

**2026 CPA Application**  
Non-Profit Organization

**Neighborhood**  
Other

**Project/Program Title:**  
Springfield Urban Wilds Initiative

**Location of proposed project**  
All Springfield Neighborhoods

**CPA program area— check all that apply. Once you make a selection, only the questions relating to that selection(s) will appear.**  
Open Space

**Anticipated Start Date of Construction**      **Anticipated completion date of project**  
6/15/2026      4/15/2027

**Name of Organization or Individual**  
ReGreen Springfield

**Applicant Contact Name and Title**  
David V. Bloniarz, President

**Applicant Contact Phone Number**  
(413) 537-3748

**Applicant Contact Email**  
dblontarz@regreenspringfield.org

**Website**  
www.regreenspringfield.org

**Applicant Contact Address**  
1 Federal Street, Springfield, Massachusetts 01105

**Additional project partner and contact details**  
Harvard University Graduate School of Design - Dillon Escandon; dillon\_escandon@gsd.harvard.edu  
USDA Forest Service - Keith.Nislow@usda.gov

## Grant Request

**Grant Request Amount**  
\$9,500.00

**Will you be seeking multi-year funding?**  
Yes

**Total Project Budget**  
\$13,500.00

**Total Sources of Committed Funding. If none write \$0.00**  
\$5,000.00

**CPA request as % of project**  
70

**List committed funds from all sources and agencies or write none.**  
\$2,000 Harvard University Graduate School of Design  
\$3,000 ReGreen Springfield

**Budget**  
ReGreen\_Springfield\_CPA\_Budget.pdf

**Sustainability**  
The project will be sustained in two ways: Long-Term Ecological Research and voluntary plant management.

First, the digital database of geographic locations, parcel information, photographs, and plants will provide a basis for Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER). LTER is a well-documented method for sustaining landscapes for long periods of time as initial research produces environmental value and establishes scientific culture. Notable examples are the Boston Urban Wilds Initiative in Boston, MA, Harvard Forest in Petersham, MA and Plum Island in Newburyport, MA, with LTER generating increased funding for the sites overtime and leading to legally established land preservation. Therefore, the digital database provides opportunities for future projects to be undertaken at the project sites, by ReGreen Springfield, the local community, the City of Springfield, and various academic institutions such as the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Harvard University.

Second, ReGreen Springfield has over a decade of consistent commitment to Springfield's open spaces, and these sites are no exception. We will continue to collaborate with the Community Preservation Committee, Conservation Commission, Parks Commission, Parks Department, Springfield Forestry, and the Mayor's Office to care for and maintain these sites through voluntary plant maintenance, community engagement programs, and potential future landscape development of some sites.

<b>Parcel ID #</b>	<b>Maps</b>
To Be Determined	Project Profile Springfield Wilds Map.pdf

## Open Space & Outdoor Recreation Questions

If the project is on municipal land or conservation land, attach a letter of support from the Park Commission or Conservation Commission.

If open space is acquired with CPA funds for conservation land, a conservation restriction is required on the property. The City cannot hold a restriction on itself and the property will need a third party to oversee the restriction.

<b>Is this project in a wetland or does it about a wetland?</b>	<b>If so, has the Conservation Commission been informed?</b>
No	No

**If your proposal involves a city park/property have you contacted Department of Parks Building Recreation Management?**  
Yes

**Has the appropriate city agency been contacted?**  
Yes

**Has the appropriate Neighborhood Civic Association been contacted?**  
N/A

## Project Details

PLEASE NOTE: You have the option of typing in a response or attaching a file. If your responses are lengthy, please upload a document. Be sure to label each document with a title.

If selected for a grant, the Grantee shall submit semi-annual progress reports. The Final report will include

before/after photos and a summary of the CPA work completed. I

#### Disbursement of Funds.

For non-city grants. Reimbursement is made to the grantee once an invoice is submitted with proof of payment. An inspection is required before releasing funds. The CPC does not pay vendors. Reimbursement for work is paid to the grantee.

#### **Upload Narrative (200 words or less)**

Urban Wilds Grant Submission.pdf

#### **Or type Project Description**

The “Springfield Urban Wilds Initiative” is a first-of-its-kind city-wide landscape planning and preservation project in Springfield, MA which will speculate and propose a plan to effectively, creatively, and scientifically preserve Springfield’s city-owned vacant lots. The project is a response to the vast amount of vacant land across the city following the economic decline of the 1960’s following the closure of the Springfield Armory, as well as the current lack of scientific research opportunities for schools, community members, and academic institutions in the city. By establishing “Urban Wilds” across the city, we can create spaces for long-term ecological research, community recreation, and educational engagement opportunities, effectively creating a long-term investment in the local community, economic development, and shared knowledge.

Additionally, these spaces will utilize Springfield based resources to serve as climate adaptation infrastructure, serving many of the necessary functions listed in the 2017 “Springfield Climate Action & Resiliency Plan” such as urban cooling, stormwater retention, carbon mitigation, air quality filtering, increased biodiversity, improved mental health, and sustainable community development; ecological benefits which increase in value monetarily exponentially overtime. Evidence is based on the implementation of “Urban Wilds” in the City of Boston, which was successful in increasing opportunities for recreation, expanding community spaces, conserving land, and fostering native species through invasive species management.

#### **Or type Applicant Experience**

David Bloniarz, Ph.D., the President of ReGreen Springfield, has led ReGreen in its efforts to promote reforestation, improve growing conditions for trees and engage new allies in tree care and monitoring, education and citizen science. David is a Research Scientist with the US Forest Service, whose work involves carrying out programs in urban forests across the Northeast, including many cities including New York City, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Burlington, VT and many others. Dr. Bloniarz is the Director of the US Forest Service Urban Natural Resources Institute, and he is a faculty member in the Department of Environmental Conservation at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst and at the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

#### **Comments or additional information**

The Springfield Urban Wilds Project represents a novel and forward-thinking approach to urban land management by transforming underutilized, city-owned vacant parcels into a coordinated network of ecologically functional “urban wilds” that are researched, planned, and managed as part of a comprehensive, city-wide system. Rather than relying on fragmented mowing or passive vacancy, the initiative applies landscape planning, ecological research, GIS mapping, and long-term stewardship to identify high-value sites and integrate them into a unified management framework that supports biodiversity, climate resilience, and equitable community access to nature. By leveraging more than 200 vacant lots across neighborhoods such as Old Hill, Brightwood, Six Corners, McKnight, and Indian Orchard, the project reframes vacant land as environmental infrastructure that delivers measurable ecological services including urban cooling, stormwater retention, habitat creation, and air quality

improvement, while simultaneously advancing education, community engagement, and future preservation opportunities.

Modeled in part on successful urban wilds initiatives in Boston but uniquely adapted to Springfield's landscape and community context, the project establishes a replicable municipal strategy that converts scattered vacant parcels into intentionally managed assets that strengthen neighborhood character, support long-term ecological research, and align directly with Springfield's broader open space and climate resilience goals.

## **Signature to Submit Application**

**The applicant certifies that all information in this application and all information furnished in support of this application is given for the purpose of obtaining a Community Preservation Act grant and is a true copy and is complete to the best of the applicant's knowledge and belief.**

David V. Bloniarz