

City of Springfield

Office of Planning & Economic Development

Year End Project Summary



December, 2015

OPED

The Office of Planning & Economic Development (OPED) offers the following as a summary of programmatic highlights from the 2015 calendar year. This report encompasses major project activity and progress over the past 12 months, above and beyond day to day office activities and project reviews.

OPED works to promote Springfield as an attractive location for new businesses, retaining and expanding our valued existing businesses, and increasing our tax base. The department provides planning support, technical assistance, coordination and advisory services to city officials, boards, and committees on issues involving land use planning, zoning, economic development, open space land preservation, smart growth, and historic preservation.

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno

Kevin Kennedy, Chief Development Officer

Brian Connors
Philip Dromey
Christopher Moskal

Alvin Allen
Kevin Chaffee
Richard Griffin
Scott Hanson
Jason Mann
Thomas Mathews
Cathy Mossi
Thomas Moore

Deputy Director, Economic Development
Deputy Director, Planning
Executive Director, Springfield
Redevelopment Authority (SRA)
Senior Planner
Natural Resources Manager
Senior Project Manager
Principal Planner
GIS Manager
Project Manager
Administrative Assistant
Associate City Solicitor, SRA Attorney

Brownfields Program



- After applying for and receiving a \$400,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2014, OPED has completed environmental assessments of several properties in the city in 2015
- Properties assessed have been throughout the city, in 2015 a focus on assisting the Central Street redevelopment project as well as other areas including South End, Downtown, and Bay area
- OPED completed an application in late 2015 for submittal for a new EPA grant to allow for additional testing of sites throughout the city

City Marketing



- OPED completed work and unveiled a new city marketing video, working with local filmmaker Chris Teebo Films
- Video is a comprehensive look at the many positive pieces that make Springfield a great place for economic development, living, and entertainment
- In just a few days after its public release, video had amassed hundreds of social media shares, positive comments and over 10,000 total views on both Youtube and Masslive
- Youtube link: <https://youtu.be/xenPufOA3M8>

CRRC Railways



- With city Assessors department, worked through a significant process with international company and attorneys to develop a tax agreement for project, which will result in \$94 million of new investment
- Currently finalizing Site Plan Review process in preparation for 2016 permitting and construction
- Project will create over 150 new permanent jobs as well as hundreds of construction jobs, and a potential for expansion as the company is seeking additional contracts in other U.S. markets
- OPED plans to work with CRRC and the East Springfield neighborhood on an analysis of the Page Boulevard corridor

Community Engagement



In addition to administering and attending several public meetings in 2015 including hosting an annual neighborhood council Presidents dinner, OPED staff continues to engage the community serving in various capacities:

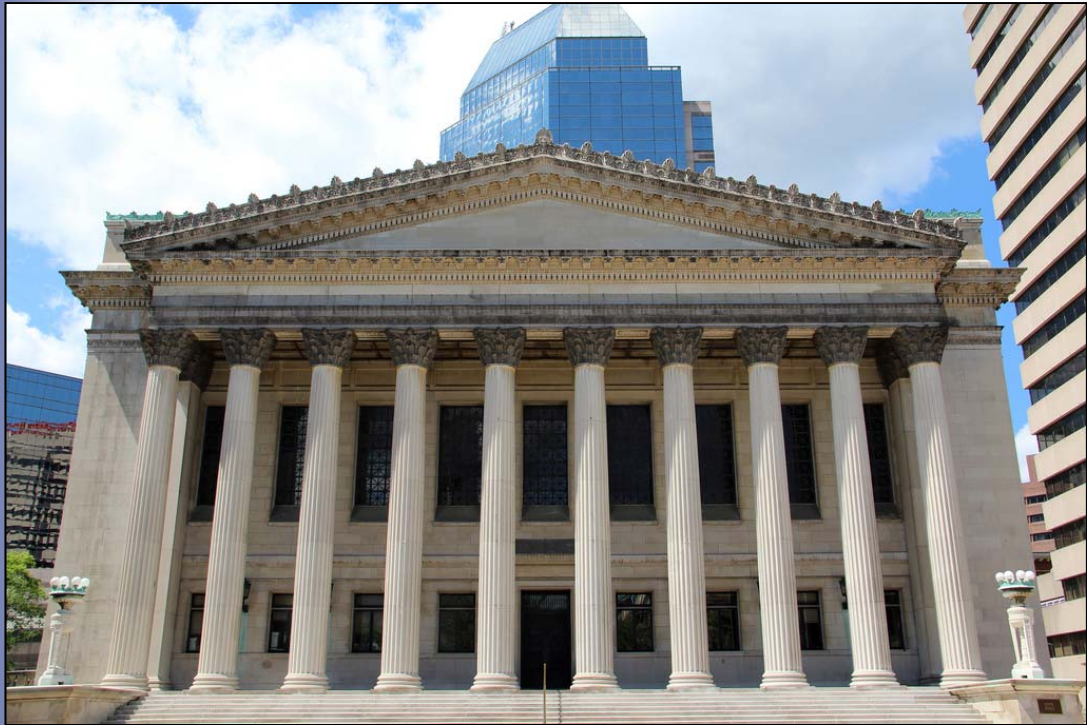
Staffing

Springfield Conservation Commission
Springfield Historical Commission
Springfield Planning Board
Springfield Redevelopment Authority

Board of Directors representation

DevelopSpringfield
Dunbar YMCA
EDC - Economic Development Partners
FutureWorks
Intercity Youth Inc.
Leadership Pioneer Valley Alumni
Live Well Springfield
Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame
New England Public Radio
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
PVPC – Plan For Progress
SABIS International Charter School
Springfield Central Cultural District
Springfield Business Improvement District
Springfield Riverfront Development Corporation
STCC Assistance Corporation

Downtown Collaboration



- Instituted a Mayor's downtown collaboration taskforce to align like-minded agencies in the downtown working towards similar goals in economic development and to assist in the coordination of major public and private developments
- Participating groups include OPED, Springfield Redevelopment Authority, DevelopSpringfield, MassDevelopment, Springfield Business Improvement District, Springfield Chamber of Commerce, and Springfield Parking Authority

Fire Station Redevelopments



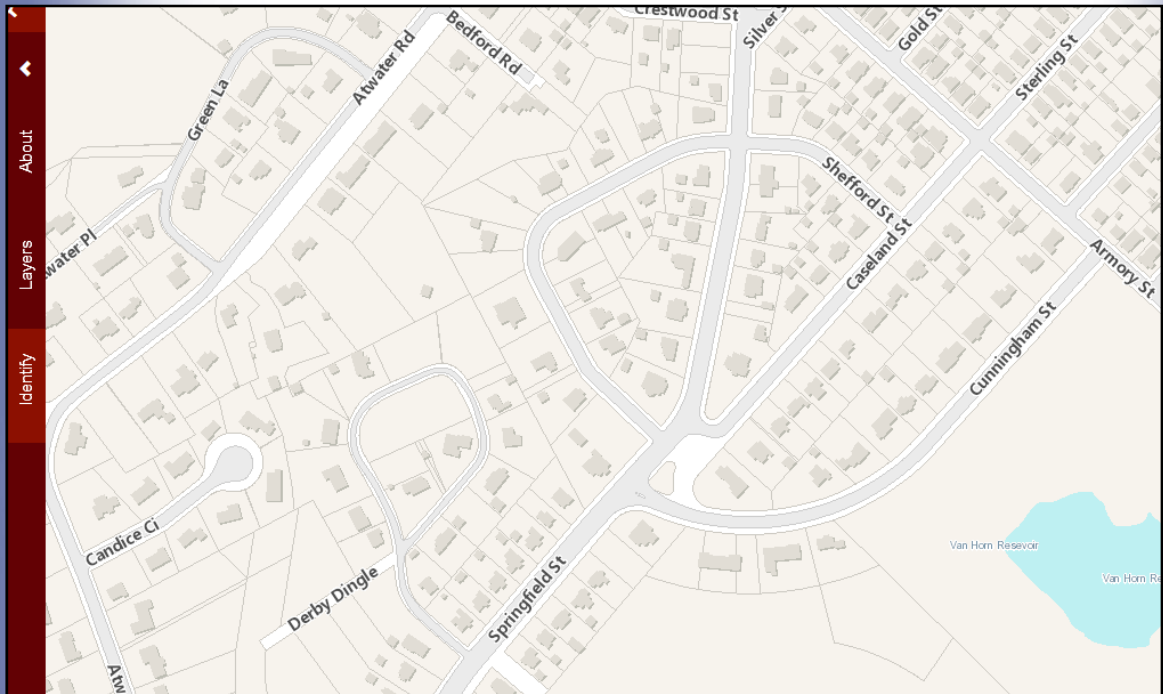
- Moved forward on the redevelopment of three of the four vacant city-owned former fire stations, after an OPED market and reuse study was utilized to recruit developers
- Fire Stations on Sumner Avenue, Oakland Street, and Page Boulevard all have sold and moved forward in redevelopment, representing nearly \$1 million in private investment as well as putting former nontaxable properties onto the tax rolls
- A fourth fire station in Indian Orchard will be made available in 2016 for redevelopment. It's currently being utilized as a school department facility workshop

Gil Penalosa



- Under a state grant, OPED was a lead participant in bringing world renowned healthy community expert Gil Penalosa to Springfield in November
- The visit included several meetings with stakeholders in the community and a keynote public address at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame
- Penalosa praised the city parks and pedestrian system and encouraged Springfield to do more in terms of bicycle infrastructure

GIS Mapping Update



- Worked with Information Technology department on a complete overhaul of OPED's GIS mapping tools, including an update to include OPED's latest aerial photography
- OPED's online mapping database is one of the most highly utilized websites in the city system
- New website to be unveiled in early 2016 will offer cleaner and updated views, easier navigation, and updated compatibility with mobile devices

Maple Street Redevelopment



- OPED has moved forward with a preferred developer for two city-owned historic row houses on Maple Street, along with an 11-unit apartment building and vacant lot for a comprehensive redevelopment of these long derelict properties
- Rowhouses have been city-owned for several years and made available on multiple occasions, however the latest disposition packaged properties and incentives in a way that attracted multiple developers
- Location is key to continue positive redevelopment of Central Street, very visible location and was in the tornado path

MGM Springfield



- Undertook an unprecedented Site Plan Review process for the largest development project in the history of Springfield. Project will create 3,000 permanent jobs in a 750,000 square foot development and will provide over \$25 million in taxes and other payments to the city each year.
- Working with other key city departments, reviewed and worked with developer team on significant design elements in preparation for 2016 construction
- For the first time in city history introduced a public element to the Site Plan Review process allowing hundreds in person as well as online streaming of Site Plan Review meeting live at City Stage

Mill Street Historic Homes



- OPED, utilizing its CDBG historic preservation fund for city owned tax-title properties, took a focused approach to seeking redevelopment of multiple properties on Mill Street including one that had suffered extensive fire damage
- The long vacant properties were all historic, larger residential homes – located at 92 Mill Street, 120 Mill Street, and 175 Mill Street
- The three homes, which had lacked investment for a decade or more, are now in the final stages of redevelopment before being made available by the developer, DP Consulting & Icarian Real Estate

Natural Resources



- Applied for and received a \$40,000 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to advance work in the Abbey Brook Conservation Area of Liberty Heights
- Updated the City of Springfield Open Space Plan, allowing the City to pursue environmental/open space grant funding through 2022
- Completed environmental permitting of several projects including: The Phaneuf Environmental Center at Forest Park, North Riverfront Park Improvements, and the Blunt Park Senior Center

Neighborhood Façade Program



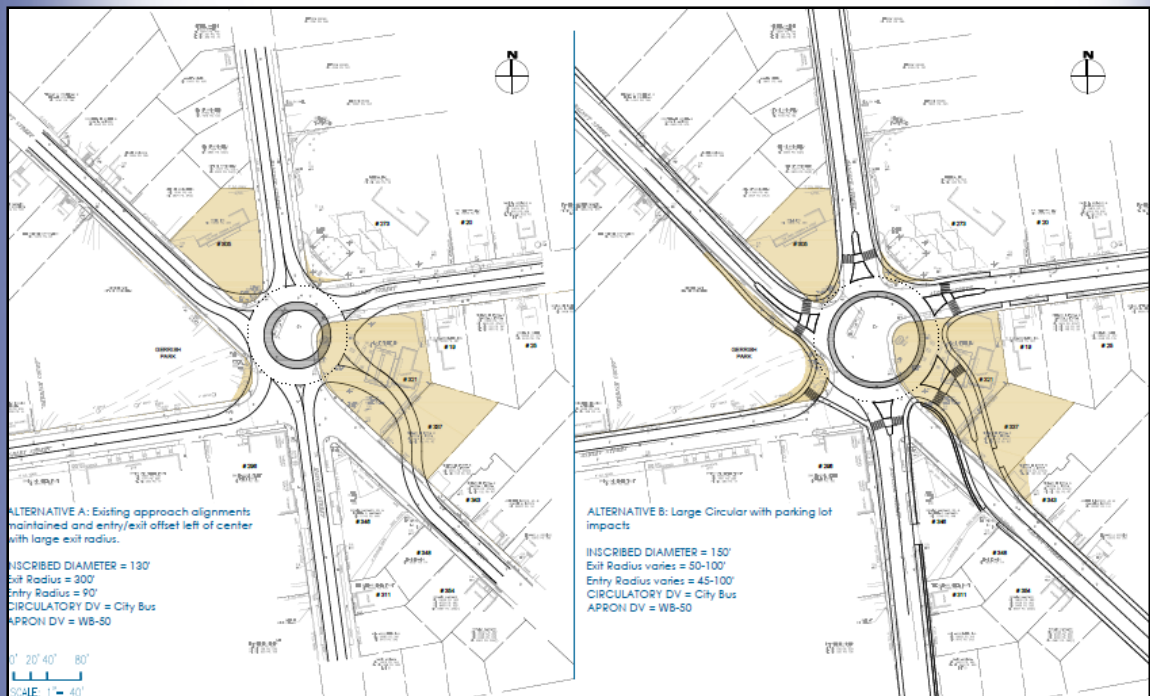
- Invested over \$200,000 in assisting small neighborhood businesses make storefront improvements to enhance the look of their businesses
- Program has funded improvements in all CDBG eligible neighborhoods, in 2015 made significant improvements in the Boston Road/Pine Point area as well as Forest Park/X neighborhood
- Program provides funding for new signs, lighting, windows, doors to assist with enhancing the businesses in our neighborhood commercial centers

Silverbrick Lofts



- Completed and gained approval on the first Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP) project in Springfield and one of the first in Massachusetts – project represents over \$17 million investment and 265 remodeled market rate housing units in downtown
- Navigated legal and approval proceedings to allow developers to add decorative security fencing
- Worked with partners at DevelopSpringfield as well as city CDBG funded program to assist improvement to ground floor storefronts

Six Corners Improvements



- OPED wrote a grant application for Six Corners Intersection Improvements and was awarded \$2.77 million through the Commonwealth's MASSWORKS program
- The intersection is regularly listed on the most dangerous intersections in the region in terms of vehicle accidents
- Department of Public Works (DPW) has begun examining several design options and will work with community on a final design that will improve safety for vehicles and pedestrians as well as streetscape enhancements

Small Business Loan Program



- Completed several small business loans of \$15,000 each to assist small businesses throughout the city in taking the next step in Springfield to further develop their product or business
- Program funds working capital and equipment needs with low interest rates and flexible terms. A loan committee of city and non-city employees reviews each application
- In 2015, businesses such as Artifact Cider, Inspired Marketing, and Glory Shoes took advantage of the program

Tax Increment Financing



- Utilized the state's Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP) to help attract millions in new private investment and hundreds of new jobs for city residents
- Falvey Linen Co., a Rhode Island company, decided to locate a new facility in Springfield with the assistance of the city's Tax Increment Financing program, which will lead to 100 new jobs and the redevelopment of a vacant 240,000 square foot former postal facility
- A full update report on all TIFs, past and present, is attached to this report

New Tax Growth



Through TIF, HDIP, and attracting other new private investments via property dispositions, OPED seeks to impact the tax base in a positive manner. Dispositions also result in sales money returned to the general fund.

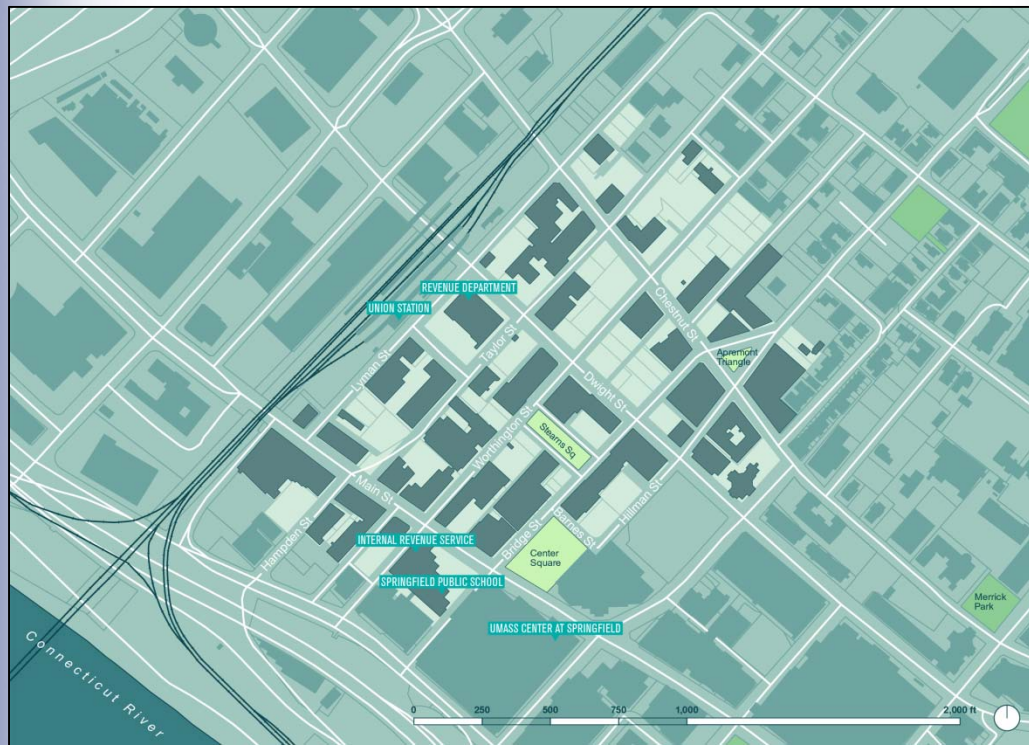
Below are examples of estimated NEW tax growth from 2015 projects:

Project	Annual new taxes
CRRC Railways	\$2.7 million*
(3) Fire Stations	\$25,000
Maple Street Redevelopment	\$30,000
Indian Moto/Mason Square Fire	\$20,000**
(3) Mill Street Redevelopment	\$15,000
Falvey Linen	\$93,000*
Silverbrick Lofts	\$80,000*

**Average annual new taxes during TIF years*

***Preconstruction value, post construction will increase*

Transformative Development Initiative



- OPED applied on behalf of the City of Springfield to be named one of MassDevelopment's "Transformative Development Initiative" districts, submitting our downtown innovation district
- Of 26 cities applying, Springfield was named 1 of 10 districts, and one of just three that were awarded a full-time fellow, for a period of three years
- In six months, the program has already had vast returns with day to day progress on the city's innovation district plan as well as the recent purchase and planned redevelopment by MassDevelopment of the former Skyplex building and introduced new events such as "Movie night"

UMASS Design Studios



- Continued longstanding relationship with UMASS Amherst in completing neighborhood design studios
- OPED staff works with UMASS professors and students in the Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Public Policy departments on neighborhood planning initiatives
- In 2015, studios focused on downtown projects including tactical urbanism and open space interventions as well as the recent 2015 Holiday market

Union Station



- The Springfield Redevelopment Authority (SRA) made significant progress in 2015, pushing Union Station into major demolition and construction activities – the first major physical activity at the address since its closing in the 1970's
- The redeveloped Union Station, to be complete in late 2016, will house Amtrak, PVTA, Peter Pan and other transit uses including expanded commuter rail in 2017
- Broke ground on new 377-space parking garage on the site of the former Hotel Charles, facing Main Street, to support the increased transit use at the new Union Station

The “X” Improvements



- OPED along with the Department of Public Works, engaged the community through a steering committee and public meetings to discuss potential improvements and design concepts to the “X” intersection in Forest Park
- The improvements would be based upon vehicle and pedestrian safety, but would also address streetscape and improvements to make the district more attractive for businesses and residents
- The study work and community engagement will continue in 2016 to determine the best design concepts to pursue

Goals For 2016



- Advance Innovation District plan – including reestablishing restaurant district, public wi-fi, enhancements to Stearns Square
- Addition of significant solar presence to city facilities and other green development activities
- Identify suitable redevelopment for former Chestnut Junior High
- Permitting and construction activities for major projects including MGM Springfield and CRRC
- Central Street Realignment construction, North Main Street construction, Six Corners Intersection design, and X Intersection design progress
- Continued development of workforce training initiatives to address increased demands
- Page Boulevard economic analysis
- Advancing the Indian Motorcycle/Mason Square Fire Station project to permitting/construction

Appendix

I. Annual TIF Report