

EXHIBIT A – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Springfield, Massachusetts was by impacted by five presidentially-declared disasters in 2011-2013, more than any other single community in the country. The most severe of the disasters was an F3 tornado, which ripped a ½ mile wide, 6.2-mile long swath of destruction through the heart of downtown and the City's residential neighborhoods.

Springfield is an old city, a poor community, and is made up predominantly of persons of color, with many vulnerable residents. These factors both increased damage from the disasters, and have also led to uneven recovery. A critical priority for increasing future resiliency is to ensure equity in the City's current ongoing recovery. The City will invest in infrastructure (green and grey) and high-quality housing through initiatives that will bring job opportunities and economic development to the community's most distressed neighborhoods, while simultaneously emphasizing environmental and quality-of-life benefits. Springfield will use this resiliency emphasis as an opportunity to build capacity throughout City departments to consider economic opportunity and environmental impact throughout all major infrastructure and capital projects.

Springfield is a mature post-industrial city. It has grand historical buildings, significant cultural and educational institutions, extensive parkland, and the locational advantage of its siting at the bend of the Connecticut River, along rail lines, and at the intersection of major north-south and east-west interstate highways. Springfield is a regional hub for education, medical care, and financial services, including home to the Fortune 100 company MassMutual, Inc.

The City has struggled with economic decline, beginning in 1968 with the closure of the United States Armory, followed by decades of loss of manufacturing jobs. White flight emptied the City of much of its middle-class. High foreclosure rates stemming from the 2008 housing crisis have led to abandonment and vacant buildings. The City has been fortunate to maintain

population by functioning as a gateway city for migrant Puerto Ricans and immigrants from Vietnam, Eastern Europe, and other nations, and now has an extremely diverse populace. Despite stable population numbers, current residents are poorer and have less economic opportunity than previous generations. The City has an overall poverty rate of 33% and an unemployment rate averaging two percentage points higher than that of the State of Massachusetts. Deepening poverty negatively impacts the tax base, making it difficult for the City to respond to aged infrastructure, deep poverty, and overcrowded schools.

Despite challenges, Springfield has made positive strides in recent years. After a 2003 fiscal crisis, the City has spent over a decade transforming itself into a modern city which follows best practices regarding professional staff, fiscal responsibility, transparency, and citizen engagement. The City has a current Moody's Investor Service bond rating of A2 with a positive outlook. Springfield is in the midst of an economic boom, with \$2.7 billion of economic development projects underway or scheduled within the next three years. These include a new multi-modal Union Station, an MGM Springfield Casino and entertainment complex, and repair of the Interstate 91 corridor that runs through downtown Springfield.

Recognizing the need to implement recovery efforts in a manner that both rebuilds devastated neighborhoods and creates a stronger community, Springfield undertook a major City-wide planning process in 2011-2012. "Rebuild Springfield" engaged over 3000 residents, provides the blueprint for rebuilding tornado-devastated neighborhoods, and sets forth a City-wide plan for building a more resilient city, focused on six "nexus domains": Educational, Physical, Cultural, Social, Economic, and Organizational. Springfield's participation in the National Disaster Resilience Competition is a natural extension of its completed, ongoing, and planned recovery and resilience efforts.