diagram below illustrates potential programming concepts that together could increase activity and vitality of Mason Square



## Major Move 3

# Invest in Quality Neighborhoods

Planning for and investing in quality neighborhoods through public infrastructure, programs, and policies is essential to transform neighborhoods into vital, sustainable, beautiful places. Strategic coordination of public investments and programs can support private development, and attract additional private resources to the community. This Major Move identifies initiatives to improve the safety, appearance, and vitality of District 2 neighborhoods through an aggressive approach to property maintenance, by transforming vacant and abandoned properties from neighborhood liabilities into new development and valued amenities, and by capitalizing on a proud and active community to engage residents in neighborhood improvements. Safe and convenient transit is also important for connecting District 2 residents to critical employment, education and services, and for creating safe and active public spaces.

### *Key Initiatives*

#### Streetscape Improvements

- Activity Centers and Corridors: Six Corner Intersection, Watershops Armory Area, Hancock Street, and Walnut Street
- Corridor of Revitalization: Central Street and Hickory Street
- Historic Streets: Maple Street and Pine Street

#### Reuse of Vacant Lots

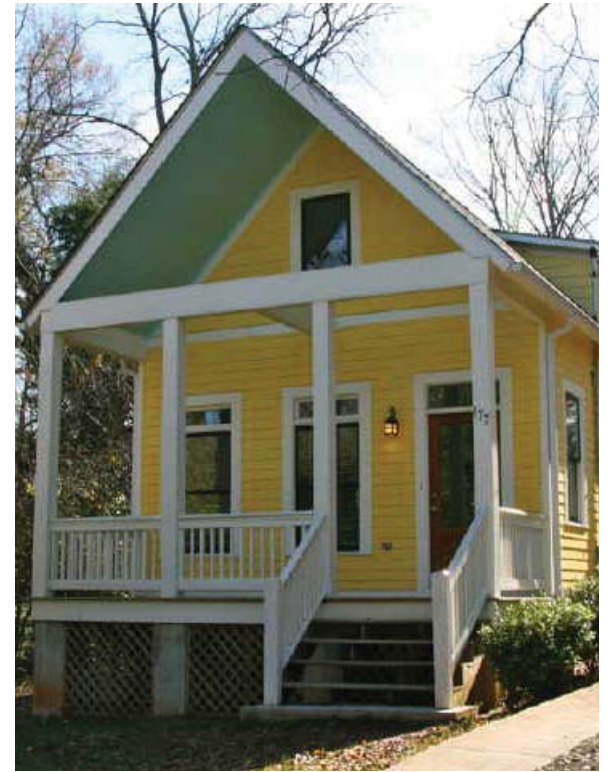
- Strategies to Manage Vacant and Abandoned Properties
- Potential Uses for Vacant Lots

#### Property Maintenance for Homeowners and Renters

- Community-city partnership
- Creative and informed approach tailored to District 2
- Expanded Homeowner Guide

#### Safe and Convenient Transit

- Enhanced routes to increase mobility and access to employment and services
- Transit stops designed as neighborhood gateways and safe public spaces
- Transit improvements coordinated with surrounding development



## Invest in Quality Neighborhoods

# Streetscape Improvements



The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.

- **Activity Centers and Corridors:** Six Corner Intersection, Watershops Armory Area, Hancock Street, and Walnut Street
- **Corridor of Revitalization:** Central Street and Hickory Street
- **Historic Streets:** Maple Street and Pine Street

District 2 residents have expressed a desire for a more walkable neighborhood, a more attractive neighborhood, improved public safety, and support for local business. Streetscape improvements present an opportunity to support all of these efforts and maximize economic development potential.

Streetscape improvements can enhance the walkability of the district through repaired and widened sidewalks, benches, landscaping, and other pedestrian amenities. Better lighting, signage, thoughtful street design, and increased pedestrian and business activity along the street all contribute to safer neighborhoods.

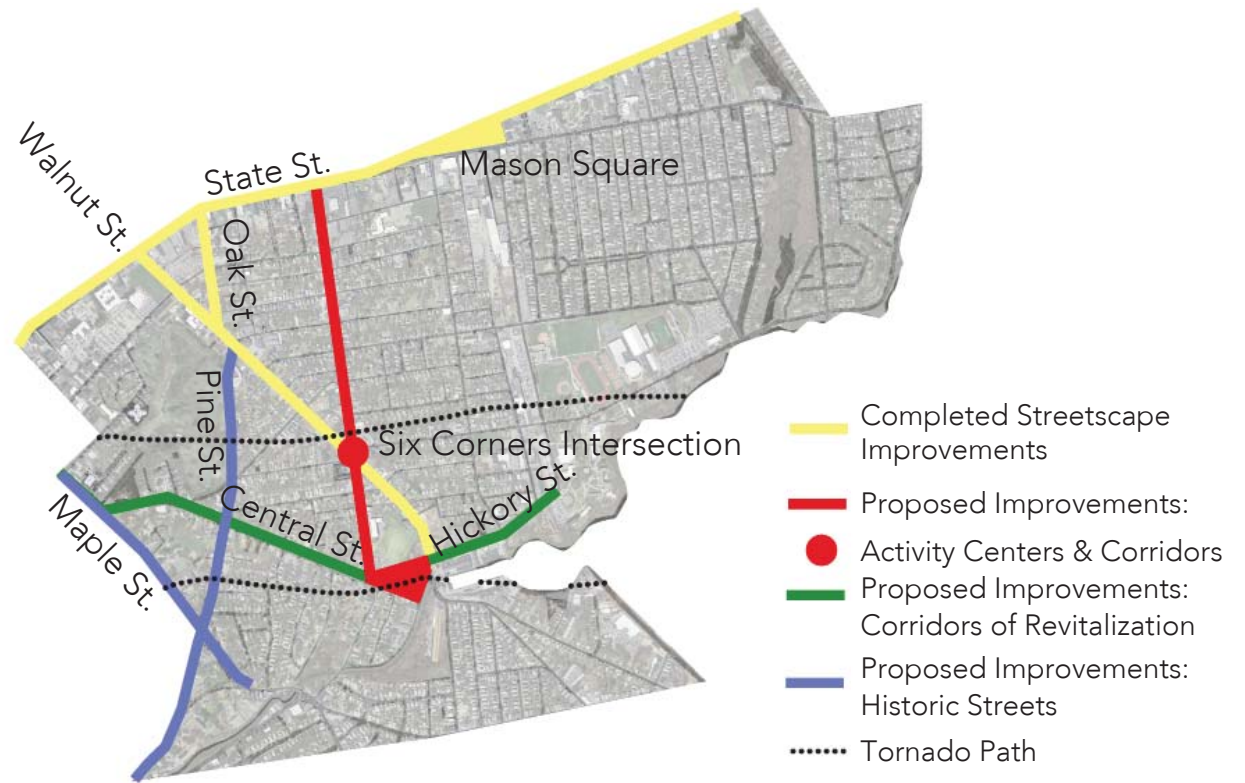
Targeted streetscape improvements also demonstrate public commitment to the area, help to improve the image and perception of a place, and can spur private investment, particularly when they are strategically coordinated with other development activity or investments in public facilities (schools, community centers, and parks, for example).

Tornado-impacted areas in District 2 include several locations with inefficient, confusing, and potentially unsafe intersections that also happen to be located within existing activity centers or corridors (particularly the Six Corners intersection and the Watershops Armory area where Walnut, Hickory, Allen, Central, and Rifle Streets converge). Streetscape improvements in these locations can improve connectivity and safety by reorienting streets and intersections to simplify traffic flow, provide mobility options with better pedestrian and bicycle amenities, and reinforce these activity centers and corridors as attractive, lively, connected destinations.



Narrow streets and limited public rights-of-way present physical challenges to implementing streetscape improvements in District 2. With the exception of State Street, all District 2 streets have only two lanes, and the major streets in the District generally have forty to fifty feet of width in which to incorporate potential improvements, maintain safe and efficient traffic flow, and meet requirements for ADA accessibility, utility location, and other considerations. However, most of the streets proposed for streetscape improvements in this initiative have wider than necessary traffic lanes, and there are a variety of successful templates to incorporate traffic lanes, wide sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, landscaping and amenities, and potentially on-street parking within the available street widths. The sample streetscape sections included with this initiative present three different streetscape scenarios that could be applied within the District.

While streetscape improvements represent a significant investment in terms of construction and maintenance costs, recent improvements to Main Street, State Street, and other streets demonstrate the City's willingness and capacity to implement streetscape projects, as well as recognition that in addition to infrastructure upgrades, such projects represent economic development catalysts with transformative potential. As District 2 rebuilds, the impact of streetscape improvements can be



Completed and Proposed Streetscape Improvements

maximized by strategically coordinating with other development in a mutually beneficial way.

This coordination also presents an opportunity for creative private funding. Streetscape improvements can be incorporated into new development projects (particularly for commercial and mixed-use projects) provided a plan and standards are in place to ensure compatibility throughout the District. New and existing business owners may be interested in cooperating with the City to improve or maintain the streetscapes adjacent to their storefronts to a standard beyond what the City could implement alone. While cooperative maintenance agreements have been successful in other places, such an approach requires a straightforward and user-friendly approach that does not discourage private participation in improving the public realm. For arterial streets such as Hancock Street and Walnut Street, state funding is also potentially available for streetscape improvements.

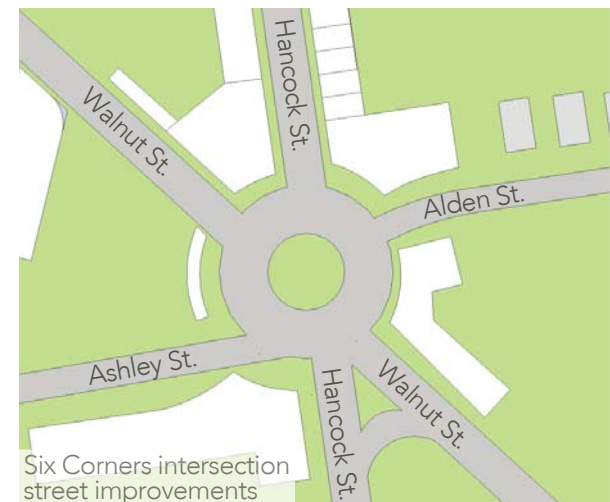
While enhanced streetscapes could provide benefits throughout the district, this initiative identifies strategic locations where opportunities exist to coordinate public infrastructure investment with other community assets and rebuilding efforts. Recognizing the recent improvements to State Street, Walnut Street, and Oak Street, and acknowledging that additional

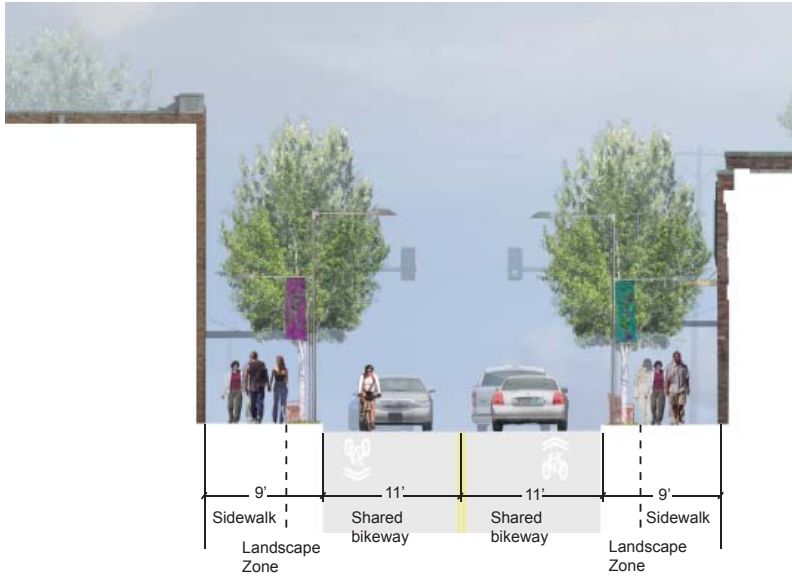
improvements may be appropriate in the long term (particularly along Walnut Street), this initiative focuses on other locations as the highest priorities for additional investment that can complement existing improvements.

### **Activity Centers and Corridors: Six Corners Intersection, Watershops Armory Area, Hancock Street, and Walnut Street**

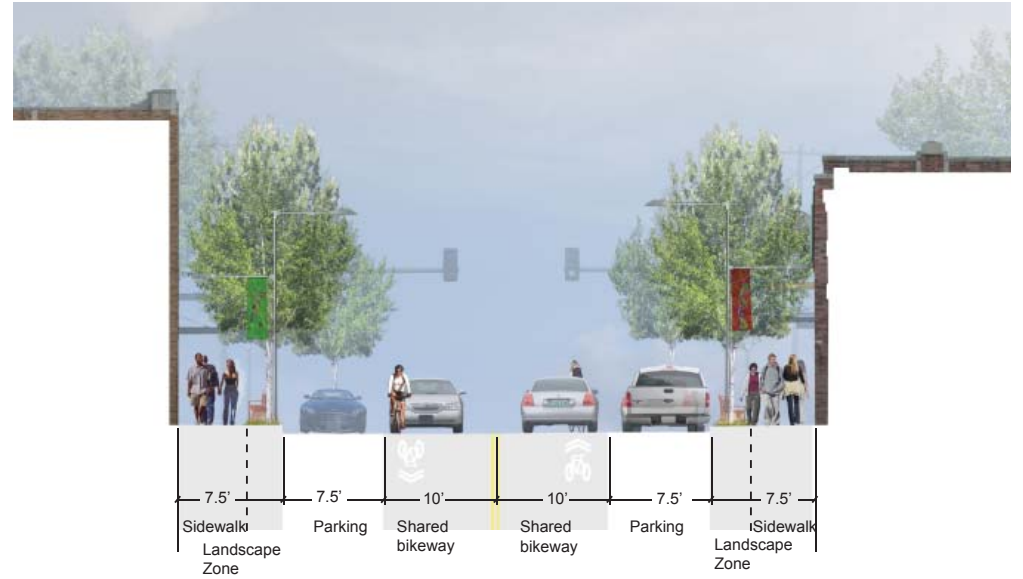
Streetscape improvements at the Six Corners intersection could support this neighborhood activity center at the junction of several key streets in the area, and potentially improve the circulation and traffic flow as well by reconfiguring this intersection as a roundabout. A project like this has the potential to redefine the character of the intersection in coordination with development opportunities for adjacent vacant or underutilized space. The “Six Corners Intersection” Implementation Opportunity under the “Enhanced Neighborhood Businesses” initiative provides a visual depiction of how these improvements might work.

The commercial activity center just west of the Watershops Armory, bounded by Central Street, Rifle Street, Allen Street, and Hickory Street also has the potential for transformation in coordination with streetscape improvements. The intersection of Hancock Street, Hickory Street, and Central Street could be reconfigured so that



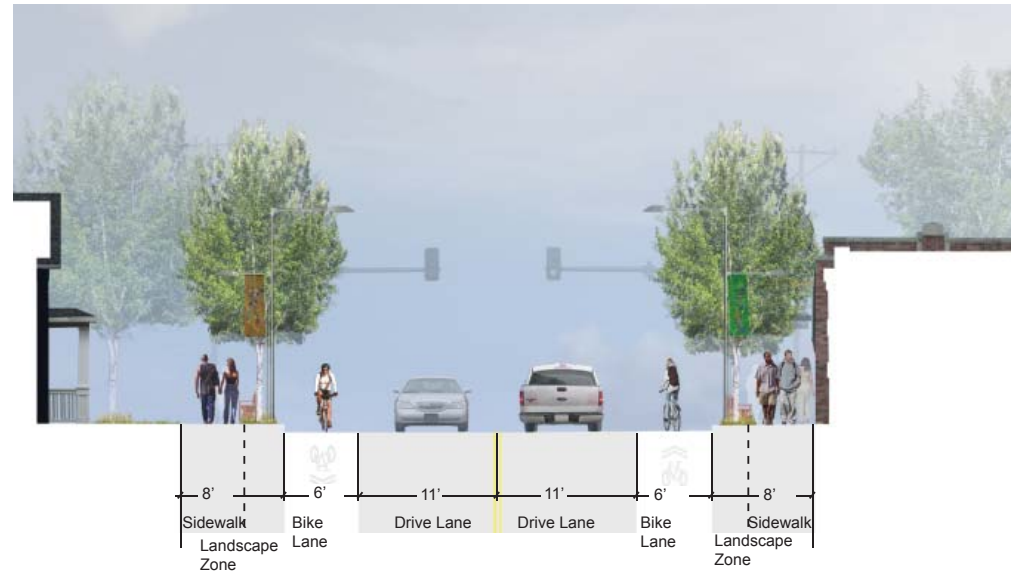


Section for Commercial 40' ROW



Section for Commercial 50' ROW

The following sections illustrate conceptual streetscape improvements for a variety of conditions present in District 2. For reference, District 2's Central, Hancock, and Maple Street generally have 50 feet of available right-of-way. Pine Street has 45-50 feet of available right-of-way. Hickory and Walnut Streets have been 40 and 50 feet of right of way. As the streetscape sections illustrate, even narrow corridors can accommodate a variety of streetscape improvements to enhance safety, mobility, and appearance



Section for Residential 50' ROW

Hickory Street flows directly into Central Street. This would simplify traffic movement through the area and, in conjunction with streetscape improvements and other development along Hickory and Central Streets, create a continuous improved corridor along the tornado path linking Springfield College, the Watershops Armory area, Maple High, and downtown Springfield further west.

Hancock and Walnut Streets are both mixed use corridors, and both streets connect the two activity centers described above. Improvements to these streets could help to support the businesses along these streets and provide a deliberate connection between activity centers. While Walnut Street has the potential for a variety of potential improvements (see streetscape section diagrams), streets that currently do not have any streetscape improvements should be the first priority for new investment.

### **Corridors of Revitalization: Central Street and Hickory Street**

Central Street includes a concentration of properties severely damaged by the tornado, as well as a number of vacant city-owned lots and recent infill housing development. With the Watershops Armory area as an anchor on the eastern end of the street, and downtown Springfield to the west, Central Street functions

as a gateway to the neighborhood for those travelling between downtown and other parts of the city. All of these factors indicate that streetscape improvements on Central Street have the potential to transform the area when coordinated with other rebuilding efforts, particularly with a realignment of the Watershops Armory intersection that connects Central Street and Hickory Street to create a continuous corridor of revitalization following the tornado path. (See “Central Street” Implementation Opportunity under the “New Infill Housing” initiative for a visual depiction of how streetscape improvements could coordinate with other investment.)

Bookended by Springfield College to the east and the Watershops Armory to the west, the areas along Hickory Street were among the most severely damaged by the tornado. Hickory Street represents the unifying link for this key area where redevelopment has the potential to include a new approach to housing, a new Brookings School as an educational anchor, a new gateway to Springfield College, and to more deliberately embrace Watershops Pond as a neighborhood amenity. (See “Hickory Street” Implementation Opportunity under the “Coordinated Housing Strategy” initiative).

### **Historic Streets: Maple Street and Pine Street**

Maple Street and Pine Street are important gateways to the Maple High - Six Corners neighborhood. Improvements to these streets can improve walkability while creating attractive streetscapes that reflect the historic character of the surrounding neighborhood. These streetscape improvements can work in conjunction with other efforts to recognize and promote the historic character of the area as a community asset (See “Promotion and Marketing of the Community” initiative).





### Partnerships / Stakeholders

- Springfield Department of Public Works
- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Planning and Economic Development
- Springfield Parks and Recreation Department
- MassDOT
- Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (coordination of streetscape improvements with bus routing needs and shelter location and design)
- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Local businesses

### Resource Needs

While streetscape improvements represent major infrastructure investments, the City already undertakes street and sidewalk construction projects regularly. There is an opportunity to coordinate and prioritize existing resources to leverage the impact of the public infrastructure investments more strategically

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- Capital Improvement Plan financing
- MassDOT (for arterial streets)
- Private developer contributions to streetscape improvements as part of adjacent new development projects
- Cooperative funding and maintenance agreements with adjacent property owners interested in improving the quality of the public

spaces adjacent to their property

- Infrastructure improvements including streetscape upgrades are eligible for funding through the CDBG program
- The recovery from many other natural disasters has been facilitated by a special federal appropriation. These funds, often channeled through the CDBG program, provide funds for gap financing and needed public improvements
- EDA grants for public infrastructure that is required to leverage private investment

### Action Steps

- Design and analyze traffic impacts for reconfigured intersections at Six Corners and to directly connect Hickory and Central Street, and incorporate these improvements as part of the Capital Improvement Program
- Update standard street templates to include pedestrian and bicycle accommodations
- Finalize locations for specific street improvements, prioritizing locations where streetscape improvements can coordinate with other public and private investment
- Identify any right-of-way needs
- Phase construction, identify funding sources, and develop final design
- Identify opportunities to incorporate sidewalk construction and repair as part of new adjacent development

### Priority



### Project Location

- Activity Centers and Corridors: Six Corner Intersection, new Watershops Armory intersection, Hancock Street, and Walnut Street
- Corridor of Revitalization: Central Street and Hickory Street
- Historic Streets: Maple Street and Pine Street

### Precedents

#### 2nd Street, Kansas City, MO

The investment in a new streetscape on 2nd Street in Kansas City helped transform the identity of the neighborhood from abandoned warehouse buildings into new mixed-use development. \$2.5 million in infrastructure investments has helped to bring about \$165 million of new adjacent development.

# Reuse of Vacant Lots



Cultural



Physical



Economic



Organizational



Educational



Social

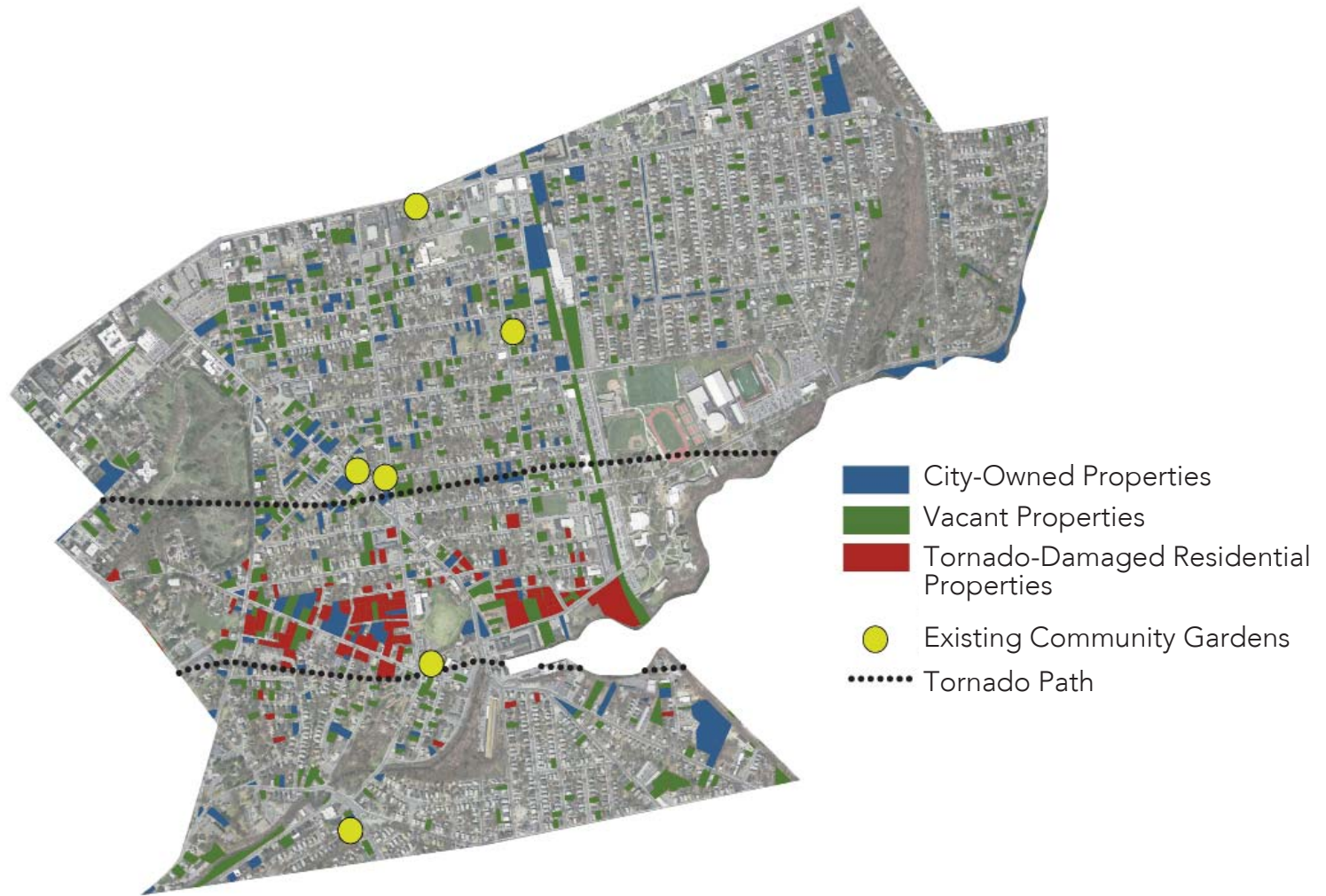
The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.

- **Strategies to Manage Vacant and Abandoned Properties**
- **Potential Uses for Vacant Lots**

Untended vacant and abandoned lots and buildings create stress in a neighborhood, and give rise to a variety of nuisance, safety, security, and health issues. Less visibly, but no less damaging, vacant properties diminish a sense of community, weaken property values, and discourage new and existing residents from investing in their homes and neighborhoods by conveying a perception of neglect, stagnation, and lack of value. Without productive uses to contribute to the tax base, vacant properties are also a strain on the City budget, even as these properties create maintenance and nuisance issues that require attention and resources from the City. Concerns about vacant, abandoned, and blighted properties in District 2 have emerged from community input throughout the Rebuild Springfield planning process.

The rebuilding process presents an opportunity to reassess the value and potential of vacant lots and recognize that these properties can be transformed into assets that strengthen District 2 neighborhoods. When these places are released for new development or innovative community projects, they can simultaneously remove the stress of abandonment and provide mutually beneficial spaces for neighbors. Safe active places help to create safe vital cities. Activating vacant lots as community spaces, gardens, parks, playgrounds and other neighborhood uses can address a variety of needs including providing access to healthy food, beautifying neighborhoods, creating safe and active public spaces, and supporting youth activities and skill development. This initiative contains two key elements to addressing vacant and abandoned property in the community: strategies to manage and find productive uses for vacant and abandoned properties, and potential short and long term uses for vacant lots.





Reuse of Vacant Lots



## Strategies to Manage Vacant and Abandoned Properties

The City has employed a range of strategies to address vacant and abandoned properties and improve how they are acquired, managed and returned to private ownership. The City's Office of Housing, Springfield Redevelopment Authority, and other agencies are already engaged in ongoing acquisition of vacant, abandoned, and tax-delinquent property to return it to productive use, and in some cases identifying opportunities to coordinate these acquisitions to facilitate strategic redevelopment opportunities.

Recognizing that the use of traditional auctions to dispose of vacant or abandoned properties can potentially exacerbate the strain and nuisance that vacant lots create for a community by opening the door to speculative buyers who lack the capacity or interest to reinvest, and that the auction process disposes of properties haphazardly without consideration of broader community goals, the City has successfully employed a Request-for-Proposals process to dispose of vacant properties. This Request-for-Proposals process includes partnerships with local housing developers and organizations to ensure that capable buyers are committed to returning

properties to productive use. The City also offers a program to sell vacant lots to owners of abutting lots who are interested in acquiring and maintaining the property.

Despite these efforts, resource challenges have limited the City's ability to address vacant and abandoned properties more effectively. The tornado and the foreclosure crisis before it have significantly increased the scale of the vacant and abandoned property issue faced by the City, even as budget challenges have reduced the staff and funding to address the problem. Federal programs used for home repairs, cleaning of vacant lots, and disposition of properties, such as CDBG and HOME funding, are also decreasing over time. In this context, it is critical that the City's efforts to manage vacant and abandoned properties be strategic and creative, to maximize the impact of ongoing efforts and leverage potential partnerships and resources.

Management and disposition of vacant properties can be supported by inventorying and evaluating vacant lots in the context of long term community development goals, and determining how available vacant lots can best support those goals. Land banking, whether operated through

existing City departments and Springfield Redevelopment Authority, or a separate formal land trust, is a strategy that supports the proactive identification and acquisition of vacant and abandoned properties to facilitate investment and redevelopment in a deliberate and coordinated way. Land banking also enables consolidation of property in strategic locations that can make it easier to develop at a scale that can attract more private investment, accommodate a broader range of redevelopment financing strategies, and have a more transformative impact on District 2 neighborhoods than would be possible with a collection of scattered sites passively acquired within an area.

There are some creative tools that can help finance land-banking efforts, including tax recapture provisions that recover costs with a portion of the tax revenue on successfully developed properties. The Center for Community Progress is a national organization that provides technical assistance with land banking and other strategies to turn vacant properties into vibrant places. Other Massachusetts communities have provided dedicated resources for land banks through measures including designating a portion of property taxes to fund acquisition of property

(often with exemptions for a certain minimum value of property), or fees for real estate transfers.

Many communities around the country have also had success in tackling vacant and abandoned properties through vacant property registration programs. A registration program offers a number of benefits for the City and the community. Through fees and penalties, such programs provide resources to manage and maintain vacant properties. More importantly, however, these fees and penalties provide a strong financial disincentive for inaction and neglect by property owners, and encourage active use of the property or sale to an interested and committed owner. A registration program also provides the City with detailed information of vacant properties in its community and reliable contact information for owners, facilitating swifter action and better communication to address maintenance, safety, and other concerns. With tools to enable better diligence on the part of property owners, the City's maintenance, demolition, and other costs are reduced, allowing for more focused efforts in critical areas.

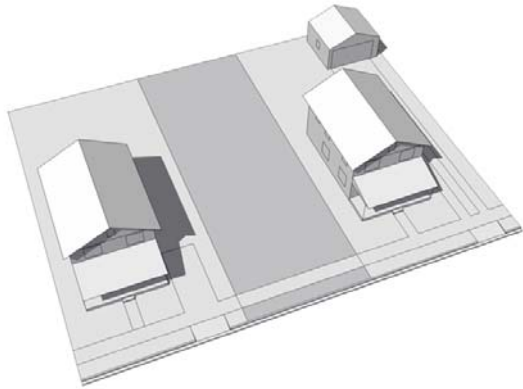
The City of Springfield adopted an ordinance in 2009 that requires registration of vacant properties

with contact information, and includes fines for failure to maintain the property. Between the adoption of the ordinance in 2009 and 2012, the City successfully registered approximately 1300 properties and collected more than \$215,000 in fees and fines to support property maintenance and code enforcement efforts. However, the City stopped enforcement of the ordinance in August 2010 and discontinued fines, limiting the impact of this ordinance as a disincentive for inaction. In the Fall 2011, the City of Springfield passed an ordinance requiring the payment of a \$10,000 bond for vacant and foreclosed properties to ensure funds for adequate maintenance. The bond is returned once properties become actively used. However, a legal challenge has prevented the enforcement of this ordinance as well.

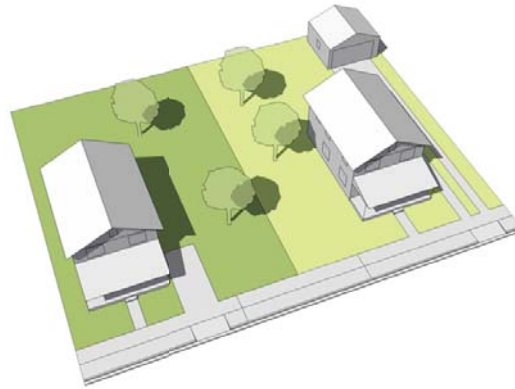
The track record of communities that have undertaken and successfully implemented vacant and abandoned property registration programs illustrates the success that diligent and concerted efforts can produce, and highlights the importance for Springfield to continue working through challenges in order to effectively implement its adopted vacant and foreclosed property ordinances. For example, in Riverside, California between 2008 (the inception of a

Neglected Property Abatement Program) and 2009, the City investigated 2,190 abandoned structures, gaining compliance with 987, while raising approximately \$1.5 million in citation, abatement invoices, and civil penalties. In Wilmington Delaware, vacant property fees have served as a deterrent to owning vacant property and generated more than \$3 million dollars since 2003. In a single year in 2008, Minneapolis, Minnesota addressed 40 percent of the 1,366 registered vacant properties on its registry through a combination of rehabilitation and demolition, resulting in significantly fewer vacant and boarded buildings, lower crime rates, and improved quality of life.

The purpose of a vacant property registration program is to address the problems that vacant properties create for communities and facilitate the transition of vacant properties to viable uses. For those property owners who face genuine financial challenges, some communities have coupled vacant property registration programs with small grants to assist owner-occupants with critical maintenance, or compliance plans where the City and property owner agree together on a strategy and timeline to address code and maintenance issues, and other measures.



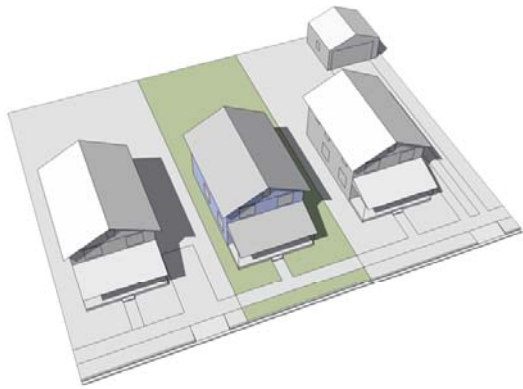
Vacant Lot



Sale to Abutting Owners



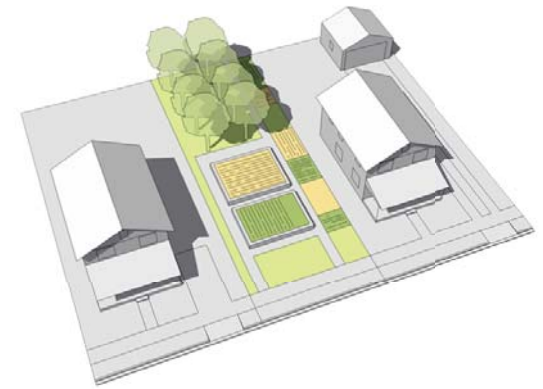
Reuse as Park, Playground or Other Community Spaces



Redeveloped for New Infill Housing



Rain Garden/Stormwater Management



Community Garden

Conceptual Diagram of Potential Vacant Lot Uses

## Potential Uses for Vacant Lots

*New Infill Development* - In most cases, the best uses for vacant lots are new development, provided that the tax, maintenance, and other liabilities can be removed to facilitate new investment. Redevelopment simultaneously brings activity to the site, demonstrates visible investment in the neighborhoods, removes nuisances, and returns property to the City's tax rolls.

*Sale to Abutting Owners* – One attractive option for vacant lots is an abutter lot program that gives an adjacent property owner right of first refusal to purchase or otherwise acquire the vacant lot. Among other benefits, this allows existing neighbors to increase their yard space, generally ensures better maintenance, and will generate taxes that may have been unpaid in the past. The City of Springfield currently provides a program for the sale of vacant lots to abutting owners.

*Community Spaces* – Depending on the immediate context surrounding each vacant lot opportunity, local playgrounds, pocket parks, or other types of public spaces are potential options for vacant lots. These uses often turn into volunteer opportunities that encourage social interaction between neighbors, since the related planting or construction is relatively simple and easy to accomplish in one or a few workdays.

These community spaces allow neighbors to come together and take an active role in beautifying their neighborhood, and transform a site that once represented neglect into a site that demonstrates community pride.

*Community Gardens* – Community gardens not only improve access to healthy and affordable produce, but also create opportunities for leadership and skill development and neighborhood beautification. The City has been working with the Springfield Food Policy Council (SFPC) and others to draft a Community Garden Ordinance to formally support and lay the groundwork for a community garden system. It is expected that the Ordinance will go to vote before the City Council in 2012. The City, SFPC, Gardening the Community, and other organizations should jointly identify and prioritize parcels for permanent or long-term community garden use. (See also the Integrated Healthy Food System initiative.)

A few things happen when a community decides to adopt a vacant parcel. Community energy is channeled positively into beautifying and maintaining the lots, rather than negatively into stressful communication with the landowner or city. Further, additional policing is lessened or eliminated because the area becomes self-policed by the community, who now has an "ownership"

in the place.

Formal maintenance agreements are common mechanisms between the city and the private interested property owners that shift responsibility for maintenance away from the City while giving the community more autonomy over the use and appearance of the land. In some cases, activation of vacant lots can introduce permanent activities for District 2 neighborhoods. In other cases, vacant lots can be improved on a temporary basis – addressing appearance, maintenance and safety of the area – without precluding future infill development.

## Partnerships / Stakeholders

- Springfield Development Service Division
- Springfield Redevelopment Authority
- Springfield Health and Human Services Division
- Springfield Parks and Recreation Department
- Gardening the Community
- Owners of vacant lots and abutting lots
- Housing development organizations (HAP Housing, Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services, Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity)
- Neighborhood Councils and community groups
- Area churches and community centers

### Resource Needs

- Vacant lot inventory with location, ownership, zoning, tax liabilities, and other information
- Resources to acquire, maintain, and manage vacant lots
- Community members/neighbors to help identify highest and best uses of each lot
- Financial and labor resources to support the transformation of the lot (if turned into a community amenity, such as a playground, community park, garden, etc.)
- Neighbors willing to purchase/acquire vacant lots and maintain the property
- Funds for infill housing

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- Federal funding sources to address vacant properties include CDBG, HOME funds, and the Neighborhood Stabilization Program
- There are some creative tools that can help finance land-banking efforts, including tax recapture provisions that recover costs with a portion of the tax revenue on successfully developed properties
- Other communities have funded acquisition of vacant property through measures including designating a portion of property taxes to fund acquisition of property or fees for real estate transfers
- National Community Stabilization Trust - The National Community Stabilization Trust was

created to assist government agencies and non-profits revitalize distressed neighborhoods by providing efficient and streamlined access to vacant and abandoned properties from financial institutions and flexible financing for neighborhood stabilization activities

- Vacant lot registration program fees and penalties can provide financial resources to address nuisance properties and encourage active use of the property
- Volunteer sweat equity from District residents
- Local businesses who own or abut vacant lots may be interested in supporting improvements to those spaces (for example, Mitchell Machine donated vacant land on Hancock Street for a community garden)
- Community Garden Resources (See Integrated Healthy Food Systems Initiative for more detailed community garden resources)

### Action Steps

- Inventory and evaluate vacant lots in terms of long-term community development goals
- Identify concentrated areas of vacant properties and other strategic locations to proactively acquire property for redevelopment
- Provide adequate funding to enable aggressive enforcement of the City's Vacant and/or Foreclosing Property Registration Ordinance to provide a strong disincentive for inaction and neglect of vacant properties

### Priority

Supportive  Critical

- Refer to precedents outlined in the U.S. Conference of Mayors' 2009 Vacant and Abandoned Properties Survey and Best Practices to determine possible strategies relevant to Springfield
- Identify vacant lots that may be in a position for transformation into a new use
- Coordinate efforts to determine best disposition strategy, including selling of vacant lots to abutting property owners where appropriate
- Utilize alternatives (such as RFPs) to the auction process for city-owned lots to encourage coordination and planning of infill and redevelopment efforts, and discourage inaction from absentee owners
- Develop criteria for sites most appropriate for gardens, e.g. next to a positive community anchor like a church, in the heart of a residential area, a willing owner, etc.

### Project Location

Vacant lots, redevelopment opportunities, and new uses for vacant lots are located throughout District 2 neighborhoods. Residents and property owners may identify additional specific sites for repurposing



## Precedents

### **Vacant Lot Interim Greening, Springfield, MA**

In 2010, Springfield experimented with providing a minimal level of landscaping of city-owned vacant lots. The lots were cleared and graded, planted with grass, and surrounded by a simple wooden fence. Examples of this treatment are two large lots on the north side of Central Street. Funding cuts have limited the City's ability to undertake more of this activity, but it had a very positive effect on neighborhoods and is a program that the City can undertake in concert with neighborhood councils and volunteer labor.

### **Mason Square Farmers' Market, Springfield, MA**

This Farmers' Market already uses vacant lots to grow the produce that is sold at the market each Saturday. This could be expanded to other sites in the district.

### **Gardening the Community, Springfield, MA**

This organization has already transformed several vacant lots in the community, weaving food production into youth development/leadership training. In 2011, they supported 30 youth in learning new urban agriculture and leadership skills, positively contributing to their community while earning money and growing more than 1000 pounds of produce on four abandoned lots in the city.

### **Vacant Lot Stabilization Project, Albany, NY**

The City of Albany has developed this project to beautify underutilized parcels owned by the City. Consistent with the City's South End plan – Capital South Plan: SEGway to the Future – this initiative creates green space in the neighborhoods to increase the overall quality of life for the community and to knit together other parks and community gardens. This program is for community-based organizations to “green” a lot with community members so that the parcel can be used as open space, providing the community with places to plant flowers or simply a place to relax and enjoy nature.

### **Vacant Building Registration Program, Minneapolis, MN**

In response to the increased demand for the resources that are consumed by abandoned properties, the City developed regulatory processes to recover costs for managing properties, promote the rehabilitation of properties, and order the abatement of nuisance properties. The costs associated with the implementation of these processes are recouped through fees charged to nuisance vacant properties. Owners of vacant properties must register and pay a fee that is due each year that the property is found vacant. All corrective action taken by the City results in additional fees which are applied to taxes on the property if unpaid. The City's approach to nuisance abatement has resulted in significantly fewer vacant and boarded buildings, lower crime rates, and improved quality of life.

## Invest in Quality Neighborhoods

# Property Maintenance for Home Owners and Renters



The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.

- **Community-city partnership**
- **Creative and informed approach tailored to District 2**
- **Expanded Homeowner Guide**

Increased attention to property maintenance and code enforcement was a consistent theme throughout community input sessions in District 2. Repaired and restored building stock is closely linked to pride of place, which in turn leads to increased neighborhood property values, improved safety and security for residents and visitors, and more desirable locations for local businesses and development. To this end, a new and aggressive approach to property maintenance is strongly recommended as part of the rebuilding plan. While the City has moved quickly to support the issuance of post-tornado building permits as property-owners clear insurance and funding hurdles, there remain opportunities to accelerate improved maintenance for properties that have been problem spots both before and after the tornado.

### Community-city partnership

A partnership between the community and relevant City staff (particularly the Office of Housing, Inspectional Services Division, and Office of Neighborhood Services) is proposed to identify and move aggressively on those properties that require repair or maintenance. Such a collaborative model is explored in the City of Springfield Economic Assessment Project prepared in 2008 by the UMass Donahue Institute for the Office of Planning and Economic Development. Code officials, the local police force, and community developers are considered critical members of this collaboration. Where resources and staff for property maintenance and enforcement are limited, a community partnership can bolster the capacity and effectiveness of property maintenance efforts even as it engages residents and property owners in the proactive improvement of their neighborhoods. This is especially important in



District 2, where property maintenance is a very high priority for residents while limited code enforcement resources still need to be spread over the entire City.

Community members can play an important role by helping to develop an overall strategy that will be effective on the ground, by collecting and filtering complaints, and by monitoring the properties and ensuring they are secured and maintained to minimum standards. A District 2 Property Maintenance Task Force made of City staff and key community members could undertake these tasks immediately and in a systematic way, aided by a city-wide inventory of maintenance and enforcement needs (as recommended in the Citywide plan) and supplemented by community input (some neighborhood groups are already compiling maintenance needs). This could transition into a robust multi-year implantation plan, which would inform a comprehensive long-term strategy for property maintenance in the district and city-wide. The Quality of Life Ordinance Squad is a successful Springfield example of a proactive code enforcement team that conducts Saturday code sweeps, looking particularly for neighborhood quality of life issues. Connected to this work is a separate initiative that identifies strategies to manage and reuse vacant lots in the neighborhoods. (See “Reuse of Vacant Lots” initiative.)

### **Creative and informed approach tailored to District 2**

There are several precedents to consider from around the country as the City works towards supporting better communities through property maintenance programs – from blight ordinances that assign heavy penalties for violations to more proactive, community-based initiatives that encourage volunteerism and could be an avenue for local job creation.

Several case studies presented in UMass Donahue Institute 2008 Economic Assessment Project and the U.S. Conference of Mayors 2009 Vacant and Abandoned Properties Survey and Best Practices are particularly relevant to proactive maintenance and code enforcement. Other communities have had success at addressing property maintenance issues through a variety of strategies. The “Reuse of Vacant Lots” initiative describes how other communities have successfully implemented vacant property registration programs to monitor issues and incent action. Strong penalties for code violations coupled with rigorous enforcement have also yielded success throughout the country, including measures ranging from fines and tax liens, to potentially foreclosing or demolishing properties that are not brought into compliance.

Many communities require code corrections upon transfer of property ownership ensuring

that responsibility for property maintenance is not transferred. North Miami Beach operates a creative tri-party escrow agreement program that works with buyers and sellers of problem properties to settle fines, release liens, and ensure the buyer will address violations in a customer friendly, non-punitive way.

The City of Arlington, Texas operates a volunteer Code Ranger program in which citizens are educated about the more common code violations and encouraged to report suspected violation locations. The key is to apply applicable practices that could be uniquely suited to meet the needs in District 2, or could spark new ideas for local solutions. Either way, these examples are perhaps the best starting point for developing a strategic approach to improved property maintenance in the district.

One of the first tasks of the Property Maintenance Task Force would be to compile and maintain an inventory of properties in need. The team would then review the toolkit of available solutions, dialogue with representatives from city staff and neighborhood councils, and identify an approach that is tailored to succeed in District 2 and other tornado-impacted areas. This is an initiative that

should feed directly into the Reuse of Vacant Lots initiative, and could easily expand to a city-wide initiative.

### **Expanded Homeowners Guide**

As part of the rebuilding effort after the tornado, DevelopSpringfield (in collaboration with the City of Springfield Office of Housing and HAP Housing) published a Rebuilding Guide for Homeowners, which provides resources for financial and volunteer assistance, the construction process in general, how to rebuild better and how to navigate the fairly complex process of rebuilding after a disaster. There is an opportunity to expand this document to become a handbook for home and property owners throughout the city. The guidance and ideas on property maintenance issues such as clean-up, building restoration, landscaping, weatherization, and other measures is transferable to many homeowners and could serve to establish clear language, and relevant instructions, warnings and priorities for effective property maintenance or improvements. This should be done in collaboration with those working on the Coordinated Housing Strategy initiative, the first initiative suggested for District 2 in this document.





### Partnerships / Stakeholders

- Springfield Office of Housing
- Springfield Department of Code Enforcement
- Springfield Office of Neighborhood Services
- HAP Housing
- Springfield Redevelopment Authority
- Neighborhood Councils

### Resource Needs

- Assigned staff from Development Services Division Office of Housing
- Identified community leaders through the respective neighborhood councils
- Access to existing programs that help support property owners with maintenance, such as local church outreach programs, and Humanics Day at Springfield College

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- City ordinance fees, code violation penalties, and potential vacant lot registration penalties can provide financial resources to address nuisance properties and encourage active use and maintenance of the property
- State grants
- Federal programs, including CDBG, HOME funds, and the Neighborhood Stabilization Program
- Philanthropic organizations
- Volunteers for clean-up, fielding and filtering

complaints, help with home/property maintenance

The following programs and resources help homeowners with home repairs and improvements:

- Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services (SNHS) - emergency repair grants and home improvement loans
- MassHousing - home improvement, septic system repair, and lead paint removal loans
- HAP Housing
- Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity - through volunteer labor, builds houses for families in need
- Rebuilding Together Springfield: A nonprofit agency that provides free rehabilitation and critical repairs to the homes of low-income homeowners, by using volunteer labor and donated materials. The local agency is one of 200 affiliates nation-wide.
- City of Springfield Emergency Homeowner Repair Program: Provide technical assistance and non-interest bearing deferred payment loans to assist eligible low and moderate-income households within the City of Springfield
- Springfield College students participate in service projects during the annual "Humanics in Action Day;" these students could help clear or repair property in need of help

- City’s Heating System repair / replace program: Provides emergency heating system repair, pays for the cost of an annual inspection of a fuel burning system, or pays for the replacement of the system, if needed. The program is intended to assist homeowners whose household income does not exceed 60 percent of the area median income.
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
- Veterans Affairs Regional Loan Center

**Action Steps**

- Identify key community and City staff for a District 2 Property Maintenance Task Force. If successful, consider citywide implementation
- Create an inventory of relevant properties in District 2 based on a block-by-block assessment. As proposed in the Citywide plan, utilize and tie this into a Citywide property maintenance database
- Establish regular meeting times and agenda for first year of the District 2 Property Maintenance Task Force, moving as aggressively as possible to transform problem areas and demonstrate positive change

**Priority**



- Evaluate existing best practices / precedents and brainstorm on opportunities particularly suited to District 2
- Identify three District 2 key initiatives/events for 2012 to engage the neighborhood into creating real change on key properties; choose a demonstrate block where significant change can be seen quickly (ties into “Capitalizing on an Engaged Community” initiative)
- Engage other potential partners whose mission is to address/eliminate substandard housing to
- Provide educational or otherwise supportive services (Habitat for Humanity, HAP Housing, etc.)

**Project Location**

As needed throughout District 2 neighborhoods. One task of a property maintenance task force would be to inventory and prioritize locations with property maintenance needs.

## Precedents

### **Tulsa Beautification Foundation Matching Grant Program, Tulsa, OK**

Foundation matches neighborhood association and non-profits fundraising dollar for dollar for beautification projects

### **Tulips on Troost, Kansas City, MO**

Tulips on Troost aims to change the face of Troost Avenue by planting one million tulips along the Avenue, hoping to inspire and motivate the citizens of Kansas City to recognize the value of neighborhood capital improvements and beautification in some of the city's most under-served neighborhoods. Tulips are just on the surface—the deep-rooted goal is to use a beautiful, accessible thing like a tulip to represent positive change on Troost and to let the city know that Troost is worth time, efforts, and resources.

### **Storefront offices, San Diego, CA**

The City's code enforcement department is opening storefront offices where residents can come in with questions and complaints.

### **Rapid Response Team, City of Las Vegas, NV**

This team is a division of the City's Neighborhood Services Department and works on proactive compliance of city codes and ordinances. They are responsible for quick responses for graffiti removal, public littering, abandoned furniture/materials, and collaborates with residents to eliminate blight and conduct neighborhood cleanup.

## Invest in Quality Neighborhoods

# Safe and Convenient Transit



The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.

- **Enhanced routes to increase mobility and access to employment and services**
- **Transit stops designed as neighborhood gateways and safe public spaces**
- **Transit improvements coordinated with surrounding development**

A healthy, reliable transit system is key to the success of any city, and particularly important for neighborhoods with significant transit-dependent populations, such as those in District 2. It is critical to recognize transit's role as a key element of urban infrastructure within the District, providing mobility options and connecting District residents to vital employment and services. In this context, there are opportunities to enhance the transit service that the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) provides within the District through improved routes, enhanced facilities, and integration of transit service with development that emerges from the rebuilding effort.

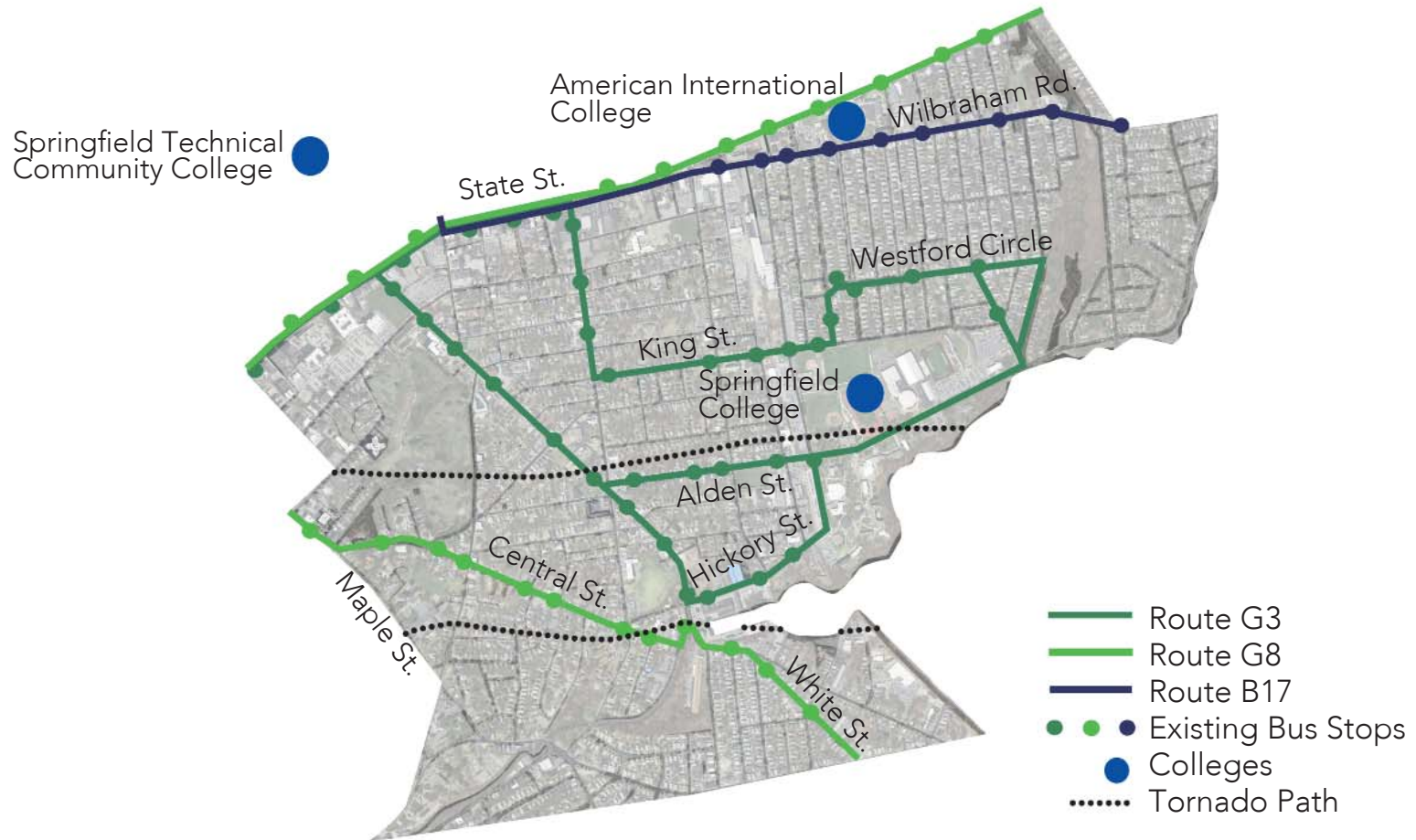
Teatro V!da is a local performing arts collective that strives to encourage creative expression and activate collaboration among diverse populations. In their "Vision for a Creative Springfield", created for the Rebuild Springfield planning effort, concerns regarding public transit in Springfield emerged: being able to feel relaxed at a bus station, incorporating a spirit of hospitality to Springfield visitors by way of the transit system, more frequent bus service especially during night and evening hours for 2nd and 3rd shift, lack of bus shelters and benches, and frequency of service between local educational institutions like Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) and Holyoke Community College (HCC). Their underlying message reflects themes heard in community meetings, and supports the need for safe and convenient transit.

### Enhanced Routes

Providing mobility options, reducing demand for parking, and serving populations without cars is only part of a successful transit mission. Transportation takes people







Existing Transit Routes and Stops

to key destinations (jobs, businesses, schools and other community amenities) and in the process builds, strengthens and reinforces those destinations. As part of PVTA's renewed commitment to put the customer first, the agency is working to identify key locations for new bus shelters based on travel demand and utilize automated passenger counts and intelligent information to identify where stops should be. This is particularly relevant in District 2 where safety, security and reliable service are major concerns for residents.

The elimination of prior crosstown service is an important issue facing District 2 residents, impacting access to jobs, access to school, and connections between schools and jobs. There is also an important social function served by these crosstown routes that provide access to many other neighborhoods and local neighborhood services and businesses without requiring the journey all the way downtown and back, with transfer waits. Where impacts to service are a result of cuts to state funding, more focused advocacy from City and regional leaders to make the case for the value of this service for the City and the region could yield positive results.

The PVTA will move into the intermodal Union

Station when it is renovated. The move into Union Station Transportation Center is an excellent opportunity to transform the current bus hub experience for transit users throughout the City, including in District 2, rather than just relying on one hub downtown. Consideration of hubs/transfer centers within District 2 where a variety of routes converge, such as at Mason Square, could benefit this transit-dependent community by reducing travel and transfer times, while supporting the activation of this location as a vital activity center. Mason Square is a potential location for a transit hub within District 2 based on a variety of factors: bus lines already intersect there, some transfers happen already, and there are many potential users and supportive land uses such as Springfield Technical Community College, American International College, Mason Square Branch Library, churches, farmers market, and others.

### **Transit Stops as Gateways and Safe Spaces**

There are numerous bus stops throughout the tornado-impacted areas of District 2, most of which lack a shelter, adequate seating or lighting, and are located on narrow sidewalks, often in front of vacant buildings or lots. This environment conveys an unsafe feeling for riders. In partnership with the PVTA, and in coordination

with other rebuilding efforts, redesigning and enhancing the bus stops throughout the tornado-impacted area and the entire District would be a highly impactful and visible intervention that would make riding the bus a more pleasant experience for passengers and would turn transit stops into neighborhood amenities and gateways as well as positive elements of the urban streetscape. The PVTA is also currently testing heaters and solar panels for shelters, and wants to explore partnerships with local businesses to put real time information in shops near major transfer points (i.e., Peter Pan terminal / Union Station, Baystate Medical lobby). The first step in transforming transit stops in the district is an evaluation of the existing conditions of current stops.

### **Improvements Coordinated with Surrounding Development**

This plan includes a variety of recommendations for new development in tornado-impacted areas, building or rebuilding of public facilities, and the implementation of streetscape improvements on several corridors within the District. As these public and private projects are implemented, it is important to recognize the potential impacts and opportunities for transit routes and facilities, and

to coordinate and leverage transit improvements with other investments to maximize the impact of scarce resources.

### Partnerships / Stakeholders

- Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)
- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Planning and Economic Development
- Springfield Parking Authority
- MASS DOT (street and road projects)
- Springfield Department of Public Works
- Springfield Emergency Management Director (for transit-related coordination and communication in emergency conditions)
- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Neighborhood Services

### Resource Needs

- Funding and advocacy to keep service levels stable or improved
- Funding for technological and other improvement initiatives that make the overall system safer, more convenient, and more reliable for the users
- Funding for shelters and other physical improvements at existing stops

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- PVTA currently receives two-year grants for

programs that have enabled them to maintain service levels, but they currently stand to lose that funding in two years without strong and consistent advocacy

- Potential regional funding in lieu of statewide funding (according to new report out by Mass Inc., there is a recommendation to fund transit at the regional scale to support transportation and balanced regional economic growth; see <http://www.massinc.org/Events/2011/10/Moving-Forward-with-Funding.aspx>)
- There is potential to integrate physical improvements to transit stops in coordination with other streetscape development projects that emerge from the rebuilding process

### Action Steps

- Convene a community dialogue regarding transit in Springfield: encourage users of all ages to attend, share current improvement plans and ideas, use community input to prioritize ideas for improvement, including the following suggested action steps (with potential city-wide benefits):
  - Identify priority locations for shelters and other bus stop improvements
  - Evaluate conditions of transit stops in the district; identify conditions that impact safety and comfort, as well as potential improvements

### Priority



- Evaluate impacts to transit routes and facilities as part of rebuilding efforts for public facilities, infrastructure, and other development
- Pursue planning, advocacy, and funding efforts to restore crosstown bus service
- Introduce a Smart Pass program to speed boarding
- Signal priority is in place on Sumner Avenue – the first ever in New England; State Street and Main Street could be next to improve service reliability (all new buses have the signal priority technology and they are retrofitting other buses with it)
- Redesign bus stop signs with route and destination information and install schedule holders
- Introduce automatic enunciators on the buses and nicer seating
- Link the CCTV cameras at PVTA facilities to the police department

### Project Location

Throughout the district as needed

## Precedents

### **Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative, Los Angeles, CA**

This initiative is a grassroots program designed to restore people's sense of ownership over their neighborhood commercial districts. It focused on developing community plans for neighborhood main streets beginning with pragmatic improvements to areas adjacent to bus stops and rail stations, with the understanding that transit stops can also function as focal points for shopping, community, economic, and social activities. Local partnerships including residents, businesses, and community groups worked together to improve the physical places around transit stops, including planting trees, installing and painting new streetlights, hanging decorative banners, redesign streets to be more pedestrian-friendly, and revitalizing adjacent vacant lots as parks and community gathering spaces. Over time, these groups have successfully leveraged additional funding to make longer-term improvements and institutionalize their community revitalization efforts.

### **City of Northampton, MA**

Northampton has a monthly transportation committee meeting and a group that advocates for transit, building support for PVRTA in that part of the region.



## Major Move 4

# Strengthen Community through Educational Institutions

This Major Move recognizes educational institutions as assets for the neighborhood and major drivers for the future success and vitality of the city. Partnerships between educational institutions and surrounding neighborhoods can provide mutual benefit by addressing a range of community needs and supporting the long-term educational missions of area schools, colleges, and other educational institutions. As tornado-damaged schools are rebuilt and new schools are opened, high-performance facilities can improve health and learning capacity of students while reducing energy and maintenance costs. Strengthening community through educational institutions also includes integrating school facilities into the surrounding neighborhood as community hubs, and creating a 21st century learning environment with state of the art education programming and facilities. Finally, coordination between schools and other facilities and services can promote collaboration and efficiency, and help to support learning, skill development, and capacity building for the entire community.

### *Key Initiative*

## Quality Schools as Community Anchors

- High-performance healthy learning environments
- Community anchors
- Collaborative and efficient services

## Collaborative Partnership Between Colleges and Neighborhoods

- Dialogue Towards a Shared Vision and True Partnership
- Better Education
- Job Opportunities through Skill Development and Workforce Training
- Healthy Vital Neighborhoods



## Strengthen Community Through Education Institutions

# Quality Schools as Community Anchors

- High-performance healthy learning environments
- Community anchors
- Collaborative and efficient services

Challenges exist today within the Springfield school system city-wide as well as within District 2. Reform of the education system is the focus of a city-wide initiative tied to the strategic rebuilding of Springfield post-tornado and, based on conversations at the District and city-wide meetings, there is great support for it. The city-wide initiative supports schools at the center of community needs from a locational, programmatic and technological perspective. Further, the city-wide initiative suggests stronger engagement of the public in the process, stresses the importance of educational reform, and recommends integrated partnerships that emphasize a continuum of lifelong education. The June 1st tornado, particularly with regard to schools, can be used as a great catalyst for real transformational change within Springfield. There are particular challenges in District 2, especially with the schools that were damaged in the tornado.

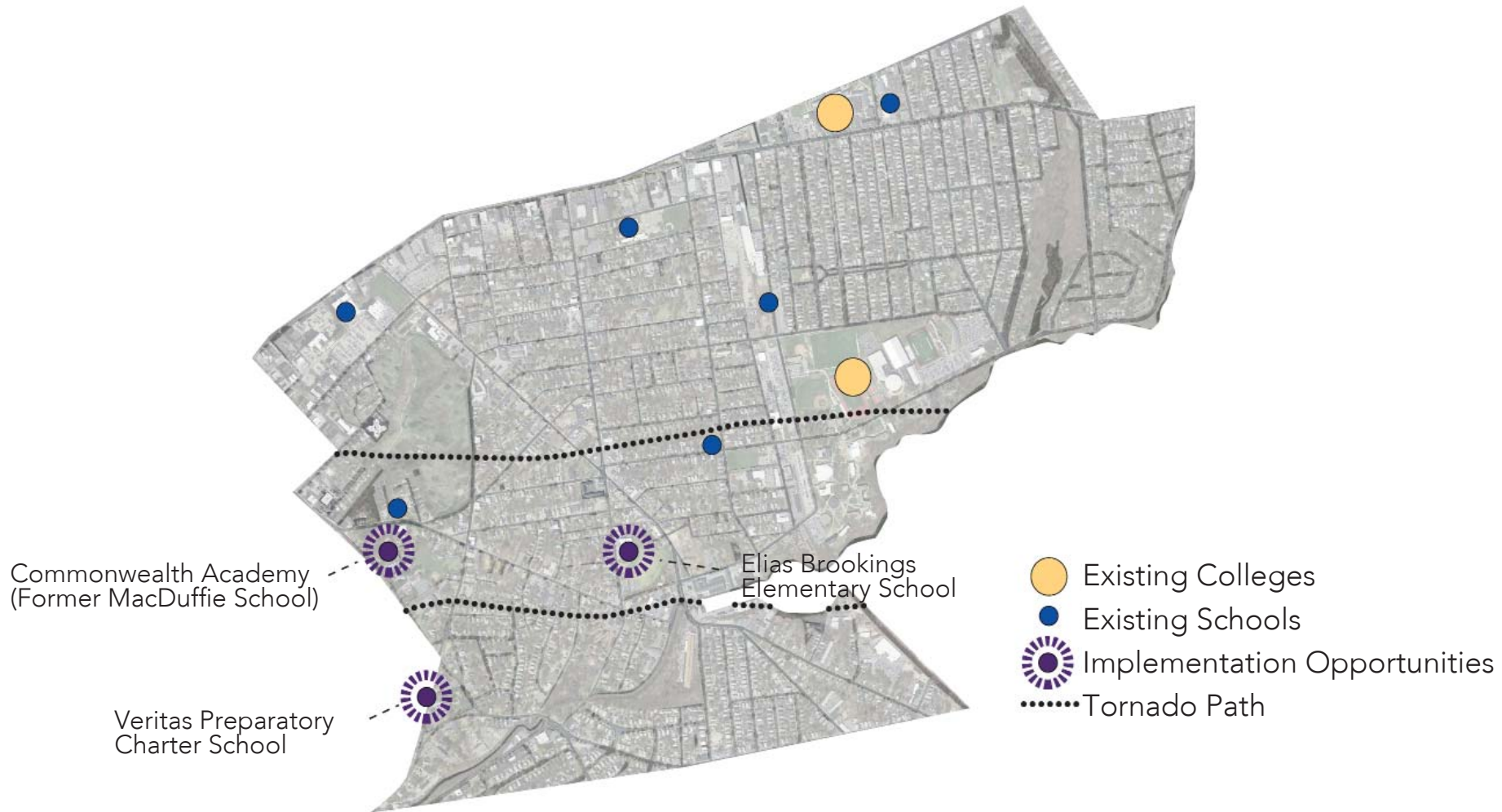
Two schools in District 2 – Commonwealth Academy (the former MacDuffie School) and Elias Brookings School – sustained significant damage in the June 1 tornado. Both the former MacDuffie School and the Brookings School are still standing, yet in need of repair. Temporary facilities have been erected behind the existing Brookings School, to be used until a permanent structure is ready for classes. Commonwealth Academy is planning to restore the historic MacDuffie campus buildings. A third school, Veritas Prep Charter School, is planning to locate within an existing building on Pine Street near Maple Street.



The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.







Successful schools are a key ingredient to stable, family-friendly neighborhoods. To that end, careful building, rebuilding, and repurposing of these three schools will signal to the community that positive and transformational educational reform can be a reality in Springfield. Each of the three institutions has interesting and unique opportunities that would support Springfield's overall rebuilding efforts, encompassing the realms of the physical structures, curriculum design and programmatic services/amenities.

World-class educational school programs at all levels (from pre-school through post-graduate, on to continuing education) provide a strong foundation for inspiring private investment and attracting people and economic development in a city and region. If the three schools noted above consider these objectives of this initiative (high-performance learning environments, schools as community anchors, and collaborative and efficient services) in their design and (re)building efforts, they could be model schools for the rest of the state and even the nation, as well as a major component of a robust and effective educational system citywide.

### **High-performance healthy learning environments**

Several national initiatives in the green building movement and a growing body of research have demonstrated the benefits of "green" schools and provide a template for local efforts to build new or renovate existing learning environments better than before. (A green school is defined as a "school building or facility that creates a healthy environment that is conducive to learning while saving energy, resources and money" by the U.S. Green Building Council. Refer to Greening our Schools: A State Legislator's Guide to Best Policy Practices.) The rebuilding process presents an opportunity to create high-performance learning environments that may not have been feasible before the tornado.

The Kiowa County School (K-12) in Greensburg, Kansas is an excellent case study for how a community (after a tornado that wiped out their entire physical infrastructure) decided to rebuild their school. Following the new city standards to design and build all civic buildings to meet LEED Platinum standards, the school and development team committed to and succeeded in this goal. This ambitious undertaking required extra time and effort in evaluating FEMA and insurance resources, as well as an effort to gain other funds. The result is that the community now has a school that they are all proud of, and it is a destination

for many educators and community leaders across the country for how to transform a community while rebuilding after a disaster. This is true primarily because of how they decided to rebuild from an environmental perspective (achieving LEED Platinum certification), but also with regard to their technological innovation, their proximity to the center of their community and their desire to provide a world-class facility for their children. These same types of opportunities can be implemented in the three schools noted above. There is a unique rebuilding opportunity in this window after the tornado for long-term thinking; it should not be wasted.

High-performance refers not only to how the building performs from an environmental perspective, but also from the perspective of preparing students for entrance into a 21st century life and career. In today's world, a learning environment can be physical or virtual, remote or in person. Creating a 21st century learning environment supports the design of physical spaces and technological systems to support the human and nature-based relationships needed for effective learning. This was a powerful idea that emerged from and was supported in the community and stakeholder meetings.

Curricula for all three District 2 schools could incorporate a deeper understanding of the facility



in which they work, revealing and illustrating the beneficial impacts of environmentally- and student-sensitive learning environments. This effort could include close integration of the physical structures with the natural environment/systems on the school grounds and in adjacent neighborhoods. Historically, the physical environment of a school has not been intentionally educational itself. With Brookings, Commonwealth Academy, and Veritas there is an opportunity for the facilities to be used as a teaching tool that supplements their public, private and charter school curricula.

### **Community Anchors**

As suggested by “Schools as Centers of Community: A Citizen’s Guide for Planning and Design”, learning environments have the potential to: enhance teaching and learning, serve as a center of the community, reflect community interests that arise from a comprehensive planning and design process, make effective use of available resources, and be flexible and adaptable for new ways of learning.

Each of the schools noted above (Brookings, Commonwealth and Veritas) could more effectively integrate their facilities into the surrounding neighborhood as a community hub, coordinated with other facilities and services to promote collaboration and efficiency in services.

The facilities could share community amenities such as a public library, community meeting places, community gardens and sports/recreation facilities. The new Veritas Prep school will not initially need all of the space in its new facility. This creates a prime opportunity to thoughtfully integrate community and school functions in a mutually beneficial way. Likewise, because new construction (rather than renovation) for the new Brookings School is being considered, the existing damaged building could be analyzed for potential community spaces while a new school is built nearby, particularly spaces that would benefit both the new school and the neighborhood.

As a follow-up to the Kiowa County School noted above, the high school students insisted (and the community followed) on rebuilding their school facility near the heart of the city’s downtown to reinforce the values of the entire town and to make it a vital part of their community. (The alternative was to build a consolidated school half-way between two small rural towns.) It is today a vibrant component to the town’s central core. Schools in New Orleans and other places that have been damaged from natural and man-made disasters are also being reconsidered as the center of communities that are building back.

## Collaborative and Efficient Services

It would also be beneficial for the District 2 neighborhoods to consider how each school could efficiently support learning, skill development, capacity building, and other services for the entire community through programs and co-located facilities that serve a range of needs for all ages. Workforce development providers could offer their services during the non-school hours to students and others in the community at school facilities located conveniently within District 2 neighborhoods. On-going adult continuing education is another use that leverages school facilities for broader capacity building efforts in the community. The “Healthy Lifestyles” initiatives highlights the potential of school facilities as “full-service” schools that provide physical and mental health services for the community. This model is already being employed within the District at the High School of Commerce. Commonwealth Academy intends to provide students a range of social and health services, and health services could also be accommodated with the redevelopment of Brookings School. This kind of access to facilities could become an income stream for the respective educational institution or simply be an added benefit within the community.

## Partnerships / Stakeholders

- Elias Brookings School
- Commonwealth Academy (former MacDuffie School)
- Veritas Preparatory Charter School

*For schools as community hubs and coordinated services:*

- Springfield Public Schools (including School Committee and School Building Committee)
- Interested neighborhood members/parents
- Neighborhood church youth group leaders, where there is an overlap with student populations
- Local PTAs and/or parent organizations
- National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities
- Springfield City Library
- YMCA
- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Neighborhood Services

*For high-performance learning environments:*

- U.S. Green Building Council – The Center for Green Schools
- The 50 for 50 Green Schools Caucus Initiative
- The American Institute of Architects – Western Massachusetts Chapter
- U.S. Department of Education – Green Ribbon Schools program

- American Lung Association – Asthma-Friendly Schools Initiative

*For workforce development and a lifelong learning approach/educational continuum:*

- Springfield College, Springfield Technical Community College and other higher education institutions that are engaged with these schools
- Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc. (REB), affiliated workforce development providers at FutureWorks, and other workforce and youth development programs (see “Job Training and Small Business Support” initiative)

## Resource Needs

- Educational workshops as needed on the benefits of “green schools” and “schools as community anchors” for: design, construction, and facility management professionals, as well as school administrations and faculty; often a field trip to other high-performance schools is very beneficial
- Close collaboration between school administration/faculty and community members to help determine mutually beneficial uses of the school facilities
- Additional funds (beyond insurance and FEMA) to push each facility’s capacity for state-of-the-art learning environments

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- Davis Foundation (initially to convene a summit that addresses city-wide educational issues and immediate opportunities for schools damaged by the tornado)
- Home Depot Foundation (long associated as supporters of green building through their Sustainable Community Development program and Sustainable Cities Initiative)
- Massachusetts Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council
- U.S. Green Building Foundation (volunteer resources)
- The Center for Green Schools, U.S. Green Building Council (centerforgreenschools.org)
- Mayors Alliance for Green Schools
- Bonds (that support first costs for renovation/ construction of schools, paid back by way of energy savings over the long-term)
- Local churches (particularly as it relates to engaging the community needs, resources and opportunities)
- Private funding from individuals, businesses, philanthropic and other organizations, especially those interested in elevating design/ building quality and/or those that care deeply about education in Springfield, the region, the state
- FEMA
- Massachusetts School Building Authority

### Action Steps

- Convene a meeting of the leadership of the three schools noted above to discuss creating high-performance learning environments, community hubs, and collaborative services, to see how these might be achieved jointly to beneficially impact the schoolchildren and the community
- Evaluate curriculum needs, site constraints, rebuilding challenges, etc. to identify challenges and opportunities for each site
- Host community workshop(s) to explore integrating community amenities within the school plans, where appropriate, and consider opportunities for the use of school facilities to support learning, skill development, and capacity building for the entire community
- Set the vision, raise funds and integrate high-performance strategies within the design of both new and existing facilities
- Facilitate a design symposium/workshop that reveals opportunities for 21st century learning environments, community needs that could be integrated into each school and potential deep sustainable strategies that set national benchmarks for providing healthy and efficient facilities

### Priority



- Coordinate with school administration and faculty to incorporate building design and systems into curriculum, including natural systems on school grounds or in adjacent neighborhoods

### Project Location

- Elias Brookings School: 367 Hancock Street
- Commonwealth Academy (former MacDuffie School): 1 Ames Hill Drive
- Veritas Preparatory Charter School: 370 Pine Street

## Precedents

### **City Heights Urban Village, San Diego, CA**

In the densely populated City Heights neighborhood of central San Diego, the school district, the city, the redevelopment agency, and a local foundation collaborated to site a new school in a neighborhood center with numerous shared goals. The Urban Village includes affordable housing, a retail center, an aquatics center, municipal service providers, and joint use recreation fields. School and community users also share tennis courts, a swimming pool, and a performance annex, which includes a performing arts center and an outdoor amphitheater.

### **Kiowa County Schools (K-12), Greensburg, KS**

In rebuilding their school after an EF-5 tornado destroyed the entire town in May 2007, the Greensburg community recommitted the school as a critical component to their community's downtown and to sustainable strategies (LEED Platinum) that make it a national model for green schools.

### **Sodexo Magna Awards Program**

This award program recognizes school boards that demonstrate innovative thinking in advancing student learning and achievement. Sodexo Scholars is a program that presents scholarships to deserving high school seniors who want to continue their education toward careers in hospitality or engineering. Sodexo is a provider to Springfield Public Schools and is interested in integrating gardens and local produce into the schools. Their overall vision for the realm of education is to work with school administrators, teachers, principals and parents to support positive and strong learning environments with emphases on food services and facilities management.

# Implementation Opportunity

Elias Brookings Elementary School (K-5)

The existing school building at 367 Hancock Street was severely damaged in the tornado, but does not require demolition. Post-tornado studies revealed that interior masonry was compromised, but there was no structural damage. Early studies by the City-selected design team reveal that renovation of this building for reuse as an elementary school is not ideal. The cost of upgrades required per code is significant and would still not yield a facility that will meet school building standards (i.e., 670 square feet per classroom in its current state compared to 900-950 square feet per classroom as required per current standards). Resident comments at community meetings indicated anecdotally that the existing building did not provide a comfortable learning environment. A temporary modular facility was erected directly behind the existing structure after the tornado and is currently being used for classroom space. It is anticipated that this temporary facility will be used for two years total.

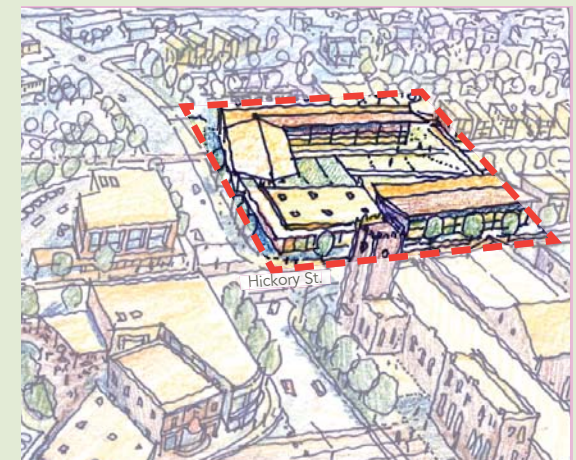
The construction of a new facility offers advantages over a renovation of the existing facility as an elementary school, primarily in terms of the quality of learning environment that could be provided in a new facility that is thoughtfully

designed. While the existing Brookings School building is not ideal for a new Brookings school, the existing building has potential for renovation for any number of activities, including a community center, branch library, community meeting spaces or housing, any of which could support existing needs within the community. Repurposing of the existing school building will require conversations with appropriate stakeholders to determine how best to use this structure. As school districts across the country see decreased enrollment, many are undertaking community-driven processes to explore repurposing possibilities. An analysis of these options should be conducted soon, preferably with community input.

A new school facility located within the existing neighborhood has the potential to serve as a major catalyst for revitalization. The final location of a new school will need to be determined in close connection with other decisions in the area, including redevelopment along Hickory Street, Central Street, and Walnut Street. However, there are certain existing neighborhood amenities important for consideration when locating the new school, including proximity to Ruth Elizabeth Park, Springfield College, and potentially with the original structure, depending on its ultimate

repurposed use(s).

Wherever it is located, design and construction for a new facility should integrate high-performance goals for healthy learning environments, efficiency, and durability. Further, any opportunities for shared facilities or shared programs with the community would enhance the viability and resiliency of the school and the neighborhood (programs and facilities could include a library, community meeting spaces, recreational/fitness facilities, workforce development programs, continuing education programs, health services, and more).



# Implementation Opportunity

Commonwealth Academy (former MacDuffie School) (Grades 6-12)

All of the buildings on the former MacDuffie School campus were severely damaged during the June 1 tornado. The status of this property is especially complicated due to the timing of ownership transactions and the particular insurance coverage issues that have arisen as a result of the timing of the conveyance. The purchase executed on May 31, one day before the June 1 tornado, but the transfer of property did not occur until July 1. Accessing insurance proceeds is critical in restoring the historic campus. The new owner's intent is to create a not-for-profit innovative school that would operate to support public education by utilizing innovative educational technologies and teaching methods. The intent is to begin with a first group of 100+/- students in the 6th-9th grades (beginning as early as Fall 2012), with as many as 300 students by 2015. These students will be coming from feeder schools in the public school system. Ideally, according to the school's founder, a majority of the students will come from the surrounding neighborhood and Springfield-at-large. Commonwealth Academy will feature a 10,000-hour mastery program in sports, the arts and sciences, STEM (science-technology-engineering-math), drama and media, by way of lectures, seminars, study groups, cooperative learning enclaves, semesters abroad, work-based learning, internships, community development and service learning activities.

One of the goals of this school is a special focus on dropout prevention and education of urban and mixed-income populations with an understanding that many children raised in tough urban areas are trauma victims with on-going traumatic stress disorder. Some Project-13 programs (as are being used in Holyoke, MA) will be incorporated. (Project 13 is a drop-out prevention program that identifies students who are determined to be at risk for school drop-out as they approach the age of 13. Through experience, they understand that scholars must be engaged before they reach the critical milestone. See [project-13.org](http://project-13.org).) This new approach may also tie in with the State's overhaul of public education to create schools that operate more autonomously than traditional public schools. It also fits with the broader city-wide goals to improve education.

There is one property at 334 Maple Street that is owned by Commonwealth Academy and abuts the Veritas Prep Charter School site. Conversations between the leaders of these two schools have begun regarding the potential for shared facilities. In addition to this, the owner is interested in locating a small, neighborhood grocery store on-site at the Commonwealth Academy campus that would generate revenue, provide healthy food options for residents, and skill development opportunities for students. This potential grocer would provide locally sourced, organic, and healthy choices including a deli with prepared

meals for working families, a bakery, a banking and check-cashing service. Two additional storefronts would be considered, one rental and one business incubator for local residents. In turn, this could tie in with the existing Gardening the Community program (see the Healthy Food Systems initiative), which creates urban gardens in vacant lots while providing leadership development training for urban youth.

Similar to the other schools noted in this section, there is potential for the new Commonwealth Academy to create a high-performance learning environment through new construction and renovation of existing structures, and to collaborate with the community to identify potential shared facilities and shared programs. Further, this institution is physically located in a prominent location in Springfield, and its structures are important historical landmarks. Commonwealth Academy is located at the top of Maple Hill off Maple Street and is visible from the river, downtown Springfield and the I-91 corridor, especially now that many trees were lost in the tornado. This site represents one of the more visible and urgent historic preservation priorities for the rebuilding process. It is important that the City and Academy work collaboratively to ensure that this institution can once again be fully utilized to serve the community.



## Implementation Opportunity

### Veritas Preparatory Charter School (Grades 5-8)



Commonwealth Academy Campus



Veritas Preparatory Charter School

The vision and mission of this new school is to prepare students in Grades 5-8 to compete, achieve, and succeed in high school, college and beyond by way of a highly structured middle school built upon a rigorous college preparatory curriculum and accompanied by daily supports in academics and character development. Although not directly impacted by the tornado, the Veritas commitment to high-performing education indicates it could become a critical piece in Springfield's post-tornado plan for city-wide educational reform, particularly in District 2. The vision and facility of Veritas Prep can inform Springfield's educational reform and potentially become a model for the City and the region in urban school reform. In addition to its rigorous curriculum, Veritas can maximize its impact on District 2 neighborhoods and the city-at large by incorporating the three primary objectives of this Quality Schools as Community Anchors initiative: creation of a high-performance healthy learning environment, supporting the neighborhood as a community anchor, and consideration of collaborative and efficient services.

The School is moving forward on plans to occupy an existing building at 370 Pine Street. This is not technically within the boundaries of District 2, but its location is more closely integrated with District 2 neighborhoods than others. Veritas School leaders acknowledge that there is more

space in this facility than they initially require and intend for the school to grow into the existing building and lease additional space over time. Their plan is to open in August 2012 with Grade 5 and grow one grade per year to eventually serve students through Grade 8. As such, they are open to possibilities for other organizations to lease additional space in the same building while their program develops in the first year, and for some time afterwards.

It is recommended that Veritas continue to collaborate with others in the community to explore these co-location options, especially if they lend themselves to shared community services. Further, and though more complicated in the case of an existing building renovation, it is recommended as part of this initiative to explore with the owner of the facility the design and construction of high-performance learning environments in the existing facility. Early strategies should be encouraged to ensure that the redesign and construction efforts surrounding this existing structure result in a healthy, durable, energy-efficient building – a high-performance facility for high-performance learning.

## Strengthen Community Through Education Institutions

# Collaborative Partnership Between Colleges and Neighborhoods



The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.

- **Develop a shared vision**
- **Pursue opportunities for collaborative partnership**

Springfield College, American International College (AIC), and Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) are significant institutions of higher learning in and adjacent to District 2 neighborhoods, and this proximity of regionally recognized institutions is an important asset for the area. This initiative begins with recognition that the future of District 2 neighborhoods and colleges is interrelated and that success of both institutions will depend on the development of strong partnerships and shared goals.

The importance of higher education institutions to the surrounding neighborhoods is multi-faceted. In their primary mission to support learning, the colleges are critical components of the education, skill training, and workforce development pipeline that is so important in District 2 (See “Job Training and Small Business Support” initiative). Because they employ large numbers of people, boost skills of the workforce, attract human capital to the area, and invest resources in the surrounding community (including physical development projects), District 2 colleges have a broad impact on the area economy. District 2 colleges can also attract new businesses and people to District 2 neighborhoods that can be an important part of revitalization efforts in the surrounding neighborhoods. The student presence contributes to civic life and engagement and presents further opportunities to create new energy and vitality in the District.

In turn, safe, healthy, vibrant neighborhoods are essential for the success of the higher education institutions in and around District 2. In the broadest sense, strong communities provide the services, amenities, and opportunities that attract and



retain people and jobs in the area and underpin the long term success of the colleges. More directly, a safe, interesting, attractive environment and healthy neighborhoods with a variety of retail, services, and amenities surrounding the colleges bolster these institutions' ability to attract and students, employees, innovators, and entrepreneurs.

While this interdependence between the colleges and neighborhoods is widely acknowledged by residents, college administrators, and City leadership, and while there are many examples of engagement and collaboration between colleges and neighborhoods, challenges remain. These challenges include the integration of development at the edge of campuses into surrounding neighborhoods, ensuring a safe and healthy environment for students, and the need for greater coordination between colleges and neighborhoods in the planning process. This initiative recommends the development of a shared vision and deeper collaborative partnerships that can capitalize on the presence of these higher learning institutions for the mutual benefit of both the neighborhoods and the colleges.

### **Develop a shared vision**

There is value in developing a shared vision for how District 2 colleges can coordinate their

missions with the interests of the city and the community. This shared vision begins with meaningful dialogue between all parties about the common interests and challenges of the colleges and the surrounding neighborhoods, and also about the respective concerns and points of friction that may exist. Engaging in an open conversation helps to build a more trusting relationship and provides a venue to include residents and other community stakeholders in a shared planning process for the future integration and partnership between colleges and surrounding neighborhoods.

The development of a shared vision improves awareness and understanding of everyone's interests and needs, and creates a framework to identify specific goals and responsibilities that everyone can embrace. With a shared understanding of how colleges and neighborhoods can be mutually supportive, and with a forum for ongoing dialogue to build trust and common interest, there is great opportunity for enhanced partnership and collaboration in a variety of venues. Active leadership from the City (potentially in the form of a designated liaison to guide college / community engagement) and formalized avenues for stakeholder participation can help to sustain dialogue and partnership.

### **Pursue opportunities for collaborative partnership**

#### *Mutually beneficial development*

One of the strongest forms of support that the City and community can provide for local colleges comes in the form of safe, healthy, vital neighborhoods that surround the campuses. This is especially true for urban campuses that necessarily spill into adjacent neighborhoods. The most successful urban colleges are those that are interdependent with their surroundings, where students live both on campus and in the neighborhood, shop in the neighborhood shops and eat in neighborhood restaurants, and where community members have access to campus facilities in a way that does not detract from student life, but instead enhances it. Successful urban colleges have moved away from separation and isolation to embrace a model of integration and interdependence.

There are a number of existing partnerships that illustrate the value of collaboration to improve the quality of adjacent neighborhoods and present opportunity for additional engagement and collaboration. For example Springfield College is supporting a loan fund for a partnership between Old Hill Neighborhood Council, Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services, Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity, and HAP Housing to develop one hundred new

or rehabilitated energy-efficient homes for owner occupants in the Old Hill neighborhood. Springfield College also has plans to build a community engagement center in District 2 that other colleges and neighborhood groups could utilize. AIC owns a number of properties in the Mason Square area and has plans for new mixed-use development on State Street that could accommodate AIC uses and other tenants. AIC is also exploring potential funding for redevelopment of the Indian Motorcycle building. Springfield College, AIC, and a variety of other organizations, education institutions, and neighborhood groups have worked together to develop a vision for an Education Corridor connecting Springfield College, AIC, and other existing and potential education facilities between Wilbraham and King Streets.

There is a unique opportunity as part of the rebuilding process for colleges and other stakeholders to partner together to ensure that new development at the fringe of existing campuses can fully serve the needs of the colleges and the neighborhood. As part of the Rebuild Springfield planning process, some of these possibilities are already being pursued. Along Hickory Street, Springfield College, area residents, and the City are working together to establish the partnerships and formal relationships necessary to rebuild in a transformational way that

supports residents and the College. Separate initiatives in this plan for new housing, streetscape improvements, transit, community safety, and more, illustrate how a more integrated and strategic approach to development is possible. If the community, institutional, and City stakeholders are able to successfully navigate the partnerships and responsibilities required to realize these initiatives, both the community and the colleges will benefit.

#### *Job training and workforce development*

Springfield College, AIC, and STCC play fundamental roles in the region's workforce development, job training, and small business support efforts. The presence of these institutions in and around District 2, where education and employment challenges are so prominent, presents a valuable opportunities for partnership and collaboration between colleges, students, employers, job seekers, and a variety of organizations. The "Job Training and Small Business Support" Initiative highlights many of the existing and potential venues for area colleges to collaborate with other training and development efforts, including small business support, incubator services, workforce development programs, and potential for better matching students with the city's successful companies through mutually beneficial curricula, internships, and training opportunities.

#### *Research, community services, and non-profit support*

There is potential for area colleges to establish partnerships that provide learning and development opportunities for students, while providing research, services, capacity building, and other support for community organizations. For example, The "Integrated Healthy Food System" and "Healthy Lifestyles" initiatives identify roles for area colleges in conducting comprehensive food assessments for the area and improving the quality of neighborhood-level health data. Other services could range from classes for residents, to sharing of information technology resources and expertise with local non-profits operating in District 2, to support and partnership in neighborhood planning and capacity-building efforts for neighborhood organizations.

District 2 Higher education institutions already engage with and support the surrounding community through various programs, including community service projects, health and in-school counseling, youth leadership development, tutoring and mentorship, and other areas. This initiative recommends building on these efforts with a deeper partnership between colleges and organizations to plan for and pursue shared goals in a strategic way to strengthen neighborhoods and higher learning institutions.



### Partnerships / Stakeholders

#### Colleges / universities

- American International College
- Springfield College
- Springfield Technical Community College

#### Neighborhood councils

- Maple High / Six Corners Neighborhood Council
- Old Hill Neighborhood Council
- Upper Hill Residents Council

- City staff from relevant departments (Office of Housing, Office of Neighborhood Services, Planning and Development Services)
- Housing organizations and private developers, including HAP Housing, Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services, and Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity
- Non-Profit service organizations
- Workforce training and skill development organizations, including MCDI, YouthBuild, Scibelli Enterprise Center and Springfield Business Incubator, and others
- Local businesses
- Area churches

### Resource Needs

- Leadership and formalized opportunities for engagement and dialogue represent the primary needs to improve collaboration

and partnership between colleges and neighborhoods. This may include a formal City liaison to guide college /community engagement.

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- A variety of financial resources may help to achieve the development goals that emerge from new partnerships (see “New Infill Housing”, “Job Training and Small Business Support”, and “Enhanced Neighborhood Businesses” initiatives for descriptions of potential development resources)
- Colleges in District 2 are uniquely capable of concentrating financial resources, technical knowledge, and human capital to support a range of goals. If the collaboration and partnership described in this initiative can be realized, these resources can have a major impact on the quality of District 2 neighborhoods, even as they are deployed to further the individual missions of each educational institution
- There exists a wide body of research and on-the-ground experience from around the nation that can provide models and lessons for strengthening the relationship between neighborhoods and higher education institutions in District 2



### Action Steps

- Identify leaders from the colleges, neighborhood, District 2 organizations, and City to initiate a substantive and ongoing dialogue for the purpose of identifying shared goals and interests, and addressing areas of concern
- Establish formal relationships and venues for ongoing dialogue that integrate the decision making processes for all groups to create a shared vision for how colleges and communities interface and support each other, including establishing goals and assigning responsibilities to achieve those goals
- Identify specific opportunities to create new partnerships and strengthen existing partnerships, including new development opportunities, job training and workforce development, capacity building and non-

### Priority



- profit support, and other areas
- Incorporate substantive community input into planning and development of future campus projects, especially where those projects have the potential to impact the quality of life in surrounding neighborhoods, or have the potential to accommodate both community goals and the educational mission of the colleges for mutual benefit

### Project Location

- Throughout District 2 but particularly at the geographic edges of college campuses where the neighborhood and campus interact
- As part of the Rebuild Springfield planning process, Springfield College, area residents, and the City are working together to establish the partnerships and formal relationships necessary to rebuild in a transformational way that supports residents and the College along Hickory Street.

## Precedents

### International Town and Gown Association (ITGA)

In an environment of municipal spending and taxation limits, state budget cuts and concerns about rising tuition, cities and universities are seeking ways to share costs of services and programs and achieve higher levels of economies of scale. As recognition of the benefits of positive town-gown relations grows, the ITGA provides colleges and communities a place to turn for contact information, program assistance, examples of successful partnerships and solutions to common problems. The Association works to provide assistance across jurisdictional and professional lines, and provide examples to show that successful partnership and shared leadership between colleges and communities are possible and advantageous.

### Evan Dobbelle at Trinity College, Hartford, CT

Excerpted from Lisa Prevost's article on Evan Dobbelle's work at Trinity College:

Committing \$6 million of the college's \$334 million endowment, Dobbelle managed to leverage more than \$175 million for the revitalization of the neighborhoods of Frog Hollow, Barry Square and Behind the Rocks, which border the campus. The initiative includes three new public schools, the nation's first college-affiliated Boys and Girls Club, a community-run job training center, and a home-ownership initiative.

A Trinity-led alliance with three nearby hospitals--which put up \$10 million--and Connecticut Public Television oversees the projects. Neighborhood committees organized under an umbrella group called HART (Hartford Areas Rally Together), as well as community housing organizations and small-business owners, regularly meet with alliance members to pitch their own ideas and to offer their input on pending projects.

This community-service activity has not only improved Trinity's environs. It has also raised (its) national profile...Dobbelle goes so far as to call community revitalization a moral obligation of higher education.

### Northeastern University, Boston, MA

From Town-Gown Collaboration in Land Use and Development by Yesim Sungu-Eryilmaz, published by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

Northeastern University's Davenport Commons project consists of 125 units of housing for students and staff, 60 affordable owner-occupied townhouses, and 2,100 square feet of retail space. Community members were concerned about a range of issues related to the project's physical design and the threat of neighborhood gentrification. The development process was complex, involving many stakeholders and negotiations. The university partnered on the project with Madison Park Development Corporation (MPDC), a local community development corporation, as well as with two local developers. Along with negotiating a community benefits package of affordable housing, MPDC helped homeowners set up a condominium association and provided both technical assistance and education for first-time homebuyers.

## Major Move 5:

# Promote Safe and Healthy Living

Promoting safe and healthy living foremost requires creating neighborhoods that accommodate healthy lifestyles, including diverse recreation opportunities, infrastructure that accommodates a range of mobility options including walking and biking, and land use patterns that support locally accessible goods and services that meet resident needs. An integrated healthy food system is not only a strategy to improve access to diverse and healthy food within District 2, but also a tool to build community, support youth development, activate vacant lots, support local businesses, and provide job opportunities. A community-based approach to public safety and strategic coordination of health services in District 2 are additional initiatives that can enhance quality and improve perceptions of the area.

### *Key Initiative*

## Community Safety

- Create a safer physical environment
- Increase the capacity of Community Policing and the Beat Management Teams
- Hold regular neighborhood events around community safety

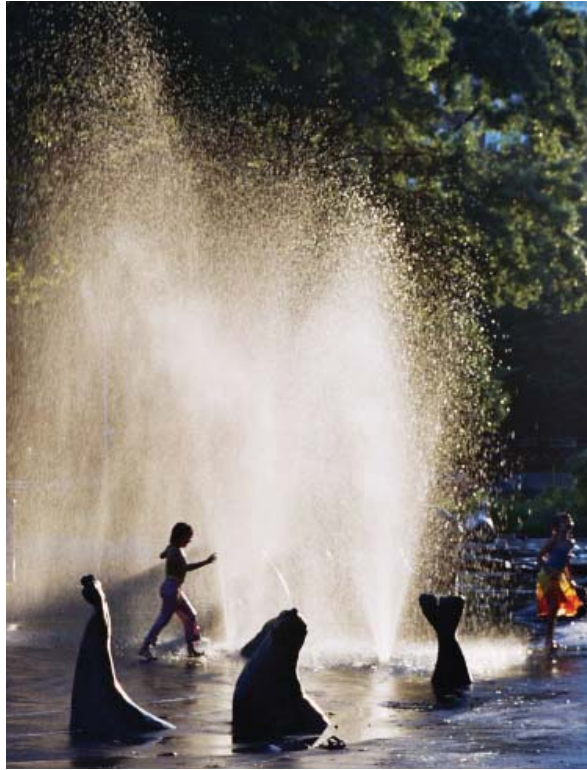
## Integrated Healthy Food System

- Support community gardens through a Community Garden Ordinance and permanent garden sites
- Develop a healthy corner store program
- Support and increase the capacity of the Mason Square Farmers Market
- Develop a full-service grocery store
- Conduct a comprehensive food system assessment

## Healthy Lifestyles

- Enhance neighborhood fitness, recreation, and mobility opportunities
- Increase access to wellness care through multifunctional 'community wellness' spaces
- Collect and track neighborhood level public health data





Promote Safe and Healthy Living

# Community Safety



The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.

- **Create a safer physical environment**
- **Increase the capacity of Community Policing and the Beat Management Teams**
- **Hold regular neighborhood events around community safety**

Community safety was repeatedly identified as a top priority of District 2 residents and stakeholders. Violence and crime have a negative effect on property values, economic development efforts, schools, community pride and overall quality of life. Although Springfield’s crime rate has improved recently (the crime rates from 2006 to 2010 were the lowest in the past 25 years), Springfield’s crime rate is still in need of improvement. These statistics reflect perceptions both inside and outside the District 2 neighborhoods. This initiative seeks to improve community safety through a mix of physical improvements, programmatic changes, and community building activities.

## Create a safer physical environment

A common and recurring theme at all of the District 2 community meetings was the need for physical improvements to deter crime and enhance the safety and perception of the neighborhood. Residents have identified the importance of occupied, well-kept homes, clean and safe streets, building maintenance and façade improvements, and active reuse of vacant lots. The successful implementation of many of the other initiatives in this plan, including encouraging new infill housing, developing vibrant neighborhood activity centers, creating streetscapes that encourage pedestrian activity, supporting better property maintenance, and reuse of vacant lots all improve perceptions of the neighborhood, increase “eyes on the street”, and thereby enhance public safety. While the ultimate solution to neighborhood safety issues in District 2 relies on establishing, active, healthy, vibrant neighborhoods, there are immediate basic projects that can help to create a safer physical environment, including repairing broken sidewalks, creating well-lit bus stops





and shelters, pedestrian signals, crosswalks, and other traffic calming measures. A 2010 report by UMass graduate students found that 60 percent of the sidewalks in Six Corners and Old Hill are in poor condition. Specific recommendations for streetscape and facade improvements are discussed in greater detail in the “Streetscape Improvements” and “Enhanced Neighborhood Businesses” initiatives, respectively. Revitalization and rebuilding efforts also present an opportunity to incorporate principles for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), a multidisciplinary approach for deterring criminal behavior through physical design, in residential, commercial, and open space areas. CPTED includes strategies for using lighting, landscaping, signage, and paving treatments to encourage legitimate use of space while deterring crime. CPTED also emphasizes the importance of property maintenance and activity in public spaces to deter crime through the presence and perception of an active, alert community.

### **Increase the capacity of Community Policing and the Beat Management Teams**

The Springfield Police Department’s Community Policing has nine officers, one for each police sector of Springfield. The District 2

neighborhoods fall within three different sectors: E, F, and G. Each sector also has a Community Policing Management Team (CPMT), or Beat Management Team that holds public monthly public meetings. Residents, organizations, and Community Policing officers work together at these meetings to discuss local safety issues and come up with solutions.

Many residents at the Rebuild Springfield community meetings repeatedly expressed their concern and frustration about levels of police presence in District 2 and wanted more Community Police officers walking or biking patrols. Though by no means an easy task, the City should explore different ways to increase the number of Community Police officers in sectors with higher crime rates, whether through grants, reallocation of funds, bonds, or other financing mechanisms.

District 2 neighborhoods can be a partner with police in maintaining and improving public safety. Residents, organizations, and neighborhood councils should better utilize Beat Management Neighborhood Meetings by assigning representative liaisons to work with the teams and attend these monthly public meetings.

Organizations and neighborhood councils should also consider adjusting their meetings quarterly or biannually to coincide with Beat Management Neighborhood Meetings. For instance, the East Springfield Neighborhood Council currently coordinates with Beat Management Neighborhood Meetings once a quarter.

The Springfield Police Department educates citizens through the 10-week Citizen Police Academy programs. Though many Citizen Police Academy graduates are active in their community groups, they could further support the Community Policing department through a more formalized volunteer role. Graduates could act as liaisons between Beat Management Neighborhood Meetings and local organizations or could lead the formation of neighborhood watch groups or regular neighborhood cleanups. A good opportunity for these graduates might be as District 2 representative members of the Safe Neighborhood Consortium as recommended in the Citywide Plan.

Springfield's CitiStat department previously facilitated NeighborhoodStat, an effort that brought residents and the Community Policing together to co-create solutions to improve neighborhood safety and quality of life issues. Though CitiStat funding was eliminated for fiscal year 2012, the Citywide plan sees an opportunity

for the Safe Neighborhood Consortium to explore grant and funding opportunities to restore NeighborhoodStat in order to track and communicate relevant safety information for use in SPD outreach, Beat Management Neighborhood Meetings, and other outreach related to public safety.

### **Hold regular neighborhood events for community safety**

Community safety is more than just deterring criminal activity. It is also about building community, pride, and solidarity. Expanding and creating regular events organized around community safety is a fun and effective means of creating safer neighborhoods and bringing people together. The Safe Neighborhood Consortium as described in the Citywide Social Recommendation #2 could serve as the common ground for organizations like SPD, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Mayor's City-Wide Violence Prevention Task Force, Citizen Police Academy graduates, neighborhood councils, and local organizations such as Keep Springfield Beautiful, United Way of Pioneer Valley, Concerned Citizens of Mason Square, neighborhood churches and others to partner to hold regular events like neighborhood clean ups, neighborhood watch walking patrols, and Annual National Night Out events. In 2011, a few Night Out events took place across the

city, though none in District 2 neighborhoods. The City and community organizations could explore expanding Night Out to include District 2 neighborhoods.

### **Partners/Stakeholders**

- Springfield Police Department
- Old Hill Neighborhood Council
- Maple-High/Six Corners Neighborhood Council
- Upper Hill Residents Council
- Forest Park Civic Association
- Citizen Police Academy
- Mayor's City-Wide Violence Prevention Task Force
- United Way of Pioneer Valley
- Concerned Citizens of Mason Square
- Faith-based community
- Keep Springfield Beautiful
- Live Well Springfield Built Environment/Complete Streets Group
- Springfield Development Services Division—Office of Planning and Economic Development
- Springfield Development Services Division—Office of Neighborhood Services
- Springfield Parks and Recreation Department

### **Resource Needs**

- Funding to increase community policing program
- Funding to implement streetscape improvements

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- Citizen Police Academy graduates
- Funding to increase community policing could come from grants, reallocation of funds, bonds, or other financing mechanisms

### Action Steps

- Incorporate consideration of CPTED principles as part of the planning and site plan review process. The proposed zoning ordinance includes enhanced plan review functions that provide an opportunity to explore CPTED accommodations where appropriate
- Identify specific streetscape improvements that can enhance public safety and improve neighborhood perceptions (see “Streetscape Improvements” initiative for more detailed action steps)
- Identify resources and strategies to increase the number of community police officers in sectors with higher crime rates
- Participate in the Safe Neighborhood Consortium as part of the Citywide Plan, including attendance at monthly Beat Management Neighborhood Meetings
- Coordinate neighborhood council meetings with Beat Management Neighborhood Meetings on a quarterly or annual basis

- Citizen Police Academy graduates can act as formal liaisons between the Beat Management Neighborhood Meetings and local organizations, and can help lead the formation of neighborhood watch groups or regular neighborhood cleanups

### Priority



### Location

District-wide

### Precedents

#### Urban Edge Housing Corporation and Boston Police Department, Boston, MA

“Urban Edge and the Boston Police Department’s (BPD) partnership began with a single building on Morse Street that was ruled by a gang of drug dealers. As the property’s developer and manager, Urban Edge reached out to the BPD to take on the Morse Street situation and the related crime problems in surrounding neighborhoods. Urban Edge and BPD created an outreach system for residents while increasing police enforcement and presence in the area. The partners cleaned up drug houses, drug cruising areas, and vacant lots and empowered Morse Street residents to take back their community. Having since expanded to take on other challenges in Dorchester, the partnership has resulted in the opening of a new police substation in a separate Urban Edge development project and the systematic targeting of crime hotspots surrounding Urban Edge’s Youth Center. Most importantly, however, formal partnerships and methods of communication have been cemented between police agencies, housing managers, resident leaders, and others.”

(Local Initiatives Support Corporation: <http://www.lisc.org/content/publications/detail/5646/>)

Promote Safe and Healthy Living

# Integrated Healthy Food System



The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.

- Support community gardens through a Community Garden Ordinance and permanent garden sites
- Develop a healthy corner store program
- Support and increase the capacity of the Mason Square Farmers Market
- Develop a full-service grocery store
- Conduct a comprehensive food system assessment

Improving access to healthy food is a recurring theme of the conversations with District 2 residents at community meetings. Food access and security is important for all neighborhoods, but it is especially critical in District 2. Food security means that all members of a household have access to enough nutritionally adequate, safe, and acceptable foods at all times for an active, healthy life.<sup>1</sup> According to the 2010 Target: Hunger Report by the Food Bank of Western Mass, nine percent of households in the Mason Square area experience moderate to severe hunger, and 19 percent are food-insecure (with limited or uncertain access to adequate food).<sup>2</sup>

To tackle the challenge of providing access to healthy food and to use wholesome food as a catalyst for community interaction and healthier lifestyles requires more than simply providing healthy options at regional groceries. To truly impact health and behavior, an integrated healthy food system is required. In addition to a full service supermarket, local specialty stores, community gardens, farmers markets, corner stores, whole food cooperatives, and even research about how to successfully build an urban agriculture network in Springfield is required. An integrated food system also celebrates diversity and promotes culturally relevant foods. Great strides have

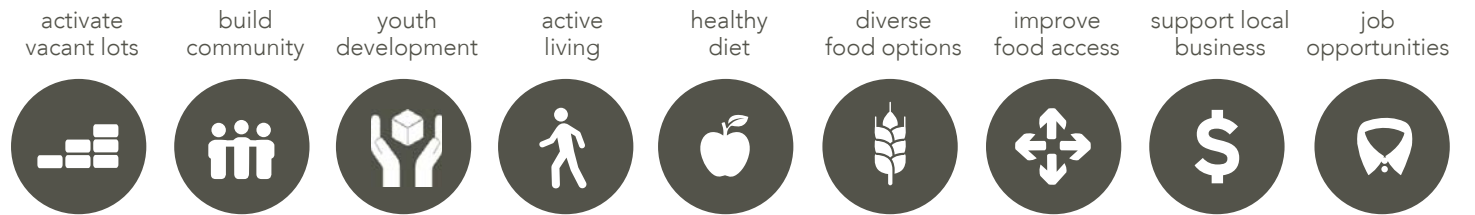


1. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/measurement.htm>  
2. Food Bank of Western Mass' Report on the Target:Hunger Program, September 2010



Healthy Food System Components

An integrated healthy food system is about more than access to food. The following diagram illustrates the range of benefits resulting from the recommendations in this section



	activate vacant lots	build community	youth development	active living	healthy diet	diverse food options	improve food access	support local business	job opportunities
<b>Community Garden</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Farmers Market</b>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Healthy Corner Store</b>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Full-Service Grocery Store and Fresh Food Hub</b>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



been made to promote an equitable food system and policy for Springfield and this initiative seeks to build on work already underway. Below are recommendations that augment those initiatives and support a holistic approach to food.

### **Support community gardens through a Community Garden Ordinance and permanent garden sites**

Community gardens not only improve access to healthy and affordable produce, but also create opportunities for leadership and skill development, neighborhood beautification, exercise, vacant lot activation, and a catalyst for further community building and citizen engagement. A 2006 study by New York University's School of Law found that New York City community gardens have a positive impact on neighboring property values (up to 9.5 percent), the impact increases over time, and gardens have the most impact when they are located in the poorest neighborhoods.<sup>3</sup>

Currently there are six community gardens within the district, mostly through Gardening the

3. Been , Vicki and Voicu, Ioan, "The Effect of Community Gardens on Neighboring Property Values" (2006). New York University Law and Economics Working Papers. Paper 46. [http://lsr.nellco.org/nyu\\_lewp/46](http://lsr.nellco.org/nyu_lewp/46)

Community, a youth community gardening and food justice organization focused primarily in Mason Square area. These gardens are on City-owned and private vacant lots and behind Mason Square Library. Revival Time Evangelistic Center and New Hope Pentecostal Church also have plans to develop community gardens. Though the number of community gardens has increased in recent years, Springfield currently does not have a formal policy or guidelines for their operation. The Springfield Food Policy Council (SFPC) has been working with the City of Springfield and others to draft a Community Garden Ordinance to formally support and lay the groundwork for a community garden system. SFPC is a public-private partnership created in 2009 to improve access to nutritious, affordable, fresh, and safe foods for all Springfield residents. It is expected that the Ordinance will go to vote before the City Council in early 2012. Community gardens have many benefits, as illustrated on the table on the preceding page. Passage of this ordinance will guide the identification and operation of current and future community gardens, and most importantly, help pave the way for more urban agriculture throughout the city (going beyond community gardens to include a variety of activities related to food production, processing, distribution, and composting).

This proposed ordinance does much for establishing healthy food opportunities in District 2, but one part has the potential to weaken the long-term viability and security of a robust community garden system: the City may reclaim property leased for a garden if an opportunity for development occurs. Because it is important to promote revitalizing development while at the same time ensuring local food production and access, the City, SFPC, Gardening the Community, and other organizations (see the Partnerships/Stakeholders section for a complete list) should supplement the proposed ordinance by jointly identifying and prioritizing parcels for permanent or long-term community garden use. This can be done using metrics for identifying appropriate lots outlined in the proposed Ordinance (likeliness of development in near future, water access, sun exposure, street lighting, soil quality, and historic uses) as well as other criteria similar to Seattle's P-Patch program (accessibility and terrain; size; presence of existing programming; adjacent existing garden; and nearby underserved populations).<sup>4</sup>

4. Department of Neighborhoods—P-Patch Community Gardening Program. 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy: Strategic Framework for Community Garden and P-Patches. <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/ppatch/documents/LevyStrategicFrameworkforweb.pdf>

Other cities have sought to further protect and ensure preservation of community gardens by including community gardens as a permitted sub-use within an open space zoning district, establishing an Urban Agriculture Overlay District (new in Boston), or establishing a land trust to, among other functions, acquire and preserve community garden land.<sup>5</sup>

### Develop a healthy corner store program

A 2010 survey by the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts found that 43 percent of Mason Square residents never purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at corner stores, even though many are scattered throughout the neighborhoods. Residents cited price (24 percent) or poor quality (19 percent) as reasons for not buying produce at these stores. Many cities have developed a healthy corner store program to bring healthy food and produce into neighborhood markets and bodegas. Residents and organizations in District 2 could work with corner storeowners to do the same using existing resources such as the Adopt-a-Bodega Toolkit by New York City's Healthy Bodegas Initiative, the Delridge Healthy Corner Store Project's Toolkit for Community Organizers & Storeowners for a neighborhood

in Seattle, and the toolkit for the Healthy Corner Stores for Healthy New Orleans Neighborhoods initiative. These toolkits guide residents on how to identify candidate stores, approach and meet with store owners, assess store products, ensure that healthy foods are affordable, and address the needs of the store owners to accommodate expanded offerings.

The incentives and tools described in the "Enhanced Neighborhood Businesses" and "Job Training and Small Business Support" initiatives can help market owners to purchase necessary storage or display equipment. Neighborhood Councils, Concerned Citizens of Mason Square (an independent group created to manage and operate the Mason Square Farmers Market), Partners for a Healthier Community (a nonprofit organization building a healthier Springfield through civic leadership, collaborative partnerships, and advocacy) Mason Square Health Task Force (a community group working to eliminate racial health disparities in Mason Square), churches and faith institutions, and other members of the Springfield Food Policy Council could be strong leaders for creating a healthy corner store program. Partnerships between store owners and Gardening the Community could provide affordable local produce to store owners. The new Commonwealth Academy at the former MacDuffie School intends to open a



5. See Seeding the City: Land Use Policies to Promote Urban Agriculture. National Policy and Legal Analysis Network and Public Health Law and Policy. 2011. [http://www.nplanonline.org/sites/phlpnet.org/files/Urban\\_Ag\\_SeedingTheCity\\_FINAL\\_20111021.pdf](http://www.nplanonline.org/sites/phlpnet.org/files/Urban_Ag_SeedingTheCity_FINAL_20111021.pdf).

neighborhood-scale market that will offer healthy food options to residents and skill development to students. By providing healthy food for residents these efforts present a critical opportunity to increase food access for nearby residents, provide healthy food within walking distance, and strengthen existing local businesses.

### **Support and increase the capacity of the Mason Square Farmers Market**

The Mason Square Farmers Market has been in operation since 2007 and is operated by the Concerned Citizens of Mason Square. This market provides affordable, healthy food and is a source of community pride where residents can have fun and connect with others and their local farmers. Concerned Citizens of Mason Square would like to expand the size and access to Mason Square Farmers Market by holding the market year-round, increasing the number of farmers and vendors, making transportation available to seniors and low-income families, and increasing awareness of the market. All of these goals can be accomplished with the development of a new centrally-located facility with a large indoor/outdoor permanent structure for a year-round market, storage space for market supplies, a licensed kitchen for vendors, and storage space for market operations.

There are a number of options to accommodate

these needs. Concerned Citizens of Mason Square has explored the potential of locating in the vacant fire station building adjacent to the lot where the existing market is held. A new full service grocery store further west on State Street could also potentially accommodate permanent market facilities to provide the community with an accessible food center and a healthy community hub. The “Mason Square Implementation Opportunity” in the Promotion and Marketing initiative also illustrates how the Mason Square Farmers Market could coordinate with Mason Square library and other partners around Mason Square to bring additional activity and vitality to the Mason Square area.

### **Develop a full-service grocery store**

A 2007 study by the Food Bank of Western Mass indicated the need for a full-service grocery store in the Mason Square area (Old Hill, Upper Hill, McKnight, and Bay neighborhoods). A full-service grocery store has a wide selection of fresh produce, baked goods, meats, and common household and toiletry items. The City of Springfield, Mason Square Food Justice Initiative, State Street Corridor Alliance, and DevelopSpringfield have been working to identify a feasible location and attract a grocer. A 2009 feasibility study by W-ZHA, LLC found two possible sites for a supermarket. Subsequent analysis by W-ZHA identified the block between

State, Walnut, Union, and Oak Streets as the best location based on traffic counts, nearby uses, and overall access. A grocery store in this location could potentially serve residents in the Mason Square neighborhoods, Maple-High Six Corners, and downtown Springfield, as well as area businesses.

Important pre-development work has been completed in support of a new grocery including a market study, surrounding streetscape improvements, all with enormous buy-in from the community. Site assembly, shared parking arrangements, and most importantly, identifying a grocery operator willing to come to an urban center remain as critical tasks to complete before a new full service grocery store can move forward. In support of efforts to attract a grocer, the Mason Square Food Justice Initiative, Mason Square Health Task Force, and the Concerned Citizens of Mason Square recently completed their JUST FOOD campaign in January to demonstrate the buying power of the Mason Square community by collecting resident’s receipts. The entire block for the proposed grocery store could potentially be part of a redevelopment project that includes retail and office anchored by a full-service grocery store. The proposed redevelopment site represents an extraordinary opportunity for not just a grocery store, but also a fresh food hub. The site could

accommodate a licensed commercial kitchen area, community-supported agriculture pick-up location, stands for farmers that want to offer produce throughout the week, and serve as a site for food demonstrations from local vendors. Concerned Citizens of Mason Square would like to develop an information center connected to the commercial kitchen that serves as a teaching and learning hub for residents. A full service grocery and food hub would provide a venue to offer culturally appropriate food and to hire locally. The proposed grocery site is surrounded by major employment centers and other facilities and services that draw people of all ages for many purposes including the Dunbar Community Center, Springfield Technical Community College, the High School of Commerce, and the Mason Square Senior Center on Union Street. The fresh food hub could connect these different institutions and make this site a hub for education, fitness and wellness, healthy food, and social gathering.

### **Conduct a comprehensive food system assessment**

The Food Access Group of Live Well Springfield (an umbrella group of organizations focused on improving healthy eating and increasing physical activity of Springfield's residents) and the Food

Bank of Western Massachusetts have recently conducted separate food access and food security assessments for Mason Square and Springfield - Live Well Springfield's unpublished asset and gap assessment on food access and the Food Bank's 2010 Target: Hunger report. While these assessments provide valuable information, food access and food security is just part of the food system puzzle because food security is affected by all aspects of the entire food system. Conducting a comprehensive food system assessment for Springfield would go beyond the work done in the aforementioned reports to better understand the various aspects of the local food system such as food production, processing, distribution and access, recycling (gleaning) and disposal. A comprehensive assessment would provide an in-depth look at all of the factors affecting food access, provides a baseline assessment of the current system, and paves the way for a sustainable food system from start to finish.

A food system assessment would benefit District 2 residents by collecting and analyzing local baseline data and information that can be used to target programs and policies within the district. Live Well Springfield Food Access Group, the Springfield Food Policy Council, the Food Bank of Western Mass, and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission are likely champions. Local universities could also provide support.

### Partnerships/Stakeholders

- Partners for a Healthier Community
- State Street Corridor Alliance
- Springfield Food Policy Council
- Live Well Springfield
- Food Access Group of the Springfield Food Policy Council
- Gardening the Community
- Neighborhood Councils
- Concerned Citizens for Mason's Square
- Develop Springfield
- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Neighborhood Services
- Springfield Health and Human Services
- State Street Alliance
- Mason Square Food Justice Initiative
- Food Bank of Western Massachusetts
- Mason Square Health Task Force
- Food Bank of Western Mass
- Springfield Partners for Community Action
- Churches and faith-based community
- Area grocery stores including Big Y, Mason Food Market, and NSA
- Pioneer Valley farmers
- Springfield Redevelopment Authority
- Springfield Development Services – Office of Planning and Economic Development
- MA in Motion program of the Springfield Wellness Leadership Council

### Resource Needs

- Public and private grants and incentives to attract a grocer for a full-service grocery store and food center (a variety of potential resources are listed below)
- Identified parcels for community garden locations
- Funding and capacity to complete a comprehensive community food system assessment
- Funding to develop a permanent, year-round farmers market location and food hub

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- The nascent Massachusetts Grocery Access Taskforce has the potential to finance food access projects in under-served communities
- Common Capital Loan Program, a community loan fund that provides project financing and business advisory service to community development projects in Western and Central Massachusetts
- Cooperative Fund of New England, a community development loan fund working throughout New England
- The Reinvestment Fund (TRF), a community investment group, finances food retail operators operating in underserved communities
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Food and Society grant program

- PVGrows Loan Fund, an initiative of the collaborative group PVGrows, will offer low-interest loans to businesses that fill key gaps in the infrastructure of the Pioneer Valley local food system starting in 2013
- The Lydia B. Stokes Foundation supports efforts including local food. Have previously funded CISA, GtC, Partners for a Healthier Community, and Farmers Markets around the country.
- The Healthy Corner Store Network - a national network led by the Community Food Security Coalition, The Food Trust, Public Health Law & Policy, and Urbane Development - awards mini-grants to organizations that work to promote the sale of healthy, fresh, affordable foods in small, neighborhood stores in underserved communities
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation provides grants for projects that advance their mission of improving the health and health care of all Americans
- USDA Specialty Crop Block Grants for projects that enhance competitiveness of Massachusetts specialty crops, including local produce
- U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Healthy Food Financing Initiatives Grant for projects that increase healthy food access in food deserts
- USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program Grants for the creation of new or the expansion of current farmers markets

- USDA Community Food Projects Competitive Grants to meet food needs of low income areas
- New Markets Tax Credits
- The City's Economic Development Incentive Program combines local property tax abatement with a suite of TIF financing, state incentives including 5 percent state investment tax credit, and 10 percent abandoned building tax credit
- Section 108 is a loan guarantee provision of the CDBG Program that provides communities with a source of financing for physical and economic revitalization projects. Section 108 allows cities to transform a portion of the CDBG funds into federally guaranteed loans that can provide resources and confidence for private investment.
- Private sponsorships from local organizations and companies

### Action Steps

*Support community gardens through a Community Garden Ordinance and permanent garden sites*

- Adopt the proposed Community Garden Ordinance to formally support and lay the groundwork for a community garden system
- Work with existing community garden partners to identify and prioritize parcels for permanent or long-term community garden use
- Support development of community gardening

infrastructure such as tool sheds, hoop houses, or fencing

#### *Develop a healthy corner store program*

- Work with corner store owners to develop a healthy corner store program to bring healthy food and produce into neighborhood markets
- Identify opportunities for partnership between store owners, community gardens and other local producers to provide affordable local produce to store owners

#### *Support and increase the capacity of the Mason Square Farmers Market*

- Identify a site and develop a new facility with an indoor/outdoor permanent structure for year-round market, a licensed kitchen for vendors, and storage space for market operations
- Initiate a sophisticated marketing campaign to rebrand Mason Square/State Street as a destination for healthy food

#### *Develop a full-service grocery store*

- Identify a grocery operator willing to develop the proposed site or commit to locating at site
- Assemble the 12 separate parcels at the Walnut/Oak Street site
- Create shared parking arrangements in coordination with surrounding property owners and institutions

### Priority



- Create a suite of incentives to facilitate the development of a new store
- Community members and stakeholders should be engaged throughout the design and development process to ensure the new store meets the needs of the surrounding community and other local businesses

#### *Conduct a comprehensive food system assessment*

- Identify resources and organizational capacity to conduct a food systems assessment
- Conduct a system-wide community food system assessment that identifies community assets, needs and resources for food production, processing, distribution, marketing and consumption

### Location

The block between State, Walnut, Union, and Oak Streets has been identified as the location for a potential full-service grocery store and has the support of the community and the State Street Alliance. Further evaluation is necessary to determine locations for permanent community garden sites and a new farmers market facility.

## Precedents

### Food System Assessments

Communities and regions across the country are developing comprehensive food system assessments. Two notable examples include the Philadelphia Food System Study (2010) and Oakland's Food System Assessment (2006).

### Healthy Corner Store Initiatives

Several cities have developed healthy corner store initiatives and provide resources for other cities looking to do the same: the Healthy Corner Store Initiative by the Food Trust of Philadelphia, The Good Neighbor program of Literacy for Environmental Justice in San Francisco, the Healthy Bodegas Initiative by the New York The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in New York City, and Delridge Healthy Corner Store Initiative in Seattle, and Baltimore's Healthy Stores Project.

### UpLift and ShopRite Supermarkets

ShopRite Supermarkets operates 10 markets throughout Philadelphia, with many located in former food deserts. President and CEO Jeffrey Brown founded the nonprofit UpLift to assist supermarket operators that share his commitment in increasing food access in underserved communities.

### Portland Fruit Tree Project, Portland, OR

The Portland Fruit Tree Project in Portland, Oregon is a grass-roots non-profit organization that "organizes[s] people to gather fruit before it falls, and make it available to those who need it most... register[s] fruit and nut trees throughout the city, bring[s] people together to harvest and distribute thousands of pounds of fresh fruit each year, and teach[es] tree care and food preservation in hands-on workshops

## Promote Safe and Healthy Living

# Healthy Lifestyles



Cultural



Physical



Economic



Organizational



Educational



Social

The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.

- **Enhance neighborhood fitness, recreation, and mobility opportunities**
- **Increase access to wellness care through multifunctional 'community wellness' spaces**
- **Collect and track neighborhood level public health data**

District 2 residents and organizations recognize that healthy living is more than exercising. That's why there are a varied number of wellness programs to support healthy living and address health challenges within the District, such as the Massachusetts Mass in Motion program carried out by Springfield Department of Health and Human Services (a state grant program to promote wellness and prevent overweight and obesity), MOCHA (Men of Color Health Awareness - a project of the Greater Springfield YMCA to fight health disparities in men of color), Mason Square Health Task Force (a community coalition working to eliminate racial health disparities in Mason Square), Fit Body and Soul (a program with faith based institutions to reduce obesity and type 2 diabetes of Mason Square residents), Live Well Springfield FIT+ (a coalition-led effort to implement interconnected strategies to reduce childhood obesity) and many more. Community health is also determined by residents' access to recreational activities and mobility options, in addition to the availability of quality wellness care for body, mind, and spirit. This initiative includes recommendations that support healthy lifestyles through neighborhood improvements and amenities, multifunctional wellness spaces, and development of better neighborhood-level health data.

### Enhance neighborhood fitness, recreation, and mobility opportunities

Healthy communities have access to fitness and recreation opportunities, and provide mobility options that make it possible to walk or bike to destinations. Walking, biking, and active recreation reduce obesity, diminish the risk of chronic diseases like diabetes, boost the immune system, and relieve stress – all of which are particularly







Existing Parks, Health, and Community Facilities

important for communities facing health challenges.

District 2 residents now have access to expanded fitness and wellness programming in Dunbar Community Center since the YMCA of Greater Springfield took over operation on January 1, 2012. (The Center maintains the Dunbar name but is now a Springfield Y Family Center. As such, the Center will raise funds to repair and renovate the facility to expand programming and install a new health and wellness center.) A number of neighborhood parks, such as Johnny Appleseed Park, have been recently renovated, providing additional recreation opportunities for youth and adults. While expanding recreation programming in urban communities is challenging when municipal budgets are tight, there is an opportunity to explore partnerships with other organizations and companies to bring additional specialized programming into parks and community facilities. Many cities rely on such partnerships to draw residents to public parks with a variety of activities.

Healthy communities are about more than recreation. Healthy communities provide safe and attractive streetscapes to encourage walking and biking, and include locally accessible retail and services in vibrant activity centers that encourage visits from surrounding residents.

Healthy communities also accommodate a range of mobility options, so that residents can reasonably travel by walking, biking, or transit if they so choose. The “Streetscape Improvements” and “Enhanced Neighborhood Businesses” initiatives detail some of the recommendations for infrastructure and land use that support the creation of healthy communities.

Multi-use trails support healthy communities by providing both recreation and transportation opportunities. Trails help to connect parks, community facilities, neighborhood activity centers and other destinations, and serve as an amenity for adjacent residential development. In District 2, the previously studied Highland

Division Rail Trail and Mill River are two potential opportunities to incorporate trails as part of the rebuilding process (see Implementation Opportunities for more details.)

### **Increase access to wellness care through multifunctional ‘community wellness spaces’**

Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s Massachusetts Community Health Information Profile data (known as MassCHIP) reveals that Springfield residents who could not see a doctor due to cost in the last three years varied greatly by race: 9 percent of Whites, 14 percent of Blacks, and 22 percent of Hispanics. The same racial disparities exist for residents without health





insurance: 9 percent of Whites, 13 percent of Blacks, and 19 percent of Hispanic. District 2 includes a large number of residents who are of Hispanic origin or African American (44 percent of Hispanic Origin, 34 percent African American, 34 percent White).

A local health care network based on the community health care model could serve District 2 residents by providing culturally competent and comprehensive community-based primary care in neighborhood health centers.<sup>1</sup> Services that are culturally competent understand the sociocultural influences on individual patients' health beliefs and behaviors and focus on reducing barriers to care through such means as offering flexible hours of service or providing culturally and linguistically appropriate health education materials.

Many health and social service providers are located within District 2, but few facilities offer both health and social services under one roof. The Mason Square Neighborhood Health Center (a full service health center for primary care, HIV testing and counseling, and a new Adolescent

1. The community health care model focuses on providing comprehensive, culturally competent primary health care (PHC), mental and dental care, and social services to all regardless of income. PHC is a type of care in which the personal physician often collaborates with other health professionals to provide both preventive and curative care over a period of time. PHC emphasizes patient education and views people as partners in their own care.

Health Center that includes a small dental clinic), Martin Luther King Family Services (provides health education, case management, a food pantry, mental health services, and various programs for individual and community health), and the proposed S.R. Williams Resource Center of the Revival Time Evangelistic Center (plans to include a neighborhood health clinic, adult and child education tutoring and classes, counseling, and some social services) are good examples within District 2 of facilities providing, or seeking to provide, both health and social services. Springfield's Department of Health and Human Services, Partners for a Healthier Community, and Behavioral Health Network could work with social service and health providers to coordinate expansion of care provided at each facility so that more facilities within District 2 provide health and social services under one roof.

Facilities that already serve as a community anchor, like community centers and schools, could also provide additional health care and social services. A full-service school model (a school that provides physical and mental health services) should be explored with the redevelopment of Brookings School. The Partners for a Healthier Community already has school-based health centers at three area high schools including the High School of Commerce, which is located within District 2. The future Commonwealth Academy

expects to provide students a range of social and health services including case management and counseling.

All of the facilities listed in this section could also collect neighborhood-level public health data, as discussed in the “Collect and track neighborhood level public health data” recommendation below. Providing accessible, affordable, culturally appropriate, health care at existing and new locations and centers throughout the area can both improve service delivery by providing multiple services in one location, and improve efficiency by utilizing existing community assets.

### **Collect and track neighborhood level public health data**

For many Springfield residents the social determinants of health – “the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work, and age, as well as the systems put in place to deal with illness” – have a greater effect on health than access to health care.<sup>2</sup> These social

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2. Definition from <http://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants>. Social and structural determinants of health, which can be defined as follows: Structural factors include those physical, social, cultural, organizational, community, economic, legal, or policy aspects of the environment that impede or facilitate efforts to avoid disease transmission. Social factors include the economic and social conditions that influence the health of people and communities as a whole, and include the conditions for early childhood development, education, employment, income and job security, food security, health services, and access to services, housing, social exclusion,

determinants are particularly important in District 2 neighborhoods where lower homeownership rates, lack of adequate property maintenance, and lower than average median incomes mean more residents live in poverty and unhealthy living conditions. These health determinants can vary drastically between and within neighborhoods. Therefore, it is important to have health and safety data at the Census tract, zip code, or neighborhood level. However, very little public health data is available in Springfield below the city level. The Census provides socioeconomic data at the tract level (such as poverty, age, education, race and ethnicity) but health data (such as obesity, diabetes, or hypertension rates) are not collected at a local level.

Census tract-level tracking and mapping of health data has helped other cities identify emerging health problems, create better policy and planning, pass local bond measures, and secure additional funds. Other communities have gathered tract-level data from the U.S. Census and their state’s department of health. See the following Precedents section for specific examples. Such an effort in Springfield would be a long-term undertaking and would likely involve the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Partners

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and stigma. (Harrison & Dean (2011). Use of Data Systems to Address Social Determinants of Health: A Need to Do More. Public Health Reports. Volume 126, Supplement 3. See <http://www.publichealthreports.org/issueopen.cfm?articleID=2718>)

for Healthier Community, Springfield’s Health and Human Services, and possibly the MassCHIP. Other potential partners may include UMass-Amherst, Springfield College, and other regional colleges that have the capacity to conduct health-related surveys, and collect and map data.

### **Partnerships/Stakeholders**

- Partners for a Healthier Community
- Springfield Department of Health and Human Services
- Springfield Parks and Recreation Department
- All Live Well Springfield member organizations
- The City’s Public Health Council, a 15-member advisory council to the Mayor
- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Neighborhood Services
- Behavioral Health Network
- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Mason Square Health Task Force
- Baystate Health
- Universities and colleges such as UMass-Amherst, Springfield College
- YMCA of Greater Springfield
- Dunbar Community & Family Center
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s Massachusetts Community Health Information Profile (MassCHIP)
- Martin Luther King Family Services
- Faith-based institutions

- The future S.R. Williams Resource Center of the Revival Time Evangelistic Center
- Public and private schools
- Fitness-related organizations and companies, such as dance or martial art studios, for partnerships in recreation programming

### Resource Needs

- Possible additional space to expand social/health services in existing facility
- Funding to implement streetscape improvements that encourage biking, walking, and pedestrian use
- Funding for trail construction including Highland Division Rail Trail and the Mill River Trail
- Funding for data collection

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- Federal Prevention and Public Health Fund from the MA Department of Health and Human Services (from the federal 2010 Affordable Care Act) to help improve wellness and prevention efforts
- Federal Community Transformation Grants awarded through the MA Department of Public Health (Created by the 2010 Affordable Care Act) to fight chronic disease such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes
- AmeriCorps to provide cost-effective support expansion of programming and services
- Prioritization and funding for parks and trail

infrastructure can occur through the City's Capital Improvement Program

- Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation accepts applications for Recreational Trails Grants on an annual basis
- Some grants are available through the EPA and other sources related to green solutions for stormwater management, which could potentially be integrated into improvements along the Mill River
- Gateway City Parks Program. This State sponsored program supports significant park projects for underserved urban populations

### Action Steps

- Explore partnerships with other organizations and companies to bring additional specialized programming into parks and community facilities
- Identify existing community centers and faith-based facilities to host additional combined health and social services programs
- Identify specific streetscape and trail improvements to support healthy lifestyles, develop final plans. Identify any right-of-way or property acquisition needs, identify funding sources, and develop final design
- Existing health and social service organizations work together to identify areas of unmet need or duplicated services and adjust service access points accordingly

### Priority



- Identify a champion to facilitate neighborhood-level tracking and mapping of health data

### Location

- Existing health-related facilities such as the Martin Luther King Family Service Center, Mason Square Neighborhood Health Center, Dunbar Community and Family Center, and the proposed S.R. Williams Resource Center are locations that would offer multifunctional "wellness" spaces. Schools such as the new Brookings School and Commonwealth Academy in the district also have the potential to strategically collocate health and social services
- The Mill River and proposed Highland Division Rail Trail are two opportunities to incorporate new trails in District 2
- The "Streetscape Improvements" and "Enhanced Neighborhood Businesses" initiatives discuss specific locations to improve the safety, appearance, and functionality of streets in District 2, as well as opportunities to enhance neighborhood activity centers that are conveniently accessible to District 2 residents

## Precedents

### **Community Health Survey Atlas, New York City**

New York City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene conducts an annual automated phone survey and publishes a report with neighborhood-level results on a broad range of chronic diseases and behavioral risk factors. These data are published in the Community Health Survey Atlas to measure and visualize changes in health and health disparities.

### **The Center for Disease Control's REACH program**

The Center for Disease Control's REACH program (Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health) is a great example of health centers and communities proactively eliminating racial and health disparities by using "community-based, participatory approaches to identify, develop, and disseminate effective strategies for addressing health disparities" ([www.cdc.gov/reach/about.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/reach/about.htm)). Massachusetts has four REACH communities: Boston Public Health Commission; Center for Community Health, Education & Research in Dorchester; Children's Hospital Corporation in Boston; and the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, Inc. in Lawrence. The Dorchester program works with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to capture diabetes data on diabetes incidence among minority ethnic groups, particularly Haitians.

### **Coalition for a Livable Future, Portland, OR**

The Coalition for a Livable Future in Portland, Oregon developed their Regional Equity Atlas to map and track indicators of equity and inform the public and policy makers. This has resulted in the passage of a bond measure to create more parks and open space that targeted a portion for the funds for low-income neighborhoods. The Atlas also contributed to the creation of an "affordable housing set-aside" in Portland's urban renewal areas.

### **Healthy NOLA, New Orleans, LA**

Funded by the Kresge Foundation, Healthy NOLA is a user-friendly open access data mapping website for neighborhoods in New Orleans intended to advance policy, infrastructure development, and bring together grassroots initiatives and top decision-makers. This data mapping tool layers data from the U.S. Census, Louisiana's Department of Health and Hospitals (collected at the tract level), Louisiana's Department of Health and Human Services – Vital Statistics (collected at the tract level), the federal Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (collected at city level), and other sources.

### **Community Health Care Network and the Boriken Health Center, New York City**

The Community Health Care Network and the Boriken Health Center neighborhood health centers in New York City serve as an excellent example of primary care centers that offer social services and provide a link to community organizations. These facilities also provide an onsite pharmacy operated by a private pharmacist, onsite laboratory, geriatrics, dental care and surgery, dermatology, podiatry, gynecology, and social work and transportation services.

### **Community HealthCorps**

Community HealthCorps is an AmeriCorps program operating through Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS) to help serve Community Health Centers located across New York State. AmeriCorps members perform outreach to individuals with no regular primary care provider to increase access to health care; provide health education on the importance of primary and preventative health, and generate volunteers to support and expand community health center service capacity.

# Implementation Opportunity

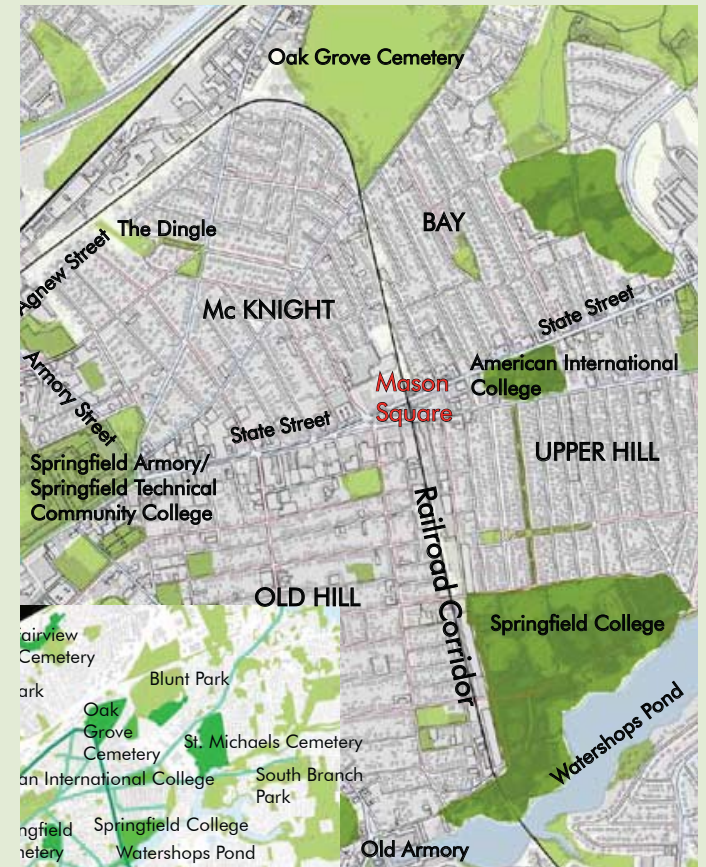
## Highland Division Rail Trail

The opportunity to develop a walking and biking trail along the abandoned Highland Division rail line was identified by residents at community meetings in District 2 and District 3. The Highland Division Rail Trail has a long and well-studied history. In 2000, the City of Springfield received a grant to study and design a 1.7 mile section of the trail to the south of District 2 that extended from Watershops Pond to the City's boundary with East Longmeadow. The study included a public engagement process that continued through 2002. Just to the north of District 2, the McKnight Neighborhood Council is actively working to promote the development of a hiking and biking trail along a two mile segment of the rail line through that neighborhood, including grant applications, trail cleanups, and a planning effort in coordination with UMass Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning students. Ultimately, the trail could link neighborhoods throughout Springfield (including McKnight, Bay, Old Hill, Upper Hill, Forest Park, and East Forest Park), connect to the Riverwalk, and even to areas beyond the city.

The development of a trail along the rail corridor in District 2 is an important implementation opportunity for a number

of reasons. First, such a trail would be a component of a larger interconnected system that helps to connect District 2 to other neighborhoods, and helps to connect destinations throughout the City. A trail could provide a unifying link along the proposed Educational Corridor (see the "Collaborative Partnership Between Colleges and Neighborhoods" initiative for more information about the Educational Corridor) and connect Springfield College, American International College and other institutions and activities (for example, Springfield College students could use the trail to access the Mason Square Farmers Market which is currently operated directly adjacent to the rail line). A trail could function as an amenity that enhances surrounding development, providing recreation and mobility options for those who live, work, or play nearby.

Currently, different sections of the rail line in District 2 are under a variety of public and private ownerships, but a fuel line easement along the portion of the potential route located in District 2 has prevented development across the corridor that would impede the creation of a trail. The rebuilding process provides a chance to revisit the rail-trail concept in coordination with other redevelopment efforts.



"Designing the Arc of Recreation" - University of Massachusetts, Amherst Department of Landscape Architecture & Regional Planning

## Implementation Opportunity

### Mill River Trail

District 2 residents have identified the Mill River as an important asset and an opportunity to enhance the neighborhood as part of the rebuilding process. Natural areas along the Mill River suffered tree damage in the tornado, and sections of the river bank are collapsing or in disrepair. Other sections of the Mill River are largely hidden behind existing buildings or below steep slopes. The rebuilding process presents an opportunity to embrace the river and create an amenity that provides recreation and mobility options. Improvements along the Mill River can link and strengthen the parks and activity centers along the river's course, and provide benefit to adjacent residential areas. Possibilities for the Mill River include:

A new trail connection along the Mill River could be an important component of a newly revitalized neighborhood activity center just to the west of the Watershops Armory building. A trail and newly embraced waterfront along Rifle Street could provide an attractive front door for a revitalized commercial center. The trail could link on the western end to the recently improved Johnny Appleseed Park. Along the path, there are opportunities for reforestation and river bank restoration. These restorative efforts could be implemented in conjunction with improvements that provide access to the waterfront and include interpretive educational opportunities about the natural systems in the area. There are also a number of unique, historic commercial building along the Mill River that currently turn their backs to the river, but could incorporate it as an asset to create attractive, interesting public spaces.

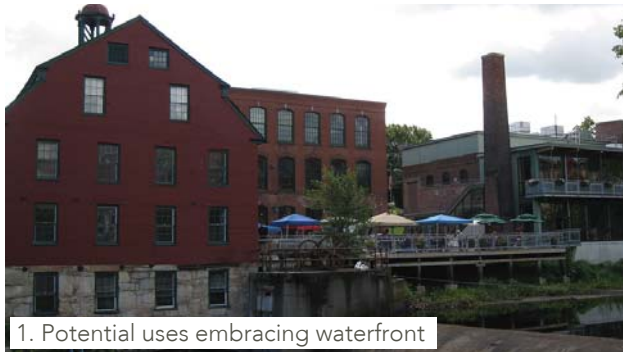


Existing Conditions



Proposed Conditions





1. Potential uses embracing waterfront



1. Existing Businesses



4. Johnny Appleseed Park

1. Adjacent businesses can embrace the river as a unique amenity
2. A new trail could connect the Watershops Armory area to Johnny Appleseed Park
3. Reforestation opportunities
4. Recreation and interpretive education opportunities



1. Watershops Area

## Major Move 6

# Build Community Capacity

Building community capacity requires developing the programs, partnerships, and systems that enable the community to continue making progress toward its vision even after the planning process is complete. This Major Move recommends strategies to identify needs and target resources to serve the community more effectively. This includes increasing partnership and collaboration between the City, neighborhood groups, service organizations, the faith community, and other stakeholders, and developing a formal framework to coordinate efforts and sustain momentum. The community pride, tight-knit neighborhoods, and renewed engagement of residents in District 2 are important assets for the rebuilding process. Building community capacity also includes initiatives to capitalize on and sustain this strong public engagement.

### *Key Initiatives*

## Capitalizing on an Engaged Community

- Promotion of and dedication to volunteerism
- Create a disaster response timeline and utilize neighborhood-based volunteers
- Enhance youth engagement and leadership opportunities

## Coordination of Community Services

- Establish a community resource network
- Develop and implement a coordinated strategy for community services
- Hold regular fairs to promote local organizations and services



## Build Community Capacity

# Capitalizing on an Engaged Community



The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.

- **Promotion of and dedication to volunteerism**
- **Create a disaster response timeline and utilize neighborhood-based volunteers**
- **Enhance youth engagement and leadership opportunities**

Since the June 1st tornado, residents and organizations have pulled together to mobilize volunteers, equipment, funds, and other resources to respond to the disaster and rebuild. District 2 residents in particular have identified the tight-knit community networks and community pride as sources of strength in their neighborhoods and important components of a successful rebuilding process. The rebuilding process presents a unique opportunity to capitalize on this renewed community spirit and civic engagement and a chance to support the residents, organizations, and institutions who have stepped forward to build a better community. The rebuilding process also presents a vital opportunity to apply the experiences and lessons learned by agencies and organizations to rebuild a more resilient and prepared community. This initiative identifies strategies to build on the momentum of tornado relief efforts to institutionalize a broader dedication to volunteerism and civic engagement. This initiative also identifies strategies for communication and resource mobilization in case of future emergencies or disasters.

### Promotion of and dedication to volunteerism

Many individuals have made personal donations of their time, money, and hard work following the tornado, and District 2 residents have identified a desire to continue sharing that generous community spirit to improve their neighborhoods for the rebuilding process and beyond. People who volunteer are more likely to be more engaged in their community in other ways such as voting or attending public meetings. Capturing and sustaining the District's spirit of volunteerism requires developing a successful framework to organize, focus, and maximize the impact of



volunteer efforts. Some of the infrastructure for a concerted volunteer effort is already in place. With their online volunteer database, the United Way of Pioneer Valley (UWPV) served as a hub for volunteer efforts during the tornado response and cleanup. They continue to serve as a clearinghouse for potential volunteers and organizations seeking volunteers in Springfield.

Springfield is already a 'Cities of Service' coalition member, a collection of cities nationwide "who have committed to work together to engage citizens to address critical city needs through impact volunteerism." Impact volunteering refers to volunteer strategies that target community needs, use best practices to set clear outcomes, produce measurable results, and gauge progress. Cities of Service members that have successfully created volunteer service plans and launched volunteer initiatives in key areas such as education and youth, health, neighborhood revitalization, safety, sustainability, and other areas are eligible for a Cities of Service Leadership Grant of \$200,000 to support volunteer efforts and potentially hire a Chief Service Officer to lead and implement volunteer initiatives. There is no better time than the rebuilding process to renew focus

on this volunteer initiative to organize and focus volunteer efforts in District 2. (See Precedents for examples of Cities of Service.)

### **Create a disaster response timeline and utilize neighborhood-based volunteers**

Springfield's Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), and the Springfield Community Together Long Term Recovery Group (SCTLTRG) members had critical roles in the tornado response and relief. The Office of Emergency Preparedness is responsible for the creation and implementation of the City's Emergency Response Plan. Health and Human Services is in charge of emergency shelters when public health is impacted, as was the case with the tornado. Health and Human Services led the Medical Reserve Corps, a cadre of medically trained volunteers for disaster response, which staffed the shelter day and night and delivered health services to shelter residents. The LEPC is comprised of representatives from city government, industry, area hospitals, faith-based organizations, public health and others. This coalition focuses on emergency preparedness and response. The SCTLTRG is a coalition of

groups that worked closely after the tornado to provide shelter and other resources and services to residents. SCTLTRG members include United Way of Pioneer Valley, the federal and state emergency management agencies, Red Cross, Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, and others. This group is exploring how to employ the knowledge and experience gained during the tornado response by establishing strategies and processes in case of other emergencies.

Despite their importance, OEP, HHS, LEPC, and SCTLTRG have not yet coordinated their efforts and responsibilities though SCTLTRG and Health and Human Services have both expressed the need for better communication and/or coordination with all groups engaged in response during and after a disaster. This initiative recommends that these organizations collaborate to create a response and relief timeline that outlines the role each organization will play at each point in the process. This timeline would also define responsibilities and expectations and the methods for the transition of responsibilities and communication. These organizations should also consider how to best coordinate and employ the Medical Reserve Corps and how to best utilize

neighborhood councils and residents for local relief efforts.

### **Enhance youth engagement and leadership opportunities**

District 2 neighborhoods have a large youth and young adult population and a number of organizations that focus on youth activities and development. Over 30 percent of the residents in Six Corners, Old Hill, and northern Forest Park are under 18 and roughly 24 percent of the population in Upper Hill is under 18. Stakeholders and residents in District 2 repeatedly pointed out the importance and need for youth development. One opportunity for youth development that emerged in stakeholder and community meetings is reactivating the Mayor's Springfield Youth Commission to tackle issues with a broad, coordinated effort and address issues that are particularly important to youth in District 2 including educational attainment, gangs, and skill development. Focusing on youth development also brings together many seemingly disparate groups and provides a forum in which to communicate and work towards a common goal.

For this Youth Commission to truly serve the young people of Springfield, the existing Youth Commission Ordinance should be amended to allow youth under 18 to serve on the Commission (the Massachusetts Governor's Statewide Youth

Council is comprised of 14-20 year olds, while Boston's Youth Council is made up of high school juniors and seniors). Once in operation, the Youth Commission could begin to chart a course for Springfield's youth through the development of meaningful goals and solutions as part of a youth master plan.

A youth master plan assesses current resources and needs and develops a vision for the future, measurable goals, and a roadmap to achieve those goals. Involving youth in the creation of this plan and the decision-making process helps ensure programs and policies are designed in a way that truly impacts young people. A youth master plan coordinates the services, support, and opportunities youth need, resulting in more effective service delivery, resource alignment, and the elimination of barriers to services and opportunities. Engaging youth in the planning process can also transform how the community perceives, works with, and works for young people. When youth volunteer, they are more likely to be involved in other civic engagements such as voting and organizing volunteer activities.<sup>1</sup> Fostering youth engagement through the Springfield Youth Commission and a youth master plan are effective means to ensure civic engagement and volunteerism now and in the future.

<sup>1</sup> Corporation for National and Community Service and the National Conference on Citizenship. Civic Life in America: Key Findings on the Civic Health of the Nation, Washington, DC. 2010, September. Retrieved from [www.nationalservice.gov/about/role\\_impact/performance\\_research.asp#CHA\\_2010](http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/role_impact/performance_research.asp#CHA_2010).



### Partners

- Springfield Community Together Long Term Recovery Group (SCTLTRG) members including United Way of Pioneer Valley, federal and state emergency management agencies, Red Cross, Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, City of Springfield Office of Housing, Episcopal Diocese of Western Mass, HAP Housing, Rebuilding Together Springfield, and Springfield Christian Ministries Tornado Relief
- Mayor’s Office
- Springfield’s Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP)
- Springfield’s Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- Springfield Police Department
- Medical Reserve Corps
- Faith-based institutions
- Council of Churches
- Youth-related organizations such as ROCA, Boys & Girls Club, Springfield Youth Network, Gardening the Community, and others
- Organizations with youth programs such as the YMCA of Greater Springfield, Springfield Parks and Recreation Department, and others

### Resource Needs

- Capacity to develop a volunteer service plan and organize targeted volunteer initiatives

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- United Way’s volunteer webpage
- Cities of Service grants
- Existing facilities for resource donation bank such as churches and other faith-based facilities vacant offices or warehouses, schools, and community centers
- AmeriCorps
- National League of Cities’ Creating a Youth Master Plan: Action Kit for Municipal Leaders to guide cities in creating a youth master plan

### Action Steps

- Develop a volunteer service plan
- Launch impact volunteer initiatives in key areas
- Identify a feasible location for a resource donation bank
- Evaluate successes and challenges of disaster response to the 2011 tornado
- Create a future disaster response and relief timeline that outlines the role that each organization will play at each point in the process
- Amend the Youth Commission Ordinance to allow youth under age 18 to serve on the Commission
- Charge the Youth Commission to develop goals and solutions for Springfield’s youth through a Youth Master Plan

### Priority



### Location

- Volunteer efforts are District-wide. A number of existing facilities in the District could potentially accommodate a resource donation bank.

### Precedents

#### Youth Master Plans

Several Youth Plans can serve as a template for developing a Youth Plan for Springfield: Thousand Oak, California’s Youth Master Plan; Pleasanton, California’s Youth Master Plan; Nashville, Tennessee’s Child and Youth Master Plan; Grand Rapids, Michigan; and Berkeley, California

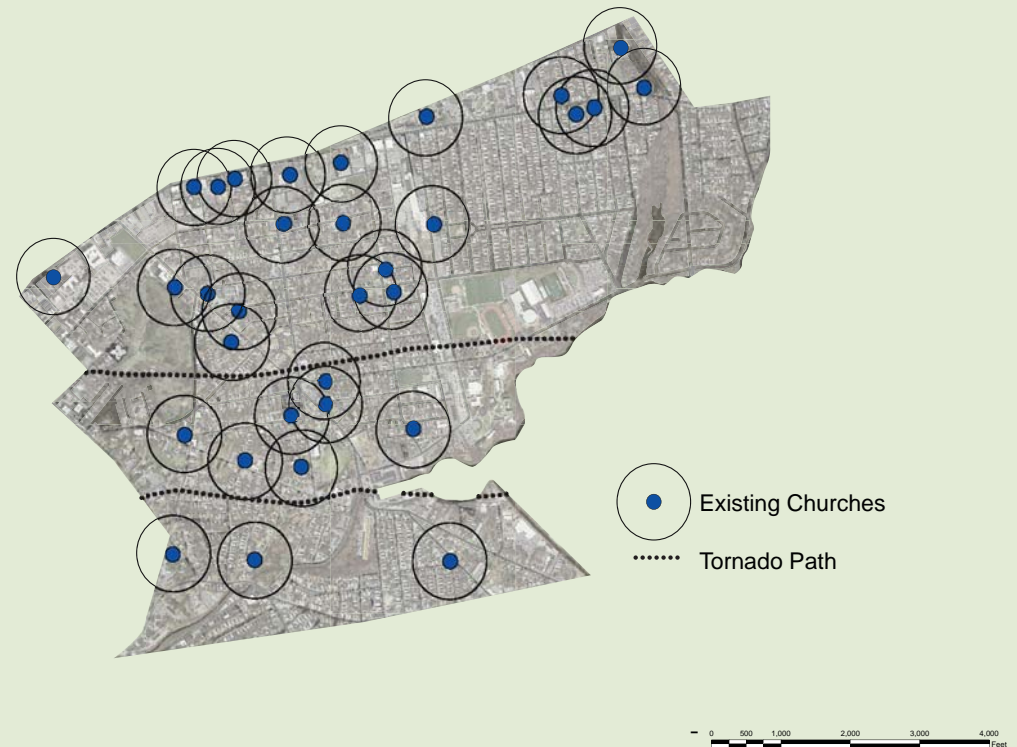
#### Cities of Service

Founded in New York City on September 10, 2009 by 17 mayors from cities around the nation, Cities of Service is a bipartisan coalition of mayors who have committed to work together to lead a multi-year effort to expand impact volunteerism. Impact Nashville is one such initiative making an impact in Nashville, Tennessee ([impactnashville.net](http://impactnashville.net)).

# Implementation Opportunity

## Churches as Anchors

There are over 25 faith based institutions and houses of worship in District 2. Many offer important services to the neighborhood, including counseling, food pantries, and fitness programs. Each District 2 church could adopt the four square blocks surrounding or four blocks near their buildings and perform regular physical improvements such as cleanups and assistance with yard or home maintenance. A church's congregation can provide the volunteers, solicit donations, and work with their community network for clean-up efforts. Churches could also activate the public spaces (vacant lots, parking lots, etc.) around their buildings and program them with religious as well as secular activities that would attract people (Jazz concerts, youth choirs, etc.). This grassroots, faith-based revitalization would create a patchwork quilt of improvement areas that builds the physical and social assets of the community. Two District 2 churches, Revival Time Evangelical Church and New Hope Pentecostal Church, are already planning on improving their immediate surroundings through the development of new community facilities. In coordination with the City, local housing and service organizations, and each other, these churches could serve as models for a "Churches as Anchors" approach.







## Build Community Capacity

# Coordination of Community Services



The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.

- **Establish a community resource network**
- **Develop and implement a coordinated strategy for community services**
- **Hold regular fairs to promote local organizations and services**

There are numerous examples of successful partnerships in Springfield that serve residents and address community needs on a variety of issues. Housing, education, child and family, health, and youth organizations have worked together on the Cherish Every Child initiative, the federal Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant project, the BEST Oral Health Program, Live Well Springfield initiatives, and other projects and programs. Though many local organizations are successful in accomplishing their mission, there is often a disconnect between different organizations and an unintentional overlap and duplication of programs. This initiative does not call for a unification or consolidation of services. Rather, this initiative focuses on intentional coordination of efforts in order to seek funding and share resources, reduce unintended duplication of services, better assess capacity and identify gaps, work together to fill those gaps with measured goals, and track progress. While organizations will benefit from coordinating with one another, it is the residents and community of District 2 that will benefit the most from coordinated service delivery.

### Establish a community resource network

An immediate tangible step to connect the various District 2 organizations (such as those outlined in the Partnerships/Stakeholders section), identify capacity and gaps in local services, and coordinate efficient service delivery is the establishment of a resource network that serves as an information hub for non-profits and residents. A resource network would perform three main duties for residents and organizations: organizing resource sharing and networking opportunities, maintaining an online community and organizational events calendar, and maintaining an online directory of organizations. This proposed online directory would combine and expand on



previous directories such as United Way’s MASS 2-1-1 call-in directory of community services, the Council of Churches of Greater Springfield’s online church directory, FutureWorks workforce development directory, and others. In addition to contact information, this directory could provide additional information useful for non-profit resource sharing such as public meeting space, large kitchens, tools, equipment, and more. United Way of Pioneer Valley already provides an ongoing online clearinghouse for volunteer opportunities and could coordinate with and link to a new resource network. There are successful models of community resource networks that can act as templates for Springfield. The Community Nonprofit Resource Group (CNRG) in Portland, Oregon is a great example of how residents and organizations can learn, share, and connect with each other in meaningful ways through a community resource network.

### **Develop and implement a coordinated strategy for community services**

Many organizations exist in District 2 to improve quality of life and expand opportunities for residents, and many successful partnerships have been created to help overcome challenges and leverage shared resources for greater impact. Though each community organization has a unique role and mission, an overlap of services

and competition for resources often exists, with the long-term success of these groups often contingent on limited funding from finite grants. A community resource network (as described above) connects organizations in a variety of ways, but does not fully address the challenge of coordinating services in District 2. What is needed is a coordinated and comprehensive strategy to connect and align organizations, programs, and initiatives under a shared set of goals for the area. As one stakeholder phrased it, ‘many organizations are paddling the same direction in separate boats; wouldn’t it be great if we were all paddling in the same boat?’

A coordinated strategy for community services builds capacity, addresses community needs, and improves the efficiency and effectiveness of community services by:

- Evaluating the needs, assets, and challenges of the community to identify service gaps and inefficient redundancies
- Developing shared goals and solutions informed by data, best practices, and innovative ideas
- Coordinating programs, partners, and facilities to leverage scarce resources
- Connecting and integrating organizations and initiatives across sectors
- Aligning funding sources
- Bringing decision-makers and organizations

together in a formal and organized way to achieve progress

Such a strategy cannot be developed or implemented in a vacuum and will require leadership, commitment, and patience to successfully integrate the many diverse interests, perspectives, and service missions. This leadership could be provided through a formal and broad-based coalition of existing organizations who already partner to develop shared goals and initiatives. Other communities have also successfully developed separate umbrella organizations whose purpose is to connect the dots between existing groups and efforts. The Citywide Organizational #2 recommendation describes how a coalescing body could coordinate the efforts of government, nonprofit organizations, and the business community. While these organizations are challenging to create, fund, and operate, they strongly institutionalize partnerships, shared resources, and coordinated action in the community. The Center for Collaborative Change (CCC) in Newark, NJ serves as a model example (see Precedents for more information).

While the citywide section of the plan recommends establishing a body that coalesces community organizations, the need is particularly acute in District 2. Many organizations, groups, and institutions are based in or work within

District 2 neighborhoods. The challenges faced by District 2 residents, including the high rate of poverty, low educational attainment, and public health concerns, makes the coordination of efforts within District 2 that much more critical.

### **Hold regular fairs to promote local organizations and services**

Many organizations and institutions work within District 2 neighborhoods. While this presents many benefits and opportunities for residents and organizations both, there is often a lack of connection. There was a recurring sentiment at community and stakeholder meetings that organizations sometimes do not know what others are doing, organizations have difficulty promoting and getting the word out about their services or work, and that residents are often not aware of all of the organizations, services, resources, and opportunities for involvement available to them.

Holding regular fairs at which members of the local community would have the opportunity to learn about resources and organizations of all types would help alleviate this disconnect. Springfield's Rebuild Fair sponsored by Mass Mutual after the tornado serves as an example. A community resource fair could coordinate with already existing annual events such as the Annual National Night Out or J.C. Williams Community Center's Street Fest. This effort could be led by partnerships between neighborhood councils, the Dunbar Community Center, United Way of Pioneer Valley, area churches, or other organizations.

### **Partnerships/Stakeholders**

- United Way of Pioneer Valley
- State Street Alliance
- Neighborhood Councils
- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Neighborhood Services
- Faith-based community organizations including neighborhood churches and the Council of Churches of Greater Springfield
- Organizations in education and youth development such as Gardening the Community, partners in the Cherish Every Child initiative, Head Start locations, Springfield Public School System, Springfield College, American International College, Massachusetts Career Development Institute, Commonwealth Academy, Springfield Technical Community College (STCC), and others
- Housing organizations such as Springfield Development Services Division–Office of Housing, Springfield Housing Authority, HAP Housing, Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services, Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity, private developers, and others
- Human service organizations such as Dunbar Community Center, Martin Luther King Family Services, ROCA, Springfield Youth Network, NAACP Springfield, Urban League of Springfield, YouthBuild, Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Springfield Forward, Phoenix House of Springfield Center, and Springfield Department of Health and Human Services, ROCA, and others

- Health and wellness organizations such as Mason Square Health Task Force, Partners for a Healthier Community, the Springfield Public Health Council, all Live Well Springfield member organizations, Mason Square Neighborhood Health Center, Behavioral Health Network, Baystate Health, YMCA of Greater Springfield, Dunbar Community & Family Center, Springfield Health and Human Services, Martin Luther King Family Services, Phoenix House of Springfield Center, and others

### **Resource Needs**

- Financial and staff support to establish umbrella coordination organization
- Financial and staff support to develop a community resource network
- Locations to host combined health and social service program access points

### **Potential Resource Opportunities**

- Dunbar Community Center
- The future S.R. Williams Resource Center
- United Way's MASS 2-1-1 call-in directory of community services
- Springfield's CTY Blackboard Connect service
- United Way of Pioneer Valley's volunteer webpage
- Third Sector New England Foundation
- AmeriCorps program, including Springfield College's AmeriCorps program
- Living Cities' Integration Initiative grants
- Community Foundation of Western Mass
- Davis Foundation

## Action Steps

*Establish a community resource network*

- Identify lead organization, such as UWPV, to lead resource network development
- Compile and expand existing community resource directories into a single online community resource network

*Develop and implement a coordinated strategy for community services*

- Identify an organizational structure (determine roles and responsibilities and how the group operates, communicates, and makes decisions) that builds on existing assets in Springfield to develop an effective public-private coalition to coordinate community services
- Identify participating stakeholders who can support the organization's work to assess the needs, assets, and issues of the community
- Identify funding to support the development of a coordinated strategy and/or the development of an umbrella coordinating organization
- Develop goals and solutions informed by data, best practices, and innovative ideas as part of a coordinated strategy

*Hold regular fairs to promote local organizations and services*

- Identify organizations to lead the development of a community resource fair
- Identify existing events to which a fair may be added to promote community services to residents

## Location

A resource network and coordinating organization would apply District (and city) wide. Community fairs could be integrated at existing events within the District where there is strong attendance from District residents

## Priority

Supportive Critical

## Precedents

### **The Center for Collaborative Change, Newark, NJ**

The Center for Collaborative Change (CCC) in Newark, NJ is an organization that connects people, ideas and resources in Newark, New Jersey. CCC works through engagement, planning and collaboration by leading specific initiatives, conducting community needs and assets assessments, developing a web-based directory and information-exchange, creating a program to link corporate sector with nonprofits, and establishing a 'social innovation incubator' to conduct research that informs initiative design. CCC is also exploring becoming involved in CDBG grants administration

### **The Coalition for a Livable Future (CLF), Portland, OR**

The CLF unites over 100 diverse organizations and hundreds of individuals to promote healthy

and sustainable communities in the Portland, Oregon area through research, policy advocacy, and public education efforts

### **The Neighborhood Partnership Network (NPN), New Orleans, LA**

NPN was established after the Hurricane Katrina to facilitate neighborhood collaboration, increase access to government and information, and strengthen the voices of individuals and communities across New Orleans

### **Community Nonprofit Resource Group (CNRG), Portland, OR**

CNRG connects people to and within the nonprofit community by providing a website and email listserv with information on events, jobs and internship opportunities, nonprofit news, training, and volunteer opportunities. The organization offers quarterly low-cost trainings and monthly networking events

