

WATERSHOPS DISTRICT REVITALIZATION PLAN

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Prepared by
Pioneer Valley
Planning
Commission



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The Vision Coalition & HAP Housing
Prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

***Vision Statement:** The Watershops District is a safe, desirable place to live with stable neighborhoods and a vibrant community center. Families and children are out on the streets and in the parks, and the neighborhood is beautiful and walkable, with diverse retail and services, jobs, a greenway along the Mill River, community gardens, and active neighborhood parks.*

Executive Summary

This effort continues to build upon efforts to rethink, redevelop and revitalize the City of Springfield following the June 1st, 2011 tornado. The Rebuild Springfield Plan, completed in February 2012, was commissioned by DevelopSpringfield¹ and the Springfield Redevelopment Authority to gather widespread community input to develop a realistic action plan for the city as a whole, as well as three distinct districts within the city.

This follow-up effort, commissioned by HAP Housing and funded by the Barr Foundation, is concerned with a small area within District 2 (Maple High – Six Corners, Old Hill, Upper Hill and Forest Park) of the Rebuild Springfield Plan. Specifically, this plan is focused on revitalization strategies within a target area of the Six Corners and Old Hill Neighborhoods hit especially hard by the June 11th 2011 tornado. This target area (see Land Use and Residential Density Map), referred to in this plan as the Watershops District, is approximately bounded by the Six Corners intersection to the north, Springfield College to the east, Johnny Appleseed Park to the south, and the intersection of Pine Street and Central Street to the west. The Watershops District has high rates of vacant and underutilized properties, but also holds considerable opportunities for transformational redevelopment. Already, there is significant momentum for revitalization of this area, including:

¹ DevelopSpringfield was formed in 2008 as a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) corporation to advance development and redevelopment projects, to stimulate and support economic growth, and to expedite the revitalization process within the City of Springfield.

- Efforts to redevelop vacant properties along Central Street into new homes
- Plans for the new Elias Brookings School to be built at the northeast corner of the Walnut/Hickory Street intersection
- Interest on the part of the Watershops Armory property management to integrate that historic structure into larger neighborhood revitalization efforts
- Potential relocation of Hill Homes to the site adjacent to the new Brookings School (and subsequent expansion of Springfield College housing into the former Hill Homes site)
- City efforts to address documented traffic problems at Six Corners, to reroute Central Street into Hickory Street, and willingness to consider additional streetscape improvements along Walnut Street, Hancock Street and Hickory Street
- Developing plans to develop a Mill River Greenway Bike Path connecting from Springfield College to Johnny Appleseed Park and beyond.

This document identifies and provides rationale for strategic actions to revitalize the Watershops District. The Watershops District Revitalization Plan is based on the results of detailed neighborhood assessment and community input, including a 3 and ½ hour neighborhood workshop attended by twenty-three participants representing a wide cross-section of neighborhood stakeholders. The basic structure of the future Watershops District presented in this plan includes three mixed-use commercial centers with residential infill in between; new institutional and community uses; transportation and streetscaping improvements; and new alternative transportation and open space connections.

In order to ensure the success of this plan, city officials, community leaders and partners are being asked to:

- Attend an information session about the Watershops District Revitalization Plan
- Review and comment on the plan
- Participate in consultation sessions regarding goals and action items
- Provide resources (financial, human, material, etc.) that support plan implementation

Though comprehensive in scope, with delegation of projects and extensive collaboration, the Watershops District Revitalization Plan is entirely feasible and is well-poised to continue moving this great city forward.

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Context

Demographics and Census Data²

The Old Hill and Six Corners neighborhoods are located approximately one mile east of the city's Central Business District (Metro Center). Both neighborhoods are two of the smallest of the city's seventeen neighborhoods and while their total area of 514 acres represents only 2.4% of the city's total land area, their combined population of 11,238 people represents 7% of the city's total population.

Over the last decade Six Corners has had the second highest population loss of the city's neighborhood's, both in terms of numbers of people (921, only slightly behind Forest Park which has three times the total population) and percent of population loss (-12%, behind only Memorial Square). Combined, the Old Hill and Six Corners neighborhoods have lost 8% of their total population over that period while the city had a net gain of .7%.

Old Hill and Six Corners are both racially diverse communities comprised of 36% black, 31% other and 30% white populations, much more diverse than Springfield as a whole which is 22% black, 21% other and 52% white. When the Hispanic population (White and Black) is extracted from the White and Black classifications, the racial composition of the two neighborhoods is 52% black, 27% Hispanic and 22% White.

More Six Corners households speak Spanish (47%) at home than English (42%) which is the case with only three other Springfield neighborhoods. Old Hill's statistics of 73% households speaking English at home and 27% speaking Spanish is higher than Springfield's average and is the sixth highest of Springfield's neighborhoods.

Old Hill has the second highest percentage of residents under 18 years of age of all of Springfield's neighborhoods, and the third lowest percentage of residents over age 65. However, over the past decade the percentage of persons under age 18 has decreased from 39.3% to 37% while the population over age 65 has increased from 6.8% to 8.2%. While Old Hill has gotten older, Six Corners has gotten a little younger over this same time period (under 18 dropping from 32.9% to 29.4% while over 65 decreased from 10.5% to 8.9%). Still, 32% of the combined neighborhoods population is under 18 years of age (3rd highest of

² Data for this section was taken from *Springfield and its Neighborhoods - A Statistical Profile for Springfield, Massachusetts* compiled by Springfield Planning and Economic Development Department with data from the U.S. Census' 2005-2009 American Community Survey.

Springfield's neighborhoods) while 8.6% is over age 65 (5th lowest neighborhood) making this area one of Springfield's youngest.

Old Hill's Family Household/Non Family Household ratio of over 3/1 is higher than the city-wide ratio of 3/2, which is higher than Six Corners' nearly evenly 50/50 split. Combined the two neighborhoods match the city-wide 60/40% composition.

While 61% of Old Hill's families have children under 18 years of age, Six Corners' 52% is more in line with the city-wide average of 51%. 81% of Six Corners' families with children under 18 are being headed by a female with no husband present, the highest of all of Springfield's neighborhoods, as compared to Old Hill's 57% which is much closer to the city-wide figure of 50%. Only 16% of Six Corners' families with children under age 18 are headed by married couples, as compared with Old Hill's 37% and the city-wide average of 40%.

Six Corners' median family income of \$17,583 is the fourth lowest of all of Springfield's thirty-five census tracts. Its median household income of \$17,283 is the seventh lowest. Old Hill falls right in the middle (18th) for both statistics (\$39,375 and \$36,500). Six Corners has the second highest poverty rate (50%) of the city's neighborhoods (behind only the South End). Old Hill is tied with the sixth highest (31%).

Of Springfield's seventeen neighborhoods Old Hill has the fifth highest unemployment rate at 10.8%, while Six Corners has the tenth highest at 9.1%. Both are above the city's average of 7.7%. However, over the past decade Old Hill's rate has dropped 19.4% and Six Corners 51%, far exceeding the city's average of 9%.

Like the rest of Springfield, most Old Hill/Six Corners residents (16 and over) drive to work alone, although at a lesser percentage (74%) than the city average (84%). The use of public transportation to get to work is at the fourth and fifth highest rate of all seventeen Springfield neighborhoods. Six Corners workers also rank as the third highest neighborhood in terms of walking to work (9%).

In Old Hill, the number of housing units with no vehicle available dropped from 32.6% to 16.5% over the past decade. In Six Corners that number declined even more from 46.8% to 15.4%, and both neighborhoods are below the city average of 21%. However, while only 9% of the owner occupied units in these neighborhoods have no vehicle available, that

number rises to 29% for renter occupied units, still below the citywide average of 38%.

Over the last decade Old Hill saw a decline (-2.7%) in the number of housing units, only one of two neighborhoods to lose housing stock (South End -1.7%).³ While Six Corners experienced a modest 1% increase it ranked only higher than Old Hill and the South End neighborhoods. City wide Springfield experienced a 2.9% increase in housing units.

From 2000 to 2009 the percentage of owner-occupied housing units in Old Hill increased from 34% to 47%. The Six Corners neighborhood also saw an increase but at a lower rate of 18.1% to 18.9%. While Old Hill's Owner/Occupied to Renter/Occupied unit ratio of 47%/53% is close to the relatively even city averages of 52%/48%, Six Corners' has the fifth highest percentage of Renter Occupied units (81.1%) of Springfield's neighborhoods, behind only the Metro Center, South End, Memorial Square and Brightwoods neighborhoods.

70% of Old Hill Owner Occupied units are valued at less than \$150,000 as compared to Six Corners' 54% and a citywide figure of 47%. Old Hill's Median Value of \$119,200 is the 6th lowest of Springfield's 35 census tracts, while Six Corners' \$146,700 is 14th lowest.

Only 27% of Old Hill renters pay less than \$600 per month while 39% of Six Corners renters do (close to the city's 37% average). Six Corners' median gross rent of \$616 is 11th lowest of city's 35 census tracts, while Old Hill's \$833 is 6th highest. Both Old Hill and Six Corners have a housing rental vacancy rate of 24%, the highest in the city (next closest is Forest Park's 16%).

80% of Old Hill's housing stock (and 72% of Six Corners) was built prior to 1950. This is well above the city wide average of 53% and ranks Old Hill as Springfield's fourth oldest neighborhood (Six Corners' ranks as the sixth).

In summary, while the Old Hill and Six Corners neighborhoods share many similarities, they are also quite different. Both neighborhoods lost population over the past decade, but Six Corners', one of the largest of Springfield's seventeen neighborhoods, has suffered much greater population loss. While the racial make-up of the two neighborhoods is much more diverse than the city's as a whole, nearly half of Six Corners' households speak Spanish at home, while only a quarter of Old Hill's do.

³ These figures, which reflect 2005-9 Census data, do not account for loss of housing stock resulting from to the June 2011 tornado.

Old Hill and Six Corners are two of the youngest neighborhoods in Springfield with almost a third of their populations being under the age of 18 and less than 10% over 65, but while nearly three quarters of Old Hill residents live in a “family household”, almost half of Six Corners residents live in “non-family households”. Over half the families in each neighborhood have children under 18 years of age, but 81% of these families in Six Corners’ are headed by a female with no husband present, the highest of all of Springfield’s neighborhoods, and only 16% of Six Corners’ families with children under age 18 are headed by married couples, as compared with Old Hill’s 37%.

Like the rest of Springfield, most Old Hill/Six Corners residents drive to work alone, but they also walk and use public transportation at a higher percentage than most other neighborhoods. In both neighborhoods, the number of housing units with no vehicle available dropped significantly over the past decade, and both neighborhoods are now below the city average. However, almost 30% of rental units have no vehicle available, limiting access to job opportunities.

Six Corners’ median family and household income is one of the lowest in Springfield, and it has one of the city’s highest poverty rates. Even though Old Hill has the 6th highest poverty rate, its family and household incomes fall within the city’s average, over twice that of Six Corners. While the unemployment rate in both neighborhoods declined between 2005 and 2009 at a faster rate than the city average, both are still amongst the highest rates in the city.

Over the last decade, Old Hill’s housing stock declined and Six Corners had the lowest increase, well below the city average. The housing stock in these neighborhoods is among the oldest in the city with three quarters of all units having been constructed prior to 1950. While both neighborhoods saw a healthy increase in the percentage of owner-occupied housing units between 2005 and 2009, Six Corners still has the fifth highest percentage of renter occupied units in the city. Although Old Hill has well over twice the percentage of owner occupied units than Six Corners, significantly more of these units are valued at less than \$150,000, and the median value of \$119,200 is nearly 20% less than Six Corners. Six Corners has one of the highest percentages of renter occupied units in the city, and its median gross rent is over 25% lower than Old Hill’s. Both neighborhoods have the highest housing vacancy rate in the city.

Land Use and Residential Density (MassGIS Data)

Based on data provided by MassGIS, the target neighborhood (See Land Use and Residential Density Map on next page) consists largely of high density (greater than 4 dwelling units per acre) and multi-family (duplex, apartment and condo) residential uses. The neighborhood has a number of parks and open spaces, as well as schools. Commercial uses are largely located at the Six Corners Intersection (where Hancock, Ashley and Walnut Street converge), at the intersection of Hickory and Walnut/Allen Streets, and at the intersection of Pine and Central Streets. Springfield College, the Watershops Armory building (occupied mostly with light industrial uses), and the Alias Brookings school are especially notable resources in the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Workshop

An extended neighborhood workshop was held on March 9th, 2013 to further develop the ideas presented in the Rebuild Springfield Plan and to brainstorm revitalization opportunities for the target area. Twenty-three participants representing a wide cross-section of neighborhood stakeholders participated (most participants were residents, but schools, nonprofits, businesses and a church were represented as well). Participants were asked to discuss existing neighborhood conditions, to identify development opportunities and constraints, and to articulate a vision for the future of the neighborhood. Specific land use and development scenarios were discussed, as well. Some of the key results are presented here, and additional discussion of the workshop results is incorporated throughout this document, particularly the Physical Plan discussion, as well as the Vision Statement.

Resources

Parks and open spaces, as well as schools, were unanimously identified as key neighborhood resources. Parks and open spaces in and near the neighborhood include Ruth Elizabeth Park, Johnny Appleseed Park, Harriet Tubman Park, Springfield Cemetery, and Barrows Park. Educational facilities in the neighborhood include the Elias Brookings School, Springfield College, the Commonwealth Academy (former site of the Macduffie School), Veritas Preparatory Charter School, and the Springfield Public Day Middle School.

Churches and good restaurants were identified as key resources by several working tables. Some specific churches named include JC Williams Church and New Hope Church. Some specific restaurants and food types identified include Juncos & Cayey, Mex-Italia and Salvadorian.

Key Neighborhood Resources

Parks and Open Space

Schools

Churches

Good Restaurants

Small Businesses

Social Services

Dunbar Community Center/YMCA

Community Leaders/Neighborhood Councils

Gas Stations

Bus Service

Shopping at Six Corners

At least two working tables identified these additional key resources in the neighborhood:

- Small businesses, including a dentist and industrial services
- Social services, including Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services, the William DeBerry School, High Street Health Center, Center for Human Development, food pantries, Springfield Partners for Community Action, and the Springfield College Child Development Center.
- Nearby childcare centers and schools, including the Rebecca M. Johnson Visual and Performing Arts Elementary School, Square One, the New Beginnings Childcare Center, and Head Start DunbarCommunity Center/ YMCA
- Community leaders, grassroots organizers and the neighborhood councils
- Bus service
- Gas stations
- A grocery store and shopping at Six Corners

Additional resources mentioned by at least one table include momentum, architecture, history, existing community (youth) gardens on Hancock Street and Central Street, a diverse population, long-term residents invested in their neighborhood, the Mason Square Fire Station and Library, jobs and businesses at the Watershops Armory, the Mason Wright Senior Community, and affordable homes.

Constraints

- Illegal Activities and Safety*
- Neighborhood Perception*
- Empty Houses and Vacant Lots*
- Ownership Consistency/Resident Turnover*
- Absentee Landlords*
- Too Many Group Homes*
- Parking*
- Lack of Funding*

Needs

- More Policing and Foot Patrols*
 - Police Substation*
 - Job Training*
 - Single Family Homes/Homeowners*
 - Neighborhood Grocery Store with Produce*
 - Community Center*
 - Perception Change*
 - Better Lighting*
 - More Useful and Used Parks*
 - Good Restaurants and Retail Jobs*
-

Constraints and Needs

Illegal activities in the neighborhood as a whole, and in the parks in particular, arose as the single most significant constraint to neighborhood revitalization. Problems cited include drugs, prostitution, gun violence, and personal safety concerns. All working tables identified a need for more community policing and foot patrols, and all were in support of a police substation being located in the neighborhood. Ideas for the location of a police substation include the Old Foundry, Eastern Avenue or Hickory Street near Springfield College, the Old Elias Brookings School site, on a

vacant parcel along Central Street or Clark Street, and in the buildings to the north of the intersection of Pine Street and Maple Street.

After safety, neighborhood perception (both self-perception and outside perception) was identified as the next most critical constraint to redevelopment efforts. Participants at several tables also expressed a desire for adult job training (especially since the Massachusetts Career Development Institute closed), more single family homes, more homeowners and community-based ownership of neighborhood property and businesses, a neighborhood grocery store with fresh produce, and a community center.

At least two working tables expressed a desire for better street lighting (including at the parks and for bike riders), more useful parks and more active use of parks, good retail and restaurants, jobs, and senior citizen resources and activities. Two groups identified a need to rehabilitate ailing structures, and one specifically noted the need to help seniors and disabled residents fix their properties.

Constraints listed by at least one table included too many empty houses and vacant lots, problems with ownership and resident turnover, absentee landlords, too many group homes, too much Section 8 housing, illegal trash dumping along the Mill River and on vacant and abandoned properties, public perception of the police and the police's perception of the neighborhood, EBT card abuse at stores, vandalism, Brookings School-related traffic and pedestrian safety issues, speeding, parking, traffic patterns, zoning, lack of funding for revitalization, and lack of support (presumably from the city) for redevelopment. One group noted that Springfield College is not seen as engaged in the neighborhood, and one specifically mentioned challenges with absentee landlord owned two-family homes on Pine and Central Streets.

Needs noted by at least one group include more senior housing and larger affordable rental units for families, developing a stronger sense of community and community identity, stabilizing residential streets, a youth and teen center with programs and tutoring, parent engagement, exercise spaces, more shared resources and collaborations, block parties, outdoor movies, courses on wheels, counseling and addiction services, city services, after school programs, a referral service for community resources, bike routes, expanded bus service schedules, a

Opportunities

- New owner-Occupied Housing*
 - Springfield College Collaborations*
 - Johnny Appleseed Park Improvements*
 - The Mill River*
 - Pine/Central Street Intersection Development*
 - Walnut/Hickory Street Intersection*
-

farmer's market, a Bank and ATM, a gym and medical services. One table noted the need for a full service grocery store, which is currently being planned at the intersection of Walnut and State Street.

Opportunities

Major opportunities for the neighborhood noted by several working tables include new developments (e.g. along Central Street) that can become owner-occupied housing, Springfield College collaborations, and Johnny Appleseed Park, which already is well-used and could also be improved with a toddler area, more lighting and a better police presence.



New homes on Central Street offer a new opportunity for owner-occupied housing.

At least two tables felt that the taking advantage of the Mill River presents a major opportunity for the neighborhood. Redevelopment at the intersection of Pine and Central Streets and the “One Stop” block were seen as significant opportunities. Two groups felt that the possibility of repurposing of the Old Brookings School into a community center represents a major opportunity.

Opportunities noted by at least one table include beat management meetings, redevelopment of the Old Brookings school into market rate housing or office space, streetscape improvements, faith-based collaborations, city-owned properties, Six Corners intersection changes, the fame of Mulberry Street, the historical value of streets and structures, engagement with industrial properties, repurposing vacant buildings, housing development along Central and Hickory Streets, engagement with the Watershops Armory, sector meetings and neighborhood councils, collaborating with schools, and high school student service requirements, which can support programs in which students help the elderly or disabled fix their properties.

Circulation and Traffic

According to residents, car trips in the Watershops District are coming from Wilbraham, East Wilbraham, East Longmeadow, Longmeadow, Sixteen Acres, East Forest Park, and Route 91/Connecticut. Many of these vehicles are traveling to downtown and Springfield's colleges (Springfield College, Western New England University, Springfield Technical Community College and American International College).

Two of the four tables at the neighborhood workshop expressed opposition to the idea of a roundabout at Six Corners. One of these two groups asserted that there is no traffic problem at Six Corners, while the other group stated that there are traffic problems at Six Corners but a roundabout is not the solution. For a more complete discussion, see the Six Corners Intersection discussion under Physical Plan and Recommendations.

Some other comments that were made during the discussion about circulation and traffic (each identified by one working table) are:

- Some residents do not feel safe enough to walk around for fear of cross-fire;
- There are not many car or pedestrian accidents in the neighborhoods;
- Cars sometimes park on sidewalks;
- Streets lack speed and safety signs;
- There are some difficult pedestrian crossings;
- The four-way stop at the Hancock and Central Street intersection needs to be addressed;
- The Walnut Street extension should be closed;
- Ashley Street should dead end at Hancock Street;
- The intersection of Eastern Avenue and King Street (north of the Watershops District area) is difficult for pedestrians, particularly those who are disabled;
- Bicycles coming down the hill near the Watershops Armory are not stopping at the traffic signal;
- There are traffic issues at the intersection of Walnut and Allen Streets; and
- Vehicles show disrespect for crossing guards at the Brookings School.

Crime and Safety

Although crime and safety were not the subject of explicit discussion exercises at the workshop, every single working table identified these as a critical neighborhood problem. In short, residents want crime, guns and drugs out of the neighborhood. One

table identified Ashley Street as a location with significant drug dealing

activity, and another identified One Stop Liquor as a drug dealing location. Some residents suggested a need to prevent loitering in vacant lots. One



One stop liquor is on identified drug dealing location

table mapped neighborhood gang and drug activity spots, and another group mapped loitering spots.

On a different note, one resident was concerned about potential safety issues for children playing at Harriet Tubman Park. She perceived a danger that children could fall into the water. (Incidentally, this resident also complained about dog poop being left on the ground at the park.)

Inventory and Assessment

Existing Conditions Inventory

A series of inventories and maps were completed to help support analysis and decision-making. In addition to the Land Use and Residential Density map previously shown, these include a Business Inventory, Property Condition Inventory, a Tax Status map, and two maps showing Major Property Owners (one overlaid on Property Condition data, and the other overlaid on Tax Status data). These maps are described briefly below and included in the Appendix of this plan.

The Business Inventory identifies the name, type and location of each neighborhood business. The business type categories are Auto, Daycare/Educational, Groceries, Industrial, Personal Services, Professional Services, Restaurant, Retail, Trade Supplies and Other. In some cases, one building possesses multiple business types, so for the purposes of mapping, businesses were assigned the category describing that building's most prevalent business type, where applicable, or assigned the more general Retail category or a new Mixed Retail and Services category where appropriate.

The Property Condition map identifies the condition of each parcel or structure. The inventory categories are Vacant (no building on parcel); Teardown (structure with extensive damage to the roof or foundation, or excessive water damage, such that it is likely not feasible to rehabilitate the building); Potentially Functionally Obsolete, Not in Use (a vacant commercial building whose future uses are limited by the size or design of the structure); Potentially Functionally Obsolete, In Use (an occupied commercial building whose future uses are limited by the size or design of the structure); Salvageable Occupied (occupied structure that has significant damage but can be rehabilitated); Salvageable Unoccupied (unoccupied structure that has significant damage but can be rehabilitated); and finally, Surveyed, In Occupiable Condition (structure that has been surveyed and is in suitable condition for occupancy).

The Tax Status Map identifies properties that are City Owned, Foreclosed, in Land Court, or are Tax Title properties (back taxes are owed). The final two maps show Major Property Owners overlaid on Property Condition and then Tax Status. These maps list the ten largest owners of parcels mapped in the Property Condition and Tax Status categories, respectively, within the target area.

Site Assessment and Key Points

The Site Assessment map (see next page) provides a summary of available information and an analysis by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) of development opportunities within the target area. To the north, a roundabout has been proposed (first by the Rebuild Springfield Plan, and now by the City of Springfield) to address documented traffic problems at the Six Corners intersection. More generally speaking, any project to improve that intersection could potentially include streetscape improvements stretching southward along Hancock Street and/or Walnut Street. Along Hancock Street, there is considerable vacancy (vacant parcels and buildings), and in the near future, the Old Brookings School building will be vacated to move the school to its new site at the northeast corner of the Walnut / Hickory Street intersection.

Two areas with potential for mixed-use commercial development are noted. The first area, at the intersection of Walnut and Hickory Streets (“the Watershops Armory intersection”), is proposed in the Rebuild Springfield as large mixed-use development encompassing the entire block bounded by Central Street, Rifle Street, Allen Street, Hickory Street and Hancock Street. This development would be located across from Ruth Elizabeth Park and the Watershops Armory, and kitty corner from the new Brookings School. The Site Assessment proposes an expanded boundary for this mixed-use area to consider how changes at Ruth Elizabeth Park, the new Brookings School, and the Watershops Armory might augment the success of and/or benefit from the proposed mixed-use development. For example, could Ruth Elizabeth Park’s open space be redesigned in a way that is oriented toward this new mixed use development, perhaps providing a neighborhood green? Also, are there complementary changes that could be made to make the Armory more inviting, and perhaps more accessible to the community? Perhaps investment in Watershops Armory improvements could even be folded into the larger mixed-use development. Another key consideration is how a large mixed-use development might take best advantage of the resident student population living just two blocks away at Springfield College. A market study would help to tease this out and to identify other potential markets for a larger mixed-use development at this location, capitalizing on the heavy commuter passing through the neighborhood via the Central and Walnut Street corridors. City plans currently being developed to reroute Central Street directly into Hickory Street (at Hancock Street) would provide increased automobile traffic and smoother traffic flows to help support the new mixed-use development along Hickory Street, and would also result in critical public investments along Hickory Street (at the two intersections bordering the potential mixed-use development, as well as along the street where the development will be facing). It is also worth

noting that city officials have discussed dead-ending Rifle Street (at Allen Street) and creating a new pocket park at that location that would be located along the new Mill River Greenway Bike Path.

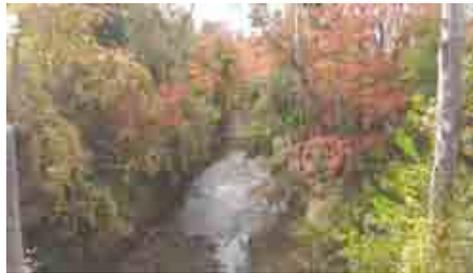
The Site Assessment also identifies a second potential mixed use district at the intersection of Central and Pine Streets. This district would be much more modest in scope, but is a good location for walkable neighborhood retail and services. The potential of this area is created by the presence of a bus stop on a small green space at the northwest corner of the intersection, as well as regular (easily navigated) geometry at the street intersection, buildings that are set right at the sidewalk (short setback distances frame the street better, make the conditions more walkable, and provide easy access from the sidewalk into the buildings), and considerable numbers of residents in close proximity (in the apartment buildings at two corners of the intersection and also nearby in the neighborhoods) who would be likely customers for any new neighborhood-serving retail. There is also potential to improve the intersection and traffic flow, as well as to enlarge and enhance the central green space, by eliminating the Florence Street extension located between Pine and Central Streets. In this scenario, the church and vacant parcel fronting Florence Street would still have vehicle access to Central Street and Pine Street, respectively.

One key issue called out by the Site Assessment is the considerable vacancy along Central Street between Pine and Hancock Streets. If there were to be a large mixed-use development from the Watershops Armory intersection to Hancock Street, the vacant parcels along Central Street would create a key opportunity for higher density housing whose residents could help support the new commercial development. Based on the results at the Neighborhood Workshop, there is strong neighborhood support for owner-occupied single family housing (to increase the proportion of

owner-occupants in this part of the city). Some participants expressed flexibility about the type of homes built, saying that duplexes or small townhome buildings would be acceptable as long as there is variation in the architecture and the buildings are owner-occupied. In addition to building types, streetscape improvements are also an important consideration along Central Street, as public investments in street trees, benches, lighting and other amenities would help to promote private investment along Central Street and support or even increase home values. Streetscape improvements along this corridor would also help to connect the two potential mixed centers.

If there were to be a large mixed-use development from the Watershops Armory intersection to Hancock Street, the vacant parcels along Central Street would create a key opportunity for higher density housing whose residents could help support the new commercial development.

Finally, in addition to previously mentioned neighborhood assets (in particular, existing parks and institutional uses), it is also worth noting that Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) and a planned full-service grocery store are located less than a mile from the target area (traveling north along Walnut Street). The Site Assessment also notes the potential relocation of the tornado-damaged Hill Homes to a new site across from the Watershops Armory and next to the new Brookings School Site. The old Hill Homes site could potentially be used for new Springfield College dormitories, which would bring Springfield College resident students even closer to the proposed mixed-use development at the Watershops Armory intersection. An extension to Harriet Tubman Park that is proposed in the Rebuild Springfield plan is also noted on the Site Assessment, as is the proposed greenway along the Mill River that would connect from Springfield College to Johnny Appleseed Park and possibly beyond. The Mill River bike path also could potentially connect to a future north/south bike path located along the Highland Division Railroad right of way.



The Mill River is the location of the proposed Mill River Bike Path

Physical Plan and Recommendations

The Watershops District Concept Plan (see following page) is based on the neighborhood assessment and community input. The basic structure of this physical plan is comprised of three mixed-use commercial centers with residential infill in between; new institutional and community uses at specific locations; transportation and streetscaping improvements; and new alternative transportation and open space connections.

Each of the proposed mixed-use centers has a different scale, character, and mix of commercial services. Residential infill on vacant and underutilized parcels is critical to the success of any new commercial development because residents within walking distance disproportionately support businesses. For example, a national study found that an average downtown resident spends upwards of \$14,000 a year in downtown stores and restaurants (vs. a downtown employee, who spends \$2,500 to \$3,500 per year)⁴. A report by the National Association of Realtors describes succinctly how residential density creates walkable neighborhoods:

“Part of the challenge of making a neighborhood genuinely walkable is providing attractive destinations nearby, such as shops or restaurants. However, ensuring that those places are both walkable and economically viable requires density. Research suggests that densities of seven units per acre or higher are needed to support a small corner store; a small supermarket requires 18 units per acre.⁵ Retail destinations located within a short walk of residences typically include markets, cafés, dry cleaners and convenience stores, all of which partially depend upon pedestrian traffic for their customer base. Higher density development contributes to the viability of a wider range of businesses, ultimately resulting in more destinations for residents to walk to. Shops, houses, restaurants and schools may be located close to each other, allowing people to go out to eat, walk to school or purchase a quart of milk within a reasonable (5-10 minute) walk.⁶”

⁴ “Downtown’s are Getting a New Life.” Oregon Business. Robin Doussard. November 2007.

⁵ Designing for Transit: A Manual for Integrating Public Transportation and Land Development in the San Diego Metropolitan Area. July 1993.

⁶ Creating Great Neighborhoods: Density in Your Community. National Association of Realtors. September 2003.

Moderate and higher density residential infill not only brings in more residents to support new commercial development, which is especially critical to the success of the large mixed use development proposed from the Watershops Armory intersection to Hancock Street, but it also supports viable mass transit. The general consensus is that 7 dwelling units per acre supports basic bus service every thirty minutes, while residential densities of 15 dwelling units per acre support premium bus service every 10 minutes.⁷ Finally, density can increase social interaction and consequently deter crime - “The concept, sometimes referred to as ‘eyes on the street,’ reflects common experience that people in homes, shops and on the street deter street crime simply through their presence. Density boosts street lufe by raising the sheer numbers of people living and working nearby.



High density infill will provide support for mass transit and frequent bus stops

Watershops Armory Intersection to Hancock Street

A key idea presented in the Rebuild Springfield plan is to pursue a large mixed-use development within the block bounded by Central Street, Rifle Street, Allen Street, Hickory Street and Hancock Street (see image below). The Watershops District Concept Plan includes an expanded area suggesting that investments in Ruth Elizabeth Park, the new Brookings School, and the Watershops Armory can complement the redevelopment of this block. At Ruth Elizabeth Park, improvements could include a new playground and neighborhood green that are oriented toward the larger development, as well as new outdoor activities and events. The park could also be a good location for a community garden.

⁷ A Toolbox for Alleviating Traffic Congestion. Institute of Transportation Engineers. 1989. Pedestrian and Transit Friendly Design. Reid Ewing. 1996. Transit Supportive Corridors and Areas. Appendix C of the Charlottesville-Albemarle Regional Transit Authority Plan. Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. August 2008.

Rebuild Springfield Plan Mixed-Use Development Concept



*The Watershops Armory Mixed-Use Concept includes the following elements 1) Reconfigured intersection to connect Hickory and Central Streets 2) Streetscape improvements 3) Enhanced retail and services for residents and visitors 4) Enhanced uses at Watershops Armory building 5) Potential site for new Brookings School 6) Repurposed existing Brookings School building 7) More active use and programming of Ruth Elizabeth Park 8) Potential Mill River trail connection 9) New mixed use development 10) New infill housing.
Source: ReBuild Springfield*

At the neighborhood workshop, participants were overwhelmingly in favor of this proposed development, partly because the One Stop Liquor store at this location is regarded as unsafe due to loitering, and also because the development presents an opportunity to bring new commercial services and a significant walking destination into the neighborhood. This development has the potential to serve as a catalyst for revitalization of the district, and could help forge new connections between the neighborhood and Springfield College as well. Some desirable features and services that were brainstormed at the neighborhood workshop include: jobs, healthcare services (e.g. eye care), a small grocery or fruit store with an outdoor open market area, a health center or gym, a coffee shop, a book store, and a movie theater. In addition, to draw Springfield College students, new places to eat and nighttime activities could be included. Activities for children might also be considered. A market study could help identify potential markets, particularly services that would be attractive to commuters driving through the area. Also, as the development is located along the proposed Mill River Greenway Bike Path, perhaps some retail could be oriented toward recreational customers. For example, perhaps a plaza with outdoor seating, an ice cream shop, and other food concessions could draw travelers off the greenway.

Public investments would be critical to the success of this proposed development, including the proposal to route Central Street into Hickory Street, and to improve safety at the Watershops Armory intersection. Streetscape improvements along Hickory Street would be located at the front face of the new development. Ideally, Hickory Street would have benches, planters, street trees and parking on both sides (space permitting). Another critical public investment is the city's development of the Mill River Greenway Bike Path, as well as the proposal to dead end rifle street and create a new pocket park. The proposed development could tie into (or even expand) this pocket park. Critically, the greenway would become another route to draw Springfield College students in the direction of the development.

Watershops Armory

The Watershops Armory, whose first floor is nearly fully occupied with light industrial uses, has been the subject of much discussion. Some residents have expressed a desire for the Armory to be more accessible to the community, perhaps with ground-floor retail. Others would like the exterior appearance of the Armory building and property to be improved. At the neighborhood workshop, some participants thought there might be an opportunity for neighborhood workforce development by engaging the Armory ownership.



The watershops armory is a key potential site for mixed use development

If a large mixed-use development does move forward on the block across the street, the Armory could make complementary investments or perhaps even be folded into the larger project. For example, the second story of the Armory is unheated and not in use, and could potentially be used for more light industrial uses or office space. Another possibility is that some of the existing first floor light industrial space could be converted into office or even retail space that can command higher rents. The Armory's management company was represented at the workshop and has expressed an interest in being part of the larger effort to revitalize the neighborhood. The Armory management is particularly interested in investments that restore the historic features of the building.

In addition, when there is tenant turnover, there is an opportunity to reconsider the types of commercial space being offered within the building. However, changing the type of commercial space offered or

offering new commercial space on the second story would require significant investment. There is also a historic preservation deed restriction on the property, which requires that any alterations to the building must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and must be approved by the Springfield Historical Commission.

Pine / Central Street Intersection

The second mixed-use commercial center identified in the Watershops District Concept Plan is at the intersection of Pine and Central Streets. This neighborhood center would be much smaller in scope and would be focused on new ground floor commercial uses that serve only the immediate neighborhood. Rather than relying on a large redevelopment effort, creation of this neighborhood center would build off existing assets (the green space, bus stop, good urban design, many residents within walking distance who are potential customers) and targeted public infrastructure improvements, and would rely on zoning changes coupled with private investments over time. The Site Assessment suggests a potential boundary for this district and also notes existing assets and vacant parcels.



The existing pocket park at the Pine Street and Central Street intersection could be expanded by eliminating the Florence Street extension

The key public infrastructure improvement for this mixed-use neighborhood center would be to expand the existing pocket park (which houses the bus stop) by eliminating the Florence Street extension located between Pine and Central Streets. This would simplify traffic flow and create a larger neighborhood green at the center of this new mixed-use area. The existing church and unused building (a residential structure with a brick commercial addition) fronting the Florence Street extension would still have access to Central Street and Pine Street, respectively. The unused building structure (see Note 2 on the Site Assessment) provides an ideal location for new neighborhood-serving retail.

At the neighborhood workshop, residents expressed a desire for good neighborhood shops and residences as well as adequate parking at this neighborhood center. Small offices offering professional or other services would also be compatible. Zoning changes to promote development of this center would allow ground floor commercial uses with residential or office space above, and would require

At the neighborhood workshop, residents expressed a desire for good neighborhood shops and residences as well as adequate parking at this neighborhood center.

new buildings to be set at the sidewalk (like the existing ones) where they are accessible to pedestrians. With these zoning changes, it is possible that the existing apartment buildings could incorporate ground floor retail space.

Parking in this area should continue to be located behind the buildings. Another possible idea is for off-street parking requirements to be eliminated or significantly reduced in this zone, with parking needs for the mixed-use center met by on-street parking and a new parking lot developed on an existing vacant parcel. Removing off-street parking requirements promotes redevelopment by taking the burden of providing parking off individual property owners and instead providing parking as a public service. Eliminating or reducing parking requirements removes a primary constraint that frequently limits the redevelopment potential of a site.

Central Street Corridor

At the neighborhood workshop, residents strongly supported development of owner-occupied single family homes on the vacant parcels along Central Street. In addition, there was some support for duplexes and perhaps small townhome buildings as long as they demonstrate architectural diversity. There were a few voices in support of new rental options, including one woman who said that there is a significant need for larger rental units that can accommodate families with children (many of the available units in the neighborhood have only one or two-bedrooms).

The redevelopment of vacant Central Street properties is progressing more quickly than the potential large mixed-use development from the Watershops Armory intersection to Hancock Street, and under the current conditions, single family owner-occupied homes are preferred along Central Street because there is strong neighborhood support and a proven market (several new single family homes recently sold along Central Street). In addition, single family owner-occupied homes will raise the neighborhood homeownership rate (currently at just 19% in Six Corners). Further, higher density housing along Central Street would be more expensive for the city to subsidize and would not fill vacant parcels as quickly as the single family development approach.

The Watershops District Concept Plan calls for single family homes along Central Street at densities of 7+ units per acre. This density was selected because it allows for small homes on small lots (approximately 6,000 square feet of lot area per unit), which is typical in walkable urban neighborhoods and is compatible with existing housing stock in these neighborhoods. In addition, densities of at least 7 units per acre help support neighborhood retail and services (e.g. 7+ dwelling units per acre is

needed to support a small corner store)⁸ and are necessary to support basic transit service (every 30 minutes).⁹ Because increasing homeownership rates is a particular concern for residents, one possible strategy is to require the new homes built along Central Street to be owner-occupied (through deed restrictions).

It is also worth noting that some of the vacant areas along Central Street properties are quite large (and deep). Where this is the case, in order to meet the specified development densities, preserve the concept of single family homes, and potentially create new



Vacant properties along Central Street could be redeveloped

neighborhood amenities, it may make sense to consider packaging multiple parcels together (including city-owned parcels and abutting vacant or underutilized privately-owned parcels) to issue an RFP for a larger Planned Development. In this case, a Planned Development could include internal streets or drives, small single family homes, and central open spaces that are accessible to these new homes.

Finally, streetscape improvements (street trees, benches, lighting, etc.) along Central Street would not only promote private investments and support home values, but would also help to connect the two proposed mixed-use centers.

⁸ Designing for Transit: A Manual For Integrating Public Transportation and Land Development in the San Diego Metropolitan Area. July 1993.

⁹ A Toolbox for Alleviating Traffic Congestion. Institute of Transportation Engineers. 1989. Pedestrian and Transit Friendly Design. Reid Ewing. 1996.

Transit Supportive Corridors and Areas. Appendix C of the Charlottesville-Albemarle Regional Transit Authority Plan.

Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. August 2008.

Six Corners Intersection

At the neighborhood workshop, some residents noted that traffic safety at Six Corners is a problem, while some participants felt strongly that there are no traffic issues at this intersection. Based on a study conducted by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), the Six Corners intersection experienced an average of 12.3



The six corner intersection presents a challenge to pedestrians

crashes per year between 2007 and 2009, and nearly 40 percent of these crashes (an average of 4.7 per year) involved a personal injury. Using a method that rates safety based on the severity of the crash (called Equivalent Property Damage Only or EPDO), the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission rated the Six Corners intersection as #45 in its Top 100 High Crash Intersections in the Pioneer Valley Region 2007-2009¹⁰ (including Hampshire and Hampden Counties). Because of the number of accidents and the irregular geometry, improving this intersection has become a high priority for the City of Springfield.

The Rebuild Springfield plan suggests a new roundabout at this intersection, and the City of Springfield has spent some time studying this potential solution. The peak measured traffic volumes (1,505 vehicles per hour¹¹) could potentially be accommodated within a single lane roundabout (the maximum volume of entering traffic that a roundabout can accommodate is 1,800 to 2,000¹²). However, it is unclear whether a single lane roundabout would work at this location because the typical volumes that a roundabout can manage are traditionally based on the assumption that the roundabout has four legs with specific (ideal) spacing, and this is not the case at Six Corners, which has five entry legs and six exit legs. Also, there are a significant number of pedestrians crossing the intersection at the peak traffic hour (157 pedestrian movements per hour, or 2.6 per minute). Because these pedestrians are likely traveling in groups, it is unlikely that this would result in significant delays for vehicles. However, any traffic backups that are caused by high pedestrian volumes would not be easily remedied (because there is no signal to tweak traffic conditions, it is difficult to fix problems once a roundabout has been constructed). The PVPC Six Corners Study (contact HAPHousing/PVPC)

¹⁰ Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. December 2012.

¹¹ PVPC Six Corners Study. 2013. Peak weekday traffic is from 3:45 to 4:45. Peak hour volumes are 1,505 vehicles, including 21 trucks and 13 bicycles, and 120 pedestrians.

¹² Roundabouts in Central Connecticut. Pat Gallagher. Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency. 2004.

Rebuild Springfield Plan Mixed-Use Development Concept



The proposed ReBuild Springfield vision for the roundabout at the Six Corners intersection would incorporate the following elements 1) Reconfigured intersection with new roundabout 2) Streetscape improvements 3) Enhanced retail and services for residents and visitors 4) Community garden 5) Alden Street as gateway and connection to Springfield College 6) Potential community facilities. Source: ReBuild Springfield

includes a capacity analysis with anticipated delay and queuing impacts for a roundabout at this location.

A significant proportion of workshop participants were strongly opposed to the proposed roundabout. Residents also identified Walnut and Hancock Streets as major pedestrian routes for residents traveling to downtown and nearby schools, bus stops, parks, stores, medical services, etc. Workshop participants noted that there is a well-used convenience store at the Six Corners intersection and expressed a desire for more retail services to be located here. Some ideas included a coffee shop, book shop, and information center for local social services and other community resources.

The use of this intersection as a major pedestrian route coupled with the community's desire for Six Corners to have inviting retail services suggests that a more urban treatment of the Six Corners intersection may be more appropriate than a roundabout.

Roundabouts are generally considered to be most appropriate for low

The use of this intersection as a major pedestrian route coupled with the community's desire for Six Corners to have inviting retail services suggests that a more urban treatment of the Six Corners intersection may be more appropriate than a roundabout.

traffic (including low pedestrian use) intersections at peripheral locations, and they tend to create less convenient pedestrian circulation than intersections, which can provide shorter walking routes and dedicated pedestrian signals. These considerations, coupled with potential delays that could be caused by high pedestrian volumes at peak-hour and unbalanced street traffic (in the PVPC study, traffic volumes on the participating streets ranged from 3,879 vehicles per weekday on Alden Street to 10,637 vehicles per weekday on Walnut Street¹⁵), suggest that the City should also explore alternatives to the proposed roundabout solution at Six Corners. The PVPC Six Corners study (contact HAP Housing/PVPC) includes some possible alternatives that could be explored.

Hancock Street

Vacant properties along Hancock Street present both a challenge and an opportunity for the Watershops District. Not including the commercial properties and Ruth Elizabeth Park at the Six Corners and Hancock/Hickory Street intersections, the section of Hancock Street addressed in the Concept Plan currently hosts a mix of vacant properties and high density residential (greater than 4 units per acre) and multi-family (duplex, apartment and condo) uses. The Brookings School, which will be vacated and moved to its new location on the Walnut Street in 2015, will leave a large developable building adjacent to Ruth Elizabeth Park (see next section for discussion of the Old Brookings School and Ruth Elizabeth Park).

Some of Hancock Street's vacant properties near Florence Street are slated to be part of a church expansion project. The remaining vacant properties, however, present a significant opportunity for new residential housing at densities that will help support frequent transit service and, critically, will provide more potential customers within a stone's throw of the proposed catalyst mixed-use development to the south.

A critical mass of residents within walking distance is important to the success of walkable downtown commercial areas. A Western Massachusetts example of the value of residential density to commercial district success that is frequently cited is Northampton; while both students and tourists also support Northampton's vibrant downtown, 25% of the city's nearly 30,000 residents live within ½ mile of downtown, and 40% of city residents live within 1 mile of downtown, providing an essential customer base for the city's downtown businesses. As previously

¹⁵ Ashley Street, a one way neighborhood street, was not included in this count due to road construction

noted, residents who live within walking distance provide disproportionate support for downtown businesses compared to other consumers.

In recent history the Watershops District's neighborhood densities have been reduced by the combined effects of blight and the 2011 tornado. New multi-family residential developments along Hancock Street would have considerable positive impact by adding new residents to the neighborhood. In addition, because Hancock Street already has a number of multi-family residential properties, this proposed use is also compatible with the existing character of the street.

Old Brookings School and Ruth Elizabeth Park

The Old Brookings School presents an enormous opportunity for the Watershops District not only because of the potential for new residential development, but also because of the potential to re-envision Ruth Elizabeth Park as a location that better serves the neighborhood.



The old Brookings School offers an enormous opportunity for residential redevelopment

At the neighborhood workshop, a community center emerged as new idea around which a consensus developed. (The Old Brookings School was the preferred location, but an alternative idea suggested the vacant parcel at the intersection of Central and Spruce Streets). Residents want this community center to house a senior center, a teen center, programs bringing elderly and younger residents together (for example, a program in which younger residents help elderly residents with home maintenance), a daycare, a gym, offices for nonprofits, clubs, movies and computers. Some residents suggested that the new community center could also be a caretaker of the park, watching over it, keeping it clean, and organizing scheduled activities that create an active outdoor space (see further discussion of Ruth Elizabeth Park below). Follow-up conversations by the Vision Coalition suggested that the community center and Ruth Elizabeth park could also house functions that complement the community and school services that will be provided by the new Brookings School (plans for the new school include an expanded playground, and potentially pavilions and barbecue grills).

Some ideas that residents have for the future re-envisioning of Ruth Elizabeth Park include tennis courts, a football field, a baseball field, a basketball court, athletic instruction, lighting (for safety), an athletic equipment storage shed, and community gardens. The idea of a community garden at this location would be particularly complementary to a community center at the Old

Brookings School, and would reinforce the reinvention of the school and Ruth Elizabeth Park as the new heart of the community. Another complementary idea for the park is to create new space for community events. Of course,

Some ideas that residents have for the future re-envisioning of Ruth Elizabeth Park include tennis courts, a football field, a baseball field, a basketball court, athletic instruction, lighting (for safety), an athletic equipment storage shed, and community gardens.

creating a more vibrant and actively used park will also help support the success of the proposed mixed-use development across the street. As previously discussed, it makes sense for any redesign of Ruth Elizabeth Park to reflect this proposed mixed-use center, perhaps by including a new playground and neighborhood green that are oriented toward development. Plans for the park should also consider the community functions that will be served by the new Brookings School grounds.

In addition to use of the Old Brookings School as a community center, neighborhood workshop participants also expressed support for new housing (including senior housing) in this building. As already discussed, new multi-family residential uses along Hancock Street are proposed by the Watershops District Concept Plan.

Walnut Street

The section of Walnut Street addressed in the Watershops District Plan is located between the Six Corners and Watershops Armory intersections. This street hosts a mix of general commercial, industrial, and high density residential and multi-family uses (see Land Use Density map). There are a handful of vacant and underutilized parcels along this street (see Property Condition Map in Appendix). Some of these properties are located within the new proposed mixed-use neighborhood centers, and the remainder are within the section of the street proposed for additional multi-family residential uses. See the Hickory Street section above for a discussion of the merits of new multi-family housing in this location. Based on the current mix of uses on the street and the presence of existing multi-family residential uses, new multi-family residential uses would be compatible with the existing street character.

Mill River Greenway Bike Path, Johnny Appleseed Park, and Harriet Tubman Park

There is strong resident support for a greenway along the Mill River, and the Armory District Concept Plan proposes one possible route. Currently, Rifle Street has a sidewalk along the side of the street across from the river, but there is no sidewalk on the side that overlooks the river. The city's plans are to construct Phase I of the greenway from Allen Street to Johnny Appleseed Park. A new pocket park at the Allen and Rifle Street intersection would be the starting point (Central and Rifle Streets are proposed to be dead-ended at this location), and Rifle Street will be reconstructed to accommodate a multi-use pathway that overlooks the river and connects to Johnny Appleseed Park.

Eventually, residents hope the greenway will connect along the Watershops Pond to Springfield College and perhaps even to a new rail trail along the abandoned Highland Division Railroad right of way. Together, the Mill River Greenway Bike Path and Highland Rail Trail have the potential to create a non-motorized alternative transportation network that weaves together large portions of the city. The Mill River Greenway Bike Path could connect cyclists all the way to the Connecticut River, while the Highland Rail Trail would cut a strong north-south alternative transportation route through the city.

At the neighborhood workshop, residents also expressed support for improvements to the well-used Johnny Appleseed Park. Some ideas included a youth rowing program that utilizes the Mill River, as well as a tennis court and a toddler area. It is worth noting that the city recently completed a round of improvements to Johnny Appleseed Park in 2011, including new playgrounds, a basketball court and other amenities. Residents also would like to have a stronger police presence and community surveillance of the park.

At Harriet Tubman Park, a proposed park extension (which appeared first in the Rebuild Springfield Plan) doubles the size of the park and improves the connection between the Watershops Armory and Springfield College. Park improvements might include safety improvements that separate children's play areas from the water. The park expansion and greenway development could potentially be completed in conjunction with Hickory streetscape improvements, which could be designed to accommodate the bike path section next to the Watershops Armory.

Catalyzing Neighborhood Revitalization

Participants at the neighborhood workshop were asked to reflect on which projects and ideas could potentially serve as catalysts for neighborhood revitalization. Key ideas included the large mixed-use development proposed from the Watershops Armory intersection to Hancock Street, public investments at Six Corners, redevelopment of the Old Brookings School (including a new community center), filling vacant lots with homes, improving and increasing use of Ruth Elizabeth Park, creating a greenway along the Mill River, and establishing community gardens. Some suggested community garden locations include Clark Street, Spruce Street, Lebanon Street, Green Street, Aldent Street, Portsmouth Street, and Ruth Elizabeth Park.

One key idea that is widely supported by residents is to introduce a police substation to the neighborhood, possibly at the Old Brookings School (other potential locations are noted in the Constraints and Needs discussion). However, it is unlikely that the city will be receptive to this idea. There was previously a police substation in the Old Hill neighborhood that was discontinued, and it was believed that this was not a productive model. Nevertheless, there is a growing commitment on the part of the neighborhood to initiate meetings with the police and to create a neighborhood public safety strategy. Developing a strong working relationship between the neighborhood and the police can lead to public safety solutions that are agreeable to all parties.

In addition to “bricks and mortar” projects, new community programs can help revitalize the neighborhood as well, and there is a strong desire for the community to be more connected. Some ideas include community efforts to help residents fix up properties in need of maintenance, community events at Ruth Elizabeth Park, and block level organization and representation at the neighborhood councils. Residents also believe that it is important to engage the City of Springfield and Springfield College – both significant landowners in the neighborhood – in revitalization efforts. The neighborhood councils and Develop Springfield are also seen as significant potential drivers of neighborhood revitalization.

Action Plan

The strategies listed here are also shown on the Action Plan – Physical Projects map.

High Priority Physical Projects

- 1. Pursue owner-occupied single family residential infill development along Central Street** at densities that support public transit and neighborhood retail services. Pursue complementary zoning changes to promote this type of development on properties that are privately owned.
- 2. Pursue infill development to build new homes on isolated vacant lots in the neighborhoods.** Using the Property Condition map as a starting point, focus on properties identified as “vacant” or “tear down” that are located within the neighborhoods (i.e. are not located on Central, Hickory, Walnut or Hancock Streets).
- 3. Redevelop the Old Brookings School** with housing and community uses that compliment the anticipated community functions in the New Brookings School. If feasible, market rate loft housing is preferable, but residents have expressed support for other options such as senior housing as well.
- 4. Realign Central/Hickory Street and install streetscape improvements** (street trees, benches, lighting, etc.) from Springfield College to Pine Street, with a particular focus on Central Street from Pine Street to Hancock Street and Hickory Street from Central Street to Walnut Street.
- 5. Redevelop the One Stop Liquor Block and Watershops Armory with mixed-uses,** including a small grocery or fruit store with an outdoor open market area, amenities that complement the adjacent Mill River Greenway Bike Path (e.g. ice cream), and other community- and commuter-serving retail and services (e.g. healthcare, gym, coffee shop, book store, entertainment, restaurants, etc.). Pursue investments that beautify the Watershops Armory property, restore key historic features, add more jobs to the neighborhood, and make the Armory more accessible to the community, possibly with ground-floor retail or office space. Next steps include a market study, as well as determining whether an urban renewal plan is appropriate.

6. **Build the Mill River Greenway Bike Path along Rifle Street (Phase I)** from the Watershops Armory to Johnny Appleseed Park. Dead-end Rifle Street at Allen Street and create a new pocket park where the bike path begins.
7. **Redesign the Six Corners intersection and install streetscape improvements on Hancock Street and Hickory Street.** The new Six Corners intersection should improve traffic safety, ensure convenient pedestrian crossings, and create space for inviting community-oriented retail services. As an extension of this investment, streetscape improvements along Hancock Street and Hickory Street can include street trees, benches, lighting, and other amenities to beautify the public realm and promote private development.

Medium Priority Physical Projects

1. **Revitalize Ruth Elizabeth Park with new recreation amenities and programs that use the park for scheduled activities.** Physical improvements to the park may include new athletic fields, community gardens, a playground, a neighborhood green, lighting (for safety), an athletic equipment storage shed, and space for community events. New programs that use the park could be organized through the proposed community center at the Old Brookings School.
2. **Rezone the Pine Street/Central Street Intersection for a small mixed-use neighborhood center,** with regulations that promote new retail and services with residential units above. Consider a pocket park expansion by eliminating the Florence Street extension located between Pine and Central Streets.
3. **Rezone Hancock Street and Walnut Street to promote high quality residential redevelopment** at densities that support frequent bus service and neighborhood retail and services. New overlay regulations (e.g. a Smart Growth Overlay District) could be established to allow this type of development in an attempt to test the market for this concept without impacting the allowable types of development under the current zoning.

4. **Expand and connect Harriet Tubman Park to the Mill River Greenway Bike Path (Phase II).** Obtain the land required for the park extension (some is city-owned and some is Springfield College-owned) and invest in park improvements, including a new Mill River Greenway Bike Path and safety improvements that separate children's play areas from the water's edge. Coordinate bike path construction with Hickory streetscape improvements, which should be designed to accommodate the bike path section along the Watershops Armory and to connect Harriet Tubman Park to Phase I of the bike path (beginning at the Rifle and Allan Street intersection).
5. **Identify neighborhood gateways** with attractive entrance signs and landscaping. Address safety at gateways within the Neighborhood Safety Plan (see Programmatic Projects #3).

Programmatic Projects

1. **Develop a neighborhood community center** to provide resources, organize activities, and help build community within the neighborhood. Some ideas for this community center include a senior center, a teen center, a daycare, a gym, offices for nonprofits, clubs, movies and computers. The community center functions should take into consideration and compliment the anticipated community functions in the new Brookings School. If located within the Old Brookings School, the community center could also be a caretaker of Ruth Elizabeth Park, watching over it, keeping it clean, and organizing scheduled activities that create an active outdoor space.
2. **Create a community garden in a central neighborhood location** such as Ruth Elizabeth Park. (Other locations for consideration include Clark Street, Spruce Street, Lebanon Street, Green Street, Alden Street, and Portsmouth Street.)
3. **Develop a comprehensive Neighborhood Safety Plan** that includes working with the Elias Brookings School on a Safe Routes to School Program, as well as pursuing strategies to increase safety at neighborhood parks, particularly Ruth Elizabeth Park and Johnny Appleseed Park.
4. **Explore the possibility of District Improvement Financing (DIF)** for the Watershops District to help implement this Action Plan. District Improvement Financing captures increased taxable value generated by revitalization efforts and channels the incremental taxes collected into further revitalization efforts within the target district.

5. **Organize “Take Back the Park” community events at Ruth Elizabeth Park** to begin to establish this centrally located park as an active and safe community space.
6. **Work with the Elias Brookings School to establish a Walking School Bus Program** that creates safe routes for children to walk to school.
7. **Develop a Home Repair Program to aid residents in need of home maintenance assistance.** Local nonprofits such as Rebuilding Together and HAP, Inc. might collaborate on such a program in the Watershops District neighborhoods. The program should also capitalize on the existing Springfield Partners for Community Action Weatherization Assistance Program, as well as the Mass Save Home MPG Program.
8. **Build capacity for the city and the Maple High Six Corners and Old Hill Neighborhood Councils to promote, support and utilize block-level neighborhood organization** (e.g. “street corner meetings”), service and representation. Engage, train and involve neighborhood residents in implementation of this Action Plan.
9. **Work with the city to address the high quantity of group homes** in the neighborhood, and work with the state representative and senator to address state policies relative to the siting of group homes.
10. **Explore with the city the possibility of negotiating with neighborhood institutional uses to make “payments in lieu of taxes”.** New payments in lieu of taxes can potentially be appropriated to directly aid neighborhood revitalization efforts and supplement funds captured through District Improvement Financing (see Programmatic Projects #4).
11. **Reach out to neighborhood businesses to assess interest in establishing a Neighborhood Business Association** to serve as an advocacy group focused on the economic revitalization of the Watershops District.
12. **Create a Neighborhood Branding Program** to improve neighborhood identity and perception, both by neighborhood residents as well as those who live outside the neighborhood. Capitalize on the Dr. Seuss history of the neighborhoods (including Mulberry Street, just west of the Watershops District).

A PPENDIX

WATERSHOPS DISTRICT

REVITALIZATION PLAN

Springfield, Massachusetts – June 2013

The Vision Coalition & HAP Housing

Prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Contents

- Analysis Maps
 - Business Inventory
 - Property Condition (followed by description of map categories)
 - Major Property Owners, by Property Condition
 - Major Property Owners, by Tax Status
- Detailed Demographic Profile of Six Corners and Old Hill Neighborhoods
- Summary of Major Moves from the Rebuild Springfield Plan
- Complete March 9th 2013 Neighborhood Workshop Results

Watershops District Business Inventory

BASEMAP

PARK AND OPEN SPACE

BUILDING USE

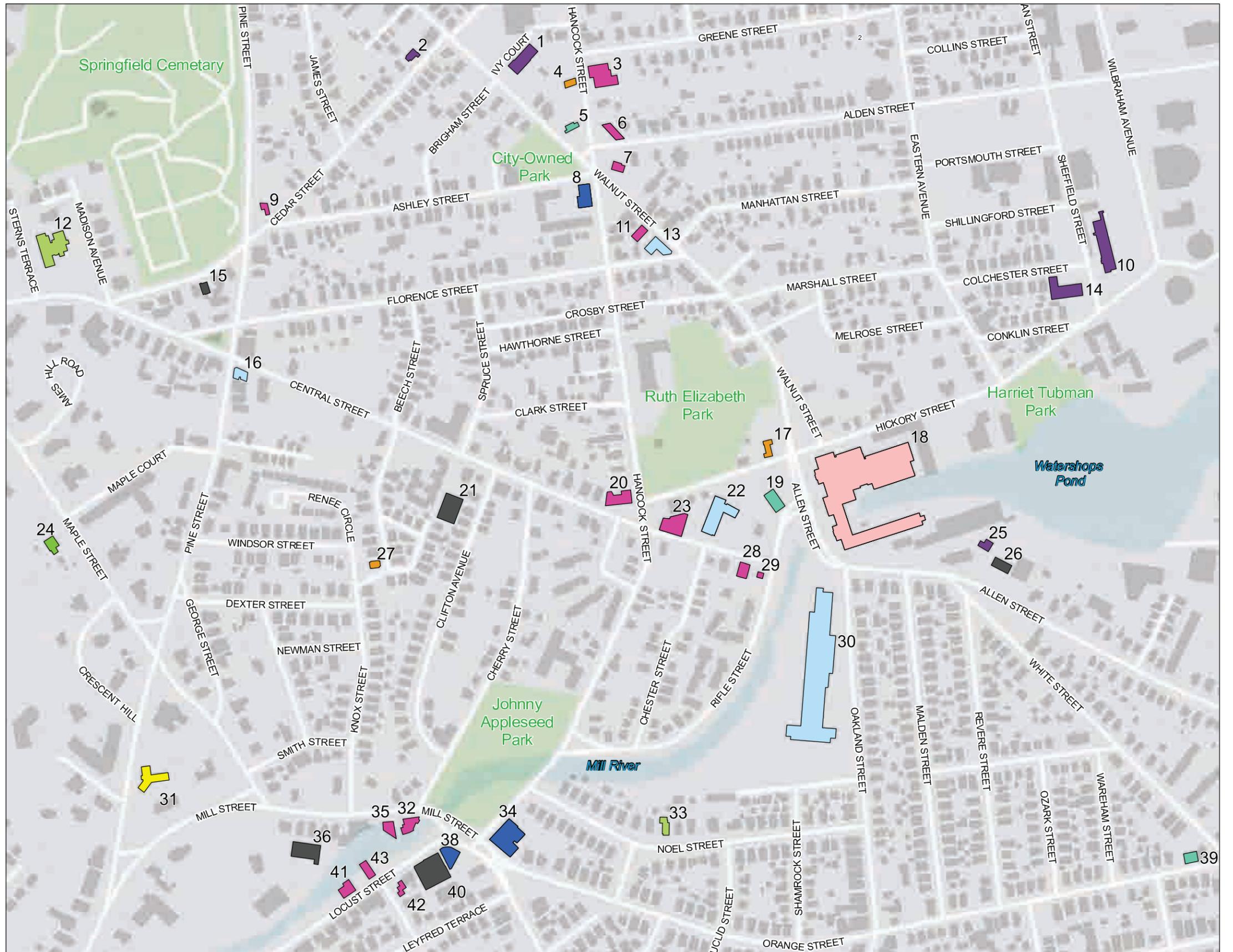
- AUTO SERVICES
- DAYCARE/EDUCATIONAL
- GROCERIES
- INDUSTRIAL
- MIXED RETAIL AND SERVICES
- PERSONAL SERVICES
- PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
- RESTAURANT
- RETAIL
- TRADE SERVICES AND SUPPLIES
- OTHER

BUSINESS INVENTORY

ID	Name*	Building Use
1	Thomas P. Ryland & Co (Landscaper)	Trade Services and Supplies
2	Thomas P. Ryland & Co (Landscaper)	Trade Services and Supplies
3	Brown's Autobody	Auto Services
4	Hancock Market	Groceries
5	Six Corners Pizza	Restaurant
6	Cligo	Auto Services
6	Touchless Car Wash	Auto Services
7	Sunoco	Auto Services
8	Six Corners Barber (Personal Services)	Mixed Retail and Services
8	Arita Mini Market (Groceries)	Mixed Retail and Services
8	Uptown Bills and Payments (Personal Services)	Mixed Retail and Services
9	Junior's Auto Body Repair & Towing	Auto Services
10	United Plumbing	Trade Services and Supplies
11	Mascaro's Service Station & Towing	Auto Services
12	Head Start	Daycare/Educational
13	Dusty Walnut Thrift	Retail
14	United Plumbing	Trade Services and Supplies
15	Karas Construction	Other
16	Summit Package & Convenience Store	Retail
17	Summit Package & Convenience Store	Groceries
18	D & R Ready Professional Services	Industrial
18	Mainline Industries (Manufacturer of Nonwoven Disposable Materials)	Industrial
18	ETS - Human Resources (Professional Services)	Industrial
18	Bio-Catalytic Industrial	Industrial
18	M & E Mechanical	Industrial
18	Aero-Bond (Aero Space Manufacturing)	Industrial
18	Poly Metal Finishing	Industrial
18	L & G Signs	Industrial
18	Custom Packaging	Industrial
19	Puerto Rico Restaurant & Bakery	Restaurant
20	Kevirt's Towing	Auto Services
21	Santanello Oil Company (Heating Oil)	Other
22	Chicharron Restaurant (Restaurant)	Retail
22	Fu Soun Chinese Restaurant (Groceries)	Retail
22	Reydl Market	Retail
22	1 Stop Discount Liquor	Retail
22	Al's Easy Check Cashing	Retail
22	Dollar Stop	Retail
23	Central Hills Storage	Other
23	Wholesale Auto Outlet	Auto Services
24	Acupuncture Center of New England	Personal Services
25	CB Electric	Trade Services and Supplies
26	L & J Linen Services	Other
27	Knox Food Market	Groceries
28	Hallmark Car Audio & Security (Electronics/Specialty Retail)	Auto Services
29	Mobile Electronics Installation	Auto Services
30	Kakley True Value Hardware	Retail
31	CHD Health Services (Medical)	Professional Services
32	Miranda Autobody (Auto Repair)	Auto Services
33	Acorn Learning Center (Preschool)	Daycare/Educational
34	Red Apple Chinese (Restaurant)	Mixed Retail and Services
34	Zona Mobile (Wireless Store)	Mixed Retail and Services
34	Alisimo Barber (Personal Services)	Mixed Retail and Services
34	Amaris Market (Groceries)	Mixed Retail and Services
35	Miranda Autobody (Auto Repair)	Auto Services
36	Recovery Zone (Repossessions)	Other
38	Mexican Food (Restaurant)	Mixed Retail and Services
38	1 Stop T's and Accessories (Retail)	Mixed Retail and Services
39	Lula Parola	Restaurant
40	New England Blue Print Paper CO (Services/Retail)	Other
41	UJ Wholesale Automobile (Auto Sales)	Auto Services
42	VJ's Tires & Rims (Auto Sales)	Auto Services
43	Automotive Sales (Auto Sales)	Auto Services

DATA SOURCES:
Data collected by PVPC interns. Field work completed February 1, 2013. This map is based on the best available data. All information is subject to field verification.

* See parenthetic notes for more information about individual businesses.



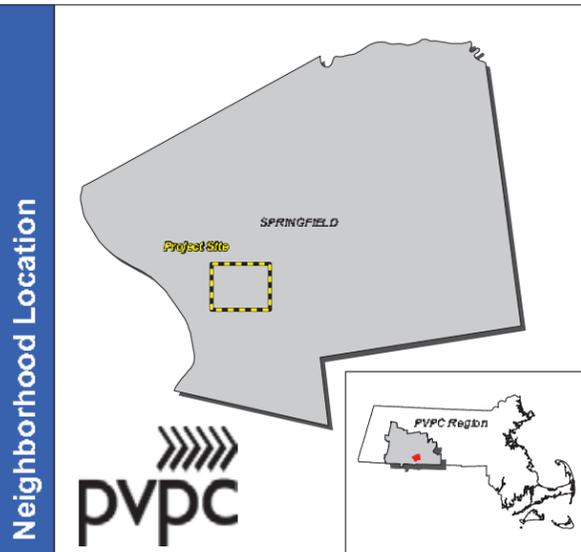
Watershops District Property Condition

BASEMAP

-  PARK AND OPEN SPACE
-  SCHOOLS
-  BUS ROUTES (PVTA)

PARCEL STATUS

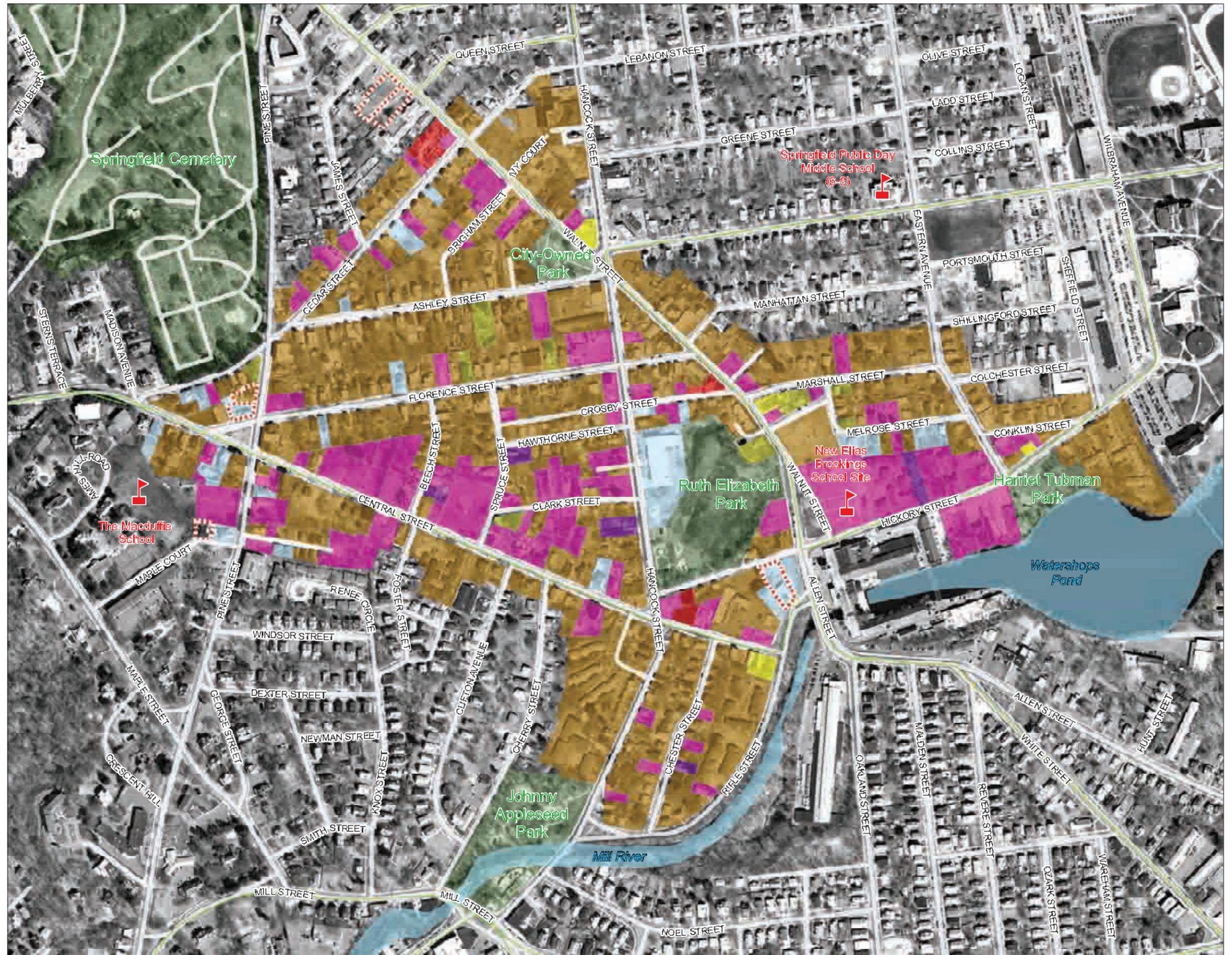
-  BROWNFIELDS
-  VACANT
-  TEARDOWN
-  POTENTIALLY FUNCTIONALLY OBSOLETE, NOT IN USE
-  POTENTIALLY FUNCTIONALLY OBSOLETE, IN USE
-  SALVAGEABLE UNOCCUPIED
-  SALVAGEABLE OCCUPIED
-  SURVEYED, IN OCCUPIABLE CONDITION



DATA SOURCES:
Parcel Status data was obtained from a windshield survey conducted November 27 & 28 2012 and January 10 & 14 2013 by PVPC staff.

Bus Route data obtained from the PVTA.

This map is based on the best available data.
All information is subject to field verification.



Watershops District Major Property Owners, by Property Condition

BASEMAP

 PARK AND OPEN SPACE

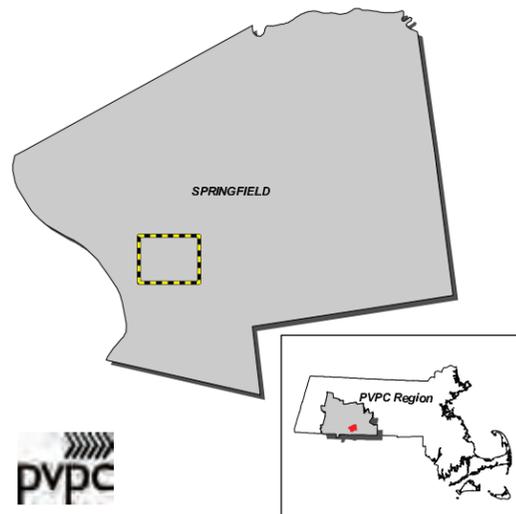
PARCEL STATUS

-  VACANT
-  TEARDOWN
-  POTENTIALLY FUNCTIONALLY OBSOLETE, NOT IN USE
-  POTENTIALLY FUNCTIONALLY OBSOLETE, IN USE
-  SALVAGEABLE UNOCCUPIED

PROPERTY OWNERS

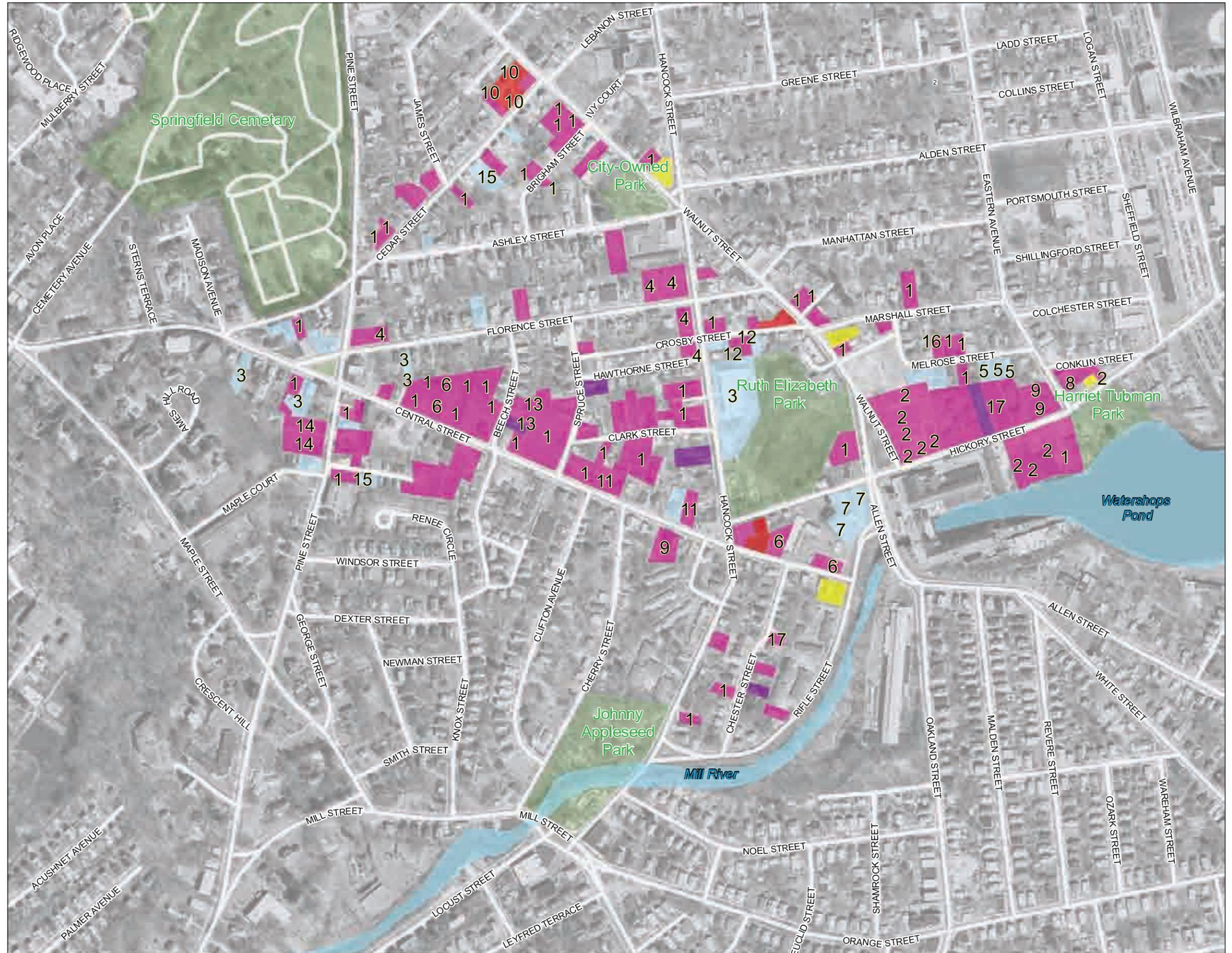
ID	OWNER NAME	STATUS	NUMBER OF PROPERTIES
1	SPRINGFIELD CITY OF	VACANT	42
2	SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE	VACANT	11
3	SPRINGFIELD CITY OF	SALVAGEABLE UNOCCUPIED	5
4	REVIVAL TIME EVANGELISTIC CENTER	VACANT	5
5	SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE	SALVAGEABLE UNOCCUPIED	4
6	SPRINGFIELD REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	VACANT	4
7	BECKETT & TAYLOR ENTERPRISES LLC	SALVAGEABLE UNOCCUPIED	3
8	DENSON MICHAEL G.	VACANT	3
9	SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY	VACANT	3
10	THOMAS P. RYLAND COMPANY	POTENTIALLY FUNCTIONALLY OBSOLETE, IN USE	3
11	AU HASSAN	VACANT	2
12	BERSDOLL JUDY	VACANT	2
13	BROWN GREGORY	VACANT	2
14	COMMON WEALTH ACADEMY HOLDINGS LLC	VACANT	2
15	DEUTSCHE BANK NATIONAL TRUST COMPANY	SALVAGEABLE UNOCCUPIED	2
16	JENNINGS ROBERT J & ANNIE L.	VACANT	2
17	RIFLE STREET LIMITED PARTNERSHIP	VACANT	2

Neighborhood Location



DATA SOURCES:
Parcel Status data was obtained from a windshield survey conducted November 27 & 28 2012 and January 10 & 14 2013 by PVPC staff. 'Property Owners' list based off a query of the 171 parcels included in the: 'VACANT', 'TEARDOWN', 'POTENTIALLY FUNCTIONALLY OBSOLETE - NOT IN USE', 'POTENTIALLY FUNCTIONALLY OBSOLETE - IN USE', 'SALVAGEABLE UNOCCUPIED' categories.

This map is based on the best available data. All information is subject to field verification.



Watershops District Major Property Owners, by Tax Status

BASEMAP

 PARK AND OPEN SPACE

TAX STATUS

 CITY OWNED

 FORECLOSED

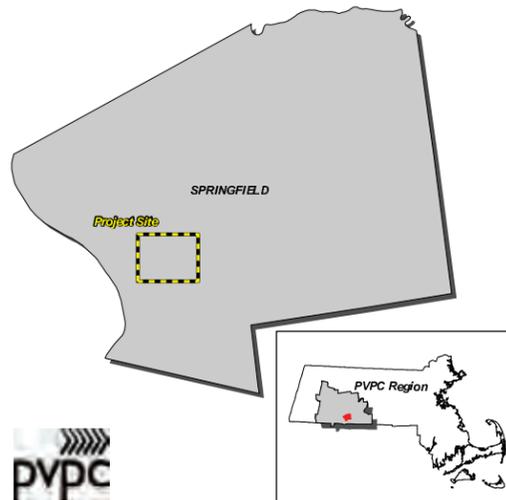
 LAND COURT

 TAX TITLE

MAJOR PROPERTY OWNERS

RANK	OWNER NAME	NUMBER OF PROPERTIES (in Project Site)
1	SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE	94
2	SPRINGFIELD CITY OF	90
3	SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY	33
4	COMMONWEALTH ACADEMY HOLDINGS LLC	18
5	HICKORY REALTY CORPORATION	13
6	MORRISSEY JAMES B JR & JOHN SWIFT	11
7	ANDREWS EARL TRUSTEE	7
8	SPRINGFIELD REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	5
9	KIBBE DEAN T	5
10	HOLLE RAYMOND G	6

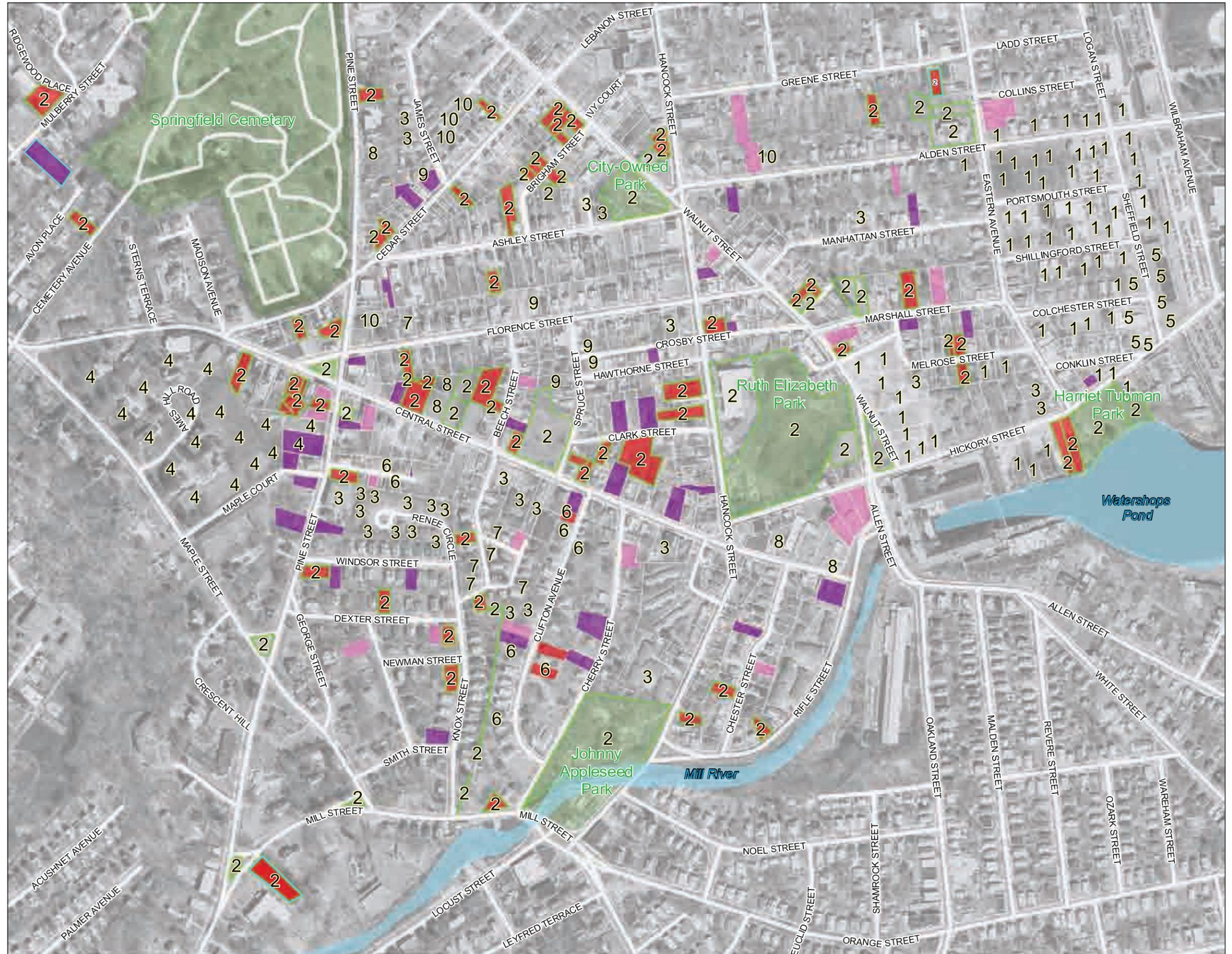
Neighborhood Location



DATA SOURCES:

Tax and Foreclosure records for 1,173 properties within the project site were obtained by Kevin Doyle (PVPC Intern) from the City of Springfield on 11/20/12. A direct query from this dataset produced the 'Major Property Owners' List (which was summarized to the top 10 in this map, and excluded properties with no given Owner Name).

This map is based on the best available data. All information is subject to field verification.



Property Condition Map Categories

Watershops District Revitalization Plan, Six Corners and Old Hill Neighborhoods

Vacant

These are vacant, potentially developable parcels.

Teardown

These properties contain structures with damage that is so extensive that it is not feasible to salvage and redevelop the building. Criteria include: Extensive roof damage, caving in or significantly deteriorating walls or foundation, and signs of extensive water damage.

Potentially Functionally Obsolete (Not In Use / In Use)

Vacant or occupied commercial property with a structure whose future uses are very limited (i.e. the structure cannot be easily reused for commercial or other purposes). These properties often have inexpensive, single story commercial buildings and are possible candidates for tear down and redevelopment.

Salvageable (Unoccupied / Occupied)

These are unoccupied or occupied structures with extensive damage that require redevelopment. A structure is considered salvageable if it can be rehabilitated with significant investment in order to be suitable for occupancy (i.e. the structure does not meet the criteria for a tear down). Signs that a structure can be salvaged include having an intact roof, exterior walls and foundation. (Note: There are some structures that were determined to be salvageable, but which have interiors or structural elements that are exposed to the outdoors and therefore may not continue to be salvageable.)

Surveyed, In Occupiable Condition

Property was reviewed in windshield survey. Property is in use/occupied and does not require redevelopment. Note that the actual condition of these properties varies widely, and some do require significant maintenance investment.

Detailed Demographic Profile of Six Corners and Old Hill Neighborhoods

Watersheds District Revitalization Plan

Old Hill/Six Corners Demographics

Data for this evaluation was taken from *Springfield and its Neighborhoods - A Statistical Profile for Springfield, Massachusetts* compiled by Springfield Planning and Economic Development Department with data from the U.S. Census' 2005-2009 American Community Survey.

The Old Hill and Six corners neighborhoods are located approximately one mile east of the city's Central Business District (Metro Center). Both neighborhoods are two of the smallest of the city's seventeen neighborhoods and while their total area of 514 acres represents only 2.4% of the city's total land area, their combined population of 11,238 people represents 7% of the city's total population.

Over the last decade Six Corners has had the second highest population loss of the city's neighborhood's, both in terms of numbers of people (921, only slightly behind Forest Park which has three times the total population) and percent of population loss (-12%, behind only Memorial Square). Combined, the Old Hill and Six Corners neighborhoods have lost 8% of their total population over that period while the city had a net gain of .7%.

Old Hill and Six Corners are both racially diverse communities comprised of 36% black, 31% other and 30% white, much more diverse than Springfield as a whole which is comprised of 22% black, 21% other and 52% white. When the Hispanic population (White and Black) is extracted from the White and Black classifications, the racial composition of the two neighborhoods is 52% black, 27% Hispanic and 22% White.

More Six Corners households speak Spanish (47%) at home than English (42%) which is the case with only three other Springfield neighborhoods. Old Hill's statistics of 73% households speaking English at home and 27% speaking Spanish is higher than Springfield's average and is the sixth highest of Springfield's neighborhoods.

Old Hill has the second highest percentage of residents under 18 years of age of all of Springfield's neighborhoods, and the third lowest percentage of residents over age 65. However, over the past decade the percentage of persons under age 18 has decreased from 39.3% to 37% while the population over age 65 has increased from 6.8% to 8.2%. While Old Hill has gotten older, Six Corners has gotten a little younger over this same time period (under 18 dropping from 32.9% to 29.4% while over 65 decreased from 10.5% to 8.9%). Still, 32% of the combined neighborhoods population is under 18 years of age (3rd highest of Springfield's neighborhoods) while 8.6% is over age 65 (5th lowest neighborhood) making this area one of Springfield's youngest.

Old Hill's Family Household/Non Family Household ratio of over 3/1 is higher than the city-wide ratio of 3/2, which is higher than Six Corners' nearly evenly 50/50 split. Combined the two neighborhoods match the city-wide 60%/40% composition.

While 61% of Old Hill's families have children under 18 years of age, Six Corners' 52% is more in line with the city-wide average of 51%. 81% of Six Corners' families with children under 18 are being headed by a female with no husband present, the highest of all of Springfield's neighborhoods, as compared to Old Hill's 57% which is much closer to the city-wide figure of 50%. Only 16% of Six Corners' families with children under age 18 are headed by married couples, as compared with Old Hill's 37% and the city-wide average of 40%.

Six Corners' median family income of \$17,583 is the fourth lowest of all of Springfield's thirty-five census tracts. Its median household income of \$17,283 is the seventh lowest. Old Hill falls right in the middle (18th) for both statistics (\$39,375 and \$36,500). Six Corners has the second highest poverty rate (50%) of the city's neighborhoods (behind only the South End). Old Hill is tied with the sixth highest (31%).

Of Springfield's seventeen neighborhoods Old Hill has the fifth highest unemployment rate at 10.8%, while Six Corners has the tenth highest at 9.1%. Both are above the city's average of 7.7%. However, over the past decade Old Hill's rate has dropped 19.4% and Six Corners 51%, far exceeding the city's average of 9%.

Like the rest of Springfield, most Old Hill/Six Corners people (16 and over) driving to work alone, although at a lesser percentage (74%) than the city average (84%). They also use of public transportation to get to work at the fourth and fifth highest rate of all seventeen neighborhoods. Six Corners workers also rank as the third highest neighborhood in terms of walking to work (9%).

In Old Hill the number of housing units with no vehicle available dropped from 32.6% to 16.5% over the past decade. In Six Corners that number declined even more from 46.8% to 15.4%, and both neighborhoods are below the city average of 21%. However, while only 9% of the owner occupied units in these neighborhoods have no vehicle available, that number rises to 29% for renter occupied units, still below the citywide average of 38%.

Over the last decade Old Hill saw a decline (-2.7%) in the number of housing units, only one of two neighborhoods to lose housing stock (South End -1.7%). While Six Corners experienced a modest 1% increase it ranked only higher than Old Hill and the South End neighborhoods. City wide Springfield experienced a 2.9% increase in housing units.

From 2000 to 2009 the percentage of owner-occupied housing units in Old Hill increased from 34% to 47%. The Six Corners neighborhood also saw an increase but at a lower rate of 18.1% to 18.9%. While Old Hill's Owner/Occupied to Renter/Occupied unit ratio of 47%/53% is close to the relatively even city averages of 52%/48%, Six Corners' has the fifth highest percentage of Renter Occupied units (81.1%) of Springfield's neighborhoods, behind only the Metro Center, South End, Memorial Square and Brightwoods neighborhoods.

70% of Old Hill Owner Occupied units are valued at less than \$150,000 as compared to Six Corners' 54% and a citywide figure of 47%. Old Hills Median Value of \$119,200 is the 6th lowest of Springfield's 35 census tracts, while Six Corners' \$146,700 is 14th lowest.

Only 27% of Old Hill Renters pay less than \$600 per month while 39% of Six Corners renters do (close to the city's 37% average). Six Corners' median gross rent of \$616 is 11th lowest of city's 35 census tracts, while Old Hill's \$833 is 6th highest. Both Old Hill and Six Corners have a housing vacancy rate of 24%, the highest in the city (next closest is Forest Park's 16%).

80% of Old Hill's housing stock (and 72% of Six Corners) was built prior to 1950. This is well above the city wide average of 53% and ranks as Springfield's fourth oldest neighborhood (Six Corners' ranks as the sixth).

Summary

While the Old Hill and Six Corners neighborhoods share many similarities, they are also quite different. Both neighborhoods lost population over the past decade, but Six Corners' loss has been much greater, one of the largest of Springfield's seventeen neighborhoods. While the racial make-up of the two neighborhoods is much more diverse than the city's as a whole, nearly half of Six corners' household speak Spanish at home, while only a quarter of Old Hill's do.

Old Hill and Six Corners are two of the youngest neighborhoods in Springfield with almost a third of their population being under the age of 18 and less than 10% over 65, but while nearly three quarters of Old Hill residents live in a "family household", almost half of Six Corners residents live in "non-family households". Over half of the families in each neighborhood have children under 18 years of age, but 81% of these families in Six Corners' are being headed by a female with no husband present, the highest of all of Springfield's neighborhoods, and only 16% of Six Corners' families with children under age 18 are headed by married couples, as compared with Old Hill's 37%.

Like the rest of Springfield, most Old Hill/Six Corners residents drive to work alone, but they also walk and use public transportation at a higher percentage than most other neighborhoods. In both neighborhoods the number of housing units with no vehicle available dropped significantly over the past decade, and both neighborhoods are now below the city average. However, almost 30% of rental units have no vehicle available, limiting access to job opportunities.

Six Corners' median family and household income is one of the lowest in Springfield, and it has one of the city's highest poverty rates. However, even though Old Hill has the 6th highest poverty rate, its family and household incomes fall within the city's average, over twice that of Six Corners. While the unemployment rate in both neighborhoods declined at a faster rate than the city average, both are still amongst the highest rates in the city.

Over the last decade Old Hills' housing stock declined and Six Corners had the lowest increase, well below the city average, and the areas housing stock remains some of the oldest in the city with three quarters of the units being constructed prior to 1950. While both neighborhoods saw a healthy increase in the percentage of owner-occupied housing units, Six Corners still has the fifth highest percentage of renter occupied units in the city. Old Hill has significantly more owner occupied units valued at less than \$150,000 than Six Corners or the city, and its' median value of \$119,200 is nearly 20% less than Six Corners homes. However Six Corners' median gross rent is over 25% lower than Old Hill's \$833, 6th highest in the city. Both neighborhoods have the highest housing vacancy rate of in the city.

Summary of Major Moves from the Rebuild Springfield Plan

Watershops District Revitalization Plan

Major Move 1

Transform Housing

Key Initiative

Develop A Strategic And Coordinated Plan For Housing Initiatives And Projects

Goal – To bring partners together to develop a coordinated strategy to:

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

Participants

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

Action Steps

1. Bring the various agencies and organizations that are providing housing development and programs together to commit to the creation of a housing strategy (not primarily a matter of financing, but of organization, vision, and a comprehensive coordinated approach).
2. Identify needs, capabilities and resources of the areas housing, programs and resources and identify shortfalls
3. Create a shared comprehensive long-term strategy for housing that will focus and leverage existing resources and efforts for maximum impact and movement toward a long-range vision for housing in the area meeting needs, strengthening neighborhoods.

- a. Identify housing needs and establish an appropriate balance
 - b. Introduce new housing types
 - c. Identify specific sites and projects
 - d. Prioritize needs and projects
 - e. Identify funding sources
 - f. Identify capacity of housing stakeholders
 - g. Coordinate partnerships and project responsibilities
 - h. Support existing programs
 - i. Allow housing implementation to happen at the community scale
 - j. Organize and integrate all of the above in a bold new vision that embraces and transforms the future
4. Support, create, and expand partnerships and programs to address housing needs in a coordinated way at a community scale
 5. Identify specific sites, projects, development opportunities and coordinate with other public investments (infrastructure, schools and community facilities) to have a transformative impact on the community
 - a. Repurposed Brookings School building – While not meeting school building standards its high ceilings, historic architecture, and floor plan, make this building an ideal space for studio, one, and two-bedroom residential units.
 - b. Development of a new Elias Brookings School – A new community-based school at the corner of Walnut and Hickory Streets would:
 - i. provide a strong anchor for the entire district
 - ii. create a link with Springfield College
 - iii. further promote school involvement within the community and vice versa
 - iv. development of a protected outdoor space for student activities
 - v. accommodating a shared community facility such as a gym
 - vi. connect public space from Ruth Elizabeth Park to park land along Watershops Pond
 - c. Relocated Hill Homes – rebuild tornado damaged homes in a new location along Hickory St. to:
 - i. build better quality housing
 - ii. maintaining access to the waterfront via improved park space
 - iii. opportunity to rent or own in attached or detached structures interspersed throughout the neighborhood.
 - d. Park and Open Space Improvements –
 - i. Redesigning and activate park (Ruth Elizabeth Playground?)
 - ii. integrate of community gardens
 - iii. better lighting
 - iv. higher levels of police/neighborhood watch patrolling
 - v. land east of Watershops Armory - new parkland that could link to Wesson Park
 - e. Retail and mixed use – Create mixed-use and retail structures near the Watershops Armory
 - i. provide quality living options for workforce housing
 - ii. serves as another key anchor in the areas redevelopment
 - iii. strengthen the Watershops Armory building as a community anchor.

- f. Potential expansion of Springfield College’s western boundary –
 - i. Create and maintain a dialogue and partnership between Springfield College, area residents, and the City to ensure mutually beneficial expansion.
 - g. Streetscape Improvements – along Hickory Street
 - i. reconfiguration of intersections at Allen Street and Central Street
 - ii. provide a unifying link for this key area functioning as an amenity for new housing, neighborhood retail, a new Brookings school, the Watershops Armory building, and Springfield College.
6. Explore new and creative financing tools to promote quality housing

Project Location

Hickory Street and Central Street Corridors, Walnut Street, the northern sections of Old Hill, and vacant, abandoned, and city-owned property throughout the District also present opportunities for new infill housing development as part of a coordinated strategy.

Key Initiative

New Infill Housing

Goal - To support additional homeownership, home rehabilitation, and new infill housing development by:

- a. Exploring pilot projects in heavily damaged areas
- b. Streamlining infill housing development with vacant lot management strategies
- c. Continuing to build on and enhance the partnership and collaboration between area housing, neighborhood, and service organizations
- d. Broadening the impact of successful existing program geographically and in terms of residents benefitted
- e. Identifying additional resources to support successful programs
- f. Reinforcing the tight-knit community fabric of District 2 neighborhoods by supporting homeowners that are engaged and invested in the neighborhood and discouraging absentee landlords and investors
- g. Closing the gap between what it costs to build or renovate a home and the price it can command. As the neighborhood strengthens and values rise, this gap will shrink and investment and development activity will become self-sustaining

Participants

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

- Area Churches
- Area Employers
- Springfield College
- American International College

Action Steps

1. Determine which existing programs are the most successful with the most potential to expand and scale up.
2. Create a narrative that can be used to tell about exciting successes and raise new funds
3. Target grant monies for existing housing organizations to pursue as a consortium in support of existing successful programs
4. Identify specific sites or a collection of sites (within the above identified corridors) to implement a pilot infill housing development project and solicit organizations at a national scale who are interested in bringing energy, innovation, and resources to the recovery effort
5. Tie housing work, priorities, and needs with other volunteer programs to identify sweat equity opportunities
6. Develop a public method to monitor and share progress to build ownership in the investment and shape a confidence in positive change
7. Land Banks
 - a. Determine legal authority necessary to acquire, manage and dispose of property, and support other functions a land bank might provide
 - b. Identify funding, including potential self supporting revenue sources through land bank activities.
 - c. Establish organizational structure
 - d. Identify critical policy goals

Project Location

- Central Street corridor represents the primary focus for new infill housing development
- Walnut Street corridor and northern sections of the Old Hill neighborhood are also important areas to focus new infill housing, both because of the available infill development opportunities in these areas, and existing housing partnerships focusing efforts here
- Vacant, abandoned, and city-owned properties are scattered throughout District 2 and present opportunities for new infill housing development

Key Initiative

Preservation as a Revitalization Tool

Participants

- Springfield Preservation Trust
- Springfield Historical Commission
- Massachusetts Historical Commission
- Preservation Massachusetts
- National Park Service (through Springfield Armory National Historic Site)
- National Trust for Historic Preservation

- Springfield Development Services Division
 - Office of Planning and Economic Development
 - Office of Housing
- Neighborhood groups
- Community organizations
- Housing developers
- Corporate and private donors

Action Steps

1. Increase advocacy for preservation with the City and the general public
 - a. Identify staff and volunteer capacity to support expanded technical assistance, outreach, education, and identify creative preservation resources
 - b. Advocate for projects in tornado-impacted areas eligible for competitive state historic tax credits
 - c. Fill vacant appointments to Springfield Historical Commission
2. Establish a revolving loan fund for preservation
 - a. Establish a capital pool and source of operating income
 - b. Create an oversight structure
 - c. Develop and formalize partnerships with neighborhoods, housing developers ,and community organizations
 - d. Define criteria for eligibility to maximize impact and support long-term goals
3. Supplement traditional preservation resources with programs for weatherization, energy efficiency, and green building
 - a. Identify available resources
 - b. Compile and advertise available resources as potential preservation tools
4. Develop an emergency weatherization and stabilization program
 - a. Develop criteria to identify properties with historic value outside of existing designated historic districts
 - b. Work with Springfield Preservation Trust to identify properties especially at risk for demolition
 - c. Review legal requirements and policies to determine where and how available resources can support interim stabilization and weatherization for at-risk properties

Location

- damaged buildings in the Maple Hill Historic District including the MacDuffie campus and 210 Maple Street
- damaged historic but undesignated buildings throughout the Six Corners neighborhood.

Major Move 2

Expand Economic Opportunity

Goals -

- Small Business and Entrepreneur Support for Startups and Existing Businesses
- Connecting Employers, Workforce Training, and Employees Enhanced Neighborhood Businesses
- Clustering Around Activity Centers
- Strategic Public Investments to Support Neighborhood Businesses Promotion and Marketing of the Community
- Neighborhood Events
- Public Realm Improvements and Programming
- Support and Shared Promotion of Local Businesses

Key Initiatives

Job Training and Small Business Support

- Small Business and Entrepreneur Support for Startups and Existing Businesses
- Connecting Employers, Workforce Training, and Employees Enhanced Neighborhood Businesses
- Clustering Around Activity Centers
- Strategic Public Investments to Support Neighborhood Businesses Promotion and Marketing of the Community
- Neighborhood Events
- Public Realm Improvements and Programming
- Support and Shared Promotion of Local Businesses

Key Initiative

Job Training and Small Business Support

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

Key Participants

- Springfield Technical Community College (STCC)
- STCC Technology Park
- Scibelli Enterprise Center
 - Springfield Business Incubator
 - Western Mass Regional Small Business Development Center
 - Western Massachusetts SCORE
- Regional Employment Board
- FutureWorks career center
- Springfield College
- University of Massachusetts
- American International College
- Massachusetts Career Development Institute
- Western Massachusetts Development Collaborative (WMDC)

- Massachusetts Office of Business Development
- YouthBuild Springfield
- Springfield Chamber of Commerce and Affiliated Chambers of Commerce of Greater Springfield
- Massachusetts Latino Chamber of Commerce
- Develop Springfield
- Springfield Development Services Division – Office of Planning and Economic Development
- River Valley Investors
- Valley Venture Mentors

Action Steps

1. Small Business and Entrepreneur Support for Start-Up Businesses
 - a. Improve awareness, understanding and ease of access of the many existing small business resources available to District 2 businesses and entrepreneurs by increasing outreach into the neighborhoods.
 - b. Address the acute employment challenges in District 2 by identifying the small business needs in District 2 neighborhoods and strategically aligning programming and resources to meet those needs
 - c. Work with local chambers of commerce (including the Massachusetts Latino Chamber of Commerce headquartered in Springfield) to expand their role in connecting entrepreneurs to resources
2. Small Business and Entrepreneur Support for Existing Businesses
 - a. Conduct an outreach effort to identify what existing small businesses need to be more competitive and expand. This includes determining needs for financing, staffing, or other assistance
 - b. Explore potential to expand Corridor Storefront Improvement Program to other corridors in District 2, particularly in tornado-impacted areas
 - c. Hold a seminar to help existing businesses scale up, expand, and become vendors for Springfield’s large businesses
3. Connecting Employers, Workforce Training, and Employees
 - a. Organize partnerships between businesses and education institutions where businesses communicate their skill needs with area colleges, and colleges respond with curriculum and career development programs to prepare students to meet those needs
 - b. Increase the impact of existing workforce development programs through efforts to increase awareness and visibility for District 2 residents

Project Location

Employment and business development are critical for residents and business owners throughout the District.

Key Initiative

Enhanced Neighborhood Businesses

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

Key Participants

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

Action Steps

1. Policy Actions
 - a. Adopt and implement the new zoning ordinance
 - b. Explore potential and appropriateness of Neighborhood Commercial Overlay Districts for District 2 activity centers (Six Corners Intersection and Watershops Armory area), and Mixed-Use Industrial zoning for Watershops Armory building at 1 Allen St.
 - c. Emphasize creating vital activity centers and corridors as part of development review in tornado-impacted commercial areas
2. Public Improvements
 - a. Identify specific public improvements to support and coordinate with private investment in neighborhood activity centers, including potential streetscape improvements, street realignments, transit stop upgrades, storefront activation programs, and blight removal activities
 - b. Phase construction, identify funding sources, and develop final design
3. Business Support
 - a. Reach out to property and business owners to identify where available business support resources can assist building improvements, expansion, or other business needs (and where new programs might have significant impact).
 - b. Reach out to property and business owners, particularly those considering rebuilding projects or new investment in tornado-impacted neighborhoods, to identify where and how public improvement projects can support and coordinate with private investments
 - c. Consider a retail analysis to identify underserved sectors within District 2 (and potentially other tornado-impacted areas), in order to target public energy and resources

Project Location

- Six Corners intersection and Watershops Armory area are key activity centers
- Hancock Street, Walnut Street, and to a lesser extent Central Street are important neighborhood mixed-use corridors.

Six Corners Intersection

- Reconfigure intersection as a roundabout
- Streetscape improvements
- Integrate the existing public green space at the intersection to encourage neighborhood events and activities.
- Proposed S.R. Williams Resource and Development Center at Florence and Hancock Streets
- Promote new pedestrian scale development, attractive signage and inviting storefronts

Watershops Armory Area

- Reconfigure Hickory Street to flow directly into Central Street.
- Reconfigure Allen, Rifle, Central and Hancock Streets into an attractive, walkable, mixed use neighborhood center
- Rehabilitate and integrate the vacant Lincoln Hall building into the revitalization of this area Connection neighborhood to Ruth Elizabeth Park to the north, and allow this open space to Develop Mill River trail to connect with Johnny Appleseed Park and other parts of the neighborhood.
- Re-establish a new Brookings School on the vacant site at the northeast corner of Hickory and Allen Streets as a multi-faceted anchor for residents and the community.
- Enhance the diverse mixed business/industrial Use of the Watershops Armory Building as an incubator and light-industrial facility ranging from workforce development programs to precision airline part manufacturing.

Key Initiative

Promotion and Marketing of the Community

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

Key Participants

- Springfield Chamber of Commerce
- Massachusetts Latino Chamber of Commerce
- City of Springfield (particularly for incorporating neighborhood marketing into Citywide promotional efforts)
- Local businesses
- Neighborhood Councils
- Residents
- Neighborhood organizations

- Arts and cultural organizations
- Area churches
- Springfield Preservation Trust (to promote the District’s historic assets, organize historic home tours, etc)
- Mason Square Farmers Market
- Area colleges

Action Steps

1. Incorporate neighborhood marketing into citywide promotional efforts
2. Work with area businesses, Neighborhood Councils, arts and cultural organizations, and area colleges to plan and organize cultural events that celebrate the District’s creativity and diversity
3. Work with Springfield Preservation Trust to organize historic homes tours to promote the District’s architectural heritage
4. Integrate neighborhood branding or theming into physical improvements (i.e. banners, signage, gateway features)
Business coordination
5. Identify simple- to-organize events where it is easy for businesses to participate and cooperate.
6. Build trust, cooperation, and shared interest through ongoing coordination of District businesses for a variety of shared promotional activities
7. Explore merchants association or other neighborhood business association that can formalize shared goals and responsibilities for promotion of neighborhood businesses

Project Location

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

Major Move 3

Invest in Quality Neighborhoods

Key Initiatives

1. Streetscape Improvements
2. Reuse of Vacant Lots
3. Property Maintenance for Homeowners and Renters
4. Safe and Convenient Transit

Key Initiative

1. Streetscape Improvements

Goal – Create a more walkable neighborhood, a more attractive neighborhood, improved public safety, and support for local business.

Key Participants

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

Action Steps

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

Project Location

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

Key Initiative

2. Reuse of Vacant Lots

Goals -

- **Develop Strategies to Manage Vacant and Abandoned Properties**
- **Develop Potential Uses for Vacant Lots**
 - **New Infill Development**
 - **Sale to Abutting Owners**
 - **Community Spaces**
 - **Community Gardens**

Key Participants

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

Action Steps

1. Inventory and evaluate vacant lots in terms of long-term community development goals
2. Identify concentrated areas of vacant properties and other strategic locations to proactively acquire property for redevelopment
3. Provide adequate funding to enable aggressive enforcement of the City's Vacant and/or Foreclosing Property Registration Ordinance to provide a strong disincentive for inaction and neglect of vacant properties
4. Refer to precedents outlined in the U.S. Conference of Mayors' 2009 Vacant and Abandoned Properties Survey and Best Practices to determine possible strategies relevant to Springfield
5. Identify vacant lots that may be in a position for transformation into a new use
6. Coordinate efforts to determine best disposition strategy, including selling of vacant lots to abutting property owners where appropriate
7. Utilize alternatives (such as RFPs) to the auction process for city-owned lots to encourage coordination and planning of infill and redevelopment efforts, and discourage inaction from absentee owners

8. Develop criteria for sites most appropriate for gardens, e.g. next to a positive community anchor like a church, in the heart of a residential area, a willing owner, etc.

Project Location

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

Key Initiative

3. Property Maintenance for Home Owners and Renters

Goal - Repair and restore building stock by developing:

- a community-city partnership
- a creative and informed approach tailored to District 2
- an expanded Homeowner Guide

Key Participants

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

Action Steps

1. Identify key community and City staff for a District 2 Property Maintenance Task Force. If successful, consider citywide implementation
2. Create an inventory and priority list of relevant properties with maintenance needs in District 2 based on a block-by-block assessment. As proposed in the Citywide plan, utilize and tie this into a Citywide property maintenance database
3. Establish regular meeting times and agenda for first year of the District 2 Property Maintenance Task Force, moving as aggressively as possible to transform problem areas and demonstrate positive change
4. Evaluate existing best practices / precedents and brainstorm on opportunities particularly suited to District 2
5. Identify three District 2 key initiatives/events for 2012 to engage the neighborhood into creating real change on key properties; choose a demonstrate block where significant change can be seen quickly (ties into “Capitalizing on an Engaged Community” initiative)
6. Engage other potential partners whose mission is to address/eliminate substandard housing to
7. Provide educational or otherwise supportive services (Habitat for Humanity, HAP Housing, etc.)

Project Location

As needed throughout District 2 neighborhoods.

Key Initiative

4. Safe and Convenient Transit

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

Key Participants

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

Action Steps

1. Convene a community dialogue regarding transit in Springfield: encourage users of all ages to attend, share current improvement plans and ideas, use community input to prioritize ideas for improvement, including the following suggested action steps (with potential city-wide benefits):
2. Identify priority locations for shelters and other bus stop improvements
3. Evaluate conditions of transit stops in the district; identify conditions that impact safety and comfort, as well as potential improvements
4. Evaluate impacts to transit routes and facilities as part of rebuilding efforts for public facilities, infrastructure, and other development
5. Pursue planning, advocacy, and funding efforts to restore crosstown bus service
6. Introduce a Smart Pass program to speed boarding
7. Signal priority is in place on Sumner Avenue – the first ever in New England; State Street and Main Street could be next to improve service reliability (all new buses have the signal priority technology and they are retrofitting other buses with it)
8. Redesign bus stop signs with route and destination information and install schedule holders
9. Introduce automatic enunciators on the buses and nicer seating
10. Link the CCTV cameras at PVTa facilities to the police department

Project Location

Throughout the district as needed

Major Move 4

Strengthen Community through Educational Institutions

Key Initiatives

1. Quality Schools as Community Anchors
2. Collaborative Partnership Between Colleges and Neighborhoods

Key Initiative

1. Quality Schools as Community Anchors

Goals • High-performance healthy learning environments

- Community anchors
- Collaborative and efficient services

Key Participants

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

For schools as community hubs and coordinated services:

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

For high-performance learning environments:

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

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

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

Action Steps

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

Project Locations

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

Key Initiative

2. Collaborative Partnership Between Colleges and Neighborhoods

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

Collaborative Partnership Between Colleges and Neighborhoods

- Develop a shared vision
- Pursue opportunities for collaborative partnership

Action Steps

- Identify leaders from the colleges, neighborhood, District 2 organizations, and City to initiate a substantive and ongoing dialogue for the purpose of identifying shared goals and interests, and addressing areas of concern
- Establish formal relationships and venues for ongoing dialogue that integrate the decision making processes for all groups to create a shared vision for how colleges and communities interface and support each other, including establishing goals and assigning responsibilities to achieve those goals
- Identify specific opportunities to create new partnerships and strengthen existing partnerships, including new development opportunities, job training and workforce development, capacity building and non-profit support, and other areas
- Incorporate substantive community input into planning and development of future campus projects, especially where those projects have the potential to impact the quality of life in surrounding neighborhoods, or have the potential to accommodate both community goals and the educational mission of the colleges for mutual benefit

Project Location

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

Major Move 5:

Promote Safe and Healthy Living

Key Initiatives

1. Community Safety
2. Integrated Healthy Food System
3. Healthy Lifestyles

Key Participants

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

Key Initiative

1. Community Safety

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

Action Steps

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

5. Coordinate neighborhood council meetings with Beat Management Neighborhood Meetings on a quarterly or annual basis
6. Citizen Police Academy graduates can act as formal liaisons between the Beat Management Neighborhood Meetings and local organizations, and can help lead the formation of neighborhood watch groups or regular neighborhood cleanups

Location

District-wide

Key Initiative

2. Integrated Healthy Food System

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

Action Steps

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

1. Adopt the proposed Community Garden Ordinance to formally support and lay the groundwork for a community garden system
2. Work with existing community garden partners to identify and prioritize parcels for permanent or long-term community garden use
3. Support development of community gardening infrastructure such as tool sheds, hoop houses, or fencing

Develop a healthy corner store program

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

Support and increase the capacity of the Mason Square Farmers Market

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

Develop a full-service grocery store

8. Identify a grocery operator willing to develop the proposed site or commit to locating at site
9. Assemble the 12 separate parcels at the Walnut/ Oak Street site
10. Create shared parking arrangements in coordination with surrounding property owners and institutions
11. Create a suite of incentives to facilitate the development of a new store
12. Community members and stakeholders should be engaged throughout the design and development process to ensure the new store meets the needs of the surrounding community and other local businesses

Conduct a comprehensive food system assessment

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

Location

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

Key Initiative

3. Healthy Lifestyles

Goals

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

Action Steps

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

Location

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

Major Move 6

Build Community Capacity

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

Key Initiatives

1. Capitalizing on an Engaged Community
2. Coordination of Community Services

Key Initiative

1. Capitalizing on an Engaged Community

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

Key Participants

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

Action Steps

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

Location

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

Key Initiative

2. Coordination of Community Services

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

Action Steps

Establish a community resource network

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

Develop and implement a coordinated strategy for community services

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

Hold regular fairs to promote local organizations and services

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

Location

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

Key Participants

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



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