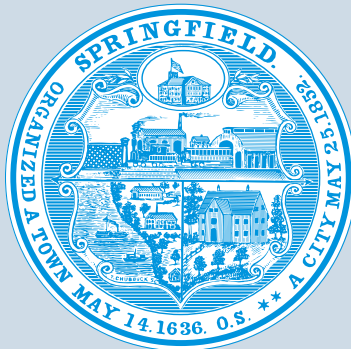




McKnight Neighborhood Investment Plan 2023-2033

City of Springfield and the McKnight Neighborhood Council, Residents, local Businesses, Organizations, and other Stakeholders

Goal: To enhance and inform the delivery of municipal services and the investment of municipal, state, federal and private funding, and other resources in the McKnight neighborhood through collaborative planning and implementation between residents, including resident businesses and organizations, and other stakeholders and city departments.



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McKnight Neighborhood Council

Office of Planning and Economic Development

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

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Way Finders Community Building and Engagement for resident, community-based organization, and small business engagement

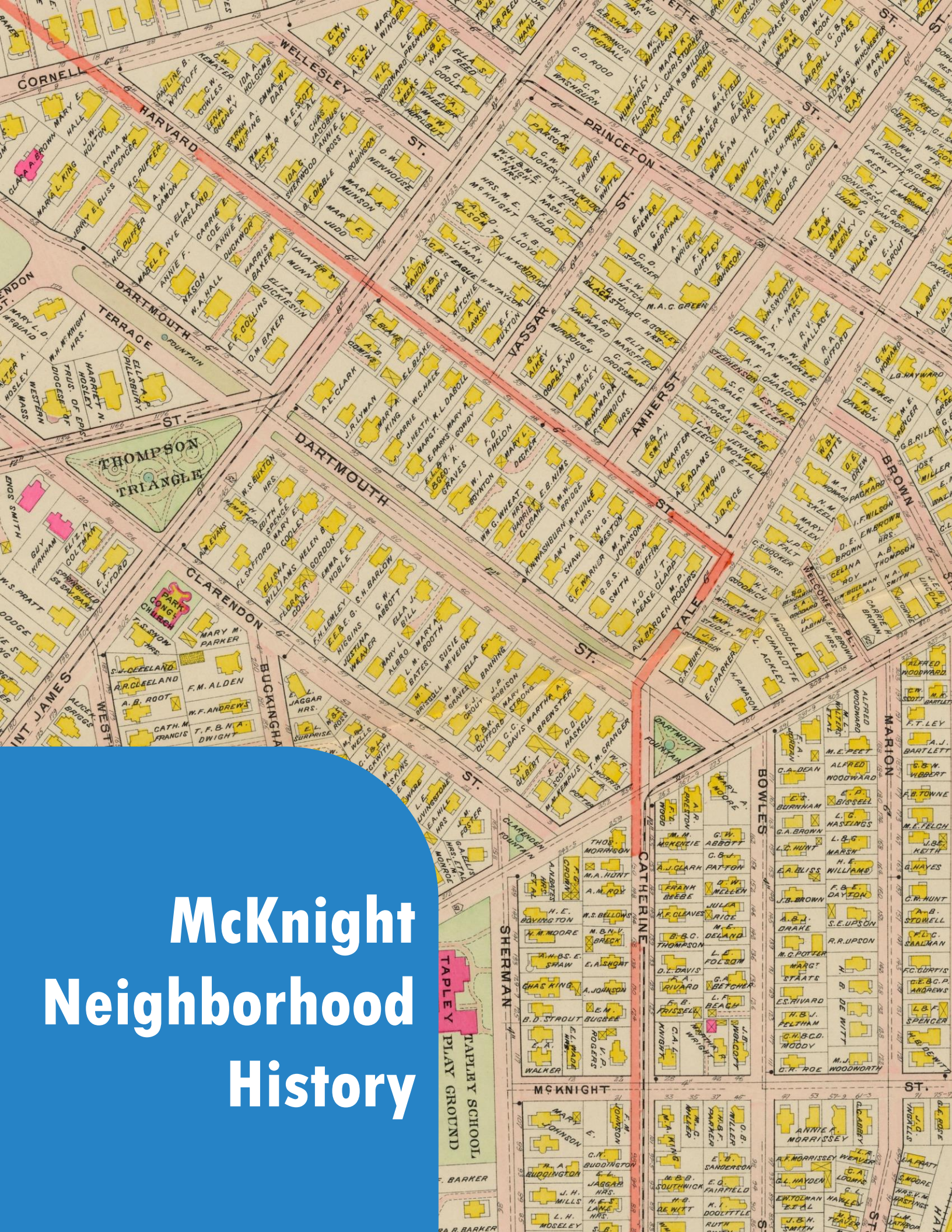
ARPA funding language



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Introduction/Executive Summary



McKnight Neighborhood History



Detail from 1851 map of Springfield, showing the future McKnight area. Boston Public Library, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center

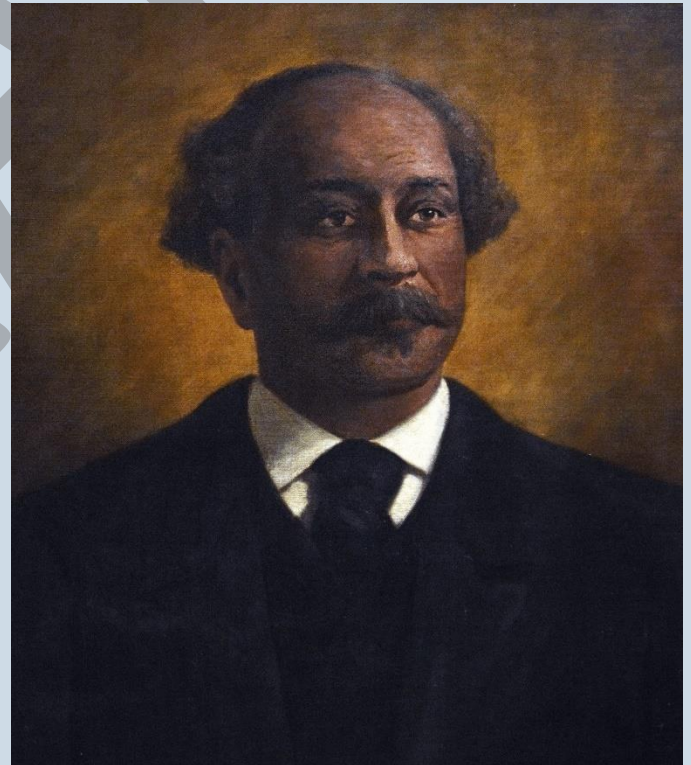
Previous page: Detail from Plate 13 of the 1910 city atlas, showing McKnight neighborhood. Boston Public Library, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center

Early History

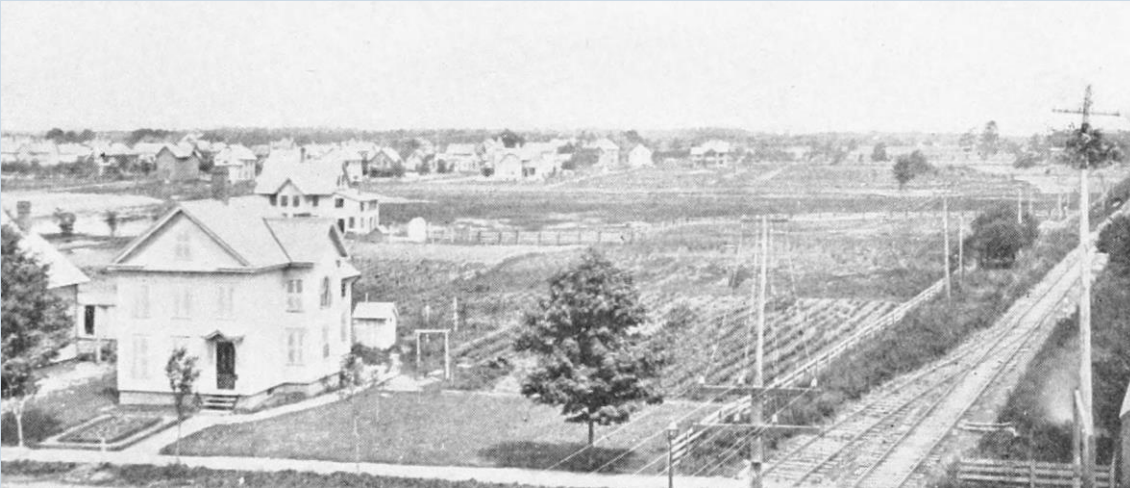
During the early 19th century, the land that would become McKnight was a sparsely populated area on the outskirts of the city. Over time, it became home to a growing number of free people of color, in part because of Springfield's support for abolitionism and involvement in the Underground Railroad. Among the early residents of McKnight was Jenny Cumfrey, who escaped from slavery in New York around 1800. She came to Springfield, where she married her husband Jack Williams and moved into a house near Goose Pond, near the present-day site of the Rebecca Johnson School. In 1808, her former enslaver tracked her down and demanded her return, but a group of 19 Springfield residents—both Black and White—pooled their money to purchase her freedom.

Hayti

By the mid-19th century, the neighborhood had become known as “Hayti,” and it continued to attract people of color. Most famously, they included Primus Mason, who was originally from Monson. He came to Springfield in 1837, purchased a house in this area, and began building wealth through doing work that was unpleasant but in demand, including collecting old shoes to recycle the leather, and disposing of dead horses. Recognizing the potential for future development in the area, Mason began investing heavily in real estate. In 1860, he purchased a large tract of land here for just \$150. Ten years later, when the McKnight brothers were starting to develop the neighborhood, Mason sold this property to them for \$17,500.



Nineteenth century portrait of Primus Mason by an unknown artist



Left: *The McKnight neighborhood seen looking north from State Street near the present-day Rebecca Johnson School, around the early 1890s. Image from Highland Community, Springfield, Massachusetts*

Streetcar Suburb

The McKnights and other developers began eyeing this section of Springfield after the Civil War, when the city experienced rapid population growth. It was also during this time that the first street railway lines were opening in Springfield, which made it easy for people to live on the outskirts of the city and commute to work by trolley. As a result, McKnight became



Dartmouth Terrace around 1905. Image from Springfield Present and Prospective.



Looking north on Westminster Street from the corner of Bay Street, around 1892. Image from Picturesque Hampden.

attractive to upper middle class families, leading to the construction of the large and elaborate Victorian homes that have since become defining features of the neighborhood. This 19th century development also included the creation of landscaped, tree-lined triangles and terraces, along with the McKnight Glen park in the northern part of the neighborhood.

One consequence of this real estate boom in McKnight was that it displaced the Black residents of the old “Hayti” community, many of whom relocated to the downtown area or to the Old Hill neighborhood along Eastern Avenue. Primus Mason was one of the few who remained, where he resided in his home at 830 State Street—directly across from the old Winchester Square fire station—until his death in 1892. In his will, he left a bequest to establish the Home for Aged Men, which stills exists today as the Mason Wright Foundation. The city subsequently named Mason Street in his honor, and then in 1982 Winchester Square—which he had sold to the city in 1860—was renamed Mason Square.



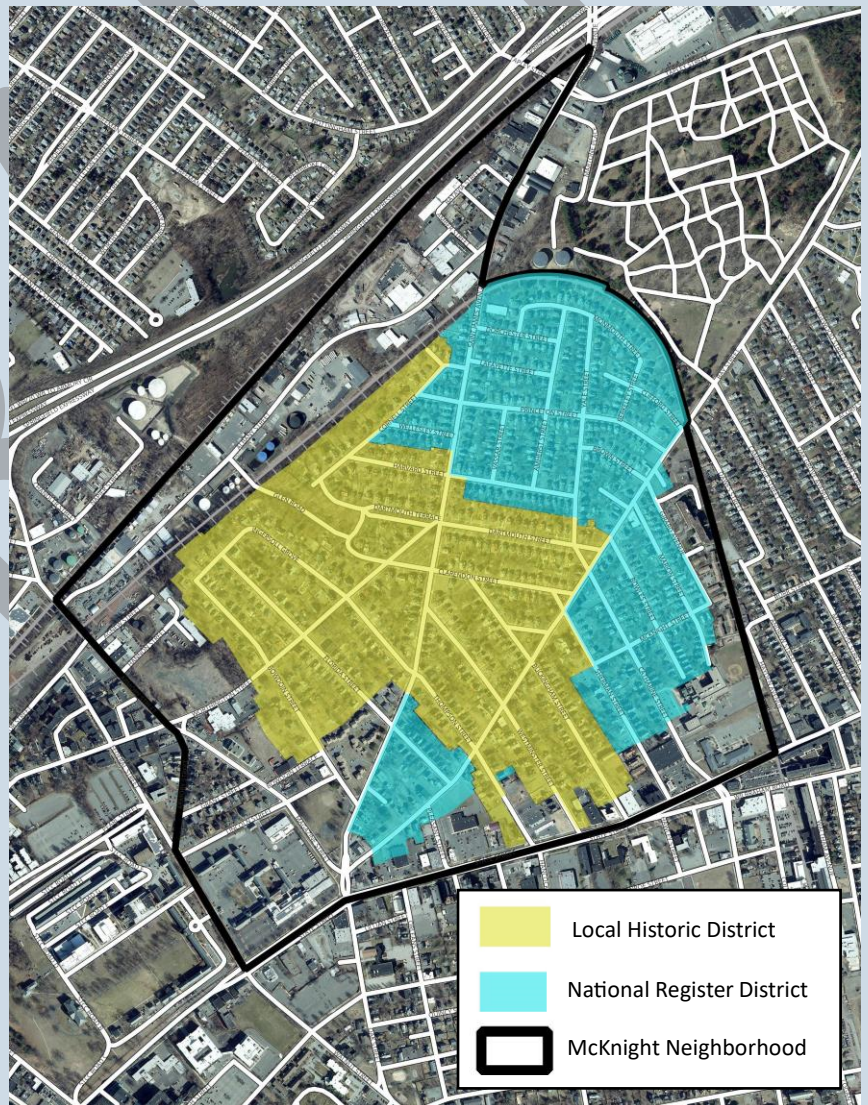
One of the last surviving homes from the Hayti community was this house at 280 Bay Street, shown here in the late 1930s. It was the home of Primus Mason's nephew Henry, but it was demolished in 1975, a year before the historic district was created. Image courtesy of the Springfield Preservation Trust.

Historic Preservation

Over the course of the 20th century, the demographics of McKnight again shifted, becoming a more racially diverse community once more. It was also during this time that McKnight residents collaborated to ensure the long-term preservation of the neighborhood. Many residents invested in restoring and maintaining the historic Victorian-era homes, and also successfully lobbied for the creation of the McKnight Historic District, which was established in 1976. Within this district, which encompasses the western portion of the neighborhood, the Springfield Historical Commission oversees exterior changes to homes, to ensure that the neighborhood retains its historic character.

Also in 1976, the Local Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register district was later expanded to include most of the other residential streets in the neighborhood, including the areas to

the east and the southwest of the Local Historic District. However, National Register listing does not provide any additional protection to these houses. The properties that are outside of the Local Historic district do not have restrictions on exterior alterations, and many have seen significant changes over the years.



Historic districts in the McKnight neighborhood. Source: MassGIS

An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood, showing a grid of streets, numerous houses with dark roofs, and some bare trees. A blue semi-transparent overlay covers the bottom-left portion of the image, containing white text.

McKnight Zoning and Land Use

Neighborhood Boundaries

The McKnight neighborhood is defined by State Street to the south, Federal and Armory Streets on the west, the CSX railroad tracks to the north, and the former Highland Branch railroad right-of-way on the east.

Residential Zoning

The central part of the neighborhood is predominantly residential. Most of this is zoned Residence A, which allows for single-family homes. The Residence A section is primarily to the north of Bay Street, while the southeastern and southwestern parts of the neighborhood are primarily zoned Residence B, for single-family or two-family homes. There are also several scattered parcels of higher-density Residence C, which allows for a wider range of multi-family dwellings such as apartment complexes.

Business and Industrial Zoning

In contrast to the residential core of the neighborhood, the periphery has a variety of other uses. Parcels that abut Federal and Armory Streets are a mixture of industrial, commercial, and business. This includes the Springfield Technology Park, a business park with commercial and office space in repurposed former Armory buildings.

Properties along Albany Street on the north/northwest side of the neighborhood are zoned for industrial use. Much of this land is occupied by fuel storage facilities, but it also includes Gasoline Alley, a commercial property that is home to several small local businesses.

Properties along State Street are zoned for business uses. Most of the existing businesses here are chain retailers and fast food restaurants, but there are also



Single-family homes on Buckingham Street



Residence C apartment complex on Bowdoin Street



Pedestrian-oriented business development on Bay Street, with high-density residential in the distance on the left and single-family homes on the right



Retail plaza at the corner of State and Catharine Streets

several large apartment buildings on business-zoned parcels. In addition, there are several scattered Business A parcels within the residential core, mainly on Bay Street. These are primarily occupied by small markets and convenience stores.

Future Economic Development

Overall, the existing commercial development appears to be adequate for the current needs of the neighborhood. Particularly with regards to food access, residents have generally indicated that their preference is to work with existing markets to expand fruit and vegetable offerings, rather than trying to bring a large supermarket into the area. Residents also indicated support for mobile markets and/or farmer's market.



Auto-oriented business development on State Street



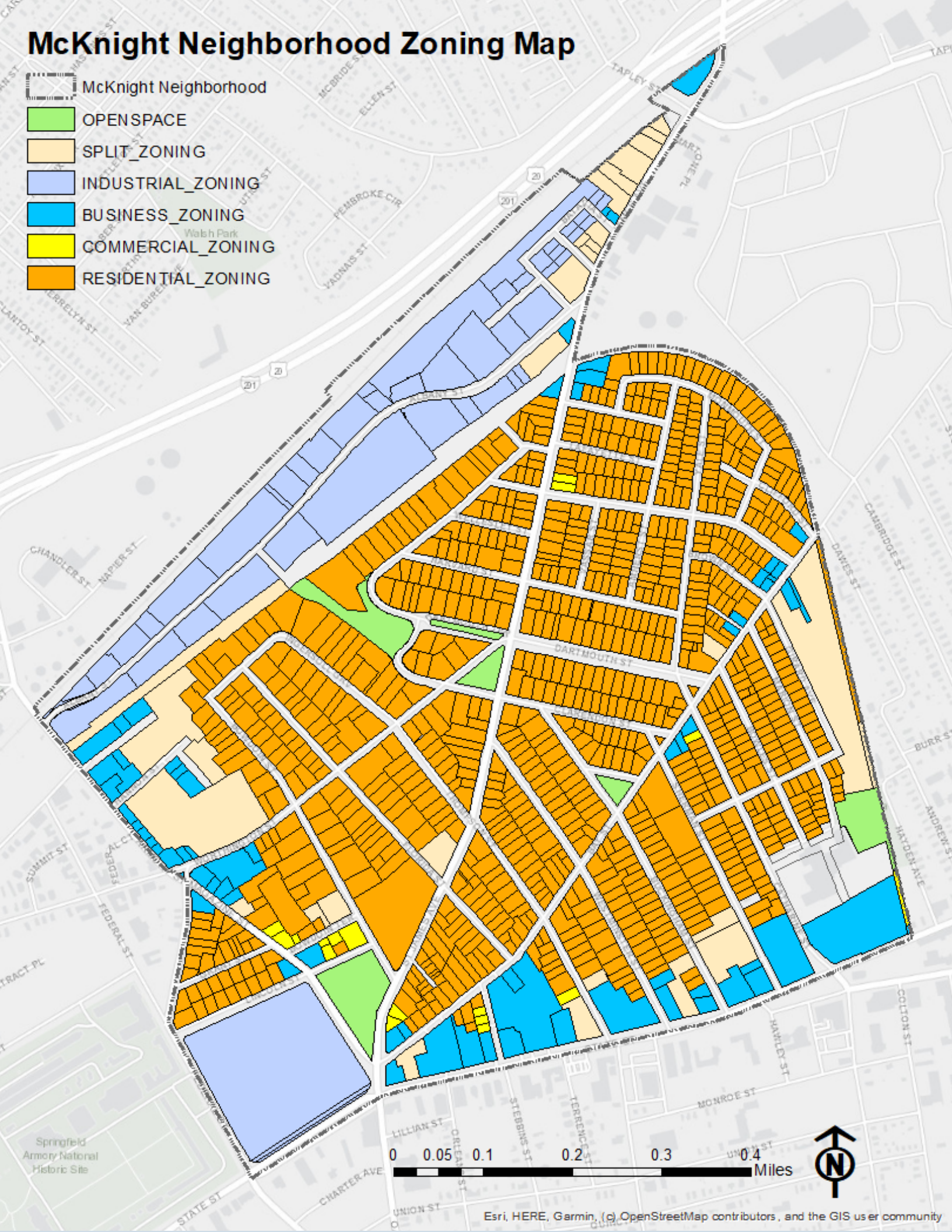
Albany Street, showing industrial development on the left and Gasoline Alley commercial property on the right

Summary of McKnight Zoning Districts

District	Description
Residence A	Low density residential, primarily single-family detached
Residence B	Medium density residential, primarily single-family and two-family
Residence C	Single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings and multi-family dwellings
Commercial A	Small scale retail and service convenience type commercial establishments.
Business A	Main Street and pedestrian oriented shopping districts with residential allowed.
Business B	Highway-oriented automotive and service business activities.
Industrial A	Full range of industrial and business uses compatible with a major urban center.

McKnight Neighborhood Zoning Map

- McKnight Neighborhood
- OPEN SPACE
- SPLIT_ZONING
- INDUSTRIAL_ZONING
- BUSINESS_ZONING
- COMMERCIAL_ZONING
- RESIDENTIAL_ZONING

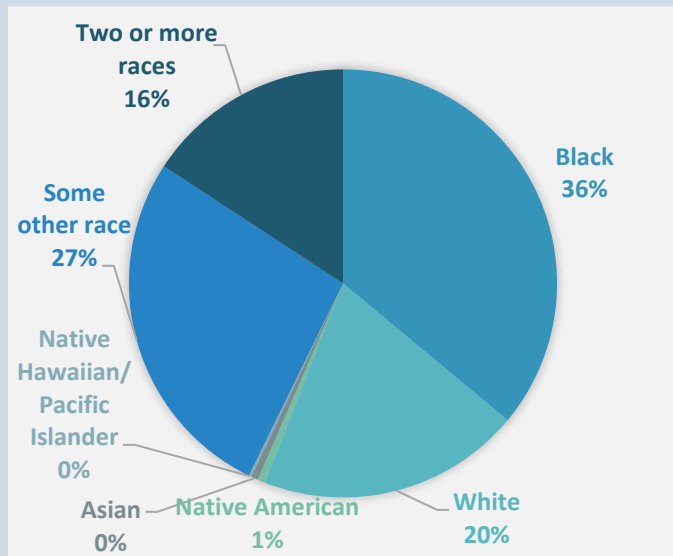




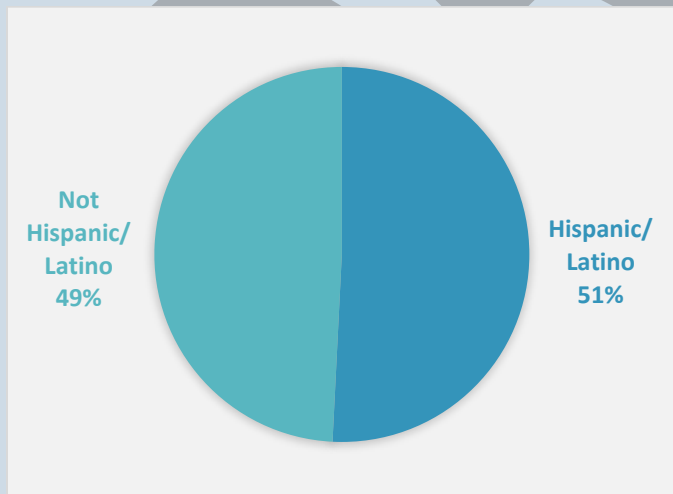
McKnight Demographics and Housing

Demographic Overview

McKnight is home to 4,859 residents as of 2020, which comprises approximately three percent of the city's population. Of this population, 20% identify as white, 36% identify as African American, and 44% identify as other races, including people of multiple races. The population is 51% Hispanic of any race. The age distribution of the population is 23% children under 18 years old, 62% people of working age, and 15% people of retirement age or older.



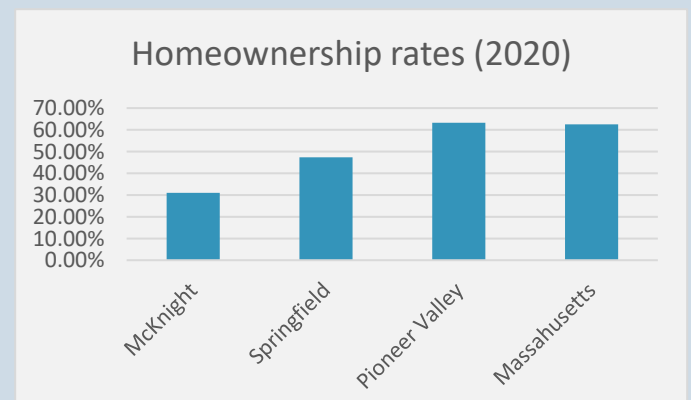
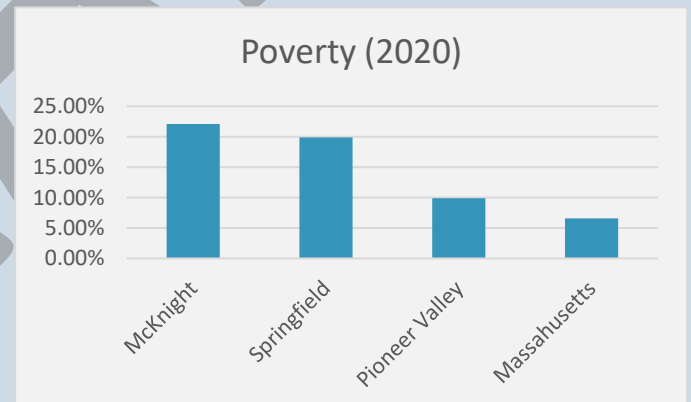
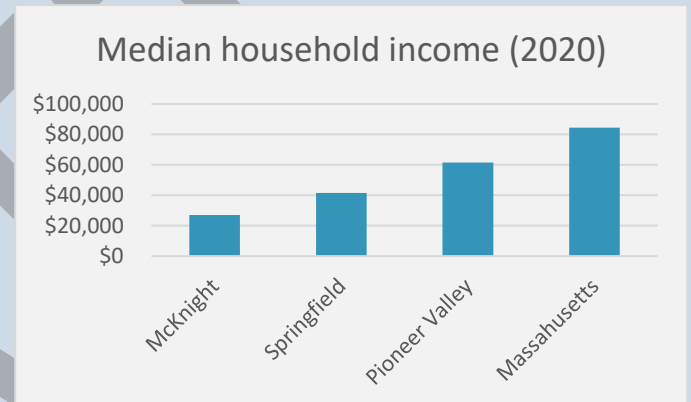
Racial composition of the McKnight neighborhood, 2020 U.S. Census



Hispanic/Latino ethnicity in McKnight, 2020 U.S. Census

Economic Security

The median household income in McKnight is \$27,019, which is the sixth lowest among the city's 17 neighborhoods. McKnight also has the second-highest levels of income inequality in the city, indicating that there is a significant gap between the most affluent and least affluent households in the neighborhood. Overall, 22.1% of McKnight residents live in households below the federal poverty line, which is slightly higher than the citywide rate



		McKnight	Springfield	Pioneer Valley	Massachusetts
Children and youth	Babies born with low birth weight	7.1%	11.1%	9.1%	7.6%
	Child poverty	48.3%	36.2%	20.8%	12.2%
Education	Preschool enrollment	89.2%	60.1%	53.6%	58.0%
	Attainment of higher education	16.3%	19.0%	32.6%	44.5%
Health	Premature mortality (per 1,000)	4.1	4.0	3.3	2.7
Economic security	Median household income	\$27,019	\$41,571	\$61,569	\$84,385
	Income inequality (Gini index)	0.52	0.48	0.47	0.48
	Poverty	22.1%	19.9%	9.9%	6.6%
	Elderly poverty	38.4%	13.7%	10.1%	8.9%
	Unemployment	22.1%	10.5%	6.7%	5.7%
	Labor force participation	43.3%	57.6%	61.4%	67.2%
Housing	Housing cost burden	42.9%	45.4%	34.9%	34.5%
	Homeownership rates	31.0%	47.4%	63.2%	62.5%
Transportation	Low-carbon commuters	30.3%	17.6%	14.1%	22.4%
	Average commute time (minutes)	20.8	21.1	23.1	30.0

Much more information is available in the [Springfield Data Atlas](#)

of 19.9%. As a result, support for current McKnight residents should be a high priority for any long-term neighborhood plans.

Housing

Although McKnight is well-known for its historic housing stock, the neighborhood homeownership rate is just 31%, which is significantly lower than both the state (62.5%) and city (47.4%) rates. Many McKnight residents are considered to be burdened by housing costs, with 42.9% reporting that they pay more than 30% of their income towards either rent or homeownership. These housing costs include maintenance, which can be a considerable expense for owners of historic properties. Older homes in general tend to require more upkeep than newer construction, and there are often added expenses related to

health and safety hazards such as lead paint, asbestos, and outdated electrical systems. However, maintenance costs can be even higher for residents within the Local Historic District, where exterior changes that are visible from the street must be approved by the



Single-family homes on Dartmouth Terrace in the McKnight Local Historic District



Homes on Harvard Street



Homes on Buckingham Street

Historical Commission. Historic district guidelines generally require historically appropriate windows, doors, porches, and clapboards/shingles, all of which tend to be more expensive to purchase, install, and maintain than modern materials such as vinyl.

Currently the Local Historic District covers only a portion of the much larger National Register district. The area of the National Register district that falls outside of the Local Historic District has been federally recognized

for its historic significance, but these houses are not currently protected from exterior changes, up to and including demolition. Because of this, existing neighborhood plans have included recommendations for expanding the boundaries of the Local Historic District, in order to ensure the long-term protection of the historic streetscapes in the neighborhood.

Residents throughout the Mason Square area have indicated that housing is a high priority, in particular assistance for the maintenance of existing owner-occupied homes. There are currently a number of different housing programs and initiatives that are available to Springfield residents. However, because this has consistently been identified as an area of need, it may be helpful for the city to examine to what extent these programs are being utilized and which neighborhoods primarily benefit from them. Additionally, it may be helpful for the city to collaborate with neighborhood councils to develop strategies for raising awareness of these programs.

Existing Housing Programs and Initiatives

Homeowner Emergency Repair Program

This program provides funding for income-eligible owner-occupants for a single item emergency repair. Homeowners are eligible to apply if there is an immediate threat to the health and safety of the occupants, or to the structural integrity of the building. This can include emergency repairs to the roof, porch, electrical/mechanical systems, plumbing, and foundation, along with other urgent code-related issues. Applicants can be from any neighborhood in the city, and those who are selected for this program receive a 0% interest deferred-payment loan. This is forgiven over the course of five years, provided that the homeowner continues to reside at the property.

City of Springfield Exterior Home Repair Program

This program is available to income-eligible homeowners in any city neighborhood. It funds up to \$40,000 in exterior repairs, such as roofs, windows, porches, siding, and painting. As with the Emergency Repair Program, the city will provide recipients with a 0% interest deferred-payment loan that will be forgiven over five years.

City of Springfield Healthy Homes Program

This program provides funding for remediating health issues such as lead paint and asthma triggers. Eligibility is determined based on income, and also based on census tract. All of the census tracts in McKnight are designated as Qualified Census Tracts. As with the other two city programs, funding is provided in the form of a 0% interest deferred-payment loan that is forgiven after five years.

Heating Emergency Assistance Retrofit Tasks Weatherization Assistance Program (HEARTWAP)

HEARTWAP is coordinated by the Valley Opportunity Council (VOC) and the Office of Housing, and it provides emergency repairs and replacements of heating systems for income-eligible renters and homeowners in the city. VOC also provides heating assistance to income-eligible residents.

Historic Home Restoration Program

This program administered by the Springfield Community Preservation Committee. Homeowners in many of the city's local historic districts, including McKnight, may apply for up to \$30,000 in grant money to fund exterior restoration work. This program was piloted in McKnight in 2020, and expanded to include other historic districts in 2022, resulting in a large number of applicants. Grant recipients were selected by lottery in 2022; out of 197 applicants, seven were selected in the lottery. Of these, 67 applicants were in McKnight, and three were among those who were selected.

The large pool of applicants indicates that there is significant demand for such programs in McKnight and elsewhere in the city. However, as of right now the Historic Home Restoration Program is limited in its funding and also in its scope of who is

eligible. Because applicants must live in owner-occupied homes in the historic district, and because fewer than a third of McKnight residents are homeowners—and many of them live outside the historic district—it means that only a small portion of the neighborhood's residents can access these funds.

City of Springfield Down Payment Assistance Program

Most of these programs are only open to homeowners, but McKnight has a fairly low homeownership rate, which means that only a small percentage of neighborhood residents are able to access these funding sources. In an effort to expand homeownership rates citywide, there are several programs that are available to first-time homebuyers, including the City of Springfield Down Payment Assistance Program.

This is available to first-time homebuyers in Springfield who meet income eligibility and other program requirements, and it provides up to \$4,000 towards a down payment and closing costs. As with the city's other programs, homebuyers receive this as an interest-free loan, which is forgiven over the course of five years, if the house remains their primary residence.

Buy Springfield Now

This ongoing initiative is a collaboration between the city, nonprofits, and private sector partners. Participants in this program receive discounts from lenders, realtors, attorneys, and home inspectors as part of their homebuying process.

Other Housing Partners

Aside from these city-managed programs, there are a number of community development corporations and community-based organizations that provide housing support and assistance in the Mason Square neighborhoods. These include Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services, Revitalize CDC, and Way Finders.

Energy Efficiency

In addition to the challenges of simply maintaining and rehabilitating the older homes in the McKnight neighborhood, homeowners may also be challenged by the added cost of the need to transition away from fossil fuel-based energy sources. This is part of a broader effort to reduce Green House Gas emissions, as the city of Springfield and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are committed to net zero energy by 2050. The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center and the MA Department of Energy Resources, along with the federal government, recognize the importance of incentivizing homeowners to invest in energy-efficient upgrades and incorporate renewable energy sources to reduce carbon emissions. Collaboration among residents, local organizations, and city, state and federal resources will be important as the neighborhood implements comprehensive strategies that foster a greener, more resilient McKnight community for generations to come.

A photograph of a street intersection in a town. In the background, a large, multi-story brick building with a central tower and a conical roof stands out. To the left, a smaller white house is partially visible behind trees. The street is paved with asphalt and has yellow and white lane markings. Several cars are visible at the intersection. Traffic lights on yellow poles are positioned at the corners. A sidewalk with green grass runs along the right side of the road. A blue semi-transparent overlay covers the bottom left corner, containing white text.

McKnight Transportation

Major Streets

The core residential area of McKnight is traversed by three main streets: Worthington Street, Saint James Avenue, and Bay Street. These are arterial streets that connect downtown Springfield to the neighborhoods to the northeast of McKnight, and residents have raised concerns about pedestrian safety and other quality-of-life issues caused by heavy traffic on these streets. In existing

neighborhood plans, some of the recommendations have included traffic calming measures, along with signage encouraging truck traffic to use Albany Street as an alternative to the residential streets.

Public Transportation

The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) provides bus service to the region, including five routes in McKnight. These are mostly in the western part of the neighborhood, and along the State Street corridor, although one route crosses through the central part of the neighborhood along Bay Street. This access to public transportation likely contributes to the fact that McKnight residents have a much higher rate of environmentally friendly transportation when compared to both the citywide and statewide averages. There are 50 individual bus stops in McKnight, but only three of these are sheltered. This is an area for potential growth, as residents have expressed a desire for new shelters as well as improvements to existing ones.



Intersection of Bay and Buckingham Streets, facing north. As with most intersections in McKnight, there are crosswalks across the side street, but not across the arterial street.



Intersection of Saint James Avenue, Dartmouth Street, Dartmouth Terrace, and Worthington Street, facing northwest.

Pedestrian Traffic

There are currently very few crosswalks across these arterial streets, and few of these have pedestrian signals. For example, there are only two crosswalks in the 1.2-mile section of Saint James Avenue between State Street and Tapley Street. Similarly, Bay Street only has three crosswalks in the residential core of the neighborhood, and Worthington Street has one. This presents a significant obstacle to pedestrian travel in the neighborhood, especially for residents with mobility difficulties.

Previous page: Bay Street from the corner of Dartmouth Street

One particular area of concern is the five-way intersection of Saint James Avenue, Worthington Street, Dartmouth Terrace, and Dartmouth Street. The intersection is controlled by a four-sided traffic signal on a pedestal in the middle of the intersection, which is supplemented by a pedestal signal on the northeast corner of the intersection for traffic on Saint James Avenue. There are no pedestrian signals, and not all sides of the intersection have crosswalks. This means that, for example, a pedestrian wishing to walk from the north side of Dartmouth Street to the north side of Worthington Street would have to make four separate road crossings.

Bicycling

There is currently no bicycling infrastructure in McKnight. Previous neighborhood planning efforts have explored the possibility of a rail trail that would run along an abandoned railroad right-of-way through the northern and eastern portions of the neighborhood. Based on those preliminary designs, McKnight residents and other stakeholders have raised concerns about this proposed route due to potential public safety and security issues. Overall, though, McKnight residents are generally favorable to the idea of some sort of a multi-use trail in the neighborhood, provided that the design process of any such trail would involve collaboration with the Neighborhood Council and abutters.

McKnight Neighborhood Transportation Map



McKnight Neighborhood

■ MCKNIGHT_PVTA_STOPS (28)

PVTA ROUTES

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— B17

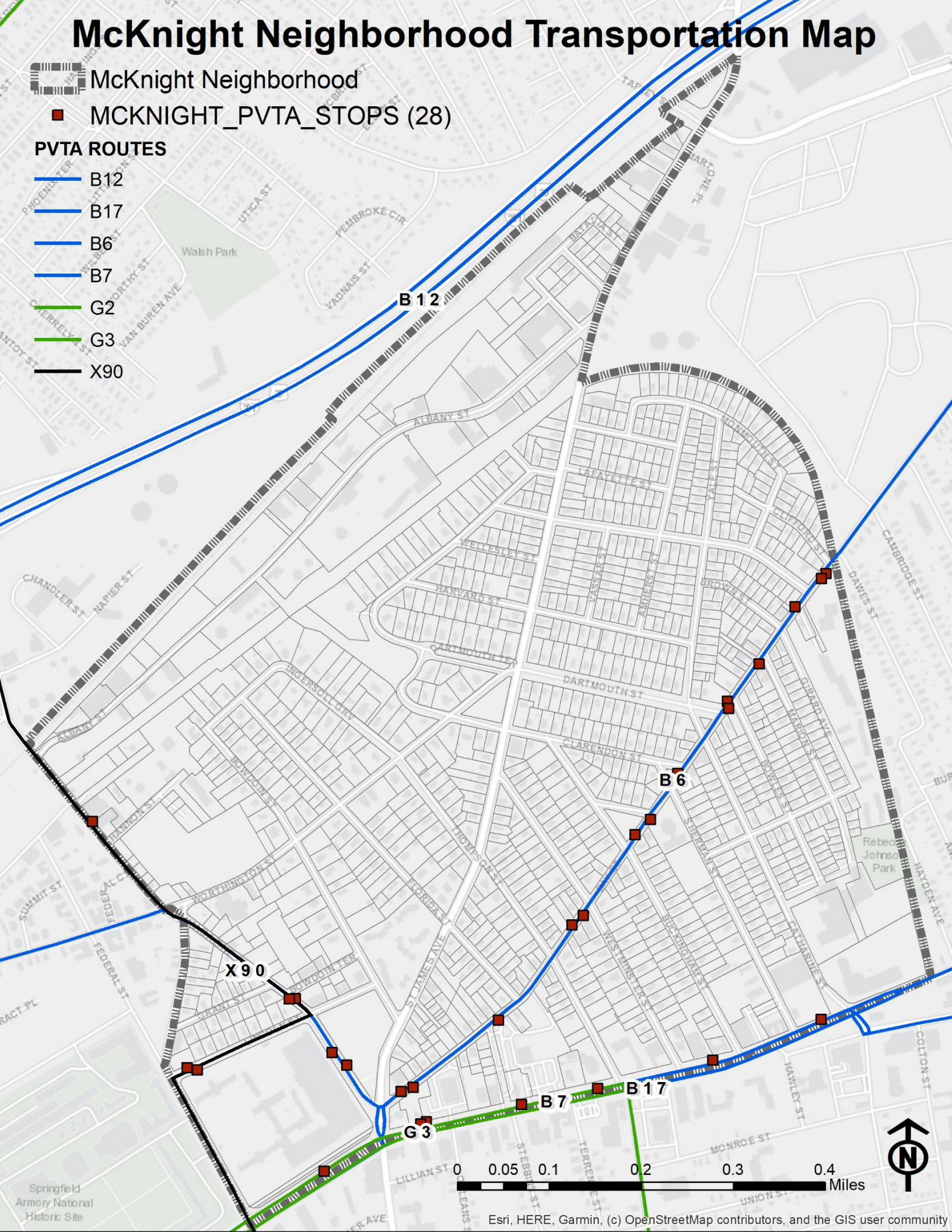
— B6

— B7

— G2

— G3

— X90



Springfield
Armory National
Historic Site



McKnight Parks and Open Space

Neighborhood Parkland

Compared to other neighborhoods in the city, McKnight has a limited amount of public open space, with six sites totaling just 9.32 acres. On a spring 2023 survey conducted as part of this neighborhood investment process, McKnight residents did indicate that they believed there was a need for new parks in the Mason Square area, but they ranked this as a relatively low priority.

Magazine Park

Of the existing parks in McKnight, the largest is the 3.13-acre Magazine Park near the southwest corner of the neighborhood, which has a baseball field, two basketball courts, and a playground. This park is included in the city's 2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan, with an estimated \$1.2 million in proposed improvements.

Other Playgrounds

Other recreational facilities include the 2.25-acre Rebecca Johnson Park on the eastern side of the neighborhood, which has playground equipment and a baseball field. A more recent addition to McKnight is the 0.25-acre Westminster Street Children's Park, which was constructed on a vacant lot at 44 Westminster Street. It features a variety of playground equipment, although nearby residents did express concern about nighttime security in the park, noting that there was no lighting to discourage illegal activity.

Other Open Spaces

The other open space properties in McKnight are intended primarily for passive recreation. Among these is the Thompson Triangle

Previous page: The fountain at the Thompson Triangle



Magazine Park



Westminster Street Children's Park

between Worthington Street and Saint James Avenue, which has a fountain and benches. There is also a smaller triangle at the corner of Buckingham and Bay Streets. There are also two other triangles along Bay Street, along with a landscaped median on Dartmouth Terrace although these are not included in the city's count of open spaces. The remaining 2.45 acres of city-owned open space in the neighborhood is the McKnight Glen, a wooded area in the northern part of the neighborhood. The glen is currently undeveloped, so this could be a potential area for investment to better utilize this as public parkland.



Athletic fields at the Rebecca Johnson Park



Thompson Triangle

Environmental Justice

Based on the 2020 census, the McKnight neighborhood is considered to be an environmental justice population, as defined by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). The EEA defines an environmental justice population as a census block group that meets at least one of four criteria relating to median household income, minority population, and limited English proficiency. The EEA considers such groups to be most at risk of being unaware of

or unable to participate in environmental decision-making, or to benefit from environmental resources. Of the four census block groups that are located entirely within the neighborhood, one block group meets all of the criteria, two meet the criteria based on income and percentage of minority residents, and the fourth block group, which consists primarily of the more affluent area within the Local Historic District, qualifies based only on percentage of minority residents.

Justice40 Initiative

Because the McKnight neighborhood is an environmental justice population, it could benefit from federal programs through the new Justice40 Initiative, which seeks to support disadvantaged communities that have historically been marginalized and underserved. Under this initiative, environmental justice communities are eligible for federal funding to support investments in any of the following areas: climate change, clean energy and energy efficiency, clean transit, affordable and sustainable housing, training and

workforce development, remediation and reduction of legacy pollution, and the development of critical clean water and wastewater infrastructure. As this is a new initiative, it is important for both the McKnight Neighborhood Council and the city to assess ways in which the neighborhood could benefit from such investments.

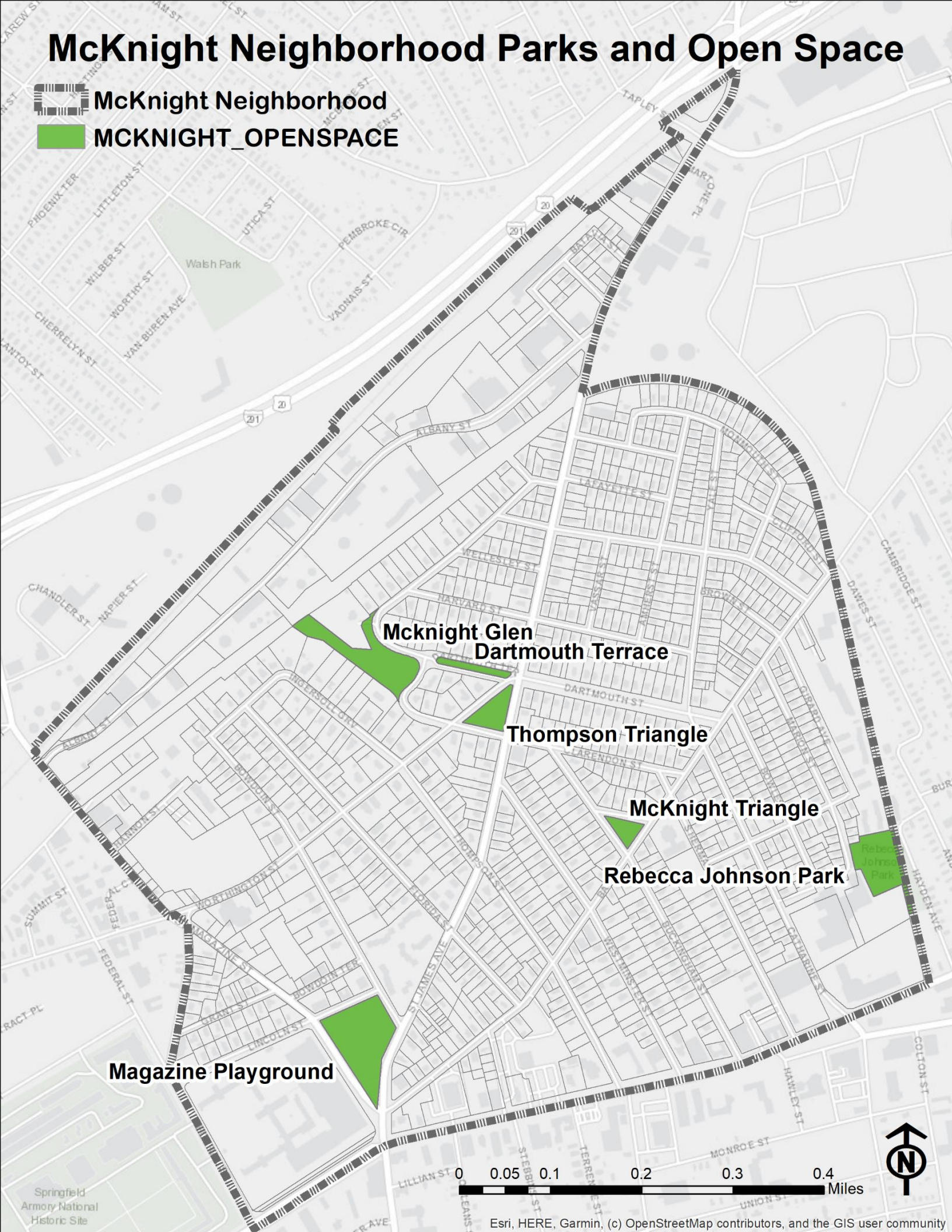
McKnight Neighborhood Parks and Open Space

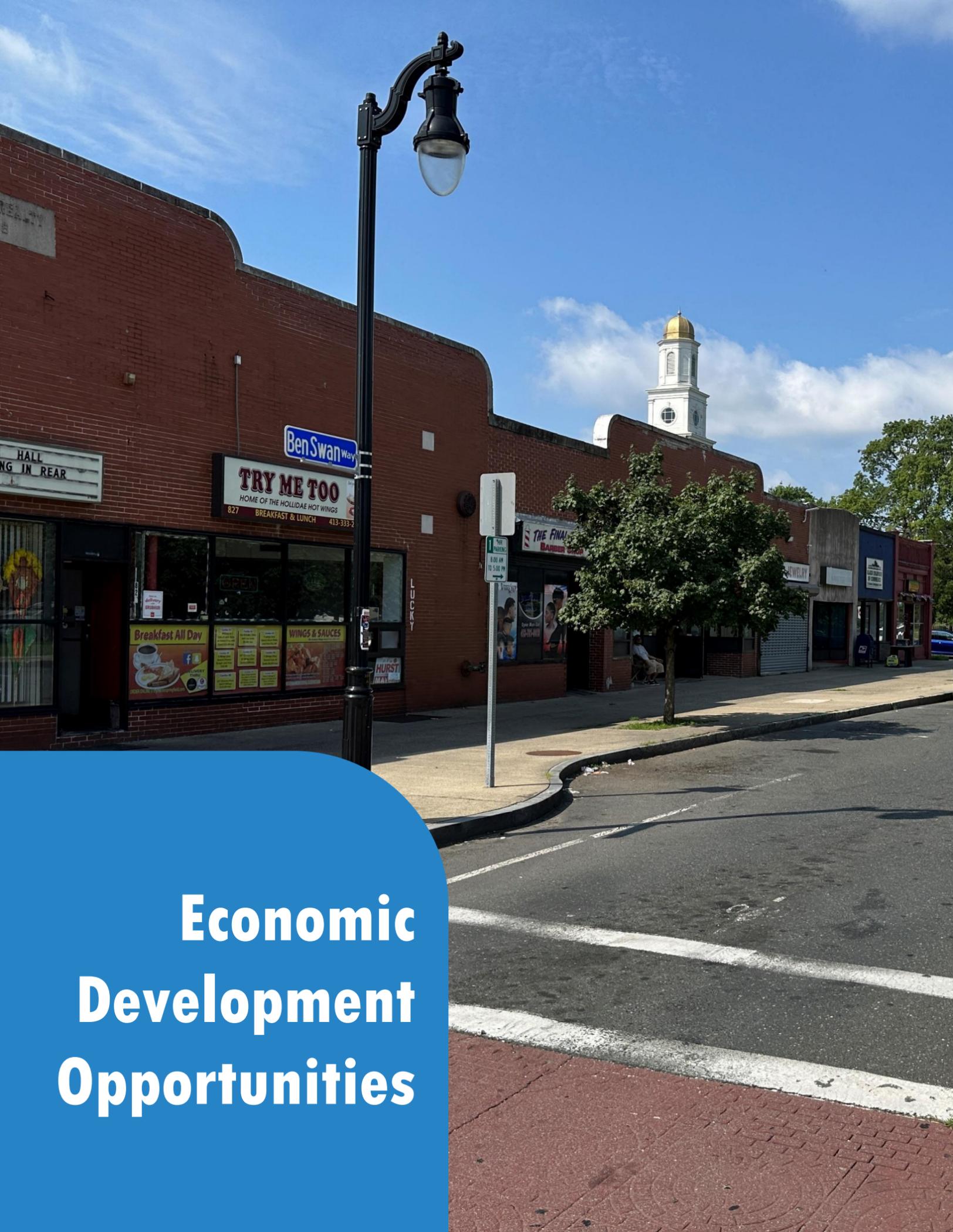


McKnight Neighborhood



MCKNIGHT_OPENSOURCE





**Economic
Development
Opportunities**

Economic Development Opportunities

As part of this neighborhood investment planning process, a number of potential economic development concerns, ideas, and opportunities in the Mason Square area emerged through resident surveys, community engagement events, meetings with stakeholders and city staff, and review of existing neighborhood plan recommendations.

These ideas included potential economic development in several key sites throughout the district. Such development would not only support existing businesses, but would also encourage further investment in the neighborhood by attracting new locally-owned businesses that would meet the needs of residents. None of these sites are located within the McKnight neighborhood, but one of them, described below, is located directly adjacent to the southern boundary of the neighborhood.

Ben Swan Way

In the early 2000s, the intersection of State Street and Wilbraham Road was reconstructed as part of a project that also included changes to traffic patterns. The section of Wilbraham Road on the south side of Mason Square, which had once been used for eastbound through-traffic, was narrowed and redesigned for local business access, with on-street parking on both sides of the street. By diverting through traffic away from this block, it created a more pedestrian-friendly streetscape here, and also enabled easier access to Mason Square Park. Then, in 2022, the street was named Ben Swan Way, in honor of longtime state representative and civil rights activist Ben Swan, whose district office was located on this block.

The southern side of Ben Swan Way is anchored by three adjacent one-story commercial buildings that form a row of eight storefronts between Winchester Street and Eastern Avenue. The building on the



Mason Square, with potential economic development area outlined in yellow. Image source: MassGIS.

westernmost side was built in 1915, and has three storefronts. The building in the middle was constructed in 1947 and also has three storefronts, and the one furthest to the east was constructed in 1948 and has two storefronts, along with a banquet hall in the rear.



Ben Swan Way and Mason Square

Given its central location at the heart of the Mason Square area, this site has strong economic development potential. The surrounding area has seen significant investment in recent years, including an expansion of the Indian Motorcycle apartment complex. This project added 60 new units to the existing 139 apartments at the facility by rehabilitating a vacant former factory building and the former Winchester Park Fire Station. Another ongoing project is the rehabilitation of the former Knox Automobile factory. When completed, this project will comprise approximately 114 new apartments. Aside from these apartment projects, other recent investments in the area include the new DeBerry-Swan Elementary School, located a block to the south of Mason Square, and the new Samuel Bolden Park, located to the southeast of Mason Square on Wilbraham Avenue.

Overall, because of the large number of new apartment units in the immediate vicinity of Mason Square, it is important to promote economic development here that will meet the needs of existing and future residents. On Ben Swan Way, this could include rehabilitating or replacing the existing one-story commercial buildings with a two- or three-story mixed-use building, which could feature stores and restaurants on the ground floor and either apartments or offices on the upper floors. This could also include new storefronts on Eastern Avenue, and if this redevelopment work was to advance it would be necessary to decide how deep the building would be, and if redevelopment would change the existing footprint.

Neighborhood Investment Process

Purpose

Creating a strong link between the community and the everyday work done by the city's many departments is essential for successful neighborhood planning. This plan must be an integral part of the strategic management, budgeting, and daily operations of city departments interacting with the McKnight neighborhood. The city Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED) maintains outreach to other departments while overseeing neighborhood investment planning and implementation. As neighborhood investment plans are completed, OPED staff ensure discussion of recommendations with relevant departments as they may be incorporated into their work plans. Ongoing communication and collaboration between Neighborhood Services, the McKnight Neighborhood Council, and all residents in the neighborhood is necessary.

In 2022, as the city and the nation emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic, the city of Springfield allocated \$746,340 of American Rescue Plan Act funds to facilitate development of twelve Neighborhood Investment Plans in neighborhoods where residents experienced disproportionately high rates of COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, and death. The city engaged the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) to both update the city's Neighborhood Data Atlas and facilitate development of the plans for these 12 neighborhoods. PVPC engaged Way Finders Community Building and Engagement via a competitive procurement process to lead engagement focusing on residents, local businesses, and community-based organizations.

Community Engagement

The community engagement process began by focusing on project kick-off and soliciting residents' thoughts on key issues for city investment, along with lifting up concerns, ideas, and issues. Phase Two shifted focus to prioritizing draft solutions identified out of Phase One input. In total, PVPC and Way Finders hosted five in-person meetings and five Zoom meetings, tabled at two community events, and administered three sets of on-line surveys, engaging an estimated 150 people in meetings with an additional 263 people completing surveys, for a total of approximately 400 people.

Phase 1

The first phase of resident engagement began with two in-person Community Kick-Off Meetings in February 2023, the first at the Mason Square Library and the second at the Bay Area Neighborhood Council meeting space. The Community Kick-off events introduced

residents to the Springfield Neighborhood Investment Plan project and engaged them to identify issues, concerns, and ideas for investment in their neighborhood.

On March 9, residents participated in an on-line Wiki-mapping workshop to share locations of issues and potential solutions and see their contributions mapped in real-time. Residents could also interface directly with the Wiki-mapping portal to share their thoughts independently.

In April, an in-person Community Mapping Workshop was held which further engaged residents to identify issues, concerns and ideas for investment in their neighborhood.

In May 2023, PVPC and Way Finders worked with the local organization Stone Soul to run an in-person Community Conversation and Networking Event which specifically focused on small business owners and community-based organization engagement.

Between March 16 and June 12, an online survey, which was offered in both Spanish and English, was available for residents to complete. In total, this survey had 160 respondents. In early June 2023, PVPC and Way Finders tabled at the Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services Annual Block Party at which many people completed the survey. Understanding that some residents did not have 15 minutes to complete the full survey, PVPC and Way Finders developed a micro-survey that engaged 103 residents to indicate priority resident recommendations.

Phase 2

The prioritization process for actions to include in the Mason Square and Maple High/Six Corners plans began in June 2023 with neighborhood meetings and another round of surveys. During this phase, we hosted a series of four community meetings on zoom for residents to both prioritize top recommendations and build their capacity by learning from city department heads (or delegates) about how the city works and prioritizes action in their neighborhoods and throughout the city.

After each meeting the polls from these meetings were turned into on-line surveys and emailed to Neighborhood Councils and CBOs to engage more residents and community leaders in completing the prioritization process.

June 21 - Housing and Energy with Gerry McCafferty, Housing Director

June 28 - Parks and Recreation/Open Spaces with Pat Sullivan, Director of Parks, Recreation & Building Management

July 12 - Arts & Culture/Economic Development/Food Access with Tim Sheehan, Chief Development Officer

July 19 - Transportation with Chris Cignoli, DPW Director and Sandra Sheehan, PVTA Administrator

PVPC posted recordings of Zoom meetings and presentation slides to the Springfield Neighborhood Investment Plan webpage for residents who missed the meetings.

In late June, PVPC tabled at a Bay Area Neighborhood Council community event as an opportunity for residents to fill out polls about the topics at two of these neighborhood planning meetings.

Goals and Strategies

City Goals

The Springfield Neighborhood Investment Planning process is built upon years of planning efforts across the city. Over the past decade, city-wide planning efforts have engaged residents and stakeholders in planning for a more resilient and equitable future, often in direct response to crises such as the 2011 tornado and COVID-19 global pandemic. Within these many plans, goals for neighborhood-specific projects and programs have been integrated with broader city goals.

City Goal #1: Improve transparency, trust, and communication between the city and the McKnight neighborhood.

One of the keys to fostering a strong neighborhood is to ensure that there is active and ongoing communication and collaboration between the neighborhood residents, the Neighborhood Council, and the city government. As such, it is vital to ensure that residents feel empowered to bring concerns and ideas to their local government, and also to participate in the decision-making process.

Strategies:

- City, neighborhood council, and residents collaborate to design, create, and implement an equitable and inclusive neighborhood planning process in McKnight, ensuring consistency with city's values of climate resilience and sustainability.
- City communicates all aspects of the Targeted Neighborhood Investment Plan update process and implementation by posting all materials on the city website-or linked to it-and providing paper copies at City Hall, Neighborhood Council offices and other locations as determined by residents and NC representatives, and to people who request them, including calendar of meetings scheduled, plan template, access to the Data Atlas and expanded GIS maps website, zoning regulations, related city plans, draft products, deliverables, notes from meetings and any other draft and final work products.
- Build the capacity of residents and the city staff to understand how each other 'works' and the forces limiting, constraining, and facilitating each group's ability to act.

City Goal # 2: Identify, prioritize, and implement investments in the McKnight neighborhood.

In creating this neighborhood plan, the goal is to not only involve residents in the process of identifying and prioritizing needs in the neighborhood, but also to ensure ongoing collaboration as the city works to implement this plan over the next ten years.

Strategies:

- City, neighborhood council, and residents identify long-term (8+ years), short-term (6 months to 3 years), and mid-term (4 to 8 years) priority projects for neighborhood stabilization, equity, sustainability, and resiliency.
- City and Neighborhood Council collaborates to conduct work on a neighborhood level that is reflective of larger city-wide planning practices, such as ReBuild Springfield, the Urban Renewal Plan, the Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP), the Complete Streets Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, the Economic Development Plan, the Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Hazard Mitigation Plan, and any other relevant plans.

Neighborhood Goals

As part of this neighborhood investment process, a number of goals and strategies emerged for the McKnight neighborhood. These were based on resident and stakeholder engagement, along with a review of existing neighborhood and city plans and an evaluation of current neighborhood conditions.

Neighborhood Goal #1: Maintain the quality of the neighborhood's housing stock.

The historic homes of the McKnight neighborhood are among its greatest assets, but they can also pose a considerable expense for residents to maintain. On the 2023 survey, respondents from McKnight placed a high priority on housing, with more than half ranking it as either their first or second priority out of seven categories.

Specifically, they expressed a preference to maintain existing houses, rather than to focus on new construction, and they chose rehabilitation as their top housing-related priority. This is consistent with the findings and recommendations of earlier neighborhood plans, which have highlighted the need for financial assistance to homeowners, as well as the need to address vacant and deteriorated properties.

Strategies:

- City and collaborators expand funding and/or programs to provide financial assistance for maintaining, rehabilitating, and renovating houses in the McKnight neighborhood.
- Neighborhood Council identifies and prioritizes vacant and/or deteriorated properties for rehabilitation.
- City collaborates with Neighborhood Council to educate residents on the process for reporting and resolving code violations.

Neighborhood Goal #2: Expand opportunities to walk, bike, and take public transportation.

Given that over 30% of McKnight residents utilize some form of environmentally friendly transportation, it is important to ensure that this continues to be a viable option. When asked about transportation priorities on the 2023 survey, McKnight respondents indicated a particular preference for improving public transportation in the neighborhood, along with improving walkability. Prior neighborhood plans have similarly indicated a need for improving walkability and pedestrian safety.

Strategies:

- Neighborhood Council works with city to identify and prioritize locations for new crosswalks and/or pedestrian crossing signals.
- Neighborhood Council works with city to identify and prioritize sidewalks that are in need of replacement.
- Neighborhood Council identifies priority streets for traffic calming measures, and city explores possible solutions.
- Neighborhood Council works with PVRTA to prioritize locations for new bus shelters.
- City and MassDOT collaborate with McKnight and other Mason Square neighborhood councils to develop a route for a multi-use trail in the Mason Square area.

Neighborhood Goal #3: Build community and pride in neighborhood

The McKnight neighborhood benefits from a strong sense of community, as well as pride in its heritage and historic architecture. In addition, it is served by an active and well-organized neighborhood council. The following strategies are some of the ways that city, neighborhood council, and other stakeholders can continue to support these areas of strength and further develop the sense of community in the neighborhood.

Strategies:

- Neighborhood Council acquires property to create a meeting space and community center for the neighborhood.
- Neighborhood Council and city collaborate to explore the possibility of expanding the Local Historic District to encompass the entire National Register Historic District.
- Neighborhood Council develops new programs, activities, and celebrations for McKnight residents.
- Neighborhood Council identifies ways to highlight the history of the McKnight neighborhood and the stories of the people who have lived there.
- Neighborhood Council advocates to the city in favor of historically appropriate street lighting within the boundaries of the Local Historic District.

Neighborhood Goal #4: Strengthen economy of neighborhood

As indicated in the spring 2023 surveys, McKnight residents are generally more favorable to working to support existing local businesses, especially in the area of food access. In that regard, the survey respondents preferred actions that would improve fresh fruit and vegetable offerings at existing stores, and also bringing mobile markets into the neighborhood, rather than establishing a full-line supermarket in the neighborhood.

Strategies:

- Neighborhood Council and city collaborate to develop strategies for supporting existing local businesses and encouraging other businesses to invest in McKnight.
- City works to encourage light industrial development on industrial-zoned parcels in the Mason Square area to expand employment opportunities.
- City works to encourage job training programs in the Mason Square area to reduce unemployment rates.
- Neighborhood Council and city collaborate to bring mobile markets and farmers markets to McKnight.
- Neighborhood Council and city collaborate to encourage local markets to expand offerings of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Recommendations and Prioritization

Neighborhood-Specific Recommendations

Aside from the district-wide recommendations, McKnight residents have identified and prioritized specific areas of need for their neighborhood:

Ensure the long-term preservation of the historic properties in McKnight

The historic homes in McKnight are a strong asset both to the neighborhood and the city as a whole, and many residents have chosen to live in and invest in McKnight because of the quality of its historic architecture. As such, it is a high priority to the neighborhood to ensure the long-term preservation of not only individual homes, but also the overall historic character of the neighborhood.

Specific recommendations for accomplishing this include:

- Expanding existing city programs that provide funding for maintenance of historic properties.
- Updating Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) inventory forms for the historic properties in McKnight. An important step in preserving the neighborhood is accurately documenting its historic resources, but the existing inventory forms for houses within the Local Historic District are generally outdated and incomplete by modern standards. For houses within the National Register District but outside the Local Historic District, there are generally no inventory forms at all for individual properties.
- Expanding the boundaries of the Local Historic District to include the entire National Register District. Although most of the neighborhood falls within the National Register District, properties are not generally protected from inappropriate exterior changes unless they are within the Local Historic District. Likewise, residents who live outside of the Local Historic District are not eligible for assistance through the Historic Home Restoration Program. Expanding the boundaries of the Local Historic District would ensure the long-term preservation of these houses, while also providing incentives to homeowners to make historically appropriate restorations.

Make the streets in McKnight safer for all road users

McKnight residents have consistently expressed concern about traffic through the neighborhood, including speeding on the main streets and cut-through traffic on residential side streets. This, combined with a lack of crosswalks and pedestrian crossing signals, negatively affects the pedestrian safety and walkability of the neighborhood.

Specific recommendations to address these concerns include:

- Conducting traffic studies of major intersections with the goal of making these intersections safer for pedestrians and cyclists. In particular, the five-way intersection of Worthington Street, Saint James Avenue, Dartmouth Street, and Dartmouth Terrace should be evaluated for ways to improve pedestrian safety.
- Installing new crosswalks, curb extensions, and pedestrian signals on Worthington Street, Saint James Avenue, and Bay Street.
- Utilizing traffic calming measures from the Complete Streets Implementation Guide on residential side streets where cut-through traffic is a problem.
- Installing signage that encourages truck traffic to use Albany Street as an alternative to Worthington Street and Saint James Avenue.

Acquire a meeting space for the McKnight Neighborhood Council

The McKnight Neighborhood Council is an active nonprofit organization that advocates for the neighborhood and its residents. However, the council currently does not have a permanent meeting space, and has instead been meeting in the Rebecca Johnson School. A high priority of the neighborhood and the council is to acquire a property to use for offices and meeting space.

District-Wide Recommendations

The four neighborhoods that make up the Mason Square district, combined with the adjacent Maple High/Six Corners neighborhood, identify both as individual neighborhoods and also as a district—especially for economic development purposes. These five neighborhoods have a collective sense of themselves, and throughout the neighborhood investment planning process several district wide recommendations emerged. These four recommendations are all supported by the five Neighborhood Councils and by the majority of residents, stakeholders, businesses and community-based organizations that participated in the plan development process.

Work with the Springfield Redevelopment Authority and the city to create and implement an urban renewal plan that will promote concentrated economic development in and around Mason Square

Because Mason Square is a major focal point for the neighborhoods in this part of the city, this would be an ideal location for further economic development. Based on resident feedback, any such urban renewal plan should include:

- Increased support for Black- and Brown-owned businesses.
- Recruitment of sit-down restaurants and other businesses to meet basic needs of all the existing residents and the many new residents at the recently developed apartment complexes.
- Recruiting a bank to the Mason Square area to improve access to financial services for residents of the district.
- Renovations and improvements of existing storefront exteriors.
- Streetscape improvements such as an increased number of waste and recycling receptacles, more shade trees, benches, pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, shelters at bus stops and improved lighting.
- Vocational training programs that will expand employment opportunities for district residents and increase the pool of job candidates for local employers.
- Promoting the development of light manufacturing on industrial-zoned parcels, in order to expand job opportunities for district residents.

Expand existing city programs that assist homebuyers and homeowners

Throughout the neighborhood investment planning process in all five of the Mason Square area neighborhoods, residents have regularly raised the issue of housing. In particular, residents believe that increasing homeownership rates and supporting existing homeowners are high priorities for these neighborhoods. As outlined earlier in this plan, there are a number of existing city programs, but many of these are limited in terms of eligibility requirements and in terms of the total number of applicants who receive funding.

Specific actions should include:

- Increasing funding for city programs that assist homeowners in maintaining, repairing, and restoring their homes.
- Increasing funding for programs and initiatives that provide education and assistance to first-time homebuyers.
- Constructing single-family homes on vacant, city-owned parcels for first-time homebuyers.

Recruit a grocery store to expand food access in the district

Based on resident feedback, there is a need for expanded grocery options in the Mason Square area. Residents noted that the existing grocery store in the district meets some of their needs. However, they also noted that, as a relatively small grocery store serving a large population, there is no competition, and their prices seem to be higher than at full-line grocery stores outside of the district.

Resident feedback has been split between those who prefer a small, locally owned grocery store, and those who would favor a larger chain grocery store in Mason Square. Overall, though, residents are in agreement that there is a need for expanded availability of healthy food options, including fresh, affordable, culturally appropriate produce.

Develop a multi-use trail that would link the Mason Square neighborhoods with other parts of the city

Residents throughout the Mason Square and Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhoods have generally indicated support for a multi-use trail, which could potentially utilize portions of the abandoned railroad right-of-way where feasible. Such a trail would provide expanded opportunities for exercise, while also providing an alternative transportation route for bicyclists and pedestrians. Development of this trail should include:

- Collaboration with neighborhood councils on the route of the trail
- Collaboration with abutters to address concerns related to privacy and security.
- Creation and implementation of a safety plan to ensure that residents are able to safely utilize the trail.
- Installation of trailside signage for wayfinding and to highlight the history of the Mason Square district and its residents.

Conduct a feasibility study of the proposed Mill River Greenway

This proposed greenway was the subject of a 2010 Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning masters project by Amy C. Verel at University of Massachusetts Amherst. It would link the Old Hill and Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhoods to the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway, and it would also have the potential to be extended to other proposed multi-use trails in the Mason Square area.

During the community engagement process of this neighborhood investment plan, residents expressed support for this proposed greenway. If this plan was to move forward, the next steps would be to:

- Identify the route of the proposed multi-use trail, with a preference for utilizing city-owned land in order to minimize land takings.
- Conduct a feasibility study to identify engineering challenges, environmental concerns, and estimated costs for constructing the greenway.

Appendix

Summaries of Recent City-wide Planning Efforts

Prior to the Neighborhood Investment Planning process, the City of Springfield has included neighborhood-level planning objectives as a part of several city-wide plans, projects, and programs.

Rebuild Springfield (2012)

The Rebuild Springfield initiative was created in response to the June 1, 2011 tornado that struck the City of Springfield and produced a four-part comprehensive planning response to the natural disaster. The Rebuild Springfield plan includes a city-wide overview and three district plans for neighborhoods directly impacted by the tornado. The Citywide planning process is organized according to the six Nexus Domains of a healthy and vibrant community. These domains include the physical, cultural, social, organizational, educational, and economic components of a community while listing twenty-one total recommendations. More neighborhood-specific recommendations and strategies are outlined in the district plans: District One (Metro Center and South End), District Two (Maple High-Six Corners, Upper Hill, Old Hill, and Forest Park), and District Three (Sixteen Acres and East Forest Park).

Local Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (2023)

The City of Springfield's latest hazard mitigation plan presents a thorough summary of community features and risks posed by natural hazards. The planning document identifies and prioritizes forty-four total mitigation actions for the City to implement. While many of the included strategies are city-wide in scope, several features are identified as priorities within specific neighborhoods.

Strong, Healthy, and Just: Climate Action and Resilience Plan (2017)

Springfield's first climate action and resilience plan in name, "Strong, Healthy, and Just: Climate Action and Resilience Plan" (SHJ) was developed in 2017 to provide a path for the City of Springfield to reduce overall greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and to enhance urban resilience. The SHJ plan builds upon over 15 years of climate action by the City and first recommends the City to conduct an analysis of the progress that had been made on previous plans and their climate-related strategies. A second priority recommendation presented is for the City to better communicate the ongoing and planned climate action and resilience work, especially in neighborhoods with high concentrations of chronically stressed residents. Additionally, the plan expands on ten recommended Action Categories with goals and strategies to reduce GHG emissions and enhance resilience.

Springfield Complete Streets Prioritization Plan – 2020 Update

Expanding on the 2017 Springfield Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, the latest update provides an examination of more recent data and a list of projects developed through various engagement efforts. The updated plan identifies previous priority projects that have been completed both city-wide and within individual neighborhoods. emissions and enhance resilience.

Local Rapid Recovery Plan (2021)

Springfield's Local Rapid Recovery Plan was the result of the Commonwealth's Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program intended to provide every municipality in Massachusetts the opportunity to develop actionable, project-based recovery plans tailored to the unique economic challenges and COVID-19 related impacts to downtowns, town centers, and commercial areas. The LRRP focuses on Springfield's Main Street Convention Center District (MSCC) in the Metro Center neighborhood. Through the LRRP process, fifteen projects were identified as priority opportunities for investing the city's initial American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

Open Space and Recreation Plan (2022)

The Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) developed in 2022 outlines a comprehensive park and conservation land improvement program and establishes a framework for guiding city expenditures through Fiscal Year 2027. The plan establishes six broad goals that were developed through input from each City department involved in managing open space.

Safety Action Plan (2022)

Collaborating with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, the City created the Safety Action Plan to provide information and direction on strategies and treatments most likely to improve roadway safety performance within the city. The plan addresses citywide crash patterns and trends and systemic treatments that can be used to address those trends. The content of the plan establishes a vision and goals specific to roadway safety performance and establishes a basis for informing roadway safety performance improvements over the next three to five years. Strategies for addressing roadway safety improvements are separated into "engineering" and "non-engineering" countermeasures. Specific countermeasure locations are identified for intersections, signalized and unsignalized, along with corridors throughout the city.

Capital Improvement Plan, FY 2024-2028 (2023)

The City of Springfield's annual update of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) acts as a roadmap for the acquisition, renovation, or construction of new or existing facilities and infrastructure. As part of the City of Springfield's continuing efforts to develop robust long-term strategic planning initiatives, the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for Fiscal Years 2024-2028 lists all capital improvement needs throughout the city, and the estimated cost associated with those projects. The estimated cost for all 477 projects totals \$1.3 billion, with the highest priority projects totaling \$182 million. These 18 "Grade A" projects include investments in public safety, upgrades to schools and municipal buildings, road resurfacing, city-wide systemic safety interventions and numerous projects aimed at driving economic development, while improving the safety, mobility, and the quality of life of the residents of Springfield.

Existing Neighborhood Plans

The City of Springfield has a long history of engaging its residents through neighborhood planning efforts. In the 1980s and 1990s there were dedicated and continual efforts from City planning staff to collaborate with neighborhood councils and associations to create Neighborhood Plans. Much of the progress initiated through neighborhood planning projects was halted in the early 2000s, while the city was under receivership.

While the City regained its financial autonomy in 2009, the economic impacts of the Great Recession and the devastation caused by the 2011 tornado presented opportunities to refocus neighborhood planning in the 2010s, which centered on the redevelopment of downtown neighborhoods. In early 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic forced planning efforts to pause and pivot to supporting residents and businesses most at risk. Federal funding made available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) has renewed the City's capacity and commitment to neighborhood planning.

McKnight Neighborhood Plan (1994)

This neighborhood plan evaluates several different urban renewal projects that were implemented in McKnight between 1974 and the early 1990s. Each project includes a description and a map, along with an update of the ongoing status of the project. The neighborhood plan also includes an overview of the demographics, existing housing stock, economic development, and community facilities in the neighborhood. At the time, neighborhood concerns centered around the condition of houses, the existing zoning of the neighborhood, traffic congestion, and a lack of community facilities. The neighborhood plan concludes with a series of recommendations, which focused on rezoning, expanding recreational opportunities, reducing heavy truck traffic, encouraging economic development, and improving existing housing stock.

2008 Revitalization Plan

This revitalization plan was developed by the McKnight Neighborhood Council, and it identifies eight areas of concern for McKnight residents. Many of these concerns centered on the visual appearance of the neighborhood, including repaving streets, installing historically appropriate lighting, restoring distressed properties, and enforcing existing zoning ordinances and historic district regulations. Other items in the plan focus on addressing public safety concerns, promoting businesses and economic development, constructing a rail trail, and acquiring a community center for the neighborhood.

McKnight Safe Streets Initiative

This initiative, which was summarized in the Springfield Complete Streets Prioritization Plan 2020 Update, featured a series of recommendations relating to traffic calming and pedestrian safety improvements. Among these were raised crosswalks at key intersections, traffic calming measures on main arteries, and a redesign of the intersection of Dartmouth and Worthington Streets.

A Plan for Springfield's McKnight Neighborhood (2022)

This draft plan was created by consultants Scott Hanson and Peter Gagliardi with the support of the McKnight Neighborhood Council and community stakeholders. A “Vision” for the neighborhood was crafted, and three categories of recommendations were presented. The “low hanging fruit” consisted of four initiatives that were ongoing or considered achievable within a 12-month period. Three projects were identified as “Projects That Could Move Forward by 2026.” Two additional initiatives were identified as projects to be completed “In the Longer Range,” sometime within the next decade: completion of a rail trail from McKnight to the East Forest Park neighborhood, and the development of a supermarket to serve the Mason Square neighborhoods.