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 Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhood through collaborative planning and implementation between residents, including resident businesses and organizations, and other stakeholders and city departments.

Domenic J. Sarno, Mayor
Springfield City Council
Jesse Lederman, President
Melvin A. Edwards, Vice President
Tim Allen
Malo L. Brown
Lavar Click-Bruce
Sean Curran
Victor G. Davila
Michael A. Fenton
Zaida Govan
Justin Hurst
Maria Perez
Kateri Walsh
Tracye Whitfield

Acknowledgements

Maple-High/Six Corners Neighborhood Council
Office of Planning and Economic Development
PVPC and sub-consultants
ARPA funding language
Contents
Goal ........................................................................................................................................ 2
Acknowledgements .................................................................................................................. 2
Neighborhood Description and Priorities ............................................................................. 4
  Neighborhood History ........................................................................................................... 4
  Neighborhood Boundaries, Zoning, and Land Use ............................................................. 6
  Demographics ....................................................................................................................... 9
  Transportation ....................................................................................................................... 9
  Housing and Income ........................................................................................................... 10
  Parks and Open Space ......................................................................................................... 12
Neighborhood Investment Process ...................................................................................... 14
  Community Engagement ..................................................................................................... 14
Goals and Strategies .............................................................................................................. 15
  Goal 1: Improve transparency, trust, and communication between the city and the Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhood ................................................................. 16
  Goal 2: Identify, prioritize, and implement investments in the Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhood ........................................................................................................... 16
  Goal 3: Maintain the quality of the neighborhood’s housing stock ...................................... 16
  Goal 4: Expand opportunities to walk, bike, and take public transportation ......................... 17
  Goal 5: Build community and pride in neighborhood ............................................................ 17
  Goal 6: Strengthen economy of neighborhood .................................................................... 18
Recommendations and Prioritization .................................................................................. 19
  Short-Term Projects (6 months–4 years) ............................................................................. 19
  Mid-Term Projects (4–8 years) ............................................................................................ 19
  Long-Term Projects (8+ years) ............................................................................................ 19
Appendix A: Maps .................................................................................................................. 20
  Maple-High/Six Corners Neighborhood Zoning Map .......................................................... 20
  PVTA Bus Stops and Routes in Maple-High/Six Corners ...................................................... 21
  Parks and Open Space in Maple-High/Six Corners .............................................................. 22
Appendix B: Summaries of existing city and neighborhood plans .................................... 23
  City-wide Planning Efforts .................................................................................................. 23
  Existing Neighborhood Plans ............................................................................................ 24
Neighborhood Description and Priorities

The Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhood is immediately to the southeast of downtown Springfield. It is located between Maple Street, State Street, Walnut Street, and the Mill River, and it is home to a diverse population of over 7,500 people, or about five percent of the city’s total population. The neighborhood has a long and rich history, which is reflected in its wide variety of land uses and architectural styles.

Neighborhood History

Although it is classified as a single neighborhood, Maple-High/Six Corners emerged as a result of two separate 19th century development processes, the results of which are still evident here some two centuries later. Pine Street, which passes north to south through the center of the neighborhood, can be seen as an unofficial dividing line; the section of the neighborhood to the west of it generally has closer ties to Metro Center, while the eastern half has a closer connection to Old Hill.

The western half developed in the early 19th century as an extension of the downtown area. These residents tended to be more affluent families who wanted the benefit of larger homes and lots, while also having the convenience of being close to the center of town. Many built homes on Union Street, Mulberry Street, and the lower part of Maple Street, and over time the development extended up the hill. By the second half of the 19th century, the upper part of Maple Street was perhaps the most exclusive neighborhood in the city, with large mansions that had commanding views of the city from atop the hill.

The eastern side of the neighborhood also developed during this time, but for different reasons. The Mill River, which forms the southern boundary of the neighborhood, is the only significant source of water power in this part of Springfield. As a result, a number of mills and factories were built along the river, most significantly the Armory Watershops. Although the main campus of the Armory is located elsewhere in the city, most of the heavy, energy-intensive manufacturing work was done here at the Watershops. These were originally located at three different sites along the river, but in 1857 they were consolidated into a single facility that still stands at the corner of Allen and Hickory Streets, just outside the boundaries of the neighborhood. Because of the presence of the Armory Watershops and other factories, this section of the city emerged primarily as a working-class neighborhood, and its development was closely tied with that of the adjacent Old Hill neighborhood.

Figure 1: Detail from 1851 map of Springfield, showing the Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhood. Boston Public Library, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center.
It was also during the 19th century that Maple-High/Six Corners became the site of Springfield Cemetery, which occupies a considerable amount of land in the neighborhood. Established in 1841, it was an early example of a “garden cemetery,” which focused on creating well-landscaped, park-like cemeteries that were not merely burial places for the dead, but also pleasant places for the living to visit. It is also the final resting place for most of Springfield’s colonial-era settlers, whose remains and gravestones were reinterred here in 1848 from the old Elm Street Burial Ground.

Over the years, many of the grand 19th century mansions in the neighborhood have been lost to fire or demolition, but there are still many historically significant homes that are still standing. These are strong assets to the neighborhood, and as a result most of the western half of the neighborhood is protected within several different local historic districts. Along the south side of State Street is the Federal Square–Upper State Street Local Historic District, which includes a row of mid-19th century commercial buildings along with a mix of early 20th century buildings, such as the High School of Commerce and the former Wesson Memorial Hospital. Other districts include the Ridgewood and Maple Hill Local Historic Districts, which feature a wide variety of 19th and early 20th century homes. Within these districts, the Springfield Historical Commission regulates exterior changes to buildings, along with new construction on vacant lots.

Together, these districts encompass a large portion of the neighborhood, and create a nearly unbroken chain of historic districts connecting the Armory in the north to the Mill River in the south. This presents opportunities for the neighborhood to promote itself as a historic and architectural destination. There are also opportunities to tell the story of the eastern half of the neighborhood, particularly with regards to its industrial heritage. One opportunity for this is the proposed Mill River Greenway, which could include interpretive signage to highlight historic sites along the way.

One of the more recent challenges that Maple-High/Six Corners has faced was the June 1, 2011 tornado, which passed directly through the neighborhood. There was no loss of life, but the tornado caused extensive damage here, particularly along the Central Street corridor. The neighborhood has proven resilient, and much of the affected area has since been repaired or rebuilt. However, there are still some ongoing challenges, including buildings on the former MacDuffie School campus that have still not been restored.
Neighborhood Boundaries, Zoning, and Land Use

The Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhood is defined by Mulberry, School, and State Streets to the northwest, Walnut Street to the northeast, the Mill River to the southeast, and Mill, Pine, and Maple Streets to the southwest. It is 0.43 acres in area, making it one of the smallest neighborhoods in Springfield geographically, but because of its high population it is one of the most densely populated neighborhoods in the city.

The Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhood is primarily residential, with some business and commercial zoning along the periphery. Most of the residential areas are zone Residence B, which allows for medium-density housing such as single-family and two-family dwellings (Figure 6). However, several parts of the neighborhood are zoned for lower-density Residence A, particularly along Maple Street (Figure 5) and in the Ridgewood Terrace area. In addition, there are many parcels scattered throughout the neighborhood that are zoned for Residence C, which allows for higher-density multi-family housing such as apartment complexes and condominiums (Figure 8).

The northern edge of the neighborhood, in the vicinity of State and Union Streets, is primarily zoned either Commercial A or Business A. This type of zoning typically allows for pedestrian oriented retail and service development, in contrast to Business B, which is more car-oriented development. Much of Walnut Street is zoned for either Business A or Business B, as is the corridor along the Mill River in the southern part of the neighborhood. There are also several parcels of Commercial A around the triangle formed by Central, Pine, and Florence Streets, near the geographic center of the neighborhood. There is no industrial zoning in the neighborhood.

Within these business and commercial zoning districts, there is a wide variety of current uses. In the northern part of the neighborhood, the High School of Commerce occupies a large lot that extends from State to Union Streets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Maple-High/Six Corners Zoning Districts</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residence A</td>
<td>Low density residential, primarily single-family detached</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence B</td>
<td>Medium density residential, primarily single-family and two-family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence C</td>
<td>Single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings and multi-family dwellings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office A</td>
<td>Former residential building used for office space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial A</td>
<td>Small scale retail and service convenience type commercial establishments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business A</td>
<td>Main Street and pedestrian oriented shopping districts with residential allowed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business B</td>
<td>Highway-oriented automotive and service business activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial A</td>
<td>Full range of industrial and business uses compatible with a major urban center.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5: New construction on previously vacant land along Central Street. Although zoned for Residence B (single-family or two-family), these are all single-family homes.

Figure 7: The former Elias Brookings school, shown after its conversion into apartments.

Figure 9: Commercial zoning at the intersection of Pine, Central, and Florence Streets.

Figure 10: Former Wesson Memorial Hospital, seen from High Street.
Adjacent to Commerce is the former Wesson Memorial Hospital, which is now an outpatient facility for Baystate Medical Center (Figure 10). It is located on High Street, but it has several large surface parking lots that occupy a significant amount of space on and around High Street. Elsewhere in the neighborhood, many of the parcels that are zoned for business or commercial are occupied by apartment buildings. Existing businesses tend to be small-scale restaurants and retail establishments that are interspersed throughout the neighborhood, and there is a limited amount of concentrated business development. One of the few exceptions is the 1 Stop Plaza (.), located in the southeastern corner of the neighborhood between Hickory and Central Streets.

Although Maple-High/Six Corners has a high population density, it also has a significant amount of vacant or underutilized land that could be repurposed to meet the needs of neighborhood residents. One ongoing initiative is the construction of new single-family homes on vacant land on Central and Pine Streets. These will be completed in the fall of 2023, and will be made available by lottery to income-eligible first-time homebuyers.

Aside from vacant land, there are also opportunities to restore deteriorated buildings in the neighborhood. One recent success is the former Elias Brookings School (Figure 7) on Hancock Street. This building was heavily damaged by the June 1, 2011 tornado, but it was recently restored and converted into apartments. However, there are several tornado-damaged buildings on the former MacDuffie School campus that have not yet been restored, including two historic 19th century homes on Maple Street (Figure 2). Within the Ridgewood Historic District, there are two large fire-damaged homes, located at 63 and 116 Mulberry Street. Elsewhere in the neighborhood, the Gunn Block at the corner of State and Walnut Streets has been vacant and deteriorating for many years. It has been stabilized, but it is in need of significant investment to fully restore it.

Other opportunities for further investment include identifying sites for concentrated business development within the neighborhood. One area with particularly strong potential is in the vicinity of the Armory Watershops at the corner of Allen and Hickory Streets (Figure 12). There are several vacant city-owned parcels here, which could be redeveloped to complement existing businesses at the adjacent One Stop Plaza. In the longer term, this could also involve converting the Armory Watershops into a space for retail shops, restaurants, and other local businesses. Aside from this site, other areas to
explore for concentrated business development include the area around the newly reconstructed Six Corners roundabout, and also the triangular intersection at the corner of Central, Pine, and Florence Streets (Figure 9).

Demographics
As of the 2020 census, Maple-High/Six Corners had a population of 7,510. Of this population, 24% identify as African American, 23% identify as White, and 53% identify as other races, including people of multiple races. The population is 63% Hispanic of any race. The age distribution of the population is 32% children under 18 years old, 57% people of working age, and 11% people of retirement age or older. Maple High-Six Corners has among the highest proportion of children in Springfield.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Maple-High/Six Corners</th>
<th>Springfield</th>
<th>Pioneer Valley</th>
<th>Massachusetts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children and youth</td>
<td>Babies born with low birth weight</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child poverty</td>
<td>64.9%</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Preschool enrollment</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attainment of higher education</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Premature mortality (per 1,000)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic security</td>
<td>Median household income</td>
<td>$23,981</td>
<td>$41,571</td>
<td>$61,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Income inequality (Gini index)</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elderly poverty</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Labor force participation</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Housing cost burden</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homeownership rates</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Low-carbon commuters</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average commute time (minutes)</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Much more information is available in the Springfield Data Atlas

Transportation
The major streets in the Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhood include Maple, State, and Walnut Streets on the outer boundaries. In addition, Mill Street passes through the southern end, and Union Street runs parallel to State Street in the northern part of the neighborhood, where it served as an alternative to State Street for east-west traffic. Other major streets include Pine and Central Streets, which cross perpendicularly through the middle of the neighborhood.

There have been two recent roadway improvement projects in Maple-High/Six Corners. One of these was the reconstruction of the Six Corners intersection to create a roundabout (Figure 13). This project, which was first discussed in a 2008 neighborhood planning report and completed in 2020, replaced a complex signalized intersection that had previously ranked as a high crash location. The other project involved a realignment of Central Street to create a direct connection between Central and Hickory.
Streets. Hickory Street was also widened as part of this project and upgraded from one-way to two-way traffic (Figure 14).

The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) services the region with public bus routes and paratransit services. Maple-High/Six Corners is served by bus routes along the edges of the neighborhood on State, Walnut, and Mill Streets, and also by a route that passes through the center of the neighborhood along Maple, Central, and Pine Streets. There are 36 individual bus stops in the neighborhood, with only 3 sheltered bus stops. This access to public transportation likely contributes to the fact that Maple-High/Six Corners residents have a much higher rate of environmentally friendly transportation when compared to both the citywide and statewide averages.

**Housing and Income**

The median household income in Maple-High/Six Corners is $23,981, which is the fifth lowest among the city’s 17 neighborhoods. It also has the third-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, 42.7% of neighborhood residents live in households with incomes below the federal poverty line, which is more than twice the citywide average of 19.9%. As a result, support for current Maple-High/Six Corners residents is a high priority for this neighborhood investment plan.

Although the historic homes of the Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhood are among its strongest assets, the overall homeownership rate is just 16.8%, which is the fifth lowest of any neighborhood in
the city. More than half of residents are considered to be burdened by housing costs, with 52.2% 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 districts, where exterior changes that are visible from the street must be approved by the 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.

Survey respondents from the Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhood indicated that housing was a high priority for them, including providing assistance in maintaining existing homes. One recent program that has been established is the Historic Home Restoration Program, which is administered by the Springfield Community Preservation Committee. Under this program, homeowners in many of the city’s local historic districts, including the Ridgewood and Maple Hill districts, 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, nine of the applicants were from Maple-High/Six Corners, although none of them were selected in the lottery.

The large pool of applicants indicates that there is significant demand for such programs in Maple-High/Six Corners 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 only one-sixth of neighborhood 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. Because it this, it is important to examine other opportunities for funding, including ways to support first-time homebuyers in the neighborhood in order to improve homeownership rates. Additionally, because the vast majority of neighborhood residents live in rental properties, it is important to identify ways to incentivize property owners to invest in existing facilities while also encouraging development of new affordable housing in the neighborhood.
In addition to the challenges of simply maintaining and rehabilitating the historic homes in the Maple-High/Six Corners 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. Preserving the rich architectural heritage of the neighborhood while ensuring energy efficiency and decarbonization is a delicate balancing act. Residents and the city government are striving to promote sustainable practices and retrofitting solutions that align with historic preservation guidelines. 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 while maintaining the neighborhood’s unique character. 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 Maple-High/Six Corners community for generations to come.

**Parks and Open Space**

The Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhood has a total of 10.48 acres of public open space at three different sites. The largest of these is the 5.94-acre Ruth Elizabeth Park in the southeastern part of the neighborhood. This park includes athletics fields, a basketball court, playground equipment (Figure 19), and a splash pad, and it was recently expanded with the acquisition of land at the corner of Hickory and Walnut Streets (Figure 20). This area of the park has since been landscaped, and it also includes accessible paths, a small pavilion, and benches.

Other open space areas include the athletic fields at Commerce High School, along with Gerrish Park (Figure 21) at the Six Corners roundabout, which is utilized for passive recreation. Another park, Johnny Appleseed Park, is located just outside of the neighborhood boundaries, but is in close proximity to many Maple-High/Six Corners residents. And, while not included in the count of public open spaces, Maple-High/Six Corners also includes the 40-acre Springfield Cemetery, which occupies much of the northern part of the neighborhood.

Both Ruth Elizabeth and Gerrish Parks are stops on the recently-created Legacy Trail, a 2.3-mile walking route that links the public open spaces in the Maple-High/Six Corners and Old Hill neighborhoods. Each park on the route includes interpretive signage to highlight the history of the neighborhood, including the story behind the parks and their namesakes.

Figure 18: Parks and open space. See full-size map in Appendix A
Additional opportunities for public open space include the proposed Mill River Greenway. This proposal, which has generated strong support from area residents, would involve a mixed-use path along the Mill River (Figure 22), from the Armory Watershops to the Connecticut River. Aside from its benefit in facilitating environmentally-friendly transportation options, this greenway could be incorporated into the existing Legacy Trail, and could further celebrate the neighborhood, its residents, and its history.

Based on the 2020 census, the Maple-High/Six Corners 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 in the neighborhood, all of them meet the criteria based
on both income and percentage of minority residents, and two also meet the criteria based on English language proficiency.

Because the Maple-High/Six Corners 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 Maple-High/Six Corners Neighborhood Council and the city to assess ways in which the neighborhood could benefit from such investments.

**Neighborhood Investment Process**

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 Maple-High/Six Corners 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 Maple-High/Six Corners 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 these 12 plans. 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 One**

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 Two**
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**
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.

Goal 1: Improve transparency, trust, and communication between the city and the Maple-High/Six Corners 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 Maple-High/Six Corners, 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.

Goal 2: Identify, prioritize, and implement investments in the Maple-High/Six Corners 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.

Goal 3: Maintain the quality of the neighborhood’s housing stock.

On the Spring 2023 resident survey conducted as part of this neighborhood investment plan, Maple-High/Six Corners residents overwhelmingly chose housing as a top priority out of seven major categories, with nearly two-thirds of respondents selecting it as their first or second priority. Much of the housing
stock in the neighborhood is older, dating back to the 19th century, which can make upkeep challenging for residents. This problem was exacerbated by the 2011 tornado, which caused severe damage in the neighborhood, and there are still several large houses on Maple and Central Streets that have yet to be fully repaired. Another concern raised by some residents is the disproportionately high number of group homes in the neighborhood, which are often located in the large 19th century mansions in the historic districts.

**Strategies:**
- City and collaborators expand funding and/or programs to provide financial assistance for maintaining, rehabilitating, and renovating houses in the Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhood.
- Neighborhood Council identifies and prioritizes vacant and/or deteriorated properties for rehabilitation.
- City and Neighborhood Council collaborate to create a process for reporting and resolving code violations.
- City and Neighborhood Council collaborate with property owners to pursue infill development on vacant lots.
- City and Neighborhood Council collaborate to address the high quantity of group homes in the Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhood.
- City and Neighborhood Council collaborate with property owners to restore historic buildings on Commonwealth Academy campus and at the corner of Maple and Central Streets.
- City and Neighborhood Council collaborate to seek private and non-profit developers to undertake development of affordable, mixed income, and market-rate rental housing and condominiums in the Six Corners neighborhood that is consistent with the neighborhood and city objectives.

**Goal 4: Expand opportunities to walk, bike, and take public transportation.**

The Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhood is well served by public transportation on the main roads, but it is important to ensure that residents on the side streets can safely access these bus stops. On the resident survey, respondents placed a high priority on improving the experience in taking the bus, along with improving walkability and implementing traffic calming measures. In general, Maple-High/Six Corners respondents placed less of a priority on bicycling and roadway improvements.

**Strategies:**
- Neighborhood Council works with city to identify and prioritize sidewalks that are in need of replacement.
- Neighborhood Council requests that the city plan and implement a pedestrian safety program, building upon the complete streets initiative, addressing the need to balance the needs and safety of pedestrians with the necessary automobile traffic.
- Neighborhood Council collaborates with Elias Brookings School to expand its Walking School Bus Program.

**Goal 5: Build community and pride in neighborhood**

On the survey, respondents from the Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhood placed a high priority on community celebrations, as well as new public art installations. Residents were also overwhelmingly favorable to the proposed Mill River Greenway, which would provide additional recreational space in the
neighborhood. When asked if they support the project, 85% answered yes, with 7.5% responding no and another 7.5% responding maybe.

**Strategies:**
- City and Neighborhood Council 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.
- Neighborhood Council advocates for the development of the proposed river walk from Allen Street to Hancock Street and Johnny Appleseed Park and develop plans for future extension to Connecticut River.
- City and Neighborhood Council collaborate on ways to revitalize Ruth Elizabeth Park with new recreation amenities and programs that use the park for scheduled activities.
- City and Neighborhood Council collaborate on the construction of a new community building at Ruth Elizabeth Park.
- Neighborhood Council identifies neighborhood gateways and collaborates with city to install attractive signage and landscaping.
- Neighborhood Council works to establish a Neighborhood Branding Program
- Neighborhood Council creates a community engagement program to bring neighborhood residents together.
- Neighborhood Council engages UMass Design Center students to conduct a public engagement and design process for Mulberry Street.
- Neighborhood Council conducts walking tour of neighborhood with mayor, city officials, and other stakeholders to identify areas of opportunity.

**Goal 6: Strengthen economy of neighborhood**
Given the amount of vacant or underutilized land in Maple-High/Six Corners, there are significant opportunities for strengthening the economy of the neighborhood. On the resident survey, respondents placed a high priority on food access, and favored the idea of bringing a full-line grocery store to the area. On another question, when asked to rank sites in the Mason Square area for concentrated business development, respondents from Maple-High/Six Corners prioritized the One Stop Plaza at the corner of Allen and Hickory Streets. Respondents also prioritized redeveloping the site of the former MCDI building, which is located outside of the boundaries of the neighborhood but within walking distance of it.

**Strategies:**
- Office of Planning and Economic Development explores the possibility of District Improvement Financing for the Watershops District.
- City and Neighborhood Council explore the possibility of negotiating with neighborhood institutional uses to make payments in lieu of taxes.
- Office of Planning and Economic Development and Neighborhood Council reach out to local businesses to assess interest in establishing a Neighborhood Business Association.
- City and Neighborhood Council explore available funding resources, including but not limited to funds available from the Office of Neighborhood Services Neighborhood Targeted Improvement Program (NTIP) to implement low cost projects in the community.
- Office of Planning and Economic Development collaborates with property owners at 1 Allen Street to create a long-term plan for the property.
- Neighborhood Council and the city collaborate with Old Hill Neighborhood Council to create a plan for the redevelopment of Walnut Street.
- Neighborhood Council and city collaborate to bring a full-line grocery store to the neighborhood.

Recommendations and Prioritization
Recommendations and priorities will be determined based on feedback from neighborhood council.

Short-Term Projects (6 months–4 years)
Recommendations

Mid-Term Projects (4–8 years)
Recommendations

Long-Term Projects (8+ years)
Recommendations
Appendix A: Maps

Maple-High/Six Corners Neighborhood Zoning Map
PVTA Bus Stops and Routes in Maple-High/Six Corners
Parks and Open Space in Maple-High/Six Corners
Appendix B: Summaries of existing city and neighborhood plans

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. Neighborhood-specific goals, recommendations, and strategies are highlighted in the “Summary of Existing Conditions” section of this report.

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.

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.

Watershops District Revitalization Plan (2013)

- A follow-up effort to the extensive work outlined in the 2012 Rebuild Springfield Plan, the Watershops District Revitalization Plan focuses on a small area within the city-wide plan’s District 2 (Maple High-Six Corners, Old Hill, Upper Hill, and Forest Park), an area 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 plan envisions a future Watershops District that 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. The plan recommends 7 “High Priority Physical Projects”, 5 “Medium Priority Physical Projects”, and 12 “Programmatic Projects”.

A Plan for Springfield’s Maple High, Six Corners Neighborhood (2022)

- This draft plan was created by consultants Scott Hanson and Peter Gagliardi with the support of the Maple-High, Six Corners 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 15 initiatives that were ongoing or considered achievable within a 12-month period. Fifteen projects were identified as “Projects That Could Move Forward by 2026.” Six additional initiatives were identified as projects to be completed “In the Longer Range,” sometime within the next decade: a riverwalk along the Mill River, redevelopment of rental properties, restoration of Commonwealth Academy buildings and adjacent properties, replacement of streetlights, reuse planning for the Armory Watershops facility, and obtaining funding for a rail trail from State Street to Allen Street.