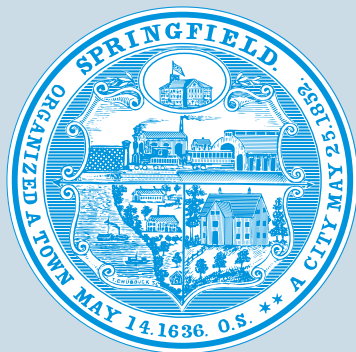




South End Neighborhood Investment Plan 2025–2035

City of Springfield and the South End Citizens Council, Residents, local Businesses, Organizations, and other Stakeholders

South End Neighborhood Investment Plan 2025–2035



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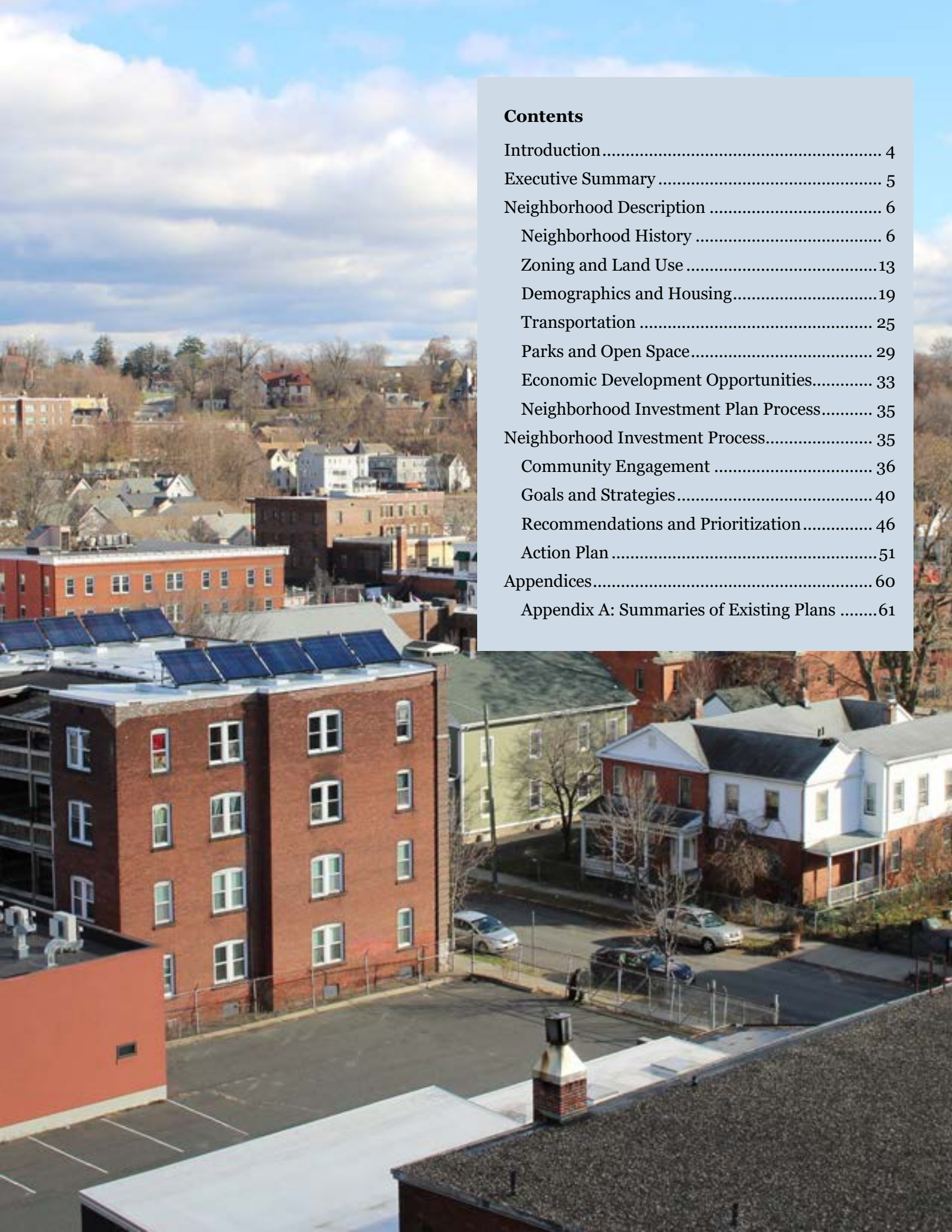
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Goal: To enhance and inform the delivery of municipal services and the investment of municipal, state, federal, and private funding, and other resources in the South End neighborhood through collaborative planning and implementation between residents,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

Introduction

Welcome to the South End Neighborhood Investment Plan 2025.

This plan begins with a brief history of how the neighborhood developed over time. We want everyone reading the plans to know that, just as your neighborhood was created by people who came before you, so too can you influence the way your neighborhood develops into the future.

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 update the city's [Neighborhood Data Atlas](#) and facilitate development of [Neighborhood Investment Plans](#) in twelve neighborhoods where residents experienced disproportionately high rates of COVID infection, hospitalization, and death, including the South End neighborhood. The city engaged the [Pioneer Valley Planning Commission](#) (PVPC) to complete this work, and PVPC subsequently engaged [Way Finders Community Building and Engagement](#) team via a competitive procurement process to lead engagement focusing on residents, local businesses, and community-based organizations.

The goal of this neighborhood plan and the planning process that led to its development is to establish and agree on shared priorities for investment in the neighborhood and to strengthen the connection between the neighborhood—its residents, small businesses, institutions, and community-based organizations, along with the [Neighborhood Council](#) and the city's many departments. The city of Springfield works with residents through the city's neighborhood councils, and the city relies on them to share information with their residents. Residents who want to get involved in their neighborhoods can start with the neighborhood council. Recognizing that the city's neighborhood councils needed financial support and technical assistance, the city invested [\\$1.7 million in the form of \\$100,000 grants to each neighborhood council](#) in 2022-2024 and developed a neighborhood council handbook.

This planning process was initiated by the city [Office of Planning and Economic Development](#) (OPED) [Division of Neighborhood Services](#), and this city office is working to ensure integration and acceptance of these prioritized projects by all city departments, boards, and commissions. Through this plan, the city and the neighborhood are proclaiming their shared commitment to work collaboratively on behalf of their residents to implement these priority investments over the next ten years, through 2035.

Executive Summary

The neighborhood investment planning process resulted in a wide range of potential investments that emerged through a review of existing neighborhood and city plans, through resident surveys, and through meetings with the South End Citizens' Council and other stakeholders. Over the course of the planning process, this list of proposed investments was narrowed down to a small number of high-priority recommendations, based on input from residents and neighborhood councils.

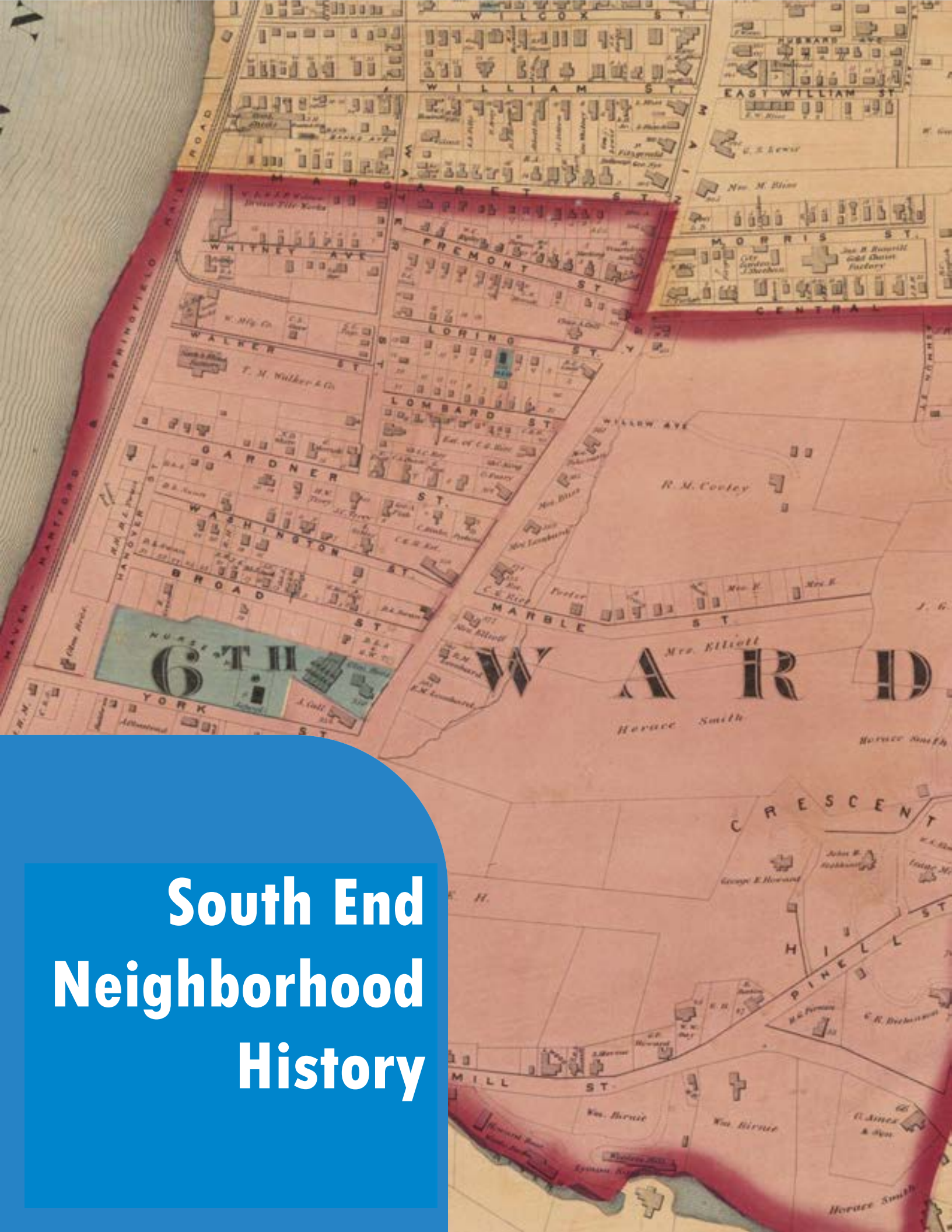
These recommendations are categorized as either neighborhood-specific recommendations, which were identified as high priorities for the South End neighborhood, or as district-wide recommendations, which are projects or initiatives that have been identified as high priorities across the South End, Metro Center, and North End neighborhoods.

Neighborhood-Specific Recommendations

- Implement crime prevention through environmental design strategies throughout the South End.
- Continue to invest in improvements to Emerson Wight Park and other neighborhood parks.
- Redevelop vacant lots in the South End.
- Facilitate the conversion of residential properties to electric heating and cooling systems and more energy efficient appliances.

District-Wide Recommendations

- Expand existing city programs that assist homebuyers and homeowners.
- Improve access and lighting along the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway.
- Redevelop the former CityStage building as a Youth Arts Center.



South End Neighborhood History

Colonial Period

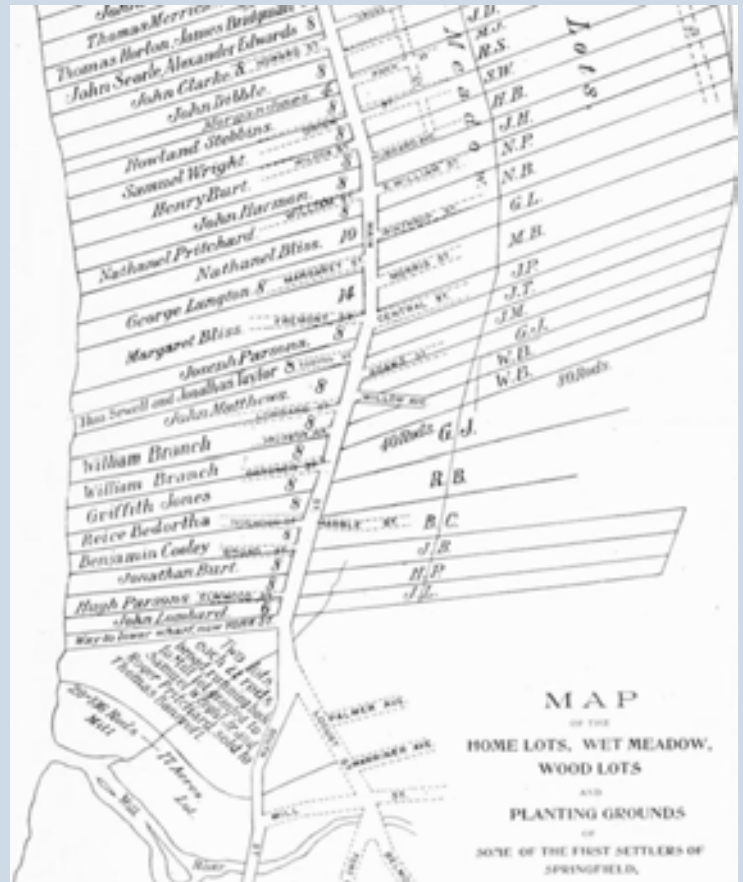
The South End is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Springfield. Along with the Metro Center neighborhood, it was developed early in the colonial period by English settlers, who built homes along the present-day route of Main Street. During the 1600s, each family was granted a long, narrow strip of land that extended from Main Street to the Connecticut River. These were the house lots, but each family also had a corresponding strip of land on the east side of Main Street for use as a wood lot.

This pattern of development is still reflected in the modern-day South End. Main Street still forms the core of the neighborhood, and many of the side streets still follow the boundaries of the old house lots that were later subdivided as the city grew.

Prominent People and Places

By the late 18th century, the northern part of the South End had developed into a fashionable area for the city's wealthy merchants. Among them were Colonel Josiah Dwight, whose house stood on the west side of Main Street, just north of Howard Street. It was later moved around the corner to Howard Street, and by the late 1940s it was possibly the last surviving colonial-era house in the city. Facing demolition, it was ultimately dismantled and rebuilt in Deerfield, where it now stands as one of the historic homes owned by Historic Deerfield.

Another colonial-era landmark in the South End was Warriner's Tavern, which stood at the southwest corner of Main and State Streets. It was built around 1773, and by the early 19th



Detail of a 19th century map, showing the colonial-era house lots in the South End. From The First Century of the History of Springfield by Henry M. Burt (1898).



The Josiah Dwight House in the South End. This house was later moved to Deerfield, where it now serves as a historic house museum. Photo from Sketches of the Old Inhabitants and Other Citizens of Old Springfield (1893)

Previous page: *Detail from 1870 map of Springfield, showing the South End. Boston Public Library, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center.*



Warriner's Tavern, shown after it was moved to the south side of State Street. Photo from Sketches of the Old Inhabitants and Other Citizens of Old Springfield (1893)

century it was operated as a stagecoach tavern. The tavern was later acquired by Jeremy and Phoebe Warriner. It was a popular place for both locals and for travelers passing through Springfield, but it also played an important role in the Underground Railroad. The Warriners gave shelter and, in many cases, employment to self-emancipated enslaved people, and they were part of a strong network of both Black and White abolitionists here in Springfield during the mid-19th century. The tavern building itself was later moved westward along State Street, where it stood until it was demolished in the early 20th century.

Other mid-19th century residents of the South End included Thomas Blanchard, who lived in a house at the southwest corner of Main and Wilcox Streets from 1825 until around 1840. Blanchard was an inventor who is best remembered for his copying lathe, which enabled the

mass-production of identical gun stocks and other irregular shapes at the Armory. His other inventions included a steam-powered vehicle, which he built around 1826. It was arguably the first automobile produced in the United States, although he did not pursue this invention beyond the prototype. Instead, Blanchard built steamboats in the late 1820s and early 1830s. These operated on the Connecticut River during its brief heyday of steam navigation, and at least one of these boats, the *Vermont*, was constructed in the South End, in a lot at the corner of Main Street and Hubbard Avenue.

Probably the most famous resident of the South End is Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known by his pen name Dr. Seuss.

He was born on Howard Street in 1904, although he only lived in the neighborhood for several years as a young child before his family moved to Forest Park in 1906.

Population Growth and Immigration

Aside from the northern portion of the neighborhood, much of the South End remained sparsely developed until the second



Central Street from Main Street, around 1892. From Picturesque Hampden.

half of the 19th century, when industrialization spurred significant population growth in Springfield. The South End became primarily a working-class neighborhood, and it had a diverse population.

By the turn of the 20th century, the northeastern part of the South End had a large population of Black residents, particularly in the area between Main Street, Stockbridge Street, Willow Street, and Hubbard Avenue.

Many of these residents were originally from the south, but had relocated in the north for greater opportunities and less racial segregation. However, discriminatory housing practices here in Springfield made it difficult for Black residents to live outside of predominantly-Black neighborhoods, and in 1905 the Rev. William N. DeBerry noted that this was “the most undesirable tenement section of the whole city,” and that “[m]any of these people are forced to live in this section



Early 20th century postcard view of the South End. Private collection.

under such conditions because of their inability to secure tenements in more desirable locations.”

The early 20th century also saw an influx of immigrants to the South End. They included Germans, French Canadians, and, most significantly, Italians. Italian immigration to the United States peaked around the turn of the 20th century, and by 1914 there were around 8,000 Italians in Springfield, many of whom lived in the South End. The

neighborhood would remain at the heart of the city’s Italian American community for decades, and it developed into a thriving ethnic community with Italian delis, markets, bakeries, and other local businesses.

The 1920 census gives some indication of the prevalence of Italian immigrants in the South End. At the time, the South End was partially in Ward 3 and partially in Ward 6, and within these two wards there were 2,845 Italian-born residents, comprising about 11% of the population in



Children playing baseball at Emerson Wight Playground in 1916. Photographed by Lewis Hine. Library of Congress, National Child Labor Committee collection.



*Residences on Maple Street, on the eastern edge of the South End neighborhood, around 1905.
Library of Congress, Detroit Publishing Company Collection*

these wards, and about 63% of the city’s total Italian-born population. However, these numbers only count people who were born in Italy and immigrated to the United States, so the Italian American community here was much higher, when American-born children of Italian immigrants are included.

Crescent Hill

In the meantime, other parts of the South End saw very different development trends. The present-day boundaries of the South End include the western side of Maple Street, which is isolated from the rest of the neighborhood by a steep bluff. In contrast to the working-class core of the neighborhood, Maple Street became one of Springfield’s most exclusive residential neighborhoods during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Many of the city’s wealthy industrial and business leaders built homes on the upper part of Maple Street and on Crescent Hill, where they had expansive views of downtown Springfield and the surrounding landscape. Some of these homes have since been lost to fire or neglect, but others are still standing.

Industrialization

Although most of the South End has historically been residential, it did see limited industrial development, particularly along the railroad corridor next to the Connecticut River. By the turn of the 20th century, industries in the neighborhood included the Barney & Berry Skate Company, the Bemis & Call Tool Company, the Newell Brothers button factory, the New England Card & Paper Company, and the Fisk Manufacturing Company, which produced soap. The waterfront area also had facilities for the Springfield Gas Light Company and the power plant for the Springfield Street Railway.

Challenges and Changes

The South End experienced major changes during the mid-20th century. Much of this was due to systemic disinvestment caused by redlining. For example, in the 1930s the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) produced maps assigned one of four grades to different parts of major cities, based on perceived long-term security risks. These determinations were often made based on metrics such as the presence of racial minorities, immigrant populations, and poor white residents. The

Springfield map, which was produced in 1935, classified nearly all of the South End as “Hazardous,” which was the lowest possible grade. Portions of the North End and East Forest Park also received this grade, but the South End had the largest percentage of its area classified as Hazardous out of any neighborhood in the city.

This perception of the South End as a hazardous area likely played a role in the subsequent siting of Interstate 91, which passes through the western part of the neighborhood parallel to the Connecticut River. The highway, which was built in the 1960s, required the demolition of a large swath of the South End. Around 400 homes in the neighborhood were demolished, and many of the displaced residents ended up moving away from the South End. The highway, which is elevated above the South End on an embankment, also had the effect of isolating the riverfront area from the rest of the neighborhood.

The South End would face further challenges in 2011, when a tornado crossed through the northern part of the neighborhood, causing extensive damage to many buildings. However, the neighborhood has proven resilient, and the rebuilding from the tornado provided new economic development opportunities, most notably the MGM Springfield casino, which was built on the northern edge of the neighborhood. Other recent investments have included a new South End Community Center, replacing an earlier one that had been destroyed in the tornado.

Historic Districts

There are two Local Historic Districts in the South End. The largest of these is the Maple



*Stores Main Street in the South End, around 1938-1939.
Springfield Preservation Trust.*



An Italian meat market at the corner of Broad Street and Columbus Avenue, around 1938-1939. Springfield Preservation Trust.

Hill Historic District on the eastern edge of the neighborhood. Although primarily in the Maple-High/Six Corners neighborhood, it also includes properties in the South End, on the west side of Maple, Pine, and Mill Streets.

The South End portion of this historic district features many architecturally significant 19th century homes. Among these are the Italianate-style Mills-Stebbins Villa (1851), the High Victorian Gothic-style Loomis-Wesson House

(1874), and the Queen Anne-style Frederick Harris House (1879). These houses, along with others in the Maple Hill area, were once owned by prominent business and industrial leaders in the city, and they stand as important landmarks from Springfield's history.

The other local historic district in the South End is the Bliss House Local Historic District. It was created in 2016, and it consists of a single building, located at 44-46 Dale Street. This house was built around 1805, and it stands as one of the oldest surviving buildings in the city.

Within these local historic districts, the Springfield Historical Commission reviews proposed exterior changes that are visible from the street. This also means that buildings in these districts are generally protected from demolition.

Aside from the local historic districts, there is also a National Register of Historic Places district in the South End. Known as the Outing Park Historic District, it features a number of early 20th century apartment buildings on and around Oswego Street and Dwight Street Extension. However, unlike in a local historic district, a listing on the National Register does not automatically confer any protection onto the buildings or their exterior appearances.



An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood. A multi-lane highway runs diagonally from the bottom left towards the center. To the right of the highway is a dense residential area with many houses and some commercial buildings. A large, open, grassy field is visible in the upper right. A blue curved overlay covers the bottom left corner, containing the title text.

South End Zoning and Land Use

Neighborhood Boundaries

The South End neighborhood is located directly to the south of Springfield’s Metro Center, along the Main Street corridor. The neighborhood boundaries are defined by State, Willow, and Union Streets to the north; Maple, Pine, and Mill Streets to the east; the Mill River and Main Street to the south; and the Connecticut River to the west. With approximately 310 acres of land area, it is geographically the smallest neighborhood in the city.

Residential Zoning

Most of the residential parcels in the South End are zoned Residence C, which allows for single-family, two-family, and multi-family dwellings such as apartment complexes. The only low-density Residence A parcels are on Maple Street and Crescent Hill, on a high bluff on the eastern edge of the neighborhood.

The existing housing stock in the South End primarily dates to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Much of this consists of detached single-family and two-family homes, but there are also a number of higher-density apartment buildings in the South End, which are located in both residential and business zones. These include the Outing Park Historic District, which features a group of restored historic early 20th century apartment buildings.

Business Zoning

Main Street forms the core of the South End neighborhood, and it is predominantly zoned Business B, which allows for a wide range of businesses, including those that are generally car



Residence A homes on Maple Street



Residence C zoning on Adams Street



Apartment buildings on Oswego Street in the Outing Park Historic District

Previous page: 2021 aerial image of the South End. Source: MassGIS



A mix of business, residence, and institutional uses on William Street



Pedestrian-oriented business development on Main Street



Auto-oriented business development along East Columbus Avenue

oriented. Many of the side streets, especially in the southern part of the neighborhood, are also zoned for Business B, while some are zoned Business A, which focuses more on promoting pedestrian-oriented development. Both types of business zoning also allow for residential use, and many of these parcels feature apartment buildings and mixed-use properties.

In the northern part of the South End, adjacent to the Metro Center neighborhood, some parcels are zoned for Business C. This zoning district allows for a wide range of high-density uses, including mixed use residential and commercial properties.

Summary of South End Zoning Districts

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

Industrial Zoning

The South End has a limited amount of industrial zoning in the southwestern part of the neighborhood, near the intersection of Main and Mill Streets. Most of this land is not currently used for industrial purposes, and instead has a mix of different commercial uses.

Overlay Districts

Aside from these base zoning districts, there are also two overlay districts in the South End, which allows for development that is specific to these sites. In the northwestern part of the neighborhood is the Casino Overlay District. This is the site of the MGM Springfield casino, which opened in 2018.

Farther to the west, along the Connecticut River, is the West Columbus Urban Renewal Overlay District. The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame is located here, along with a hotel, restaurants, and other businesses. However, this area is largely isolated from the rest of the South End because of Interstate 91, which passes through this area on an elevated embankment.

Land Use

As of 2024, the single largest land use in the South End is commercial, which covers about 91 acres, or about 29% of the land area in the neighborhood. The largest individual types of commercial uses are automotive sales and service (21 acres), office spaces (16 acres), and retail establishments (9 acres). In addition, several large parcels include a mix of commercial uses, including the Basketball Hall of Fame (18 acres) and MGM Springfield (13 acres).

The next largest land use in the South End is transportation rights-of-way,



Industrial-zoned land on Mill Street



The MGM Springfield casino is located in the northern part of the South End



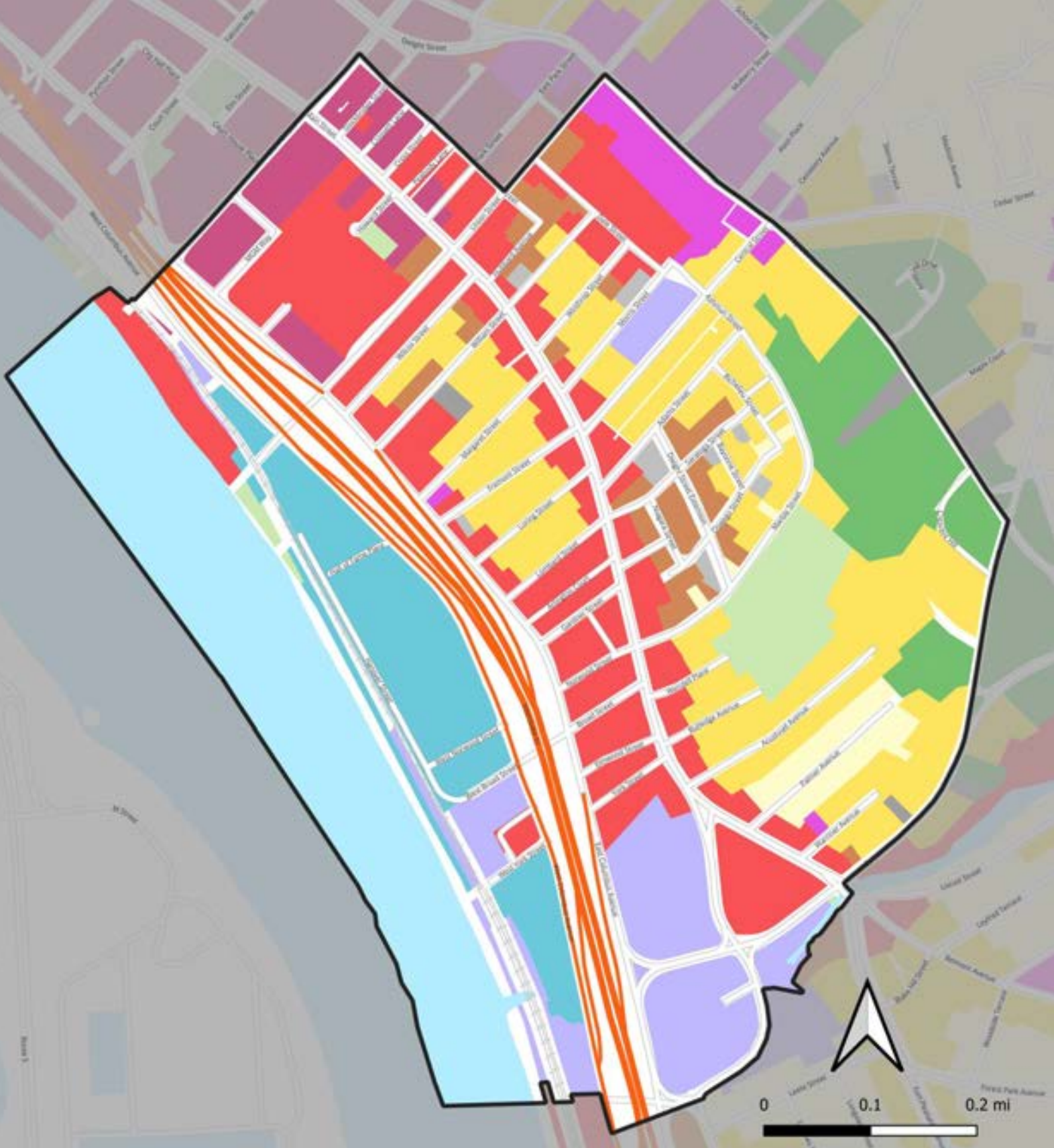
The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame is located along the riverfront area of the South End

which cover 89 acres, or about 29% of the land area in the neighborhood. This includes streets and highways, along with railroad tracks. In particular, Interstate 91 occupies a considerable amount of land. The highway, along with the adjacent East and West Columbus Avenues, covers about 35 acres in the South End, or about 11% of its land area.











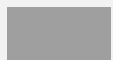
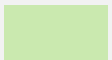
Residential uses comprise about 82 acres in the South End, or 27% of its land area. Most of this residential development is medium-density housing; about 52 acres consist of either single-family homes or 2-3 family homes. Apartment buildings cover about 17 acres in the South End, and about 10 acres of residential land is classified as vacant but developable or potentially developable.

About 30 acres in the South End are used for governmental purposes, equivalent to 10% of the land area. This includes city-owned parks, schools, and other municipal properties.

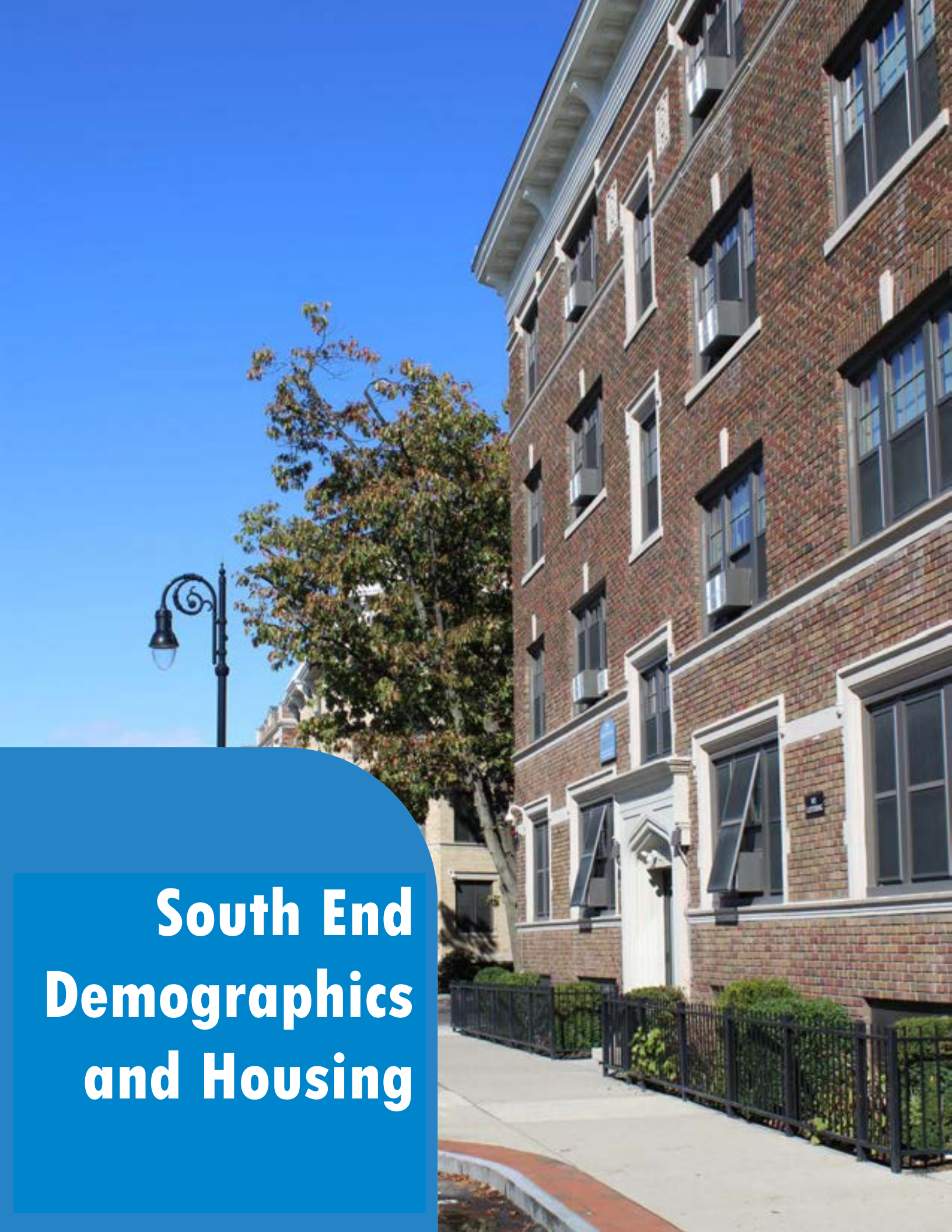
The remaining 4% of land in the South End is used for various not-for-profit purposes, including private charitable, educational, and religious organizations.



South End Zoning Districts

	Residence A		Business A		Commercial A		Industrial A
	Residence B		Business B		Commercial Parking		Connecticut River District
	Residence C		Business C		Office A		Open Space

Source: MassGIS, Springfield WebGIS

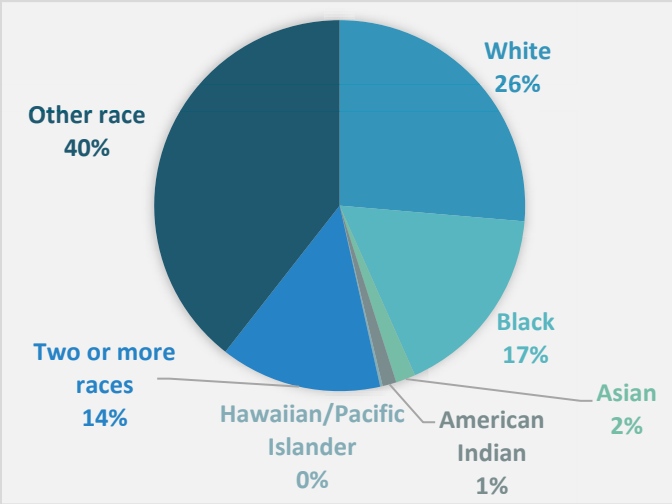


South End Demographics and Housing

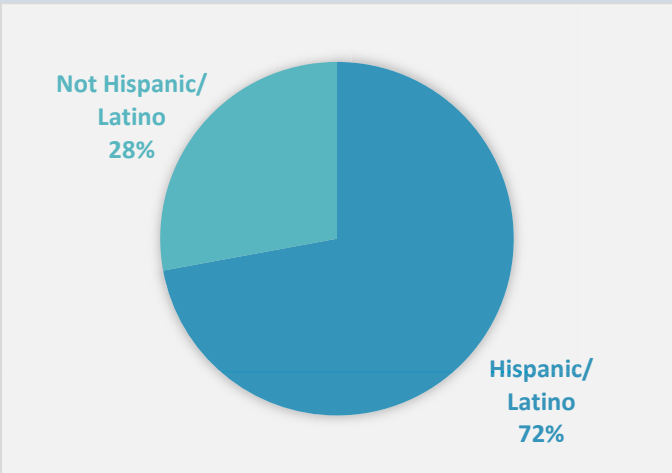
Demographic Overview

With 2,736 residents as of the 2020 census, the South End is by far the smallest neighborhood in the city in terms of population, and it comprises less than 2% of the city’s total population.

As mentioned in the Neighborhood History section, the South End neighborhood has traditionally been at the center of Springfield’s Italian-American community, and this heritage is still evident with many of the local businesses in the neighborhood. However, over time these demographics have shifted, and the

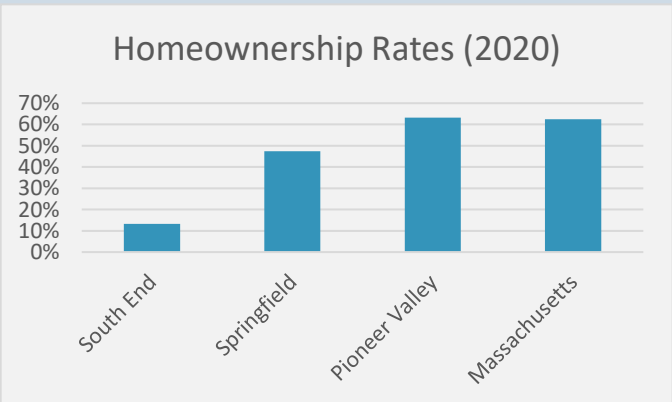
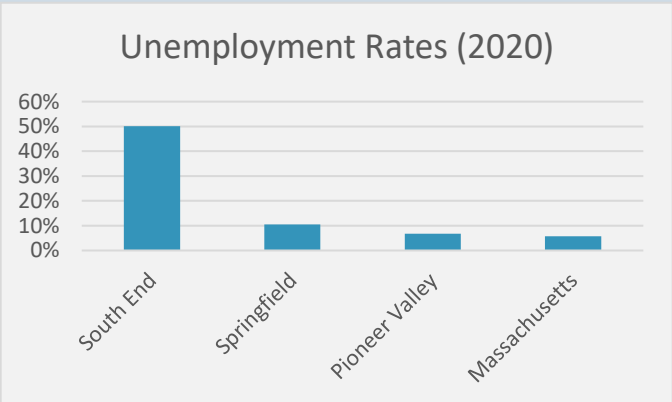
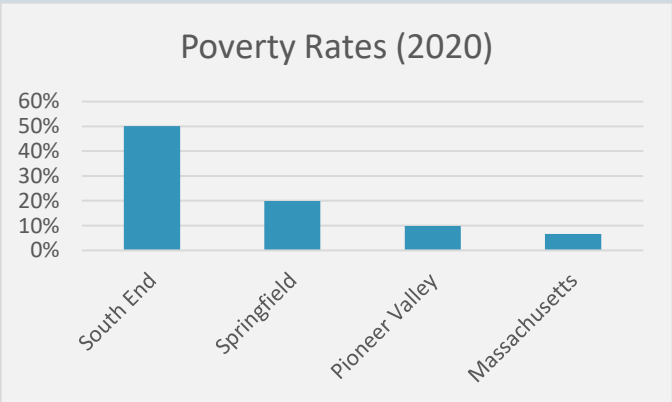
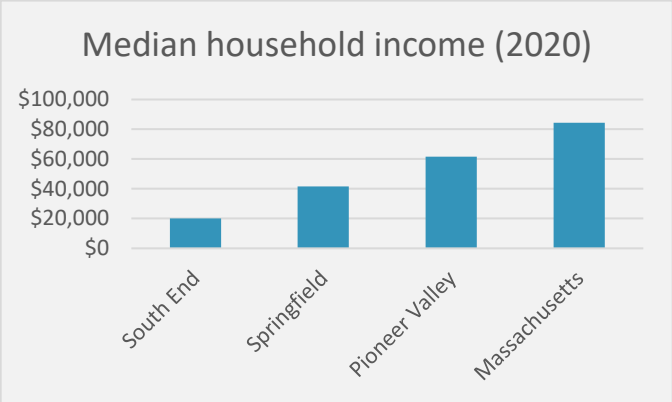


Racial composition of the South End, 2020 U.S. Census



Hispanic/Latino ethnicity in the South End, 2020 U.S. Census

Previous page: Apartment buildings on Dwight Street Ext. in Outing Park



		South End	Springfield	Pioneer Valley	Mass.
Children and youth	Babies born with low birth weight	19.0%	10.3%	9.1%	7.6%
	Child poverty	56.0%	36.2%	20.8%	12.2%
Education	Preschool enrollment	23.3%	60.1%	53.6%	58.0%
	Attainment of higher education	7.5%	19.0%	32.6%	44.5%
Health	Premature mortality (per 1,000)	4.4	4.0	3.3	2.7
Economic security	Median household income	\$20,202	\$41,571	\$61,569	\$84,385
	Income inequality (Gini index)	0.49	0.48	0.47	0.48
	Poverty	50.1%	19.9%	9.9%	6.6%
	Elderly poverty	46.3%	13.7%	10.1%	8.9%
	Unemployment	12.3%	10.5%	6.7%	5.7%
	Labor force participation	41.5%	57.6%	61.4%	67.2%
Housing	Housing cost burden	68.9%	45.4%	34.9%	34.5%
	Homeownership rates	13.3%	47.4%	63.2%	62.5%
Transportation	Low-carbon commuters	17.6%	17.6%	14.1%	22.4%
	Average commute time (minutes)	12.8	21.1	23.1	30.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

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

South End is now predominantly Hispanic, with 72% of residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino of any race. Overall, 26% of South End residents identify as White, 17% identify as Black, and 57% identify as other races, including people of multiple races.

Economic Security

Compared to the other neighborhoods in Springfield, the South End tends to have weaker economic security. The median household income in the South End is \$20,202, which is the third lowest of the city's 17 neighborhoods, and less than half of the citywide median. Half of residents have a household income that falls below the federal poverty line, compared to 19.9% citywide, and the neighborhood also has the lowest labor force participation rate (41.5%) in the city.

Housing

The homeownership rate in the South End is 13.3%, which is the third lowest in the city. There are an estimated 711 subsidized housing units in the South End, which is about half of the total number of housing units in the neighborhood.



The South End has a mix of medium and high-density housing units

Housing Stock

According to the 2024 assessor's data on MassGIS, there are 1,479 housing units in the South End. About 37% of these units are in buildings that have 1 to 3 units each. Another 37% are in buildings with between 4 and 20 units, and the remaining 26% of housing units in the South End are in buildings with more than 20 units.

The existing housing stock in the South End primarily dates to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Approximately 95% of the housing units were constructed prior to 1939, and just 1% have been constructed since 1990.

Housing Investments

Despite the age of the housing stock in the South End, many of these buildings have been rehabilitated in recent years. Most significantly, this included the restoration of a group of 23 early 20th century apartment buildings at Outing Park, located on Oswego, Bayonne, Niagara, and Dwight Street Extension. Completed in 2015, this work involved demolishing buildings that were too badly deteriorated, and restoring the remaining ones, including upgrading bathrooms and kitchens, installing new heating and hot water systems, and replacing the roofs and windows. In total, Outing Park comprises 316 units, the vast majority of which are subsidized.

Around the same time that these apartments were completed, the neighboring Marble Street apartment complex was demolished. This Springfield Housing Authority-owned property consisted of 46 units in two buildings, but by the 2010s they had become structurally obsolete and structurally deficient. Additionally, because of the isolated location of



Apartment building at the corner of Main Street and Wendell Places



Restored apartment buildings at Outing Park

the site, at the end of a dead-end road, the apartments experienced high crime. As a result, these buildings were demolished with the intent of reducing concentrated poverty in the neighborhood.

Another ongoing housing investment in the South End is the construction of 40 townhouses on the former Gemini textile mill site on Central Street. These homes are expected to be completed in 2024, and will be made available to low- and moderate-income residents, which will help to address the low homeownership rates in the neighborhood.



Ongoing construction work at the Gemini Townhouses on Central Street



The buildings at 113-117 State Street and 1139-1155 Main Street

In addition, a major planned investment in the northern part of the South End is the restoration of the buildings at 113-117 State Street, 1139-1155 Main Street, and 11-21 Stockbridge Street, which will collectively include 72 market-rate units and 18 units at 80% AMI.

Another ongoing restoration project is at 7-9 Stockbridge Street, which was purchased by the Springfield Preservation Trust in 2023. It is one of the oldest surviving commercial buildings in Springfield, and it is in the process of being rehabilitated and converted into office

space on the ground floor and two apartment units on the upper floors. The project is expected to be completed in the fall of 2025.

Housing Cost Burden

Overall, 68.9% of South End residents are identified as being housing cost burdened, meaning that they pay more than 30% of their income on rent, a mortgage, or other housing costs. These costs include maintenance, which can be a considerable expense in older neighborhoods such as the South End, where most of the existing housing stock dates to the 19th and early 20th centuries. 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.

Homeownership Support

Residents throughout the city have indicated that housing is a high priority, in particular assistance for the maintenance of existing owner-occupied homes. There are currently a number of different housing programs and initiatives that are available to

Springfield residents, as outlined on the following page. However, because this has consistently been identified as an area of need, the city has been examining to what extent these programs are being utilized and which neighborhoods primarily benefit from them. Part of the motivation for the city's decision to invest ARPA funds in the Targeted Neighborhood Investment planning process is to build capacity of residents and their neighborhood councils to make use of these resources. In addition, it is also important to assess the amount of funding being dedicated to these programs, to ensure that the city is meeting residents' needs.

Existing Housing Programs and Initiatives

Homeowner Emergency Repair Program

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

City of Springfield Exterior Home Repair Program

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

City of Springfield Healthy Homes Program

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

Heating Emergency Assistance Retrofit Tasks Weatherization Assistance Program (HEARTWAP)

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

Historic Home Restoration Program

This program administered by the Springfield Community Preservation Committee. Homeowners in many of the city's local historic districts 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.

The large pool of applicants indicates that there is significant demand for such programs. 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 a historic district, it means that only a small portion of the neighborhood's residents can access these funds.

City of Springfield Down Payment Assistance Program

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

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

Buy Springfield Now

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

Other Housing Partners

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

Energy Efficiency

In addition to the challenges of simply maintaining and rehabilitating the older homes in the South End neighborhoods, 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 greenhouse 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 South End community for generations to come.



South End Transportation



Main Street looking north from the corner of William Street

Major Streets

Main Street runs through the center of the South End, but other major north-south streets include Maple Street on the eastern edge of the neighborhood, and East and West Columbus Avenues on the western side. Interstate 91 also passes through the neighborhood, with several exits and on-ramps along East and West Columbus Avenues. The major east-west streets through the neighborhood include Union, Central, and Mill Streets.

Transportation Improvements

One recent transportation investment in the neighborhood was the extension of Marble Street to connect it to Ashmun Street. This work followed the completion of the new South End Community Center on Marble Street, and it improved access to the community center and adjacent Emerson Wight for residents in the northeastern part of the South End neighborhood.

Commuting Characteristics

The average commute time for South End residents is 12.8 minutes, which is by far the shortest out of any neighborhood in the city. By contrast,

the city-wide average is 21.1 minutes, the Pioneer Valley regional average is 23.1 minutes, and the Massachusetts statewide average is 30.0 minutes per commute. Of the South End residents who commute to work, 17.6% use an environmentally friendly mode of transportation, either by biking, walking, carpooling, or riding public transportation.

Pedestrians and Bicyclists

Nearly all of the streets in the South End have sidewalks, and the neighborhood is one of the most walkable parts of Springfield. However, there is currently only limited bicycle infrastructure. The Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway extends along the riverfront on the western edge of the neighborhood, but it is largely isolated from the rest of the neighborhood due to Interstate 91 and the railroad tracks that parallel the river. There is currently only one access point to the riverwalk in the South End, via a pedestrian bridge. The elevator on the east side of the bridge has been out of service for many years, making it impractical for cyclists to utilize this access point.



The extension of Marble Street, looking north toward Ashmun Street

One potential neighborhood investment is the proposed Mill River Greenway, a multi-use trail that would cross through the southern part of the South End neighborhood and connect the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway to the Armory Watershops. Such a trail would facilitate environmentally friendly forms of transportation by connecting the city's Metro Center to the South End, Maple-High/Six Corners, and Old Hill neighborhoods.

Aside from the bikeway, other bicycle infrastructure in the South End includes a ValleyBike bikeshare stations, located at Angelina Florian Park at the corner of Main and Morris Streets.

Public Transit

Other transportation options in the South End include public transit. The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) serves the region with public bus routes and paratransit services. The G1, G2, and X92 PVTA bus routes follow the Main Street corridor through the South End, and the X92 also provides service along the southern edge of the neighborhood on Mill Street. In addition, the G5 route serves Maple Street on the eastern edge of the South End, and the B7 route serves State Street on the border of the Metro Center and South End neighborhoods.

In addition to these regularly-scheduled bus routes, the PVTA also offers on-demand ride service for seniors and for people with disabilities.



Interstate 91 passes through the South End, creating a significant barrier that separates most of the neighborhood from the riverfront area








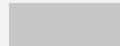
The pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks at Riverfront Park



The bikeshare station at Main and Morris Streets



South End Public Transportation

-  B7 PVTA Route
-  G1, G2, G5 PVTA Routes
-  X92 PVTA Route
-  Bus Stops
-  Streets
-  Buildings

Source: Pioneer Valley Transit Authority, MassGIS



South End Parks and Open Space

Neighborhood Parks

The South End has 15 acres of public open space across four different sites. The largest is the 8.5-acre Emerson Wight Playground, which features a baseball field, track, playground, and outdoor basketball courts. This park was the subject of a major renovation and expansion project in the early 2010s, including acquisition of over 1.5 acres of land on Marble Street, which was then incorporated into the existing parkland.



The new South End Community Center on Marble Street



Athletic fields at Emerson Wight Park

The new South End Community Center building is also located at Emerson Wight Playground. This was completed in 2017, replacing the previous community center, which had been partially destroyed by the 2011 tornado. The new building at Emerson Wight Park features space for a variety of programs, along with recreational facilities such as indoor basketball courts. The South End Community Center is a privately run and privately funded community-based organization that serves children, youth, and families in Springfield, with a focus on the South End. All of its programs are funded in part through user fees.

The South End also includes about 5 acres of Riverfront Park, which extends into the Metro Center neighborhood. The park features a small playground, a splash pad, and passive recreational space. The park is also home to the city's September 11th memorial. In addition, the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway passes through the park. The only access point to the park and the Bikeway in the South End is via the walkway over the railroad tracks near Union Street. The main entrance is located just over the neighborhood border, on the north side of State Street.

The other two parks in the South End are Angelina Florian Park on Morris Street and Leonardo da Vinci Park on Howard Street, adjacent to the MGM Springfield casino. Da Vinci Park is intended for passive recreation, while Angelina Florian Park has playground equipment.



Angelina Florian Park at the corner of Main and Morris Streets



Leonardo da Vinci Park, adjacent to the MGM Springfield casino



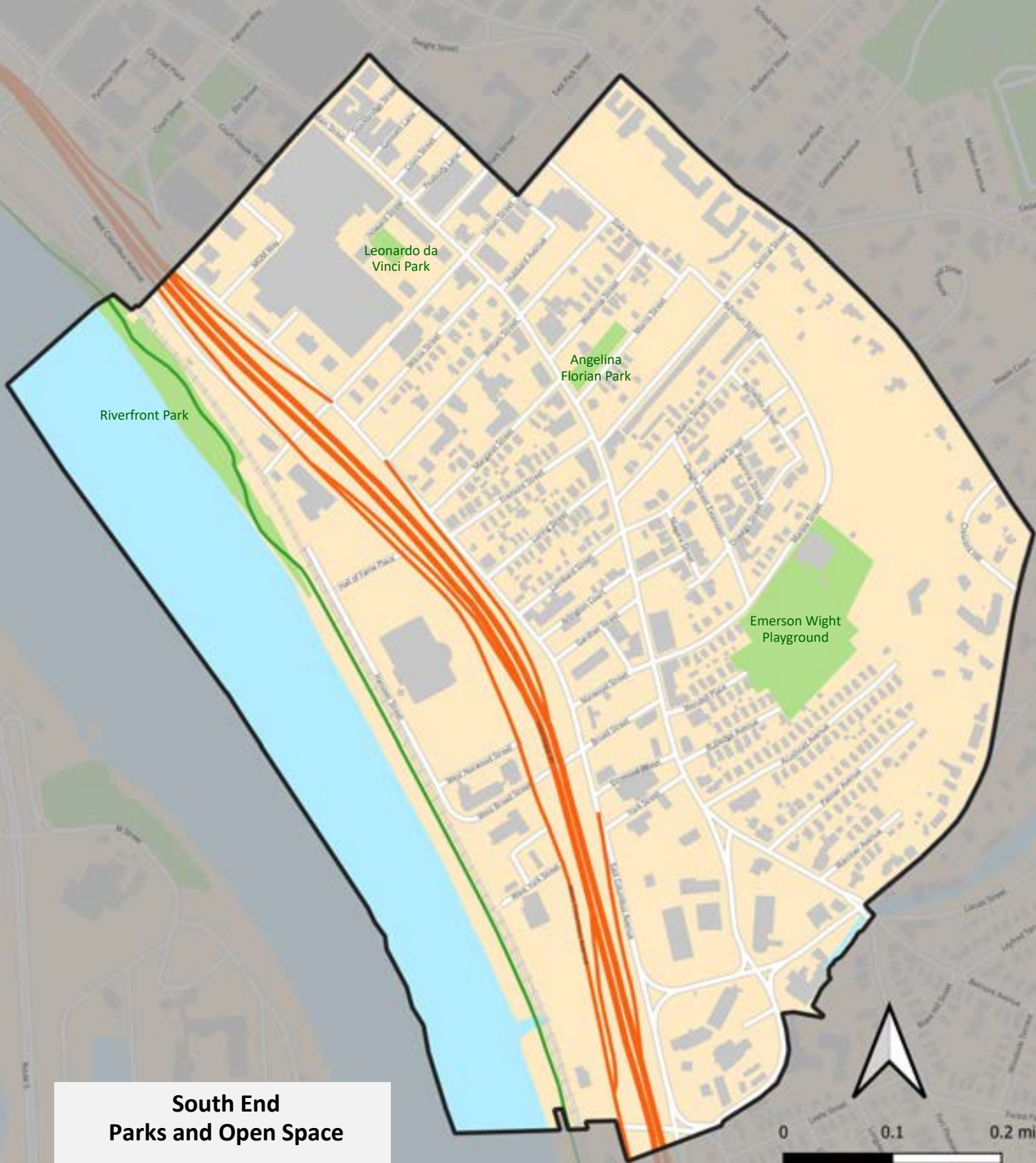
Riverfront Park

Environmental Justice


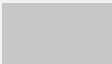

Based on the 2020 census, the South End is considered to be an environmental justice population, as defined by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). The EEA defines an environmental justice population as a census block group that meets at least one of four criteria 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. All of the census block groups in the South End meet all of these criteria.

Justice40 Initiative

Because the South End is an environmental justice population, it could benefit from federal programs through the 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. It is important for both the South End Citizens Council and the city to assess ways in which the neighborhood could benefit from such investments.



South End Parks and Open Space

-  Parks and Open Space
-  Buildings
-  Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway

Source: MassGIS, Springfield WebGIS

South End Economic Development Opportunities

Economic Development Opportunities

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

These ideas included potential economic development in several key sites throughout the district. Such development would not only support existing businesses, but would also encourage further investment in the neighborhood by attracting new locally-owned businesses that would meet the needs of residents.

Crime Prevention Through Economic Design

Throughout this neighborhood investment process, residents and other South End stakeholders have raised concerns about perceptions of crime. Although the recent crime data for the neighborhood does not indicate that the South End is a particularly high crime area, it is important to consider how to change this perception.

One way to address this is by utilizing crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) strategies. These strategies can include increased exterior code enforcement of buildings in the neighborhood, along with encouraging investments that improve storefronts and building facades. In addition, CPED strategies can include street trees and other plantings, improved lighting, and designing streets that encourage and are safe for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

In the South End, CPED strategies can not only deter potential criminal acts, but they can also reinforce the idea that the neighborhood is a safe place to live, work, and visit. Such strategies can help to ensure that South End businesses are able to fully benefit from the fact that two of the city's largest attractions – the Basketball Hall of Fame and MGM Springfield – are both located in the neighborhood.



Neighborhood Investment Plan Process

Community Engagement

The Community Building and Engagement team from Way Finders with support from PVPC led the engagement process for the South End Springfield Neighborhood Investment Plan. We aimed to provide residents with as many opportunities as possible to participate in the plan development process by hosting community meetings, informal coffee hour gatherings, designing and implementing easy to complete surveys, and providing one-to-one connections at community events. As a result, the planning process was iterative which allowed for continuous refinement of ideas and goals identified by residents.

Diverse resident participation was crucial to the process as well, with engagement focusing on populations often overlooked. As part of the process, resident leaders from the targeted areas were invited to support the Planning Team with strategic thinking, outreach, and engagement. The team consisted of PVPC staff, Way Finders' staff, representatives from the South End Citizens Council (SECC), and five volunteer community advocates whose participation was supported by stipends funded by the city.

The resulting process began with understanding the neighborhood context broadly, engaging residents to develop a community vision for the future of their neighborhood, and then collaboratively developing goals and strategies that could 1) help accomplish the community vision and 2) be implemented over the next 10 years.

Phase One: Initial Engagement and Data Collection

The process was divided into two phases, each consisting of multiple parts. In phase one, engagement included:

- In-person community meetings, coffee hours, and prioritization workshops
- Outreach at neighborhood events: tabling, distributing flyers, sending bulk emails, and publicizing via social media
- Resident surveys: collecting input through various survey formats

Given the demographics of the neighborhood, the engagement team focused on reaching residents living in housing units and multi-family dwellings, working to flyer at area bodegas, Hispanic eateries, and businesses.

The planning team began its community engagement by emailing more than 400

residents utilizing Way Finders database of neighborhood contacts to inform them of the process, and alert them to upcoming opportunities to participate. In addition, Way Finders and PVPC staff tabled at the Tower Square Harvest Festival in October to raise awareness and collect resident feedback on a neighborhood map and introductory surveys. More than 50 residents took the surveys or provided feedback on the neighborhood map.



Interactive workshop in April 2024 at the South End Citizens Council offices

The survey asked:

- What do you like most about your neighborhood?
- If you had money to solve 3 problems in your neighborhood, what would you solve?
- When thinking about yourself and your neighbors, how do you feel about the housing in your neighborhood?
- Do your transportation options (driving, biking, walking, rolling) feel safe and efficient in your neighborhood?
- Do you feel like your neighborhood is prepared for extreme weather events (such as flooding, heat waves, poor air quality)?
- What would you like the city to be doing to help with the climate crisis?
- Are there specific services or types of businesses that you would like to see in your neighborhood?

- What other priorities or concerns do you think should be addressed as part of the neighborhood investment planning process?

Way Finders team and resident advocates reached out to several neighborhood property managers and landlords, community-based organizations and small businesses. These included the South End Community Center, Springfield Rescue Mission, Dakin Humane Society, South End Community Food Pantry, Outing Park (First Resource), Frigo's, Veritas Prep Charter School, Good Quality Barber and more to share flyers and surveys with their clientele and residents.

In June, emails went to more than 250 contacts highlighting the prioritization survey and inviting residents to the final interactive meeting.

Community Meetings and Coffee Hours Held in Metro Center			
Date	Location	Event	Resident Attendance
02/2024	South End Citizens Council (SECC), 510 Main St.	SECC Meeting	4
02/7/2024	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 60 Congress St.	Meeting with UMass Landscape Architecture & Regional Planning Program students	11
02/22/2024	SECC, 510 Main St.	SECC meeting	3
03/28/2024	South End Middle School, 36 Margaret St.	Spring Event	28
04/18/2024	SECC, 510 Main St.	SE Interactive Workshop	21
06/25/2024	SECC, 510 Main St.	SE Prioritization Workshop	12
Total			201

Surveying and Outreach

Between late February and June 2024, a series of online and print surveys were available in both Spanish and English. In phase one, a total of 96 people participated in a general survey.

In phase two, topic-related surveys were launched, with 66 additional people participating in surveys that asked them to prioritize strategies in categories that included Arts and Culture, Economic Development, Energy, Food, Housing, Parks and Open Spaces, and Transportation.

This allowed residents to further narrow priorities for investment in their neighborhood based on feedback from the first round of surveys.

Residents ranked them as high, medium, or low priority or identified their top two priorities for specific projects. Surveys were collected at various locations including the Tower Square Harvest Festival, Springfield's Pancake Breakfast, and the Tower Square Farmers Market.

Outreach also included flyer distribution by a team of resident volunteers and Way Finders staff at key locations throughout the South End including the South End Community Center, the South End Citizens Council, Mom and Rico's Specialty Shop, AC Produce, La Fiorentina Pastry Shop, Frigo's Gourmet Food and Catering, housing units, day care centers, barber shops, salons, bodegas, and other small businesses. This effort was aimed at encouraging participation in the investment planning process and extend invitations to the interactive workshops.



Prioritization workshop at the South End Citizens Council offices

Other Communication/Promotion

- Press releases were created and sent to local media outlets (print, social media, online).
- Flyers distributed at community meetings and programs.
- Social media posts promoting meetings on Way Finders page, with public sharing available, and tags to partner pages.
- Flyers with a QR code that linked to the Springfield Neighborhood Plans website and community wide surveys were distributed widely.
- Email invitations to community meetings sent via Constant Contact to more than 5,000 Way Finders clients in the targeted neighborhood.
- Email invitations sent to stakeholders, community partners, businesses, community organizations, and multiple listservs
- SMS texts, email listservs, and the Springfield Neighborhood Investment Plan website were set up to provide up to date information on the project and the process to residents who signed up at community meetings, tabling

opportunities and other outreach activities and were used throughout the process for engagement outreach.

Phase Two: Refining the Plan and Targeted Outreach

In phase two, engagement included:

- Small business luncheon
- One-to-one meetings with Community Based Organizations
- Draft plan review by Neighborhood Councils

In July 2024, CBOs and small business operators were interviewed by Catherine Ratte, Land Use and Environment Director, PVPC, and Beatrice Dewberry, Community Building and Engagement Director, Way Finders, to gather feedback for the South End plan. CEOs and/or Executive Directors at the Caring Health Center, Dakin Humane Society, Latino Economic Development Council, New North Citizens Council, Springfield Partners for Community, Public Health Institute of Western Mass., and Way Finders were among the interviewed.

In August 2024, PVPC and Way Finders hosted a lunch for small business owners at Nadim's Restaurant. More than 40 small business

operators located within the North End, South End, and Metro Center neighborhoods were invited to attend and share feedback. Among businesses in attendance were the owners of Nadims, Las Kangris, Hispanic American Union, Doreen's Travel, and others. Also present was Tina Quagliato Sullivan, Deputy Development Officer for Housing, Community Services & Sustainability, City of Springfield and Ed C. Whitley, Deputy Director of Neighborhood Services, City of Springfield. Small business owners provided ideas to the City about ways businesses could be better supported regarding City policies and practices, as well as giving feedback on neighborhood priorities.

The proposed final South End Neighborhood Investment plan was reviewed by the South End Citizens Council and was posted to the project website. The council made print copies available to residents who prefer to review paper copies. PVPC staff attended monthly meetings of the South End Citizens Council, ensuring that the council was informed throughout the Neighborhood Investment Plan development process.



Small business owner's lunch at Nadim's Restaurant in August 2024

Goals and Strategies

City Goals

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

City Goal #1: Improve transparency, trust, and communication between the city and the South End 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 South End Citizens 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 the South End, ensuring consistency with city's values of climate resilience and sustainability.
- City communicates all aspects of the Targeted Neighborhood Investment Plan update process and implementation by posting all materials on the city website-or linked to it-and providing paper copies at City Hall, Neighborhood Council offices and other locations as determined by residents and NC representatives, and to people who request them, including calendar of meetings scheduled, plan template, access to the Data Atlas and expanded GIS maps website, zoning regulations, related city plans, draft products, deliverables, notes from meetings and any other draft and final work products.
- Build the capacity of residents and the city staff to understand how each other 'works' and the forces limiting, constraining, and facilitating each group's ability to act.

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

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

Strategies:

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

Neighborhood Goals

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

Neighborhood Goal #1: Maintain and expand the neighborhood's housing stock.

Strategies:

- Increase funding for city's home repair program for existing homeowners, focusing on "curb appeal" exterior projects (porches, painting, replacement siding, upgrading/replacing/repairing windows, roofing and chimneys) and critical interior issues (weatherization, replacement of faulty wiring or plumbing, upgraded heating systems, removal of lead paint, etc.)
- Expand Single-family homes for homeownership targeting city-owned property (infill lots and larger parcels) for new residential development via RFPs and by funding programs to increase homeownership rates in the South End.
- Restore vacant and fire-damaged rowhouses at corner of Maple & Central Streets.

Neighborhood Goal #2: Expand transportation opportunities and ensure that the streets are safe for all forms of transportation.

Strategies:

- Improve street lighting and the neighborhood's streetscape to improve the visual appearance of the neighborhood focusing on assuring residents that this is a 'cared for' neighborhood
- Repair sidewalks and install new or improved crosswalks at key intersections focusing on sidewalks on east side of Ashmun St. and Marble St.
- Improve access to the Riverfront and businesses at Hall of Fame Avenue via York St, Fremont St, Union St, and Broad St.

Neighborhood Goal #3: Improve and expand parkland and recreational open space areas

Strategies:

- Improve existing neighborhood parks and open spaces (#1 survey priority) focusing first on increasing lighting in Emerson Wight Park and using the park for block parties/concerts/events. Diversify play areas and increase benches and picnic tables. Manage stormwater with a rain garden on the southeast side
- Focus on CT Riverwalk and Bikeway--improving access, lighting and programming to enhance public safety

Neighborhood Goal #4: Strengthen the economy of the neighborhood

Strategies:

- Redevelop vacant lots. Research how other cities have reached out to landlords to get vacant lots sold and/or re-developed, and if the vacant lots belong to the city—the city should commit to marketing it for community gardens and markets while maintaining it in an aesthetically pleasing manner, perhaps mowing, clearing and benches
- Support existing local businesses and work to expand retail development including recruiting sit-down/dine in restaurants and possibly a grocery store
- Implement workforce training and development programs to connect South End residents with institutions within and outside the neighborhood.
- Consider changing current highway-oriented “Business B” zoning on Main St. to prioritize pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development
- Market the existing Main Street façade program and Small Business Loan Program specifically to South End businesses.

Neighborhood Goal #5: Celebrate the rich and diverse history and culture of the South End

Strategies:

- Expand community events, celebrations and other programming including increasing public art installations such as murals and outdoor sculpture
- Create a neighborhood branding program to promote the neighborhood and develop community pride including informational signage highlighting the history of the neighborhood and its residents
- City-stage re-development as Youth Arts Center to address the critical need for accessible and equitable arts programs by serving as a creative community hub for youth arts organizations in Springfield

Neighborhood Goal #6: Ensure the long-term sustainability and climate resilience of the South End

Strategies:

- Expand the EV charging station network throughout the South End.
- Assist homeowners and renters in converting to electric heating, cooling, and energy-efficient appliances to achieve greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals

Neighborhood Goal #7: Reinforce the idea that the South End is a safe place to live, work, and visit

Strategies:

- Improve street lighting, cameras, and increase police presence.
- Utilize Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design strategies such as natural surveillance, access control, territorial enforcement, and maintenance and management.

Recommendations and Prioritization

Neighborhood-Specific Recommendations

As part of this neighborhood investment process recommendations, residents of the South End have identified and prioritized specific areas of need for their neighborhood:

Implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPED) strategies throughout the South End

During the neighborhood investment planning process, residents regularly raised concerns about negative perceptions of public safety in the neighborhood. Although recent crime data does not support the belief that the South End has higher crime rates than other parts of the city, it is important to address these perceptions to ensure that the streetscapes of the neighborhood convey a sense of safety. By implementing CPED strategies, it will better convey the idea that the South End is a safe place to live, work, and visit. Specific strategies that would benefit the South End include:

- Improved street lighting, cameras, and increased police visibility.
- Prompt enforcement of exterior code violations.
- Sidewalk and crosswalk repairs that promote walkability throughout the neighborhood.

Continue to invest in improvements to Emerson Wight Park and other neighborhood parks

Emerson Wight Park is an important asset for the South End neighborhood, and it recently underwent a major renovation and expansion. However, during the neighborhood investment planning process, residents expressed opportunities for continued investment in the park as a community hub, including:

- Increased lighting
- Increased benches and picnic tables
- Use of the park for block parties, concerts, and other community events
- Stormwater management through a rain garden on the southeast side of the park

Redevelop vacant lots in the South End

In recent years, a number of vacant properties in the South End have been redeveloped, including the ongoing construction of the Gemini Townhomes on vacant industrial land on Central Street. However, there are still many vacant parcels in the neighborhood, including those that are privately owned and those that are owned by the city. Because these vacant lots affect the overall appearance of the neighborhood, residents have expressed that this is a high priority for the South End. Specific actions can include:

- City collaborating with private landowners to promote the redevelopment of vacant lots.
- City exploring options for redeveloping or divesting itself of city-owned vacant properties.
- Strict enforcement of code violations on privately-owned vacant lots.
- Ongoing maintenance of city-owned vacant lots, including regular mowing, brush clearing, and litter removal.

Facilitate the conversion of residential properties to electric heating and cooling systems and more energy efficient appliances.

Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is important not only for the climate as a whole, but also for the physical health of residents in Springfield. As such, one of the top priorities for the South End is support for homeowners and renters in converting to electric heating and cooling systems such as heat pumps, along with the use of energy efficient appliances. Specific actions can include:

- Educating residents on the benefits of electric heating and cooling systems.
- Educating residents on existing programs and incentives.
- Expanding existing programs to support a broader number of residents.
- Funding new programs that provide financial assistance and incentives for homeowners and renters to convert to electric heating, cooling, and energy-efficient appliances.

District-Wide Recommendations

Along with the neighborhood-specific recommendations, the neighborhood investment planning process also resulted in several recommendations that were consistent across the North End, Metro Center, and South End neighborhoods. These four recommendations are all supported by the neighborhood councils and by the majority of residents, stakeholders, businesses and community-based organizations that participated in the plan development process.

Expand existing city programs that assist homebuyers and homeowners

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

Specific actions should include:

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

Improve access and lighting along the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway

The Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway links the North End, Metro Center, and South End neighborhoods. It is a valuable asset for pedestrians and cyclists, and it is used both for recreation and for environmentally friendly commuting. However, it has only a few access points, and it lacks lighting, which limits its usefulness to many people. Future investments in the bikeway should address these issues, including:

- Adding more access points along the route of the Riverwalk and Bikeway.
- Repairing the elevator at the walkway over the railroad tracks at Riverfront Park.
- Extending the southern terminus of the Riverwalk and Bikeway to connect it to the South End Bridge.
- Adding lighting to improve visibility and perceptions of safety along the Riverwalk and Bikeway.

Redevelop the former CityStage building as a Youth Arts Center

The former CityStage building at 150 Bridge Street was used for many years as a performing arts venue. It closed in 2018, but it is the subject of a proposed reuse that would involve converting it into a youth arts center. Such a facility would provide accessible and equitable arts programs and serve as a hub for the creative community, in association with existing providers and programs. It would serve not only the North End, Metro Center, and South End neighborhoods, but also the other neighborhoods throughout the city.

Action Plan

Timeline:

Short-Term (S)	6 months – 3 years
Medium-Term (M)	4 years – 8 years
Long-Term (L)	8 years or more to implement

Goals are organized where the first one in each section has received the highest amount of votes on the neighborhood survey and through additional engagement with the various stakeholders.

Primary Goals			
Housing Goal: Maintain and expand the neighborhood’s housing stock.			
Action	Lead Implementer	Collaborators	Timeline
<p>H-1. Increase funding for city’s home repair program for existing homeowners, focusing on “curb appeal” exterior projects (porches, painting, replacement siding, upgrading/replacing/repairing windows, roofing and chimneys) and critical interior issues (weatherization, replacement of faulty wiring or plumbing, upgraded heating systems, removal of lead paint, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request additional funding in next year’s city budget process. • Identify new grant programs or possible funding sources as federal, state, and private funds become available and are more readily advertised. 	City Development Services and City Council	Springfield No One Leaves, Way Finders Resident Advocates, Community Preservation Act Committee, Springfield Housing Trust Fund - <i>currently being developed</i>	S
<p>H-2. Expand Single-family homes for homeownership targeting city-owned property (infill lots and larger parcels) for new residential development via RFPs and by funding programs to increase homeownership rates in the South End.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory current landlords and status of development of parcels/buildings in neighborhood. • Reach out to landlords who may looking to release their lots or buildings for sale. • Identify new grant programs or possible funding sources as federal, state, and private funds become available 	OPED, Springfield Redevelopment Authority (SRA)	Office of Housing, Way Finders	S

H-3. Restore vacant and fire-damaged rowhouses at corner of Maple & Central Streets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand nature of code enforcement issues for these properties Identify new grant programs or possible funding sources as federal, state, and private funds become available and are more readily advertised. 	Department of Code Enforcement	Office of Housing, Way Finders	M
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Transportation Goal: Expand transportation opportunities and ensure that the streets are safe for all forms of transportation.

Action	Lead Implementer	Collaborators	Timeline
T-1. Improve street lighting and the neighborhood's streetscape to improve the visual appearance of the neighborhood focusing on assuring residents that this is a 'cared for' neighborhood. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify street lighting needs through a nighttime walk of the neighborhoods Secure funding and implement. 	Department of Public Works (DPW)	Walk Bike Spfld, South End Citizens Council, OPED, MassBike, Walk MA, MassDOT	S
T-2. Repair sidewalks and install new or improved crosswalks at key intersections focusing on sidewalks on east side of Ashmun St. and Marble St.	DPW	WalkBike Springfield, Board of Public Works	S
T-3. Improve access to the Riverfront and businesses at Hall of Fame Avenue via York St, Fremont St, Union St, and Broad St.	DPW	Walk Bike Spfld, PVPC, Board of Public Works, MassDOT, Parks Department	M

Parks Goal: Improve and expand parkland and recreational open space areas

Action	Lead Implementer	Collaborators	Timeline
P-1. Improve existing neighborhood parks and open spaces (#1 survey priority) focusing first on increasing lighting in Emerson Wight Park and using the park for block parties/concerts/events. Diversify play areas and increase benches and picnic tables. Manage stormwater with a rain garden on the southeast side.	Parks Department	South End Citizens Council, DPW, Police Department	S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> P-2. Focus on CT Riverwalk and Bikeway-- improving access, lighting and programming to enhance public safety 	Parks Department, SRA	South End Citizens Council, DPW, AMTRAK	M

Economic Development Goal: Strengthen the economy of the neighborhood			
Action	Lead Implementer	Collaborators	Timeline
ED-1. No more vacant lots. Research how other cities have reached out to landlords to get vacant lots sold and/or re-developed, and if the vacant lots belong to the city—the city should commit to marketing it for community gardens and markets while maintaining it in an aesthetically pleasing manner, perhaps mowing, clearing and benches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory current landlords and status of development of parcels/buildings in neighborhood. • Reach out to landlords who may looking to release their lots or buildings for sale. • Activate city community garden ordinance. 	OPED, Springfield Redevelopment Authority (SRA)	Office of Housing, Way Finders, Gardening the Community, Springfield Food Policy Council	S
ED-2. Implement workforce training and development programs to connect South End residents with institutions within and outside the neighborhood. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage and understand workforce needs of local employers and educational institutions • Work with community organizations, including workforce development agencies 	MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board	South End Citizens Council, Springfield Technical Community College (STCC), New England Farm Workers' Council	
ED-3. Market the existing Main Street façade program and Small Business Loan Program specifically to South End businesses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory storefronts in the South End neighborhood • Keep track of vacant lot and building sales to facilitate communication to interested businesses coming to the city. 	OPED	South End Citizens Council	S
ED-4. Consider changing current highway-oriented “Business B” zoning on Main St. to prioritize pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify current uses along corridor • Research how other parts of the city zoned for mixed-uses are faring 	OPED	South End Citizens Council, City Council	M

ED-5. Support existing local businesses and work to expand retail development including recruiting sit-down/dine in restaurants and possibly a grocery store <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with the South End Citizens Council to refine understanding of business needs in neighborhood. Keep track of vacant lot and building sales to facilitate communication to interested businesses coming to the city. 	OPED, Springfield Redevelopment Authority (SRA	South End Citizens Council	M
Arts & Culture Goal: Celebrate the rich and diverse history and culture of the South End			
Action	Lead Implementer	Collaborators	Timeline
AC-1. City-stage re-development as Youth Arts Center to address the critical need for accessible and equitable arts programs by serving as a creative community hub for youth arts organizations in Springfield	Hope for Youth and Families	Springfield Cultural Council, OPED, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Spfld Community Music School	S
AC-2. Create a neighborhood branding program to promote the neighborhood and develop community pride including informational signage highlighting the history of the neighborhood and its residents.	OPED	South End Citizens Council, Springfield Cultural Partnership, Springfield Cultural Council	M
AC-3. Expand community events, celebrations and other programming including increasing public art installations such as murals and outdoor sculpture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify existing buildings that offer community spaces and programs for all ages. Ensure that those services are widely advertised. Research current programming of existing cultural centers 	South End Citizens Council	Springfield Cultural Council, Department of Health and Human Services, Partners for Community Action, Hope for Youth and Families, Community, Foundation of Western Massachusetts, Springfield Cultural Partnership	M

Energy/Climate Action Goal: Ensure the long-term sustainability and climate resilience of the South End			
Action	Lead Implementer	Collaborators	Timeline
ECA-1. Assist homeowners and renters in converting to electric heating, cooling, and energy-efficient appliances to achieve greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals.	OPED	NNCC, RevCDC, Mass Save® Program, Partners for Community Action, SRA	S
ECA-2. Expand EV charging stations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify all current charging stations in the neighborhood, including those in parking garages and lots. Identify planned locations based on previously adopted plans or mentions. Seek grant funding to install new charging stations. 	DPW, Eversource	OPED, PVPC, Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER)	M
Public Safety Goal: Enhance the safety and well-being of all South End residents			
Action	Lead Implementer	Collaborators	Timeline
PS-1. Crime Prevention through Environmental design (CPTED) -- Remedy physical problems associated with neighborhood crime and disorder through proactive code enforcement and maintenance of vacant city-owned land strategies are aimed at maximizing features of the built environment that reduce crime. <i>For example, well-lit and well-maintained walkable spaces with good visibility and access to shops, parks, and other amenities have been shown to reduce rates of crime and fear of crime.</i> Four principles: Natural surveillance; Access control; Territorial enforcement; Maintenance/management	Police Department	OPED, SRA, Code Enforcement / Building Department, South End Citizens Council	S
PS-2. Improve street lighting and increase police presence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify all current street lights and need through walkthroughs and safety audits. Analyze crime data and areas where higher crime rates or safety concerns exist. Identify planned locations of light installations or where police presence is needed based on previously adopted plans or mentions. 	Police Department	South End Citizens Council, DPW	M

Examples of Potential Funding Sources

Arts & Culture

Cultural Facilities Fund	This program provides funding for public and non-profit cultural facilities such as museums, historic sites, theaters, exhibition spaces, and classrooms. These funds can be used for planning, acquiring, designing, constructing, and rehabilitating eligible facilities.
Local Cultural Council (LCC)	The LCC provides funding for a wide range of cultural activities, including festivals, lectures, performances, and other events that have a public benefit. Eligible applicants include municipalities, organizations, and even private individuals.
Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey and Planning Grant Program	This program provides funding for historic preservation planning, including inventorying historic properties and other cultural resources. Such inventories are valuable tools in identifying and prioritizing historic properties, while also highlighting the history of structurally disadvantaged groups whose stories are often overlooked.

Clean Energy

Community Change Grants	This federal program is administered by the Environmental Protection Agency, and it provides grant funding to address issues relating to pollution and climate change in disadvantaged communities. The entire North End area qualifies as a disadvantaged community under the program criteria. Applicants must consist of a partnership of two community-based organizations (CBO), or a partnership between a local government and either a CBO or institution of higher learning. These funds can be used for projects relating to issues such as climate resiliency, low- and zero-emission technology and infrastructure, and pollution reduction.
Community Clean Energy Resiliency Initiative (CCERI)	This state program provides funding for clean energy projects that improve municipal resilience and prevent service disruptions caused by climate change.
Green Communities Program	Municipalities in Massachusetts that are designated as Green Communities, including Springfield, are eligible to apply for competitive grants under this program. These grants can be used for projects that reduce municipal carbon footprints. In Springfield, this would not only result in energy savings, but it would also help to reduce the city's high air pollution rates.

Economic Development

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)	CDBG funds may be used for a variety of economic development-related projects. These include commercial or industrial improvements and assistance, microenterprise assistance, and planning/capacity building projects.
Community One Stop for Growth	One Stop is a single application process that includes a number of different state grant programs relating to economic development and housing. Funding is available for a variety of projects, including community activation & placemaking; planning & zoning; site preparation; buildings; and infrastructure.

Examples of Potential Funding Sources	
Food Security	
Urban Agriculture Program	This program provides funding for the development of urban agriculture, in order to improve access to fresh, local produce in low- and moderate-income areas. Eligible applicants include municipalities, non-profit organizations, educational and public health institutions, and private individuals with commercial urban agriculture experience.
Housing & Historic Preservation	
Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)	CDBG funds can be used for a wide range of housing-related initiatives. These include homeowner assistance programs, first-time homebuyer programs, housing rehabilitation, and code enforcement.
Community Preservation Act (CPA)	The CPA is funded by city taxpayers, with matching contributions by the state. These funds are administered by the city's Community Preservation Committee, and can be used to for development of affordable housing along with historic preservation.
Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP)	The HDIP involves tax incentives for the development of market-rate housing in Gateway Cities in Massachusetts, including Springfield. Eligible projects may involve new construction or substantial rehabilitation of existing buildings, and must be within the city's designated HD Zone. However, only a small portion of the North End is within the designated HD Zone.
Housing Stabilization Fund (HSF)	This state-funded program provides funding for acquisition and/or rehabilitation of rental properties, or construction of new properties. Eligible applicants include non-profit and for-profit developers, along with municipalities. All properties that receive HSF assistance must be occupied by low- and moderate-income residents.
Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF)	The MPPF provides funding support for preservation work on buildings that are listed on the State Register of Historic Places. Applicants include municipal governments and non-profit organizations. Within the North End neighborhoods, there are a number of eligible historic buildings, and this number could likely be expanded with additional historic resource surveys.
Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey and Planning Grant Program	This program provides funding for historic preservation planning, including inventorying historic properties. Because many of the historic buildings in the North End have not yet been inventoried, especially those in Brightwood, this would be an important step in prioritizing residential properties for rehabilitation and making them eligible for additional grant opportunities.
National Housing Trust Fund Program (HTF)	Funding from this program can be used to acquire, rehabilitate, or construct new rental properties for residents with incomes at or below 50% of the median area income. Eligible applicants include non-profit developers, along with for-profit developers who are partnered with non-profits that receive support service funds.

Examples of Potential Funding Sources

Parks & Open Space

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)	CDBG funds may be used for a variety of public facilities and improvements. These include projects relating to the acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of open space-related amenities such as parks, playgrounds, public trees, sculptures, and fountains.
Community Preservation Act (CPA)	Along with affordable housing and historic preservation, CPA funds can also be used for projects relating to parks and open space areas in Springfield.
Gateway City Parks Program	This program provides funding for Gateway Cities in Massachusetts, including Springfield, to create or improve parks and other recreational spaces in the city.

Transportation

Chapter 90 Program	This state-funded program provides reimbursement for expenses relating to a wide range of eligible projects. This includes analysis, design, and construction work for roadway improvements, traffic calming measures, bike lanes, sidewalks, and other transportation-related work.
Complete Streets Funding Program	This program provides funding for Massachusetts communities, including Springfield, that have a Complete Streets policy. It provides funding for projects that are identified in the city's Prioritization Plan, which can include intersection redesigns, traffic calming measures, and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements.
MassTrails Grants	This program provides matching reimbursements for projects that involve recreational and shared-use trails. Eligible expenses include the development, design, construction, and maintenance of these trails.
Safe Routes to School Program	This program seeks to make walking and bicycling safer for students traveling to school. Such initiatives not only help to improve student health, but they also improve traffic congestion and air quality.
Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program	This program provides funding for municipalities and public transit authorities to improve safety and accessibility for all roadway users. Eligible projects include bikeshare programs, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and transit infrastructure.

Appendices

Summaries of Recent City-wide Planning Efforts

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

Rebuild Springfield (2012)

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

Local Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (2023)

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

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

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

Springfield Complete Streets Prioritization Plan – 2020 Update

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

Local Rapid Recovery Plan (2021)

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

Open Space and Recreation Plan (2022)

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

Safety Action Plan (2022)

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

Capital Improvement Plan, FY 2024–2028 (2023)

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