



# District 3

EAST FOREST PARK, SIXTEEN ACRES

FEBRUARY 28, 2012

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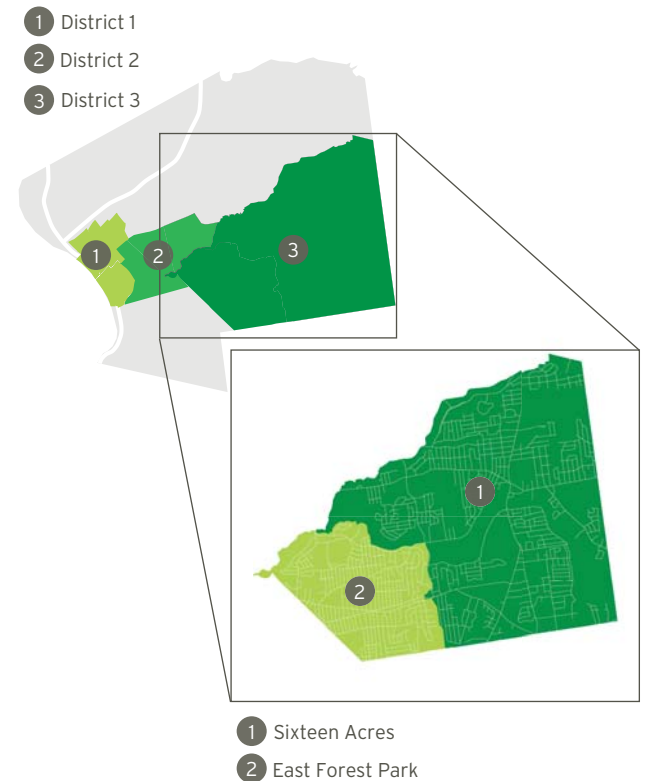
# Introduction

Planning District 3 is comprised of the East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres neighborhoods, relatively stable areas with a strong sense of neighborhood pride. There were very consistent themes that emerged from the residents and stakeholders of this community as part of the shared dialogue that shaped the development of this rebuilding plan. There was a particular sense of loss for the once beautiful and rich tree canopy that blanketed the area. While home rebuilding has long since begun in this district, it will take generations for newly planted trees to replace what was lost. While residents value their strong neighborhoods, quality homes, and natural resources, they also identified better connectivity between these amenities and improved support for healthy, vital neighborhoods as critical components for a better future. Within District 3, the rebuilding process presents opportunities to strengthen the physical and social connections.

The recommendations that follow come from voices heard in the community meetings, in many smaller and targeted stakeholder meetings, from the online social media site, and from earlier plans created before the storm. Residents are ready to turn the devastation of the tornado into an opportunity to enhance their neighborhoods by way of better homes, schools, parks, greenways, trails and other community assets.

Residents of District 3 have demonstrated sturdiness and resolve in response to the tornado. It is this same work ethic and steadfastness that were the early foundation of these neighborhoods that will also fulfill their desire to create an even stronger future.

For now, the destruction to schools, parks, homes and trees in East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres may still seem overwhelming. This is offset by the sound of hammers in the neighborhood and the newly revealed views of parks and water features long hidden. As in the other neighborhoods, both residents and city leaders must remain steadfast in their commitment to implementing the plan. There is plenty to do; all should be engaged – from the oldest who remember the early days of this community to the youngest whose future will be shaped by this rebuilding effort.



The Rebuild Springfield Plan includes both Citywide recommendations that will have an impact across Springfield, as well as District level recommendations for the specific neighborhoods impacted by June 1st tornado. District 3 includes the neighborhoods of East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres

# Community-Driven Process

Over the past few months, hundreds of ideas were shared by residents and stakeholders – at public workshops, online forums, stakeholder interviews, advisory committee meetings, and numerous conversations throughout the community. This input forms the basis of the vision, guiding principles and initiatives that follow.



This word cloud represents the ideas and input from public meetings. The larger the word, the more often it was mentioned. Credit: wordle.net

## Community Meetings

Three community meetings were held in District 3 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. Residents also provided valuable perspectives and insights through the emails and letters shared with the planning team.

## 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 3 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

Pursue a renewed dedication to a connected and family-friendly community. Rejuvenate our natural character, craft well-designed and efficient homes, and support strong neighborhoods that are anchored by schools, parks, and community facilities of the highest quality.



# Guiding Principles

## Guiding Principle 1

Restore and enhance the neighborhoods' **natural resources**, including trees, water bodies, open spaces, and wildlife, and recognize these resources as amenities that enhance value, improve health, and provide recreational opportunities.

## Guiding Principle 2

Promote the **family-friendly** character of the community through safe, attractive neighborhoods that feature good jobs, strong community organizations, quality schools, social gathering spaces, and activities for all ages.

## Guiding Principle 3

Focus on **schools, parks, and public facilities** as community anchors that are integrated into the neighborhood and coordinated to provide efficient, effective services.

## Guiding Principle 4

Improve **mobility** within and between neighborhoods through efforts to reduce congestion, calm traffic, provide bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, explore trail opportunities, and enhance streetscapes that support local businesses.

## Guiding Principle 5





Strengthen neighborhoods by rebuilding, repairing, and maintaining well-designed **homes** that are efficient, durable, and comfortable.

## 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 3 residents and stakeholders, and paint a picture of the future to which they aspire. From this compelling vision, four Major Moves emerged – four broad actions that will transform District 3 neighborhoods if implemented successfully. Each major move is supported by several Key Initiatives. For each Initiative, a brief description is provided, along with suggestions for 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.

Key Initiative	Priority (1-5)	Domain					
		 Cultural	 Physical	 Economic	 Organizational	 Educational	 Social
<b>Restore and Enhance Natural Resources</b>							
Reforestation	5		✓	✓			✓
Enhanced Use of Parks and Open Space	4	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
<b>Rebuild Homes to Strengthen Neighborhoods</b>							
Quality Homes	5		✓	✓		✓	
Aggressive Maintenance and Repair Assistance	2		✓	✓			
<b>Maximize Impact of Schools and Community Facilities</b>							
Quality Schools as Community Anchors	4	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
<b>Connect Communities</b>							
Complete Streets	3		✓	✓			
Youth and Senior Activities	2	✓			✓	✓	✓
Communication and Collaboration	3				✓	✓	✓

Restore and Enhance Natural Resources

Rebuild Homes to Strengthen Neighborhoods

Maximize Impact of Schools and Community Facilities

Connect Communities

# District Overview Map



## Implementation Opportunities

### Enhanced Use of Parks, Waterfronts, and Interconnected Greenways

- Access to Watershops Pond

### Youth and Senior Activities

- Camp Wilder

### Quality Schools as Community Anchors

- Branch Library at Dryden Memorial School
- Three Schools as Community Hub

### Complete Streets

- South Branch Parkway
- Plumtree Road

## Major Move 1

# Restore and Enhance Natural Resources

This Major Move is based on recognition of the incredible natural resources in East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres, and the critical need to restore the tornado-impacted water bodies, parks, forested natural areas, neighborhood tree canopies, and wildlife. Toward that end, reforestation efforts can re-establish the natural beauty of the area while supporting more resilient and sustainable natural systems. Building upon the existing natural assets in District 3, the development of an interconnected greenway and trail network can provide recreational opportunities, increase mobility options, provide environmental benefits, and function as an amenity for surrounding neighborhoods and activity centers. As District 3 recovers and rebuilds from the tornado, there is an opportunity to take advantage of residents' renewed awareness and appreciation of the area's natural amenities to get the most out of parks, waterfronts, recreation facilities, and activities.

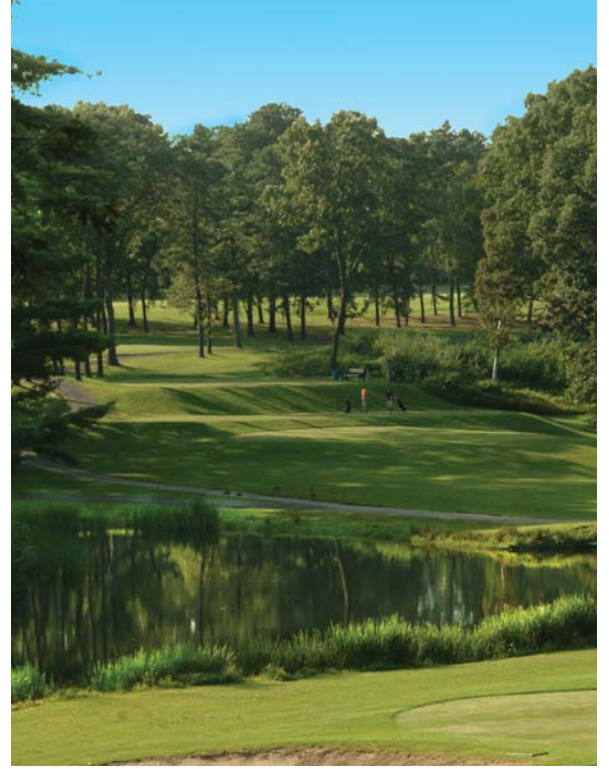
### *Key Initiatives*

## Reforestation

- Reforestation plan
- Outreach, information, and resources for residents
- Creative replanting through volunteers and other resources

## Enhanced Use of Parks and Open Spaces

- Enhance parks and recreation areas through a combination of design, facility, and programming improvements
- Improve waterfront access and provide water-based recreation options
- Develop an interconnected greenway and trail network



## Restore and Enhance Natural Resources

# Reforestation



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.

- **Reforestation plan**
- **Outreach, information, and resources for residents**
- **Creative replanting through volunteers and other resources**

Springfield's legacy trees defined the lush character of many of the community's neighborhoods and parks. In the June 1st tornado, Springfield lost a staggering 10,000 trees (with many more lost in the October snowstorm). Losing that historic canopy damaged the appearance, the performance, and the memory of Springfield. The tree canopy provided a measurable benefit to the community. A recent Forest Service study calculated the lost ecosystem benefits to total approximately \$3 million per year. Stormwater runoff, carbon storage, songbird habitat loss, noise, and temperature were all negatively impacted.

The East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres neighborhoods were particularly impacted by this loss and are keen on seeing that living legacy restored. Challenges include the loss of extensive street trees and natural area forestation, the protection of key viewsheds to take advantage of new vistas to particular public areas, and the difficulty of overcoming right-of-entry obstacles for remaining trees.

Fortunately, the issue of reforestation has been taken on, and a plan and reforestation efforts are underway. That work will identify the optimal species mix, call for removal of invasive species, and lay out the path for establishing a healthy, resilient, and iconic tree canopy. More than bringing back the beautiful green tree infrastructure, this initiative will support the habitat and ecological benefits called for in community meetings and critical to establishing a strong natural system and character. The consistent community support for this initiative serves to reinforce the work that is in place, and underscores the importance of promptly seeing it through.



## Reforestation plan

Replanting lost trees cannot happen overnight, and will ultimately require the contributions and coordination of a myriad of volunteers, neighborhood groups, local organizations, and state and federal partners, supported by a variety of funding and partnership opportunities. The City should continue reforestation planning efforts including:

- Removal of debris
- A prioritized list of replanting projects and initiatives to restore the tree canopy in tornado-affected areas
- Restoration of the natural beauty of the area while integrating resilient tree species
- Identifying strategic locations to preserve viewsheds through the tree canopy (including views of Watershops Pond)

## Outreach, information, and resources for residents

The task of replanting is enormous, and successful reforestation will rely on the combined contributions of the many residents who recognize the value of reforestation and have been energized in the aftermath of the tornado to take an active part in the recovery of this important natural asset. This includes

- Reforestation Focus Areas
- Parks
- ..... Tornado Path



the replanting of trees on private property. The City can assist residents by providing outreach, information, and other resources.

The City's Regreen Springfield website ([regreenspringfield.com](http://regreenspringfield.com)) is an excellent tool that is already being utilized to assist in these efforts. Regreen Springfield includes information to help property owners replant on their property, including assistance on selecting the appropriate location, type, and size of tree to plant, as well as guidance on how to plant and care for trees over time. Regreen Springfield includes information on ongoing replanting efforts, opportunities for partnerships and donations, and information on the measurable benefits of replanting. The website also includes a form to request a tree to assist in City's efforts to prioritize replanting needs. Finally, the Regreen Springfield website includes an online mapping tool that allows viewers to track replanting efforts and see the number and location of replanted trees throughout the City, with information for each tree including the planting date, species, and donor.

### **Creative replanting through volunteers and other resources**

Successful replanting will require identifying creative resources and partnerships to support and supplement the City's reforestation efforts. State and federal grants, private trusts, and corporate donations are examples of outside

resources that can be deployed to assist with reforestation. Partnerships with local neighborhood groups and organizations such as Springfield Arbor Allies can help to capitalize on the sweat equity and volunteers derived from strong neighborhood support for reforestation. Private companies are potential sources for financial or material donations. The City has also partnered with the UMASS Landscape, Nursery, and Urban Forestry Program to provide student assistance for woodland management.

As an example of these creative partnerships, in October the donation of \$10,000 from NASCAR allowed the city to purchase 40 trees from Sixteen Acres Garden Center, which provided the trees at a discount. Springfield Arbor Allies and many neighbors came out to provide labor for the replanting efforts.

### **Partnerships / Stakeholders**

- Springfield City Forester
- Springfield Parks and Recreation Department
- Neighborhood groups and resident volunteers
- Local organizations, including Springfield Arbor Allies and Keep Springfield Beautiful
- Private nurseries, landscapers
- Private donors
- State and Federal Foresters
- Massachusetts Department of Recreation and Conservation
- USDA Forest Service
- Massachusetts Audubon Association

### **Resource Needs**

- \$6-8 million according to City estimates
- Sweat equity
- Plantings

### **Potential Resource Opportunities**

- Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Grants - USDA Forest Service, and the Massachusetts Urban and Community Forestry Program. These are 50-50 matching grants offered to municipalities and non-profit groups
- Urban Forestry Environmental Justice Pilot Grant Program - Competitive 75-25 matching grants to municipalities and non-profit organizations working in environmental justice communities in Massachusetts.
- The Jane's Trust - The trust aims to protect and enhance the natural environment and to conserve natural resources in its geographical areas of interest.
- Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust - The Trust is interested in supporting environmental projects which will have a positive impact on: protection of critical natural resources; energy conservation; public awareness of the critical environmental issues facing the region; protection of the public's health, especially in low income or minority communities.
- Heritage Tree Care Grant Program: This federally funded program offers competitive grants to communities with advanced tree care programs wishing to protect and enhance large or unique "heritage trees" located on public



property or easements.

- MASS ReLeaf Grant Program: Mass ReLeaf is a trust fund for public tree planting projects in Massachusetts. By seeking public or private funding Mass ReLeaf is able to provide matching grants to support local projects that involve a partnership in the planting and care of trees on public land. The goals of the program are to help communities purchase trees to be planted for energy conservation, screening, community gateway or parking lot enhancement, or to offset urban pollution; and to assure long-term tree survival by emphasizing proper tree selection, planting, aftercare and maintenance.
- Forest Stewardship Planning Grants for Private and Town Forestlands: This program seeks to encourage landowners to practice long-term guardianship through the development of a management plan for their woodlands. Grants are awarded to landowners and municipalities for the preparation of 10-year Forest Stewardship management plans. Grants range from \$350 to \$6,600.

### Action Steps

- Continue outreach and public information efforts to assist residents in replanting
- Continue to develop creative partnerships and resources to supplement City reforestation efforts
- Continue the outreach and relationship with Forestry interests at state and federal agencies

- Complete the City Parks reforestation planning
- Elements of the Plan should include:
  - Removal of debris
  - A prioritized list of replanting projects and initiatives in parks and natural areas to restore the tree canopy throughout tornado-affected neighborhoods.
  - Restoration of the natural beauty of the area while integrating resilient tree species.
  - Identify strategic locations to preserve viewsheds through the tree canopy.
  - In other communities, fallen wood has been harvested and milled to create furniture or other wood products. The City could identify potential small local or regional millers with whom to partner.

### Project Location

City-wide, with special emphasis in and around: Nathan Bill Park, Island Pond, South Branch Parkway / Watershops Pond, Bass Pond, Veterans Golf Course, and Camp Wilder. Also there are significant reforestation needs along Bradley Road south of Plumtree Road, along Woodland Road and along the greenway corridor west of Tinkham Road.

### Priority

Supportive

Critical

### Precedents

#### Katrina Reforestation Outreach Program

Helps landowners identify resources to reforest their land. Includes a list of programs and a planning tool. ([katrinareforestation.org](http://katrinareforestation.org))

#### Tree-mendous Maryland Program

Maryland Department of Natural Resources program that provides low-cost trees to organizations for planting on public lands and community open spaces. The program provides a list of available trees and shrubs and free delivery of trees for community orders of 10 or more trees. Using the Community Reforestation Program, development projects in Baltimore County pay for required reforestation, developers are also permitted to pay a fee in-lieu of mitigation for required reforestation. These fees are used to reforest open lands.

## Restore and Enhance Natural Resources

# Enhanced Use of Parks and Open Spaces



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.

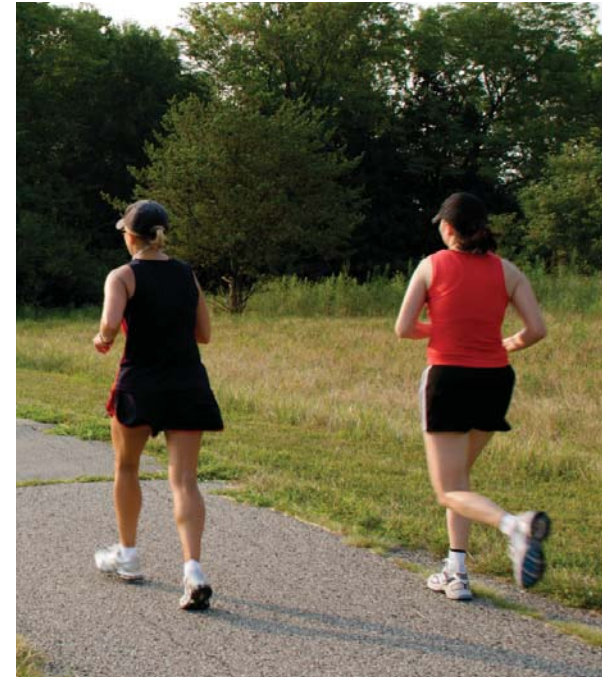
- Enhance parks and recreation areas through a combination of design, facility, and programming improvements
- Improve waterfront access and provide water-based recreation options
- Develop an interconnected greenway and trail network

East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres possess incredible natural resources that are recognized by the community as important assets and amenities for the area. These water bodies, parks, and forested natural areas are also within the locations most severely impacted by the June 1st tornado. This initiative focuses on recognizing the importance of parks, waterfronts, and interconnected greenways to the community, and identifying strategies to enhance these areas as they are restored.

### Enhance parks and recreation areas through a combination of design, facility, and programming improvements

The goal is to get the most out of parks and recreation areas through a combination of design and facility improvements to enhance existing parks, new programming for a range of users and activities, and strategic park land acquisition to increase the interconnectivity of the overall parks and green space system. Because resources are limited for expanded formal park programming, creating parks and open space areas that are more universally accessible, open to the public, and integrated into the neighborhoods is important to promote greater usage.

District 3 includes a large number of public parks and natural areas that will require cleanup and restoration as part of the tornado recovery process. Tornado-impacted areas in District 3 also include a large area of natural forested area under City ownership that are not actively used or broadly known to exist as a public amenity. The restoration of these areas presents an opportunity to explore design or facility





improvements. Even modest improvements can increase the awareness, access, and usefulness of park areas for the long-term.

Conservation areas in tornado-impacted areas present opportunities to increase awareness and exposure of District 3's incredible natural assets, and by so doing increase the impact of these assets for the surrounding neighborhoods. Conservation areas can provide educational and recreational opportunities even as they protect critical ecological systems.

Finally, partnership opportunities with schools (outdoor classrooms), arts and cultural groups (cultural festivals and other events), or other organizations can help to support a wide variety of expanded activities in parks and promote education, healthy living, and cultural enrichment.

District 3 residents identified Nathan Bill Park, Murray Park, Veterans Golf Course and surrounding natural areas, Watershops Pond, Bass Pond, Camp Wilder, and conservation areas west of Tinkham Road as public park and recreation areas in need of critical attention as part of tornado-recovery efforts. Community

meetings for the Rebuild Springfield planning process revealed strong interest in enhancing parks and recreation amenities in the District, including residents who have already begun organizing to explore and advocate for potential opportunities. The City can build on this energy and interest through targeted stakeholder meetings with residents to identify specific improvements throughout East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres.

### **Improve waterfront access and provide water-based recreation options**

The damage from the tornado revealed new views of the district's many water bodies and increased awareness of the potential opportunities to enhance public waterfronts. As the ponds and surrounding shores affected by the tornado are cleaned up and restored, these water bodies can better serve the community by improving waterfront access and integrating additional water-based recreation options. Water quality of area streams and pond is important, and there are a number of specific actions to improve water quality that can be undertaken as part of a comprehensive effort to clean up and restore water bodies in the district, including long deferred dam maintenance and repair.

Watershops Pond and Bass Pond are two key areas in District 3 that were both heavily impacted by the tornado, and have great potential to increase awareness, access, and use of the community's water resources. District 3 residents also identified Island Pond as an important community asset. Island Pond is owned by the Diocese of Springfield, which is currently undertaking efforts to rebuild Cathedral High School, and exploring the potential integration community recreation opportunities as part of that process. Access to Island Pond could potentially be incorporated as part of these efforts (See "Quality Schools as Community Anchors" initiative).

### **Develop an interconnected greenway and trail network**

East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres already have a strong network of parks and natural greenways, including designated parks, conservation areas, passive forest land on city property, and large natural areas under private and institutional ownership. An interconnected trail network extending throughout the district and potentially beyond can provide recreational opportunities, increase mobility options, link public facilities and activity centers, and function as an amenity for surrounding uses.

An interconnected system could potentially link the Watershops Pond area, Nathan Bill Park, Murray Park, Helen C. White Conservation Area,

Veterans Golf Course and surrounding natural areas, Bass Pond, Camp Wilder, Mill Pond, greenway areas along North Branch Parkway, and beyond. Partnership with institutional property owners of natural areas could enhance an interconnected system by linking to Island Pond and areas around Cathedral High School and St. Michael's Academy, as well areas north of Plumtree Road owned by Western New England University.

### **Partnerships / Stakeholders**

- Springfield Parks and Recreation Department
- Neighborhood Groups and engaged resident stakeholders
- Preschools, schools, colleges, and other educational organizations
- Arts and cultural organizations
- Running and cycling clubs
- Private and institutional property owners of large natural areas
- Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

### **Resource Needs**

- Funds for property acquisition may be necessary if critical greenway connections are identified as part of a comprehensive trail and greenway planning process
- Facility upgrades and parks infrastructure will require funding as part of the City's CIP process.

- Funds (or an endowment) for open space maintenance

### **Potential Resource Opportunities**

- Prioritization and funding of facility upgrades and park infrastructure should occur through the City's CIP process.
- Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) 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 enhancement of the City's water bodies, streams, and greenway network.
- The Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) provides resources for public infrastructure, including water, sewer, rail, and road improvements. The EDA is a potential source of funding for improvements to area dams in District 3, several of which have had long deferred maintenance and are overdue for repair or replacement.
- City bonds

### **Action Steps**

Parks:

- Continue critical cleanup efforts. Work with various local, state, and federal partners to identify funding sources for cleanup, debris removal, and reforestation.

- Identify facility and programming priorities and gaps as part of a comprehensive parks and recreation plan. Incorporate capital improvements as part of the CIP process.
- Develop partnerships with area schools, colleges, arts and cultural groups, and other organizations to enhance programming and activity in parks to supplement existing programming and enhance educational and enrichment opportunities.
- Invest in facilities necessary to promote park programming

#### Water Bodies:

- Identify key sites to provide or enhance access to water bodies, including Watershops Pond north of South Branch Parkway, Watershops Pond West of Agnes Street, Bass Pond, and Mill Pond as part of a comprehensive parks and recreation plan. Identify facilities necessary for improved water-based recreation options. Incorporate capital improvements as part of the CIP process.
- Continue to plan for and develop a funding strategy for ongoing maintenance of water bodies, including repair and upkeep of dams, and dredging of ponds.

#### Trails and Greenways:

- Identify key trail routes, connection points, and potential system gaps as part of a comprehensive trails and greenway planning process.

- Identify opportunities to extend the trail network through partnership and collaboration with institutional property owners of large natural areas.
- Conduct further public input.
- Develop final routes.
- Identify any property or right-of-way acquisition needs.
- Phase acquisition of right of way and construction.
- Identify funding sources.
- Develop final design.

#### Project Location

- An interconnected system could potentially link the Watershops Pond area, Nathan Bill Park, Murray Park, Helen C. White Conservation Area, Veterans Golf Course and surrounding natural areas, Bass Pond, Camp Wilder, Mill Pond, greenway areas along North Branch Parkway, and beyond.
- Partnership with institutional property owners of natural areas could enhance an interconnected system by linking to Island Pond and areas around Cathedral High School and St. Michael's Academy, as well areas north of Plumtree Road owned by Western New England University.

#### Priority



#### Precedent

##### Little Sugar Creek Greenway, Charlotte, NC

The Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department embarked on an ambitious update to its earlier greenways plans to not only extend and create new greenway corridors, but also improve established corridors. The Little Sugar Creek Greenway includes a 12.5 mile trail that, once completed will stretch from Charlotte's urban core to the southern, exurban end of the county near the border with South Carolina. The development of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway responds to the vital need for a more livable and sustainable community for all residents and businesses:

- Provides an amenity for recreation, culture, and history
  - Protects and preserves the environment
  - Provides an alternative mode of transportation
  - Creates new opportunities for economic development
  - Connects diverse neighborhoods of Charlotte with a corridor of open space
  - Improves a stream corridor with the worst water quality rating in North Carolina
- <http://www.planning.org/cityparks/casestudies/charlotte.htm>

# Interconnected Greenway and Trail System



Parks, greenways, and natural areas were heavily impacted by the June 1st tornado. As these areas are reforested and restored, there is an opportunity to create an interconnected trail and greenway system with enhanced recreation options that links parks, community facilities, and other destinations



1  
Connecting Parks  
and Recreation  
Areas



5  
Access to Waterfront



9  
Camp Wilder



2  
Connecting Schools



6  
Access to  
Conservation Areas



10  
Highland Division  
Rail Trail



3  
Connecting Activity  
Centers



7  
Access to Public  
Natural Areas



11  
Potential Bicycle  
Loop



4  
Connecting Other  
Neighborhoods



8  
Amenity for  
Residential  
Neighborhoods



12  
Coordination of Trail  
and Street Network

# Implementation Opportunity

## Access to Watershops Pond

The natural area between Watershops Pond and South Branch Parkway in East Forest Park is notable both for what this area lost in the tornado- significant tree cover, and what was revealed – stunning views of Watershops Pond. District 3 residents identified the need for reforestation in this location, as well as a desire to improve access to and use of the waterfront. Improvements to this area could include access to the waterfront, enhanced recreation opportunities, and a trail that connects both to a larger system of parks and greenways, and to a more complete South Branch Parkway with improved bicycle and pedestrian options. Reforestation of this area should include the preservation of key view corridors across Watershops Pond.

Further west on Watershops Pond, along Arcadia Boulevard, is City-owned park land that is currently underutilized. This presents another opportunity to provide access to the waterfront and improve existing park areas. This site could also potentially be connected to a future Highland Division Rail Trail. The images to the right depict the unique views, as well as the tree damage, that resulted from the tornado.



Views from the south side of Watershops Pond looking north





Before

1. Improved access and visibility of park areas
2. Direct access to waterfront
3. Water-based recreation opportunities
4. Reforestation
5. Preservation of newly created view across water
6. Trail link to interconnected greenway system



After



## Major Move 2

# Rebuild Homes to Strengthen Neighborhoods

Reflecting the determination and commitment expressed by District 3 residents as they discussed the rebuilding of their neighborhoods in the aftermath of the June 1st tornado, this Major Move focuses on quickly and efficiently cleaning up, repairing, redeveloping, and occupying tornado-damaged properties to ensure that the distinct character, family-friendly atmosphere, and high quality of life in East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres are maintained. This Major Move also emphasizes the creation of durable, attractive, comfortable, and efficient housing through strategies to maintain the area's architectural character, the establishment of resources to support quality new construction, and through a suite of programs to support upgrades for existing homes.

### *Key Initiatives*

## Quality Homes

- Preserve neighborhood character
- Promote durable, attractive, efficient housing through coordination of new and existing programs
- Explore opportunities for pilot projects to demonstrate new and rehab construction strategies

## Aggressive Maintenance and Repair Program

- Continue efforts to ensure progress on property maintenance and repair
- Explore a community-city partnership to address cleanup and maintenance issues
- Expand Homeowners Guide



## Rebuild Homes to Strengthen Neighborhoods

# Quality Homes



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.

- **Preserve neighborhood character**
- **Promote durable, attractive, efficient housing through coordination of new and existing programs**
- **Explore opportunities for pilot projects to demonstrate new and rehab construction strategies**

Springfield is home to many diverse neighborhoods, each with a distinct character and a strong sense of history. Maintaining and strengthening family-friendly neighborhoods and ensuring the protection and creation of durable, attractive, and efficient housing is of primary importance to the residents of East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres. Enhancing the quality of homes in particular – whether they were destroyed, damaged or untouched in the tornado – is an important part of this preservation of character. This initiative includes strategies to preserve the cherished neighborhood character that defines District 3 Neighborhoods. This initiative also includes recommendations for the creation and coordination of programs and resources that promote the incorporation of healthy, efficient, and durable systems in new and existing homes.

### Preserve neighborhood character

District 3 residents have identified the quality of their neighborhoods and close-knit, family-friendly character as essential strengths. Residents have also expressed concerns about the potential impact of the June 1st tornado on the quality of District 3 neighborhoods moving forward. In this context, preserving and promoting quality homes and neighborhoods is paramount. Part of preserving neighborhood character in the rebuilding process is restoring the natural areas, schools, and other amenities that define East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres as healthy, vital places, and continuing to invest in the physical and social connections within and between neighborhoods. Many of the initiatives in this plan include recommendations



to enhance these important neighborhood components.

Zoning and Design Guidelines can also be useful tools to preserve and enhance the character of District 3 neighborhoods, but residents will need to work with City officials, Neighborhood Councils, and other neighborhood groups to determine how restrictive, prescriptive, or hands-off they want to be. Documents like the Design Guidelines for the Residential Architecture of Springfield (2008, Dietz & Co.) are examples of reference materials useful in creating a common language for new construction. In some cases, neighborhoods may choose to enact stronger homeowner covenants or design protections. Zoning district overlays that supplement existing use regulations with particular design requirements are another potential tool, but can only be effective if there is strong community consensus about how and to what extent the architectural quality of an area should be protected and preserved. It is also important to remember that a certain amount of flexibility should be retained to allow for architectural creativity and appropriate modernization if formal guidelines are utilized.

### **Promote durable, attractive, efficient housing through coordination of new and existing programs**

Great progress has been made in the last couple of years to bolster the toolbox available to homeowners nationwide who want to improve the efficiency, durability and sustainability of new and existing homes. Springfield has the opportunity, and the climate and technical knowledge, to emerge as a leader in this arena. There is tremendous potential to develop a voluntary green homes program specific to the Western Massachusetts and Northeastern U.S. climate, to conduct significant educational training for homeowners and builders, and to take advantage of and augment, federal, state, and local programs, tax credits and incentives. Investing in these strategies will improve the quality of housing for the community and reduce utility bills for homeowners. This is also an opportunity for growth in new skilled jobs for the area, including building contractors, architects, landscape architects and installers, and more.

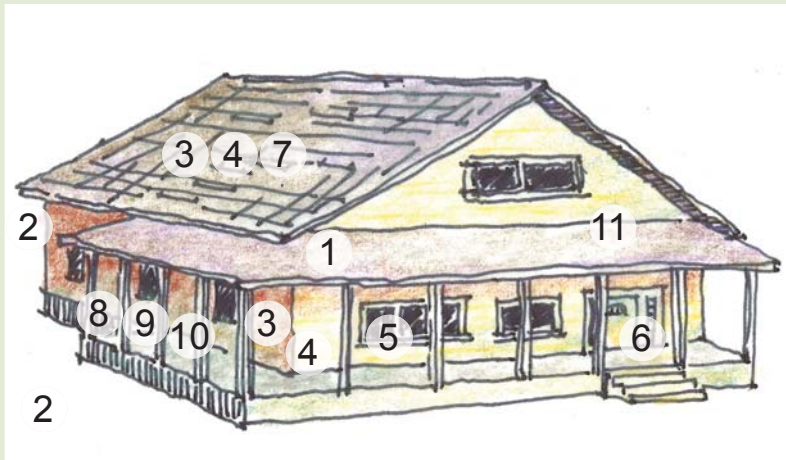
### **Explore opportunities for pilot projects to demonstrate new and rehab construction strategies**

One of the most helpful ways to educate

homeowners, builders, designers, and city officials is through a life-size demonstration project. Pilot projects can attract funding and in-kind donations from a variety of sources, including home improvement stores, utility companies, energy-efficiency consultants, and so on. Further, they are the perfect place for demonstrating new home technologies, design strategies, and construction techniques through programmed homeowner training sessions. While these recommendations are born out of the post-tornado planning efforts, they are also useful beyond tornado recovery situations to ensure an on-going approach to strengthen neighborhoods through quality home design and building for generations of Springfield residents to come.



# Quality Home Strategies



There are many strategies that have been developed and tested to significantly increase the durability, energy-efficiency, comfort and health of a home. Some variations are dependent on the local climate (i.e., the amount of insulation recommended in exterior walls), while some are universal (strategies that increase resiliency of a house during high-wind events). An educational manual or homeowner classes focused on Western Massachusetts conditions could benefit homeowners of existing homes as well as those about to build new.

## 1 Orientation

For new construction, orient the house to maximize southern and northern exposure, shade the south, east and west windows to minimize solar heat gain in summer months and capture it during winter months.

## 2 Rainwater / Stormwater

Harvest rainwater on-site for irrigation, car-washing, toilet-flushing; Create a raingarden on-site to slow percolation of stormwater back into the groundwater, minimizing or eliminating stormwater runoff off-site.

## 3 Framing

Incorporate resource-efficient framing techniques to minimize wasted wood use in wood-framing construction.

## 4 Insulation

Create a tight wall cavity with appropriate ventilation (“insulate tight, ventilate right”). Install air and water barriers in the correct location within the exterior walls, based on local climate conditions.

## 5 Windows

Impact resistant windows have stronger frames and hardware to withstand wind and debris. A clear film is sandwiched between two sheets of glass so the glass doesn’t shatter into the house if the glass breaks. The U-value rating of windows makes a difference on the overall insulation quality of the home. The lower the U-value, the better. (i.e., A lower U-value provides higher insulating capacity of the unit).

## 6 Doors

High pressure rated doors with steel-reinforcement and high-quality jambs and latches can help fight wind damage.

## 7 Roof

Ring-shank nails add holding power because the rings act as wedges to keep nails firmly in place. Hurricane clips increase the connection strength between the roof and walls. Some shingles (rated by UL 2218 or FM 4473 as Class 3 or 4) have been tested and found to withstand increasing levels of hail damage. High-albedo (or highly reflective) roof surfaces reduce energy (cooling) loads by reflecting solar heat, reducing surface temperature and decreasing heat transfer into the building. These include standing seam metal roofs, green roofs, some light-colored composite shingle roofs and others.

## 8 HVAC

Consider radiant floor heating coupled with a geothermal heat pump system and high-efficiency units to maximize energy savings on monthly utility bills.

## 9 Plumbing

Incorporate high-efficiency plumbing fixtures (i.e., low-flow, dual-flush) to reduce daily water use.

## 10 Appliances

Use EnergyStar rated lighting and appliances to reduce daily energy loads.

## 11 Materials

Use materials with low -or no-VOCs (volatile organic compounds); look for salvaged and recycled-content materials where possible (i.e., dimensional lumber, floor tile, wood flooring, brick pavers).

### Partnerships / Stakeholders

- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Housing
- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Planning and Economic Development
- Neighborhood Councils
- Local residential architects, engineers and contractors
- Utility providers
- U.S. Green Building Council – Massachusetts Chapter
- American Institute of Architects (AIA) – Western Mass Chapter
- Center for Ecological Technology

### Resource Needs

- The expense related to preserving neighborhood character varies greatly depending on the particular place. Typically investments in preserving homes and neighborhood character can be directly tied to a payoff in homeowner values. As it pertains to the employment of efficient or green building techniques, there is a large body of evidence supporting the benefits of efficient and healthy new construction and retrofits. Examples from the U.S. Green Building Council as well as evidence from the Department of Energy demonstrate the long-term benefits of investing in efficiency and healthier materials. The challenge continues to be finding the

funding to cover the up-front investment.

- Many homeowners face challenges financing improvements where declining home values and other factors have reduced the available equity that is necessary to secure loans.

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- Springfield could potentially consider a revolving loan fund or direct grants to homeowners could help to provide the upfront funding or guaranteed lending necessary to invest in upgrades that will pay off in the short and medium term. A relatively small funding source can provide the seed for substantial upgrades or guaranteed loans, particularly if the local utility is willing to join the partnership.
- Center for Ecological Technology (CET) - Since 1976, CET, a non-profit organization has engaged in work that demonstrates and promotes practical, affordable solutions to the environmental challenges encountered in our daily activities. CET's mission is "to research, develop, demonstrate and promote those technologies which have the least disruptive impact on the natural ecology of the Earth." From offices in Pittsfield, Northampton and Springfield, CET finds sustainable solutions to complex issues in order to benefit our environment, health, economy, and community. Programs include topics such as: Renewable energy access for residents, businesses,

farms and organizations; Energy-efficiency for residents and businesses; Waste management (reuse, recycling, composting and toxics use reduction); and Environmental education for students and teachers

- Enterprise Green Communities - Enterprise Green Communities provides funds and expertise to enable developers to build and rehabilitate affordable homes that are healthier, more energy efficient and better for the environment. Fundraising and grants by nonprofits
- ReBuild Western Massachusetts (Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources) – This program, sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, promotes energy-efficient building practices in new construction and repairs of residential and commercial structures effected by the June 1, 2011 tornadoes. (Email rebuildwma@icfi.com.)
- Barr Foundation, particularly their strategy on climate through energy-efficient buildings. The Barr Foundation is committed to helping Massachusetts meet or exceed their 2020 and 2050 targets for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and become national models for reducing GHG emissions. They also seek to support approaches that ensure no group of residents is unfairly burdened by the costs of action, or excluded from the benefits to pocketbook, health, or quality of life that flow

from new green jobs, more efficient buildings, and a highly efficient transportation network.

- Private donations from individuals and corporations (home improvement companies have a history of helping communities recover from disaster, i.e., Home Depot Foundation)
- Department of Energy Block Grants or similar energy-efficiency funding
- Housing and Urban Development grants
- Municipal general funds as seed money
- U.S. Green Building Council
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. Department of Energy

### Action Steps

- Convene interested city and neighborhood representatives to determine how best to preserve/protect the character of the existing neighborhoods; this may lead to the creation of design guidelines, zoning modifications or no changes at all
- Investigate precedent revolving fund and guaranteed lending programs
- Work with neighborhood groups to identify pilot neighborhoods for preservation, design assistance, energy and material upgrades, or other demonstrations of quality homes
- Determine which grants and partners to pursue
- Advertise successes and adjust programs to maximize impact

### Project Location

Focused on tornado impacted areas initially, and then continue district- and city-wide as appropriate

### Priority



### Precedents

#### Long Island Green Homes Program, Babylon, NY

Long Island Green Homes (LIGH) is a Town of Babylon program that helps homeowners make energy efficiency improvements, by financing all of the upfront costs. Local, BPI certified, private contractors recommend and install insulation, air sealing, heating systems, and hot water systems to participant's homes. After the work is complete, participants pay for the work over time with the money that they save on their energy bills. Since October 2008, LIGH has been helping hundreds of Babylon homeowners reduce their monthly utility bills (and carbon footprint) by 20-40%. Their goal is to help every Babylon household reduce their carbon footprint by eliminating

wasted energy in homes. Daily operations are handled by the Green Team, which is assembled of knowledgeable professionals that are eager to help guide you through the process. (<http://ligreenhomes.com/>)

#### Project Living Proof, Metropolitan Energy Center, Kansas City, MO

The goal of Project Living Proof (PLP) is to restore a modest home to exhibit how to make a century-old home more energy efficient. The house is both a test lab for various products and strategies, and a working classroom, where anyone can come in to see "how it is done" in person.





## Rebuild Homes to Strengthen Neighborhoods

# Aggressive Maintenance and Repair Program



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.

- **Continue efforts to ensure progress on property maintenance and repair**
- **Explore a community-city partnership to address cleanup and maintenance issues**
- **Expand Homeowners Guide**

Relatively quickly after the tornado, many property owners in District 3 removed debris, cleaned up and began repairs or reconstruction on their property. City staff worked quickly to document damaged properties and facilitate reconstruction/building permits. Some areas, however, have not made progress. This presents a nuisance and negatively impacts the aesthetics and property values in the neighborhoods of District 3. With the high value that District 3 residents place on maintaining the quality and character of their neighborhoods, it is no surprise that aggressive maintenance and repair assistance was one of the most highly identified priorities at community meetings.

Barriers to progress include funding gaps between insurance reimbursement and reconstruction costs and property owners (sometimes absentee) who lack motivation or means to repair property in a timely manner. Resolving the funding gap issue may require connecting property owners with existing programs and evaluating where existing programs are inadequate. These repairs can potentially be combined with energy-efficiency projects to secure additional funding. While District 3 has been very successful in addressing damaged properties thus far, the recommendations below outline additional strategies that may support these efforts.

### **Continue efforts to ensure progress on property maintenance and repair**

In response to the June 1st tornado, the City of Springfield has undertaken an intensive effort to address damaged properties. The City has compiled programs and



resources for homeowners in need of assistance. To address the risk that some property owners may abandon damaged properties, and not use insurance funds to repair or rebuild, the City has sought court orders requiring that insurance money be used for repair and rebuilding efforts. The City has also undertaken active code enforcement where necessary. Through December 2011, 90% of damaged residential properties had been cleared, repaired, or had work ongoing. In East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres, only 15 properties remained with outstanding code enforcement issues or lack any of action for debris removal and repair. Where the need remains, the City should continue to reach out to current property owners to offer support to those that need it, and options for those interested in selling/relinquishing property.

District 3 community meetings revealed a disconnect between what many residents thought was inaction by the City in post-tornado cleanup and the City's actual progress in dealing with damaged properties. As part of the City's ongoing efforts to address damaged properties, it will be critical to maintain an open dialogue with residents throughout the process to both disseminate information and solicit feedback. The "Communication and Collaboration" initiative identifies strategies to support such a dialogue.

### **Explore a community-city partnership to address cleanup and maintenance issues**

A partnership between the community and City staff could help to facilitate resolution of damaged properties and move aggressively on those properties that require repair or maintenance. Code officials, the local police force, and community developers are considered critical members of this collaboration. Community members can also play an important role by collecting and filtering complaints, and by monitoring the properties and ensuring they are secured and maintained to minimum standards, for example. One of the first tasks of the Property Maintenance Task Force would be to 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.

### **Expand Homeowners Guide**

As part of the rebuilding effort after the tornado, the City and DevelopSpringfield published a Rebuilding Guide for Homeowners, which provides resources for financial and volunteer assistance, the construction process, 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 consistent language and priorities.



■ Tornado-Damaged Residential Properties  
..... Tornado Path



### Partnerships / Stakeholders

- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Housing
- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Planning and Economic Development
- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Neighborhood Services
- Springfield Development Services Division – Inspectional Services
- HAP Housing
- Habitat for Humanity
- Christmas in October

### Resource Needs

- Financing to help with funding gaps
- Resolution of right-of-entry issues
- Identified community leaders through the respective neighborhood councils
- Access to existing programs that help support property owners with maintenance

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- HAP Housing
- Hampden County Bar Association (community service work)
- Western New England University (Dial-a-Lawyer program)
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Springfield College students participate in service projects during the annual “Humanics in Action Day”; these students and students

from other local universities could help clear or repair property in need of help

- Rebuild 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.

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

- MassHousing - home improvement, septic system repair, and lead paint removal loans
- Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) - emergency repair grants and home improvement loans
- Rebuilding Together, Inc.
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
- Veterans Affairs Regional Loan Center
- Department of Public Health
- City of Springfield Emergency Homeowner Repair Program: Provides technical assistance, interest bearing and non-interest bearing loans, as well as 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% of the area median income.

For help with energy-efficiency measures:

- 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.
- Massachusetts Division of Energy Resources
- MassSAVE 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.
- 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.
- State income tax credit for renewable energy: 15% 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% 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

- Western Massachusetts Electric

#### Action Steps

- Create a short-term task force to include city staff and representatives from District 3 to facilitate resolution of properties.
- Reach out to current property owners of such properties to understand real disposition; offer support to those that need it; offer options for those interested in selling/relinquishing property
- For those interested in working towards repair and on-going maintenance, explore all possible resource opportunities (as suggested above) and connect owners with existing programs and evaluate where existing programs are inadequate
- If appropriate and with community input and support, identify new uses for any relinquished property, from community garden/park, to new/renovated house or business, to neighborhood playground
- Work towards dissolution of the task force as quickly as possible, when all properties have been addressed with positive action taken

#### Project Location

Immediate maintenance and repair efforts are focused on tornado-impacted areas. Longer term strategies to support property maintenance are applicable District-wide.

#### Priority

Supportive Critical

#### Precedents

##### Code Enforcement and Wireless Technology

Code enforcement officers use new efficient wireless technology that connects them back to the main office while allowing them more time in the field and less time in the office doing paperwork. The software was purchased with \$42,000 of HUD CBBG funds. Computers and printers were also installed in the Code Enforcement vehicles, allowing access to information in the field.

##### Rapid Response Team, Las Vegas, NV

This team is a division of the 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 clean up.



## Major Move 3

# Maximize Impact of Schools and Community Facilities

Successful, high performing schools and community facilities help to support stable, family-friendly neighborhoods that District 3 residents identified as a priority to maintain and enhance in the rebuilding process. Maximizing the impact of schools and community facilities includes rebuilding tornado-damaged schools that are integrated into the surrounding neighborhoods as community hubs and resources. Collaborative partnerships between schools, libraries, recreation facilities, health services, neighborhood organizations, and others through the sharing of physical space and integration of programming enables the leveraging of scarce resources to provide services in the most efficient and effective manner possible. High quality school design also invigorates interest in learning while providing a healthy, safe, and comfortable learning environment.

### *Key Initiative*

## Quality Schools as Community Anchors

- Three-school area as community hub
- High-performance facilities
- 21st century learning environments





## Maximize Impact of Schools and Community Facilities

# Quality Schools as Community Anchors



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.

- **Three-school area as community hub**
- **High-performance facilities**
- **21st century learning environments**

Throughout the Rebuild Springfield planning process, District 3 residents have recognized the importance of quality schools to maintain strong neighborhoods, and have emphasized the need to rebuild the school facilities damaged in the tornado. Successful schools are a key ingredient to stable, family-friendly neighborhoods, especially when they are integrated into the life of the community beyond merely the students that attend classes. World-class educational school programs at all levels (pre-school through post-graduate, and continuing education) provide a strong foundation for inspiring private investment and attracting economic development in a city and region. People and businesses that value education move to or are willing to travel to places that provide exceptional educational opportunities, a fact with city-wide implications as Springfield pursues educational reform.

Three key Springfield schools – Cathedral High School, St. Michael's Academy, and Dryden Memorial School – are all located within a two-block area within the East Forest Park neighborhood, at the intersection of Wendover and Surrey Roads. Each facility sustained significant damage in the tornado. Cathedral students are attending a temporary facility at 310 Main Street in Wilbraham, while a separate temporary structure was established at the Dryden School for the foreseeable future. Students of St. Michael's Academy have also been meeting at another facility due to the tornado. The status of these schools after the tornado was of great concern to those in the community, as expressed at the public meetings held in this district – testament to the long-held feeling that these schools are important and valuable assets to the adjacent neighborhoods and the city as a whole. There is a unique opportunity in this window of time – after the tornado and before re-design and





construction – to consider how rebuilding this three-school area in a strategic and intentional way can strengthen each educational institution and the community at large.

### **Three-school area as community hub**

One way to approach rebuilding in the area of Cathedral, St. Michael's, and Dryden educational institutions is to identify how all three facilities might integrate into the surrounding neighborhood as a community hub, coordinated with other facilities and services to promote collaborative and efficient services. While Dryden school operates under a different administration from Cathedral and St. Michael's, and no definitive decisions on coordinated facilities and services have yet been made, pursuing such an approach has the potential to enhance the venues, programming, and curriculum of students.

Design teams have already been selected for each facility, and these teams have begun early analysis of each structure. Each school is also currently in conversation/negotiation with FEMA in an effort to identify available funds for the rebuilding of each facility. As part of the community hub concept, these sites could

share community amenities such as a public library, community meeting places, community gardens, walking/running/biking trails and other sports/recreation facilities. These represent only potential concepts for the area; specific needs and constraints may be known by each administration already, while some ideas may still emerge through meetings with community members to explore new ideas for mutually beneficial school and community integration.

Library and school officials are already exploring a city library branches on the Dryden Memorial School property. (See Implementation Opportunity included with this Initiative.) Such a move will strengthen both institutions and encourage the natural connection between the three schools and a public library. It may even allow longer library hours if school staff or parent volunteers or community service opportunities for Cathedral high school students provide additional staffing support. Conversely, it may allow each school to reduce its own internal library provisions and instead rely on the relocated city library branch.

In addition to shared school and community amenities such as those noted above, a

comprehensive look at street improvements in the immediate area of these schools as part of the rebuilding effort is strongly recommended. Community conversations revealed on-going concern for the traffic patterns that have developed over the years at each of the schools, especially with the drop in school bus use and rise in automobile transport over time. A collaborative solution by the design teams of each facility, school administration and the City's Public Works Department that addresses this particular issue would deliver long-term safety and infrastructure goals for the community, while providing a valuable component to each respective site design strategy. Attention to access points for each property, sidewalk and streetscape design, and coordinated parking and pickup/drop-off strategies should be included to alert visiting drivers more intuitively that they have entered a school zone, provide safer conditions for regular drivers who pick up and drop off students and offer more comfortable amenities for all in the area to take advantage of walking, running and biking options along those roads.

### **High-performance facilities**

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 by the U.S. Green Building Council is defined as a "school building or facility that creates a healthy environment that is conducive to learning while saving energy, resources and money". (Refer to Greening our Schools: A State Legislator's Guide to Best Policy Practices.) The post-tornado rebuilding process presents a unique opportunity to create high-performance learning environments that may not have been as feasible before the tornado.





The Kiowa County Schools in Greensburg, Kansas are an excellent case study for how a community (after an EF-5 tornado wiped out their entire physical infrastructure) decided to rebuild their K-12 schools. Following the new city ordinance 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 extra effort to gain additional funds from unusual sources. The result is that the community now has a school that they are all extremely proud of, and that is a destination for many educators and community leaders across the country for how to transform a community, especially while rebuilding after a disaster. It took this community a little longer than originally intended to accomplish this, but the extra time and effort have resulted in long

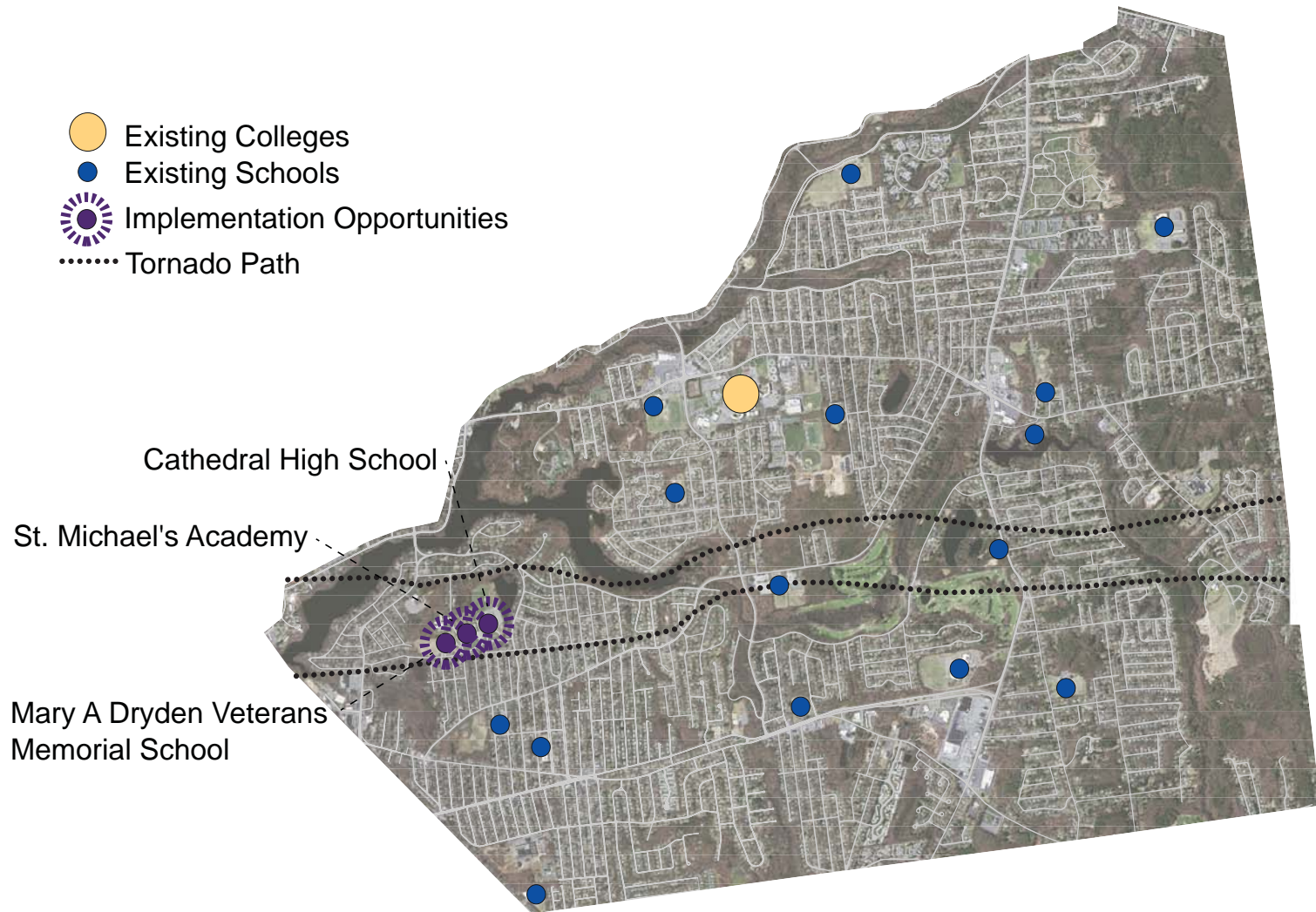
term benefits for the community. These same types of opportunities can be implemented in the three schools noted above. There is a unique rebuilding opportunity in this window after the tornado for long-term thinking, and it should not be wasted. Funding should be prioritized accordingly to consider long-term benefits, and ensure that once built, these facilities can continue to serve the community for generations. Balancing short-term financial constraints with this reality will be critical to a successful rebuild.

If aggressive in these high-performance goals for each facility (i.e., energy, water and system integration and healthy material goals) a complementary curriculum could be implemented that would teach children (and visitors) about the impact of buildings and development on the environment. This curriculum could include education about the physical structures as well as all natural systems in and near the school grounds.

### **21st century learning environments**

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 learning environment supports the design of physical spaces and

-  Existing Colleges
-  Existing Schools
-  Implementation Opportunities
-  Tornado Path



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 during this planning effort. Specific ideas for creating such learning environments include: one laptop per child, online textbooks for easy access without heavy backpacks, 24/7 connectivity and access, smart boards in the classrooms, and lesson capture for those unable to be present in the classroom.

While severely impacted by the tornado, the Cathedral, St. Michael's and Dryden school facilities each hold interesting opportunities for strategic rebuilding. As plans are made for the repair and/or reconstruction of each of these

schools, all opportunities to build back in a way that is more healthy, durable, comfortable, and energy-efficient should be explored, doing as much as possible to create learning environments of which students, faculty and the community are even more proud. Additionally, community service and job opportunities for students on the school grounds through integrated community programming options further prepares each student for career choice and opportunities. If the three schools noted above incorporate these recommendations into their design and building efforts, they could become not just major components of a robust and effective city-wide educational system, but also model schools for the rest of the state, and even the nation.





**Potential Community Hub - Cathedral / St. Michael's / Dryden Memorial Schools**

- 1 Possible relocation sites for East Forest Park branch of the Springfield City Library, immediately adjacent to Dryden Memorial School (either to the east to be equally accessible to St. Michael's Academy or to the west on more level ground) Access to Watershops Pond
- 2 Opportunities to integrate new or enhanced amenities that could be integral to the school buildings and available to the community during non-school hours, i.e., community meeting places, indoor recreational/fitness facilities, libraries
- 3 Outdoor space that could connect to a city-wide interconnected greenway and trail system, for use by students (i.e., cross-country teams) and the community
- 4 The potential for additional outdoor recreational fields / facilities that could be used by the schools and the community will be studied throughout the planning process as the schools rebuild.
- 5 Streetscape improvements and coordinated drop-off and pick-up strategies for all three schools
- 6 Opportunities to transform prior school buildings into high-performance facilities that incorporate 21st century learning environments
- 7 Improved access to Island Pond could provide recreation and interpretive learning opportunities for students and the surrounding community.

### Partnerships / Stakeholders

- Diocese of Springfield (Cathedral High School and St. Michael's Academy)
- Dryden Memorial School: Springfield Public Schools including School Committee and School Building Committee
- Local PTAs and/or parent organizations
- Interested neighborhood residents/parents
- Representatives from District 3 neighborhood councils
- Springfield City Library
- Springfield Health and Human Services
- 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
- National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities
- YMCA

### Resource Needs

- Facilitation for community engagement sessions and 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

administrators, faculty, students and parents

- Close collaboration between school administrators, city staff, community members and design/construction teams
- Additional funds (beyond insurance and FEMA) to push each facility's capacity for state-of-the-art learning environments

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- 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 ([www.centerforgreenschools.org](http://www.centerforgreenschools.org))
- Mayors Alliance for Green Schools
- Davis Foundation (initially to convene a summit that addresses city-wide educational issues and immediate opportunities for schools damaged by the tornado)
- School district bonds (that support first costs for renovation/construction, 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
- Springfield City Library

### Action Steps

- Evaluate current status of each school facility, including disposition of design/rebuild process
- Convene a meeting of the leadership of the three educational institutions noted above to collaborate on issues of common purpose and progress, such as shared resources, safety and transportation issues
- Maintain communication between school administrations and with the public throughout the process of rebuilding, particularly in the areas of environment, safety and transportation
- Host community workshop(s) to integrate community amenities within the school plans, where appropriate
- For each educational facility, set the vision, raise funds and hire a high-performance integrated design team
- Consider 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

- Set aggressive goals for energy-use, water-use, healthy materials, etc.
- Coordinate with school faculty to incorporate building design and systems into curriculum, including natural systems on school grounds or in adjacent neighborhoods

### Priority



### Project Location

- The tornado-impacted Dryden Memorial School, St. Michael's Academy, and Cathedral High School are located at the intersection of Surrey and Wendover Roads in the East Forest Park neighborhood.

### Precedents

#### 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. See 4-1/2 minute interview with Superintendent Darin Headrick at <http://www.usd422.org/vnews/display.v/ART/4d8b7a58063dd>.

#### Everett Alvarez High School Aquatic Center, Salinas, CA

The Salinas Unified School District built a new aquatic center to be jointly used with area swim teams and the City of Salinas. The joint use agreement with the city enables community use outside of school hours and outlines the city's shared responsibility for operations and maintenance costs.

#### The Lakes Regional Library, Fort Myers, FL

This Library was built between two high schools. At 2:30pm it opens its side doors to enable students to enter the library without having to walk along an arterial roadway. The library has a teen/internet area and study carrels. Students spend the afternoon and evenings there.

# Implementation Opportunity

## Branch Library at Dryden Memorial School

The East Forest Park Branch of the Springfield Public Library is currently renting space in a commercial shopping center. In addition to paying rent, the branch is open only 12 days per month limiting the amount of programming that can be undertaken there.

All three schools (Dryden, St. Michael's and Cathedral) are all located near the branch. The library needs more space and is interested in co-locating a branch into or near a rebuilt Dryden Memorial School. This would allow the library to operate during, as well as after, school hours and would serve students as well as the general public. Library branches have been known to co-locate in schools in Springfield so there is an existing precedent for this implementation opportunity.

Dryden School consists of a diverse learning community. The Principal and Staff are working together to incorporate the Cornerstone Literacy Initiative into the school's instructional culture. Further, Dryden nurtures an environment of excellence by high expectations and attainable goals. Each student will develop higher-order thinking

skills for the 21st century in order to become competent communicators in our ever-changing technological society. Having a city branch library either integral to the school or adjacent to it would explicitly support these goals for literacy and preparing their students for living and working in the 21st century. This is especially true if the library incorporates amenities consistent with state-of-the-art libraries where a multitude of services and amenities are available for students and the community-at-large. While this may seem like a significant jump in services, it would be a key component to accomplishing the goals of this overall initiative.

Specific action steps to consider:

- Facilitate comprehensive meeting(s) with key stakeholders to create a comprehensive vision for the new location of a branch library on Surrey Road near Dryden Memorial
- Hold a brainstorming workshop with library staff, students, faculty, parents, school administrators and interested community members to envision how a library could best be incorporated onto the existing property and how various members of the community

might become more engaged in the library operations (as noted above) to ensure longer hours and integrated use by schoolchildren and community residents

- Coordinate among School Library and Public Library staff regarding facility management
- Develop concept plans and designs for the new library space, space requirements that incorporate an expanded vision for the facility (integrate streetscape improvements that may be considered as part of the three-school rebuilding efforts, as noted above)



## Major Move 4

# Connect Communities

Connecting Communities is about enhancing the physical connections that improve access and mobility within District 3, while strengthening the social connections between the residents, organizations, and institutions that make up a neighborhood. Sidewalks, bicycle lanes, off-street trails, more robust transit, and measures to calm traffic and reduce congestion all support increased connectivity and provide mobility options for residents. Beyond physical connections, District 3 residents identified an opportunity through the rebuilding process to better connect and collaborate between the city, neighborhoods, and relevant organizations to quickly and effectively share critical information, and create a venue to share and address community issues in a coordinated way. Neighborhood connections are also strengthened through programs and activities that support a family-friendly, multigenerational community where youth and seniors can remain active and engaged.

### *Key Initiatives*

## Complete Streets

- Improve major streets to enhance mobility options
- Locate strategic streetscape improvements to support businesses and catalyze private investment
- Develop a long-term strategy to address sidewalk construction, repair, and maintenance

## Youth and Senior Activities

- Improve access to youth and senior activities through new partnerships and facilities
- Identify stable funding sources to maintain and enhance recreation programming
- Enhance youth engagement and leadership opportunities

## Communication and Collaboration

- Strengthen communication between Community Policing and residents
- Enhance dialogue between the City and residents through online and outreach campaigns
- Explore utilizing neighborhood-based volunteers for emergency response and relief



## Connect Communities

# Complete Streets



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.

- **Improve major streets to enhance mobility options**
- **Locate strategic streetscape improvements to support businesses and catalyze private investment**
- **Develop a long-term strategy to address sidewalk construction, repair, and maintenance**

In District 3, streets in the tornado-impacted areas generally lack mobility options. Many streets have no sidewalks, and there are currently virtually no bicycle accommodations. While three bus routes serve the district along Sumner Ave, Plumtree Rd., and Wilbraham Rd., station locations, frequency, and proximity of service to District 3 residents make transit a challenging option for many. A lack of mobility options necessitates driving for all travel including short local trips, and exacerbates traffic congestion.

In many locations, the transportation infrastructure that does exist has suffered damage or been degraded in quality as a result of the tornado and cleanup efforts. Street maintenance and repair remains an immediate priority as improvements to the street network are pursued.

This initiative includes recommendations to provide mobility options, enhance safety, and support local businesses and activity centers through a variety of improvements to streets in the tornado-impacted area. This initiative also recommends the development of a long-term strategy for sidewalk construction, repair, and maintenance that can focus scarce resources in a strategic and systematic way.



### **Improve major streets to enhance mobility options**

Improved sidewalks, bicycle lanes, transit, and off-street trails together can supplement a transportation network that provides options for residents and enhances connectivity within the neighborhoods.

In addition to providing mobility options, complete streets can help to address traffic flow and congestion issues in high-traffic areas through improved management of access drives, internal traffic circulation, signalization and other measures.

District 3 residents identified a number of key streets in tornado-impacted areas that, if improved with pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, could support could enhance the safety and livability, while improving connections within and between District 3 neighborhoods. These streets, including Island Pond Road, South Branch Parkway, Plumtree Road, and Tinkham Road, share a number of common characteristics. They are generally two lane streets with very wide lanes. In many cases, they lack sidewalks, or have sidewalks on only one side of the street. In some locations, the attractive tree canopy along these streets has been lost.

All of these streets could easily accommodate sidewalk, bicycle, and landscaping improvements within the existing paved area, and in so doing, enhance the mobility options of District 3 residents (See “South Branch Parkway” and “Plumtree Road” Implementation Opportunities). Improvements could be coordinated with projects already moving forward, including a reconfiguration of the General Edwards Bridge, and improvements to Plumtree Road between Bradley Road and Wilbraham Road.

In addition to improvements to key streets, District 3 residents identified traffic issues along Surrey Road and Roosevelt Road related to drop and pickup at Dryden Memorial School and Cathedral High School. The “Quality Schools as Community Anchors” initiative discusses the opportunities to improve this traffic situation through reconfiguration of access as part of the rebuilding of these schools.

The rebuilding process presents an opportunity to enhance the service that the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) provides within the District through improved routes, enhanced facilities, and integration of transit service with other street improvements that occur through

the rebuilding process. In particular, crosstown routes can 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 cuts to state funding have impacted transit service, more focused advocacy from the City and regional leaders can help to make the case for the value of this transit service for the City and the region.

### **Locate strategic streetscape improvements to support businesses and catalyze private investment**

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.

Beyond enhancing mobility and connectivity, investments in streetscape infrastructure can function as an incentive and catalyst for private investment. Residents have identified Sumner Avenue as a location where streetscape improvements could simultaneously support

- Street Improvements
- ..... Tornado Path





and enhance neighborhood businesses by improving the visual character of the corridor while providing safe, convenient local access to surrounding residents. The City is already in the process of studying a reconfiguration of the intersection of Sumner Avenue and Allen Street, and this existing project could potentially be coordinated with streetscape improvements help to transform the area and spur new investment.

Landscaping, street lighting, and other amenities may similarly impact various locations throughout East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres. Opportunities to bury power lines in coordination with street improvements can improve the aesthetic quality of the area while making the power grid more resilient in adverse conditions.

### **Develop a long-term strategy to address sidewalk construction, repair, and maintenance**

In addition to identifying improvements to key streets in the tornado-impacted areas of District 3, residents identified a need to improve the safety, walkability, and livability throughout District 3 neighborhoods through improvements including sidewalks and street lighting. Many neighborhoods in the tornado-impacted areas and throughout East Forest Park and Sixteen do not have any sidewalks. In addition, existing

street and sidewalk infrastructure in the district suffered damage from uprooted trees during the tornado and heavy vehicles during the cleanup and debris removal process. Limited FEMA reimbursements for damage have resulted in the repair of isolated slabs, leaving areas with definite need of repair.

The scale and cost of upgrading infrastructure throughout District 3 neighborhoods presents a daunting challenge, particularly when the City faces serious budget difficulties. However, there are three steps that can help the City maximize the impact of available infrastructure resources. The first is a recognition that streets and sidewalks represent a fundamental component of strong and vital neighborhoods, and that as District 3 neighborhoods and the City-at-large look to rebuild better and stronger, the long term success and vitality of these neighborhoods will depend on this basic street infrastructure. The second step is to strengthen the City's inventory and analysis of street and sidewalk infrastructure, including maintenance needs and critical new connections. The City of Springfield is currently in the process of developing a more robust pavement management system, and a sidewalk inventory could be part of that process. The third step is the development of a comprehensive program to evaluate and

prioritize improvements, so that as resources become available, there is a clear plan for where investment should be focused to maximize its impact.

### Partnerships / Stakeholders

- Springfield Department of Public Works
- Springfield Department of Parks and Recreation
- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Planning and Economic Development
- MassDOT
- Pioneer Valley Transit Authority
- Utility Providers
- Bicycle and Running Clubs
- Homebuilders, development community, and neighborhood associations (for sidewalk construction)

### Resource Needs

- While sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and 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 these public infrastructure investments more strategically.
- Funding and advocacy to support transit service within District 3

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- Capital Improvement Plan financing
- MassDOT (for arterial streets)
- 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

### Action Steps

- Update standard street templates to include pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.
- Finalize locations for specific street improvements and identify any right-of-way needs.
- Phase construction, identify funding sources, and develop final design.
- Identify opportunities for to incorporate sidewalk construction as part of new development.
- Incorporate inventory and analysis of bicycle and sidewalk infrastructure into the City's ongoing pavement management process
- Identify and prioritize strategic street improvements to enhance mobility and safety within the District

### Project Location

- Streetscape Improvements: Allen Street / Sumner Avenue
- Managing Traffic: Roosevelt Avenue / Surrey Road / Island Pond Road
- Mobility Options: South Branch Parkway, Plumtree Road, Island Pond Road
- Residential Sidewalks: Throughout East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres

### Priority

Supportive Critical

### Precedents

#### Metro Nashville Comprehensive Sidewalk Program

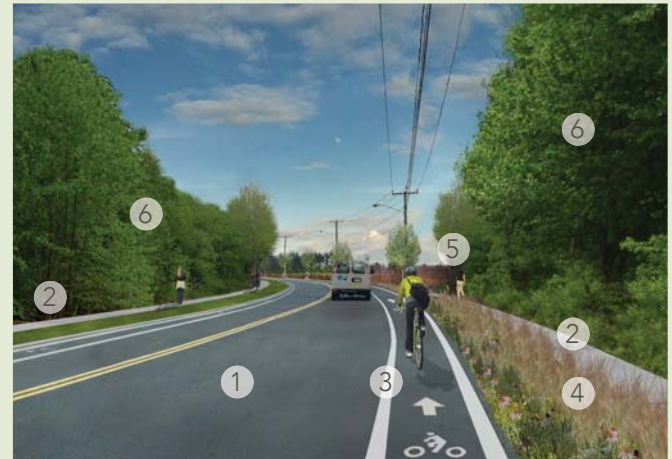
This program, which began in 2002 and is administered by the Public Works Department, makes neighborhood more accessible and improves pedestrian safety by systematically repairing existing sidewalks and constructing new sidewalks, in coordination with a Strategic Plan for Sidewalks and Bikeways.

# Implementation Opportunity

Plumtree Road, South Branch Parkway

District 3 residents identified the need for sidewalks and bicycle lanes along key streets in the tornado-impacted areas. Sidewalks and bicycle lanes can help to connect neighborhoods, provide mobility options, and increase safety. South Branch Parkway in East Forest Park and Plumtree Road in Sixteen Acres are two of the streets highlighted by residents for potential improvements. Both of these streets have two wide lanes, and could accommodate a range of streetscape improvements not only with the existing right-of-way, but within the existing paved area, minimizing the impact of potential improvements on adjacent property owners. In addition to enhancing mobility, improvements to South Branch Parkway and Plumtree Road could coordinate with the development of an interconnected trail system and reforestation efforts.

1. Narrowed Traffic Lanes
2. Sidewalks
3. Bicycle Lanes
4. Landscaping / Stormwater Management Features
5. Connections to an interconnected trail and greenway system
6. Coordination with reforestation effort



## Connect Communities

# Youth and Senior Activities



Cultural



Physical



Economic



Organizational



Educational



Social

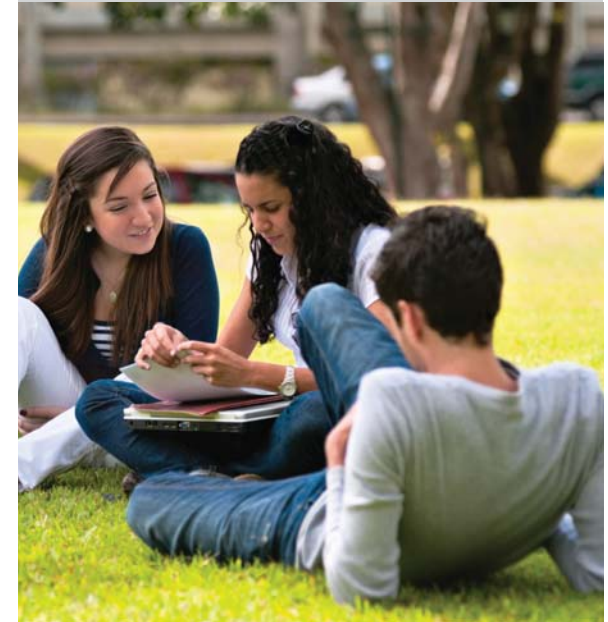
The city-wide planning process is organized according to the six domains of a healthy and vibrant community. Domains that are positively impacted by the Initiative described on this page are indicated above.

- **Improve access to youth and senior activities through new partnerships and facilities**
- **Identify stable funding sources to maintain and enhance recreation programming**
- **Enhance youth engagement and leadership opportunities**

Residents of East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres value the family-friendly character of their neighborhoods, and identified activities for youth, seniors, and all ages as an important component of a strong and vital community. Activities for residents, both young and old, can foster and strengthen the connection between residents of all ages and support a multigenerational community where seniors, children, and teens are engaged and connected. These activities also promote personal development, improve public health, and support the high quality of life that residents enjoy. Youth and senior activities should focus on providing both recreational activities and opportunities for civic engagement and leadership. Successful activities support all aspects of personal development including physical, social, cognitive, and leadership skills. The recommendations for youth and senior activities in this section are as much about personal development and civic engagement as they are about physical recreation. Additionally, the following recommendations identify potential funding and facility resources that can support adequate access to activities for the youth and seniors of District 3 and supplement the range of existing programs and facilities already available to District 3 residents.

### **Improve access to youth and senior activities through new partnerships and facilities**

Sixteen Acres and East Forest Park have a range of facilities and programs for youth and seniors. These neighborhoods include a number of parks, sports facilities, playgrounds, golf courses and other recreation resources. The City's Parks and



Recreation Department offers a variety of sports leagues, after-school activities, and other youth programming. Camp Wilder is a popular and successful youth camp that was directly impacted by the June 1st tornado. Schools provide pool and gym facilities within District 3, and the Greenleaf Community Center is a well-used and treasured community resource. Both East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres have branch library locations, and the Mayflower Senior Center on Sumner Avenue provides seniors with a variety of classes, workshops, health screenings, and social events.

Even with these resources, the priority placed on youth and senior activities in District 3 highlights the scarcity of available space for recreation programs. Many public school gyms are either already reserved for after-school activities, or have gyms that cannot accommodate certain types of sports. The Greenleaf Community Center is extremely popular and heavily booked. Additionally, when compared to other parts of Springfield, East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres have few options for private or family/senior-friendly gyms. The following recommendations present options to increase the number of fitness and activity facilities through new

- School
- Private Gym
- Community Center
- Senior Center
- Library
- Art/Theater
- Pool Facility
- Camp Wilder
- Parks
- ..... Tornado Path



Existing Community Facilities

facility development and partnerships. These recommendations also present opportunities to support more complete, intergenerational neighborhoods where youth, seniors, and families continue to want to live.

Explore the development of a new Parks and Recreation Department community center. The Parks and Recreation Department has a long-term goal of a community facility in every neighborhood throughout Springfield. Exploring partnerships with faith-based institutions, local schools and universities, or private organizations such as the YMCA of Greater Springfield may be the most feasible option to co-locate services and combine funding sources.

Explore development of a Y Express facility. While there are currently no Springfield YMCA locations in East Forest Park or Sixteen Acres, the YMCA of Greater Springfield has expressed an openness to exploring potential new YMCA locations if market-viable. One option could be a Y Express facility, which is a small-scale fitness and wellness center located in an existing storefront, with senior-friendly equipment and youth programming. Typically, a Y Express format is used until membership is large enough to warrant and fund development of a larger facility. Springfield Y will open a Y Express this year in Agawam.

Explore co-locating activities in schools. Several District 3 schools already provide opportunities for youth and senior activities. The Diocese of Springfield, which oversees the administration Cathedral High School and St. Michael's Academy (both damaged by the tornado) is already exploring additional facilities on their properties in this area that could be made available to the public outside normal school hours, including an outdoor track, ball fields, and tennis courts. The "Quality Schools as Community Anchors" initiative discusses in more detail how school facilities might be integrated into the surrounding neighborhood as community hubs, coordinated with other facilities and services to promote collaboration and efficient services.

Explore partnerships for programming and shared facilities. The Parks and Recreation Department and Health and Human Services (in charge of senior programming) should consider exploring partnerships with other organizations and companies to bring additional and specialized programming into parks and community facilities. Partnerships with the many companies and organizations that exist within District 3 can enhance youth and senior programming when budgets are limited. Many cities rely on such partnerships to draw residents to their parks to offer educational, exercise, recreation, or cultural activities such as yoga or tai chi in the park, writing

workshops, outdoor movies, and library book sales.

Restore and enhance Camp Wilder. With youth and educational programming, facilities for community events and activities, and operating through a successful public/private partnership, Camp Wilder embodies many of the recommendations included in this initiative. The Camp was heavily impacted by the tornado, and has been identified by District 3 residents as an important priority for restoration. In conjunction with restoration efforts, there is an opportunity for expanded programming, potentially including senior or multigenerational programming. See the "Camp Wilder" Implementation Opportunity for a description of the many opportunities for this park.

### **Identify stable funding sources to maintain and enhance recreation programming**

The Parks and Recreation Department provides many valuable programs to youth and adults throughout East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres and does so at a low per-child cost. However, providing funding for activities and programming can be difficult in the face of budget challenges, and a stable, reliable source of funding can help. Today, most of the Recreation Division's funding for programming and activities comes from grants. Any revenue the department collects from



fee-based programming or rental fees currently goes directly to the City's general fund. The City and the Parks Commission should explore re-establishing a recreation revolving fund that directs revenue raised by the Recreation Division into an account to fund future recreation activities. Presently, three Parks & Recreation facilities, including Camp Wilder, have a designated revolving fund to fund operations. The Parks and Recreation Department once had a successful revolving loan fund that was dissolved when the Finance Control Board took over leadership in 2004. Springfield's Multi-Year Financial Plan (FY12-FY15) includes a line item to develop a revolving account for the Recreation Division for youth recreation but must first be passed by City Council. This revolving fund has the potential to provide \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year for recreation activities. Re-establishing this revolving fund is one way to ensure the stability and continuity of valued recreation programming, and continue to provide physical, educational, and personal development opportunities to youth, seniors, and all ages throughout District 3.

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

District 3 residents have identified their youth as a major asset. Existing activities for youth in District 3 can be augmented by providing more opportunities for civic engagement and

leadership development. One opportunity for youth engagement that emerged in stakeholder and community meetings is reactivating the Springfield Youth Commission. This would provide a means of engagement while enabling both young people and adults to tackle issues important to youth with a broad, coordinated effort. Issues particularly important to youth in District 3 include enhancing transit to make it more safe and accessible and enhancing neighborhood amenities and activities that provide recreational, educational, and personal development opportunities for young people. For this Commission to truly serve the young people of Springfield, the Youth Commission Ordinance should be amended to allow youth under 18 to serve on the Commission. (For example, 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.

### Partnerships/Stakeholders

- Springfield Parks and Recreation Department
- Springfield Health and Human Services
- YMCA of Greater Springfield
- Baystate Health
- Springfield Libraries
- Springfield Elder Affairs
- Springfield Parks Commission
- Public and private schools
- Corporations and community organizations (partnerships for recreation programming)
- Churches and other faith-based institutions
- Arts and culture organization within district such as dance studios and galleries
- Fitness organizations such as yoga studios and martial arts studios

### Resource Needs

- Funding for potential community center
- Funding for new Y Express
- Additional staff capacity to pursue partnerships

### Potential Resources Opportunities

- Prioritization and funding for community facilities can occur through the City's Capital Improvement Program. Partnerships with faith-based institutions, local schools and universities, or private organizations such as the YMCA of Greater Springfield may be the most feasible option to co-locate services and combine funding sources
- If market analysis indicates additional private

recreation facilities can be supported in District 3, private banks are a potential funding opportunity

- A re-established recreational revolving fund has the potential to provide \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year for recreation activities

### Action Steps

- Revive Youth Commission and amend the Youth Commission ordinance to allow youth under age 18 to serve
- Charge the Youth Commission to develop goals and solutions for Springfield youth through a Youth Master Plan
- Re-establish Recreation Revolving Fund
- Explore partnerships with other organizations and companies to bring additional specialized programming into parks and community facilities
- Identify opportunities to enhance youth and senior activities through the rebuilding of Dryden, Cathedral, and St. Michael's Schools
- Conduct a market study to explore feasibility of a family and senior friendly private recreation facility with District 3 (such as a Y Express)

### Project Location

- Opportunity for enhanced youth and senior activities district-wide
- Camp Wilder was heavily damaged, but represents a key opportunity for enhanced programming

### Priority



- Schools, particularly the trio of tornado-damaged schools in this district (Dryden, Cathedral, and St. Michael's Schools), present opportunities for integrated community facilities and programming

### Precedents

#### Youth 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

#### Youth Master Plan Kit

The National League of Cities published Creating a Youth Master Plan Kit that provides guidance for developing a youth plan with examples from twelve cities.



# Implementation Opportunity

## Camp Wilder

Camp Wilder was directly impacted by the tornado and District 3 residents identified its restoration as one of the highest priorities for the tornado-recovery process. With a combination of attractive natural features setting, community meeting space, youth programming, and a successful public/private partnership, the value of Camp Wilder to the community is clear. With the restoration and reforestation of the area, there is an opportunity to enhance the facilities and programming, including connection to an interconnected greenway and trail system, improved access to Bass Bond, renovation of existing structures on the site as community facilities, and additional programming for youth, seniors, and families.



1. Reforestation
2. Connection to interconnected greenway and trail system
3. Improved access to waterfront
4. Existing community facility
5. Potential renovation of existing structures as community facilities
6. Opportunities for expanded programming for youth, seniors, and families

## Connect Communities

# Communication and Collaboration



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.

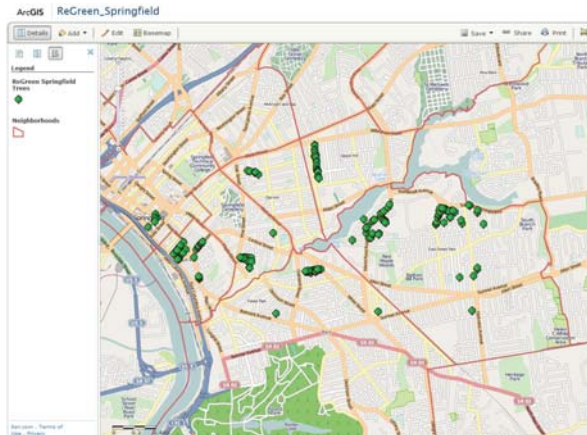
- **Strengthen communication between Community Policing and residents**
- **Enhance dialogue between the City and residents through online tools, outreach campaigns, and 3-1-1 services**
- **Better utilize existing resources in disaster response and recovery**

At the district-wide community meetings, residents of Sixteen Acres and East Forest Park overwhelmingly expressed their desire for safe, attractive, and connected neighborhoods. For residents, having a connected community includes improving communication and collaboration between District 3 residents and the City. Having a two-way dialogue between the City, neighborhoods, organizations, and institutions is critical for immediate rebuilding, preparing for future emergencies, and moving forward to create even stronger neighborhoods. Creating better connections between residents and the City can spur the creation of new partnerships, enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery, and capitalize on the engaged citizenry that was mobilized in the tornado response and cleanup.

### Strengthen communication between Community Policing and residents

Maintaining safe, family-friendly neighborhoods was a theme repeated at all of the District 3 community meetings. The successful implementation of many of the other recommendations in this plan help to enhance public safety by supporting active, healthy, vibrant neighborhoods, and a safer physical environment. Residents also identified a strong relationship between the Springfield Police Department's Community Policing and District 3 neighborhoods as a critical component to maintain and enhance safety.





There are two policing sectors that cover East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres, each of which has a Community Policing Management Team (CPMT), or Beat Management Team, comprised of residents, organizations, and community policing officers that hold public meetings monthly. Many residents at the community meetings repeatedly expressed their concern and desire for a greater police patrols in the neighborhoods. While budget challenges present significant hurdles for increasing personnel and resources for policing, the priority that residents of District 3 (and throughout the City) have placed on enhancing safety warrants that the City should explore different ways to enhance community policing efforts, whether through grants, reallocation of funds or personnel, bonds, or other financing mechanisms.

With existing personnel and resources, there are still opportunities to enhance public safety through greater collaboration between the City and residents. Residents, organizations, and neighborhood councils can better utilize the CPMTs by assigning representative liaisons to work with the teams and attend the monthly CPMT meetings. Organizations and

neighborhood councils should also consider adjusting their meetings quarterly or biannually to coincide with CPMT meetings. For instance, the East Springfield Neighborhood Council coordinates with the CPMT meeting once a quarter. The Springfield Police Department educates citizens through the 10-week Citizen Police Academy (CPA) programs. Though many graduates are active in their community groups, they could further support community policing through a designated volunteer role. Graduates could act as formal liaisons between the CPMT and local organizations or could lead the formation of neighborhood watch groups or regular neighborhood cleanups.

**Enhance dialogue between the City and residents through online and outreach campaigns**

District 3 community meetings for the Rebuild Springfield planning process revealed a disconnect between what many residents thought was inaction by the City in post-tornado cleanup and the City's actual progress in dealing with damaged properties. As Springfield moves forward with the implementation of Rebuild Springfield plan, it will be critical to maintain an open dialogue throughout the process to both

disseminate information and solicit feedback. Below are some relatively simple ways for better two-way communication online.

- Simple online tools such as MindMixer, Facebook, online feedback forms, or online citizen mapping tools provide a venue to solicit feedback from residents and encourage ongoing dialogue for both specific and general topics. The Regreen Springfield website is one example of how Springfield's reforestation efforts are involving and communicating with residents. (More examples are in the Precedent section at the end of this section.)
- The City's website can be restructured to be more user-friendly. The Center for Digital Government recognizes City, County, and State websites that employ "clear communication, design aesthetic and easy navigation" with the Best of the Web Awards. Recent winners of this award can serve as an example for Springfield.
- Providing a city employee directory and organizational chart can help residents and organizations directly locate the correct department or employee for their needs.
- Posting the minutes from any public meeting (including neighborhood council meetings and Community Policing Management Team

meetings) on the City's website or a new Facebook page can increase the awareness and transparency of the work the City is doing.

- The Citywide section of the Rebuild Springfield plan proposes using methods similar to CitiStat to track and communicate progress to residents during implementation of the Rebuild Springfield plan. CitiStat "is a data-driven management system designed to monitor and improve the performance of city departments in real-time" by using "inexpensive software to track a myriad of government performance indicators."<sup>(1)</sup> The City of Springfield employed CitiStat tracking from 2007-2011 but funding was eliminated for fiscal year 2012. Springfield's CitiStat previously facilitated NeighborhoodStat, an effort that joined multiple City departments to focus on neighborhood-based quality of life improvements and share performance data with residents. CitiStat improved communication between residents and the City by tracking and sharing relevant neighborhood-level data while soliciting and monitoring resident satisfaction. The City could explore reinstating the CitiStat department, or

(1) The CitiStat Model: How Data-Driven Government Can Increase Efficiency and Effectiveness. Center for American Progress, 2007. [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/04/pdf/citistat\\_report.pdf](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/04/pdf/citistat_report.pdf).





identify comparable alternative methods, to track and communicate relevant information with residents.

- The 311 Citizens Service Center (CSC) is widely used by District 3 residents to report concerns and service requests to the City. This service is the go-to method for residents to communicate with the City and could be easily adapted to also receive feedback and input on the implementation of the Rebuild Springfield plan.

Residents also proposed a campaign to help them in preparing for disasters by helping them prepare a home emergency supply kit, register with the Connect-CTY notification service (the city's instant notification system that sends a recorded message to resident and businesses phone numbers when important news occurs), and identify local news outlets that provide coverage on emergencies. Residents also stated that they would be like to be notified through Connect-CTY of major road closures such as those that occurred during the June tornado and October snowstorm.

### **Better utilize existing resources in disaster response and recovery**

As residents discussed with each other at community meetings how to better connect with each other, available services, and the City, two potential strategies emerged: the creation of a

neighborhood-based cadres of on-call volunteers to help in disaster response, and improving radio coverage of breaking news and weather events.

During the Rebuild Springfield planning process, District residents developed the idea of forming a cadre of trained civilian volunteers that are assigned a specific neighborhood and ready to mobilize in times of disaster. Springfield's Office of Emergency Preparedness, Springfield's Health and Human Services, and the member organizations of the Springfield Community Together Long Term Recovery Group (including the Red Cross, Salvation Army, United Way of Pioneer Valley, and others) are all involved in disaster response and relief. These organizations should explore utilizing neighborhood councils and forming a system of neighborhood-based volunteers (including Springfield Medical Reserve Corps) for emergency response and relief.

Community meetings revealed concerns about the lack of coverage by television and radio stations during and after the June 1st tornado, as well as the October 30th snowstorm. In times of disaster, the battery-powered radio is often the only method of communication. In the aftermath of the tornado, although one AM station continued coverage for a period of time, most stations maintained regular programming. Springfield, along with many other small to mid-size radio markets, may not have adequate local

radio coverage during disasters because many local stations broadcast syndicated programming and do not have the capacity for full time local programming.

There are examples from other tornado-impacted communities of quality coverage by stations that are based out of the local colleges, owned by large corporations, or are community public radio stations (see the Precedents section for examples). A panel at the 2011 Radio Television Digital News Association conference shared suggestions based on experiences with Hurricane Katrina that Springfield's radio stations could implement including developing a comprehensive disaster response plan and establishing relationships with first responders, Red Cross, and hospitals. The Communication Security, Reliability, and Interoperability Council provides a model plan that local radio stations can use to draft their own plan.<sup>(2)</sup> These models provide a starting point as the City, Springfield's Office of Emergency Preparedness, and the Springfield Community Together Long Term

(2) Local Radio Station Model Disaster Recovery Plan & Incident Response Manual. March, 2011. Developed by the Communications Security, Reliability and Interoperability Council Working Group 2-B. [http://www.nabanet.com/nabaweb/members/pdf/ssc/CSRIC\\_2B\\_%20Radio\\_rev\\_5.3.pdf](http://www.nabanet.com/nabaweb/members/pdf/ssc/CSRIC_2B_%20Radio_rev_5.3.pdf)

### Partnerships / Stakeholders

- Springfield Community Together Long Term Recovery Group
- City of Springfield (for online outreach, communication, and data tracking)
- Springfield Police Department's Community Policing liaison
- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Neighborhood Services
- Neighborhood Councils
- Springfield's Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP)
- Springfield's Health and Human Services (HHS)
- Medical Reserve Corps
- Organizations in District 3 interested in public safety issues
- Springfield Police Department's Citizen Police Academy

### Resource Needs

- Funding to enhance community policing program
- Capacity to develop and manage enhanced online communication
- Funding for CitiStat. The Springfield Fiscal Year 2012 Adopted Budget identified the cost at \$240,241 but identified potential for \$1.3m in cash and ongoing efficiency savings.

### Potential Resource Opportunities

- Citizen Police Academy Graduates
- Funding to increase community policing could come from grants, reallocation of funds, bonds, or other financing mechanisms
- Existing news outlets
- AmeriCorps volunteers for cost effective staffing
- Medical Reserve Corps

### Action Steps

- Strengthen communication between Community Policing and residents
- Identify resources and strategies to enhance community policing efforts in targeted areas
- Residents, organizations, and neighborhood councils can assign representative liaisons to work with community policing management teams and attend monthly CPPMT meetings
- Coordinate neighborhood council meetings with CPMT meetings on a quarterly or annual basis
- Citizen Police Academy graduates can act as formal liaisons between CPMT and local organizations, and can help lead the formation of neighborhood watch groups or regular neighborhood cleanups
- Enhance dialogue between the City and residents through online and outreach campaigns

## Priority



- Explore sources of funding for CitiStat. Previously CitiStat was supported through the City's General Fund.
- Survey Best of the Web Awards winners and identify how Springfield's website can be improved
- Create a Facebook page for the City
- Create and publish city employee directory and organizational chart online
- Explore utilizing neighborhood-based volunteers for emergency response and relief
- Develop disaster preparedness outreach campaign for residents
- Work with civilian volunteers, Springfield's Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP), Springfield's Health and Human Services (HHS), and the member organizations of the Springfield Community Together Long Term Recovery Group (SCTLTRG) to develop a formal system of volunteers for emergency response and relief

## Precedents

### Rebuild Springfield MindMixer Online Town Hall Forum

This is a tool used to solicit feedback during the Rebuild Springfield planning process. Barnstable, Massachusetts is another local example of community using an ongoing online town hall forum where residents can share ideas on how to improve their city. Other initiatives that successfully utilized MindMixer include Fargo, North Dakota's Go2030 Plan ([go2030townhall.com](http://go2030townhall.com)) and Wichita, Kansas' Transit Talks ([wichitatransittalks.com](http://wichitatransittalks.com)). One U.S. Congressman, Lee Terry of Nebraska, utilizes MindMixer for soliciting feedback from his constituents. Kansas City's MindMixer website, KCMomentum, provides a forum for residents to share ideas on how to improve their city.

### Facebook Town Hall, Chicago, IL

Chicago's Mayor recently launched a Facebook Town Hall in which he answers questions submitted and ranked by the public. This forum compliments other interactive online tools by the City of Chicago including a participatory budgeting website and the Mayor's Twitter feed.

### The Mayor's Participation Action and Communication Team, Richmond, VA

MPACT allows online users to report issues, such as streetlight outages, using a mapping tool online.

### Post-Disaster Radio Coverage, Joplin, MO

After an EF-5 tornado hit Joplin, Missouri in late May, 2011 six commercial radio stations owned by Zimmer Radio, Inc. began non-stop coverage before and after the tornado after residents lost electricity internet, land lines, and cell phone access. The station became the go-to center for residents to find loved ones, make donations, get help, and have their questions answered by public officials, agencies, insurance executives, and a lawyer.

### Post-Disaster Radio Coverage, Tuscaloosa, AL

College radio station WVUA-FM at University of Alabama was knocked out for two days after a tornado hit Tuscaloosa, Alabama in late April, 2011. Once operable, the station worked to provide information to residents on the air and through Facebook and Twitter. At the decision of Clear Channel's local market manager, the four local Clear Channel stations (WACT-AM, WRTR-FM, WTXT-FM and WZBQ-FM) canceled regular programming and began serving as a clearinghouse of information and relief services through simulcasts.

