Upper Hill Neighborhood Investment Plan 2023-2033

City of Springfield and the Upper Hill Residents 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 Upper Hill neighborhood through collaborative planning and implementation between residents, including resident businesses and organizations, and other stakeholders and city departments.

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Acknowledgements

Upper Hill Residents Council  
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PVPC and sub-consultants  
ARPA funding language
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Neighborhood Description and Priorities
The Upper Hill neighborhood is located about two miles east of downtown Springfield, near the
geographic center of the city. It is located along the State Street and Wilbraham Road corridors, in the
southeastern corner of the Mason Square district. The neighborhood is predominantly residential, but it
is also home to two of the city’s colleges. Upper Hill is about 0.7 acres in area, and it is home to over
4,200 residents, or about 5% of the city’s total population.

Neighborhood History
Unlike the Old Hill neighborhood, which was primarily developed in the second half of the 19th century,
the Upper Hill neighborhood would remain sparsely settled until the turn of the 20th century. By this point, the city was becoming a major industrial center, and many companies began building factories
along the railroad corridor on the western side of the neighborhood.

The most notable of these was the Hendee Manufacturing Company, which was located in the
triangle of land between State Street, Wilbraham Road, and Rutland Street (Figure 1). Later renamed
the Indian Motorcycle Company, it produced motorcycles here in the Upper Hill neighborhood
until it closed in 1953. Much of the facility is still
standing, and has been converted into apartments.

Another important manufacturer in the neighborhood was the Knox Automobile Company. This was one of several car manufacturers in Springfield during the early 20th century, and its factory was on the south side of Wilbraham Road, at the corner of Waltham Street (Figure 2). As of 2023, this building—which had been vacant for many years—is undergoing conversion into
apartments.

Unlike many other factory cities in New England, the companies in Springfield generally did not
employ large numbers of unskilled laborers. Instead, most of the work in Springfield’s factories
involved precision manufacturing and other skilled labor, along with a variety of clerical and
managerial work. As a result, the city’s workers tended to be better paid and, consequently, had
better housing options, in contrast to the factory tenements that often dominated other industrial cities
in the region. This led to a proliferation of single-family and two-family housing in Springfield, which
contributed to its nickname as the “City of Homes.”

Here in the Upper Hill neighborhood, the increased demand for houses resulted in the subdivision of the
land between State Street and Alden Street. By the 1910s, new streets and house lots had been laid out
here, including a public park–Gunn Square–and landscaped terraces along Massachusetts Avenue and Westford Circle (Figure 3). Car ownership was becoming more common by this point, and many of the houses were built with garages in the back of the lot, but residents also had access to public transportation via trolley service on State Street and on Wilbraham Road.

The development of the land in this area also led to the establishment of two colleges in the Upper Hill neighborhood. In the northern area, between Wilbraham Road and State Street, is American International College (AIC), which was established in 1885 as the French Protestant College (Figure 4). The goal of the school was to meet the needs of new immigrants and their children, and over the years it continued to expand its mission to serve students from the United States as well as abroad, inspiring the “International” part of the school’s name. Today, AIC continues to have a diverse student body, with demographics that closely match those of the surrounding community.

The other institution of higher learning in Upper Hill is Springfield College, which was also established in 1885 (Figure 5). It began as the School for Christian Workers, and later became the International Y.M.C.A Training School, and it was originally located on the north side of Mason Square. It was there that instructor James Naismith invented the sport of basketball in 1891. However, by the mid-1890s the school had relocated to its new campus on the Watershops Pond in the southern part of the neighborhood. The school would later be renamed Springfield College, and its campus now includes most of the land in Upper Hill to the south of King Street and to the west of Middlesex Street.
Neighborhood Boundaries, Zoning, and Land Use

The Upper Hill neighborhood is defined by State Street, Roosevelt Avenue, and Wilbraham Road to the north, the former Highland Branch railroad right-of-way to the west, and the Watershops Pond to the south and east.

Nearly the entire neighborhood is zoned for medium-density Residence B, which allows for single-family and two-family dwellings (Figure 8). Most of these properties are on uniformly-sized lots that measure about 50 feet wide and about 100 feet deep. The only area in the neighborhood with lower-density Residence A zoning is in the southeastern corner, in the vicinity of Northumberland Street and Carnarvon Circle (Figure 7).

The nonresidential zoning is generally on the periphery of the neighborhood, including industrial parcels along the former railroad right-of-way and Business zoning on State Street (Figure 11). Otherwise, the only other Business zoning is on scattered parcels along Wilbraham Road (Figure 10 and Figure 16).

Most of the housing stock in Upper Hill dates back to when the neighborhood was developed in the early 20th century, and it consists primarily of two-family residences, along with some single-family homes. However, the neighborhood has also seen an increase in housing units through adaptive reuse of former industrial properties. The former Indian Motorcycle factory, located in the triangle between State Street and Wilbraham Road, has since been converted into apartments (Figure 9), and as of 2023 a similar project is underway at the former Knox Automobile factory at the corner of Wilbraham Road and Waltham Avenue (Figure 2). This project will add 54 new apartment units to the neighborhood, and will provide further opportunities to expand restaurant and business options in the Mason Square area, in order to meet the needs of these new families.

As mentioned in the neighborhood history section, the Upper Hill neighborhood is also home to two colleges. The main campus of American International College is in the northern part of the neighborhood, between Wilbraham Road and State Street, and Springfield College is in the southern part, along Alden Street. The proximity of these two schools presents opportunities for the city and neighborhood to partner with them to attract and support local businesses that will serve the needs of the student populations as well as the neighborhood as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Upper Hill Zoning Districts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>District</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7: Low-density Residence A development on Northumberland Street

Figure 8: Residence B development on Dunmoreland Street

Figure 9: Apartments at the former Indian Motorcycle factory between State Street and Wilbraham Road

Figure 8: Residence B development on Dunmoreland Street

Figure 10: Business B (foreground) and Business A (distance) zoning on the south side of Wilbraham Road

Figure 11: Existing business development on State Street between Reed Street and Colonial Avenue.

Figure 12: The Springfield College campus on Alden Street
Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Upper Hill</th>
<th>Springfield</th>
<th>Pioneer Valley</th>
<th>Massachusetts</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Children and youth</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Babies born with low birth weight</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child poverty</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Preschool enrollment</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
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<td>Attainment of higher education</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
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<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
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<td>Premature mortality (per 1,000)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<td><strong>Economic security</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Median household income</td>
<td>$35,271</td>
<td>$41,571</td>
<td>$61,569</td>
<td>$84,385</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income inequality (Gini index)</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.47</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elderly poverty</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labor force participation</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
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<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing cost burden</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homeownership rates</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Low-carbon commuters</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average commute time (minutes)</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Much more information is available in the Springfield Data Atlas*

As of the 2020 census, Upper Hill had a population of 4,269, comprising about five percent of the total city population. Of these residents, 38% identify as African American, 33% identify as white, and 28% identify as other races, including people of multiple races. The population is 31% Hispanic of any race. The age distribution of the population is 16% children under 18 years old, 76% people of working age, and 8% people of retirement age or older. Upper Hill has the highest percentage of working-age adults and the lowest percentage of children in any city neighborhood.

**Transportation**

The Upper Hill neighborhood includes three major east-to-west streets: State Street and Wilbraham Road in the northern part of the neighborhood, and Alden Street in the southern part. The only major north-to-south street in Upper Hill is Roosevelt Avenue, which passes through the eastern part of the neighborhood.

Roosevelt Avenue passes beneath State Street, but it crosses Wilbraham Road and Alden Street at grade, which means that these intersections tend to experience high traffic volumes. The intersection of Roosevelt Avenue and Alden Street was recently reconstructed as part of a larger project to improve the nearby intersection of Roosevelt Avenue and Island Pond Road, which is located across the Watershops Pond in the East Forest Park neighborhood. As for the intersection of Roosevelt...
Avenue and Wilbraham Road (Figure 15), this has been an area of concern for some residents, and existing neighborhood plans have included recommendations for a study to explore redesigning it.

The average commute time for residents in the Upper Hill neighborhood is 25.3 minutes, which is the longest for any neighborhood in the city. Of the Upper Hill residents who commute to work, 26.1% use an environmentally friendly mode of transportation, either by biking, walking, carpooling, or riding public transportation.

The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) services the region with public bus routes and paratransit services. The Upper Hill neighborhood is served by bus routes along State Street, Wilbraham Road, and Roosevelt Avenue, in addition to a bus route that serves the central part of the neighborhood along Westford Circle. There are 40 individual bus stops in Upper Hill, including one sheltered bus stop on Wilbraham Road.

The neighborhood has limited bicycle infrastructure. There are bicycle lanes on Roosevelt Avenue between Wilbraham Road and Alden Street, and also on the portion of Alden Street that was reconstructed as part of the Roosevelt Avenue improvements (Figure 14). One proposed cycling-related project is the Highland Rail Trail, which would follow the former railroad right-of-way at the eastern end of the neighborhood and link with the proposed McKnight Community Trail to the north. This trail would also have the potential to be extended south through the city and into East Longmeadow.

Residents have also raised concerns regarding existing conditions for pedestrians, particularly on Wilbraham Road (Figure 16). One recent improvement was at the intersection of Wilbraham Road and Massachusetts Avenue. This project involved narrowing Wilbraham Road and installing a crosswalk with overhead flashing lights. Overall, though, there is still a limited number of crosswalks on the street, with only five on the entire 0.75-mile section of Wilbraham Road in the neighborhood, including just two that are equipped with pedestrian crossing signals.
Housing and Income
The median household income in Upper Hill is $35,271, compared to the citywide median of $41,571. Overall, 25.1% of Upper Hill residents live in households with incomes below the federal poverty line, compared to the citywide rate of 19.9%. The homeownership rate is 40.2%, which is lower than the citywide average but significantly higher than the other neighborhoods in the Mason Square area.

There are an estimated 220 subsidized housing units in the neighborhood, which is the fifth-lowest number out of the city’s 17 neighborhoods. This comprises only about 10% of the neighborhood’s total number of housing units, and may contribute to the fact that the majority of Upper Hill residents are considered to be burdened by housing costs. Housing cost burden is defined by paying more than 30% of income toward either rent or homeownership, and 62.8% of Upper Hill residents meet these criteria. These housing costs include maintenance, which can be a considerable expense in older neighborhoods such as Upper Hill, where most of the existing housing stock dates to the early 20th century. Such homes 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.

There are currently some funding opportunities to assist some Springfield homeowners in exterior maintenance, such as the Community Preservation Committee’s Historic House Restoration Program. However, currently only homeowners in certain local historic districts are eligible to apply for this grant money. There are no local historic districts in Upper Hill, so residents in this neighborhood are not able to access this source of funding. Because Upper Hill survey respondents placed a high priority on housing, particularly on maintaining and rehabilitating existing homes, this may be an area where there is opportunity to explore expanding the existing program, or creating similar programs for residents who live outside of historic districts.

In addition to the challenges of simply maintaining and rehabilitating the older homes in the Upper Hill 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 Upper Hill community for generations to come.
Parks and Open Space

The Upper Hill neighborhood has a total of 31 acres of public open space at seven different sites. Gunn Square (Figure 21), Homer Street Playground, and Adams Park all feature playground equipment, and Adams Park also has an outdoor basketball court and an open field (Figure 19). The neighborhood also has the newly-opened Samuel Bolden Park on Wilbraham Avenue (Figure 20). This park has playground equipment, a basketball court, along with a large open field.

Aside from these parks, the neighborhood also has a significant amount of undeveloped or underutilized parkland. The city owns 2.5 acres of land along the shore of the Watershops Pond, extending along Alden Street from Lakeside Avenue to near Middlesex Street (Figure 24). However, there are limited recreational facilities there, aside from a boat ramp near Bonnyview Street (Figure 23) and several benches near Roosevelt Avenue. There is currently only a short section of sidewalk on the waterfront side of Alden Street, although there are well-worn footpaths in the grass that indicate that it sees significant pedestrian use.

The single largest park in the neighborhood is the nearly 20-acre Wesson Park, which is located to the west of Roosevelt Avenue, along banks of the Carlisle Brook (Figure 22). It is primarily wooded, aside from a small clearing where a gun club building once stood, and it is currently undeveloped. As with other wooded areas in the city, illegal dumping is a problem here, and there is a significant amount of trash and other discarded items in the park. Overall, it has strong potential for redevelopment, both to improve recreational opportunities for local residents and also to discourage illegal dumping.

Based on the 2020 census, the Upper Hill 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 six census block groups that are located in the neighborhood, all six meet the criteria based on both income and percentage of minority residents.

Because the Upper Hill 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.
Figure 19: Basketball court at Adams Park on Wilbraham Road

Figure 20: Samuel Bolden Park, seen looking north from King Street parking lot

Figure 21: Playground at Gunn Square

Figure 22: Carlisle Brook in Wesson Park, near the corner of Wilbraham Road and Roosevelt Avenue

Figure 23: Boat ramp at the Watershops Pond on Alden Street

Figure 24: Looking west on the Watershops Pond from near the corner of Alden and Northumberland Streets
of pollution, and the development of critical clean water and wastewater infrastructure. As this is a new initiative, it is important for both the Upper Hill Residents 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 Upper Hill 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 Upper Hill Residents 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 McCaffert, 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 Upper Hill 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, Residents Council, and residents collaborate to design, create, and implement an equitable and inclusive neighborhood planning process in Upper Hill, 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, Residents 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 Upper Hill 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, Residents 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 Residents 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 planning process, Upper Hill residents overwhelmingly chose housing as a top priority out of seven major categories, with more than three-quarters of respondents selecting it as their first or second priority. In general, respondents tended to prefer efforts to support maintaining and rehabilitating existing homes, rather than construction of new homes.

**Strategies:**
- City and collaborators expand funding and/or programs to provide financial assistance for maintaining, rehabilitating, and renovating houses in the Upper Hill neighborhood.
- Residents Council identifies and prioritizes vacant and/or deteriorated properties for rehabilitation.
- City and Residents Council collaborate to create a process for reporting and resolving code violations.

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

The Upper Hill neighborhood is well served by public transportation on the main roads, with most residents living no more than one block away from at least one bus route. However, it is important to ensure that residents can safely access these bus stops. On the resident survey, respondents placed a high priority on both the walkability of the neighborhood and also on improving the experience of taking the bus, including installing new shelters. In general, Upper Hill respondents placed less of a priority on biking, roadway improvements, and traffic calming measures.

**Strategies:**
- Residents Council works with city to identify and prioritize locations for new crosswalks and/or pedestrian crossing signals, especially at major intersections along Wilbraham Road.
- Residents Council works with city to identify and prioritize sidewalks that are in need of replacement.
- Residents Council works with PVTA to prioritize locations for new bus shelters.
- City and Residents Council collaborate to explore redesigning the intersection of Wilbraham Road and Roosevelt Avenue.
- Residents Council identifies sites for additional shade trees along Wilbraham Road and other neighborhood streets, and shares recommendations with city.
- Residents Council collaborates with DPW to identify areas with high pedestrian traffic and install benches to accommodate people with mobility difficulties.

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

On the resident survey, half of the respondents indicated a need for more parks in the Mason Square area, and another third of respondents indicated that there may be such a need. As noted in the neighborhood profile, the Upper Hill has a significant amount of public open space, but much of this is not currently being utilized to its full potential, so there are certainly opportunities for improving these areas for recreational use. Another area of need that has been noted in previous neighborhood plans is improving engagement and involvement with the Residents Council. This corresponds with the survey responses, which indicated a preference for prioritizing community events and celebrations in the neighborhood. By increasing involvement in the Residents Council, this will grow capacity for more events such as these.

**Strategies:**
- Residents Council develops strategies to increase membership of the council, recruit and train new leaders, and develop and implement resident engagement strategies.
- City and the Residents Council collaborate to create and implement a plan for the development of Wesson Park.
• City and Residents Council collaborate on redesigning the playground at Adams Park to improve accessibility.
• City and Residents Council collaborate on a plan to expand recreational opportunities on city-owned land along the Watershops Pond.
• City, Residents Council, and Old Hill Neighborhood Council explore possibility of acquiring a site for an Old Hill/Upper Hill community center.

Goal 6: Strengthen the economy of the neighborhood.
On the resident survey, Upper Hill respondents indicated a preference for concentrated business development at Ben Swan Way, which is located just outside of the neighborhood boundaries at Mason Square. On another question regarding food access, Upper Hill residents overwhelmingly chose to prioritize a full-line grocery store. Out of five food-related options, two thirds of respondents selected this as their top priority.

Strategies:
• Residents Council and city collaborate to develop strategies for supporting existing local businesses and encouraging other businesses to invest in Upper Hill.
• Residents Council and city examine existing zoning in Upper Hill and identify areas where rezoning could help support appropriate business/commercial use.
• Residents Council and city collaborate to bring a full-line grocery store to the Mason Square area.
• Residents Council and city collaborate to prioritize concentrated business development at Ben Swan Way, and also on the block of Wilbraham Road between Waltham and Northampton Avenues, and the block of State Street between Reed Street and Colonial Avenue.
• City and Residents Council collaborate on plans to redevelop the former Homer Street School.

Recommendations and Prioritization
Recommendations and priorities will be determined based on feedback from Residents 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

Upper Hill Neighborhood Zoning Map
PVTA Bus Stops and Routes in Upper Hill
Parks and Open Space in Upper Hill

- G Frank Adams Park
- Homer Street Playground
- Gunn Square Park
- Samuel Bolton Park
- Lake Massasaqua Access

Parks and Open Space Map

- Upper Hill Neighborhood
- Open Space
- PROPOSED_Highland-McKnight_RailTrail
- Vacant Lands

Scale: 0 0.05 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 Miles
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 Residents 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.

A Plan for Springfield’s Upper Hill Neighborhood (2022)
- This draft plan was created by consultants Scott Hanson and Peter Gagliardi with the support of the Upper Hill 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 16 initiatives that were ongoing or considered achievable within a 12-month period. Nine projects were identified as “Projects That Could Move Forward by 2026.” Four additional initiatives were identified as projects to be completed “In the Longer Range,” sometime within the next decade: redesigning the intersection of Wilbraham Road and Roosevelt Avenue, replacing all streetlights in the neighborhood, increasing resident engagement with the neighborhood council, and developing Wesson Park.