

## CITY OF GREENFIELD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2024

This community development strategy was prepared by the City of Greenfield Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD) in partial fulfillment of the requirements for submitting its annual CDBG Mini-Entitlement application. This document was completed based on input received at a public hearing held on December 4, 2023.

### ***Planning for Community Development in Greenfield***

Greenfield has a city form of government with an elected Mayor and Council of 13 members. CEDD partners with other key municipal departments (Planning, Department of Public Works, Recreation Department, Council on Aging, and Public Safety), committees (Sustainable Greenfield Implementation Committee, Crossroads Cultural District, Greenfield Redevelopment Authority, Greenfield Housing Authority, Commission on Disability Access, Greenfield Local Cultural District, and Community Preservation Committee) and regional organizations (Community Action of Pioneer Valley, Opioid Task Force, Franklin County Resource Network, Greenfield Business Association, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, Franklin Regional Council of Government) to assess community needs and develop plans that guide our community development priorities.

### ***Key Planning Documents:***

<i>Sustainable Greenfield Master Plan</i> , January 2014	<i>Complete Streets Prioritization Plan</i> , Summer 2017
<i>ADA Self-Assessment and Transition Plan</i> , June 2018	<i>City of Greenfield Hazard Mitigation Plan</i> , April 2020
<i>Franklin County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)</i> , 2021-2023	<i>Downtown Greenfield Revitalization Plan</i> , April 2023
Community Action Pioneer Valley <i>Community Assessment</i> , July 2023	<i>Greenfield Community Preservation Plan</i> , 2023-2024

### ***Common Themes and Key Development Issues:***

**Housing:** The housing crisis in Greenfield is multi-faceted and heavily felt by residents. Data analyzed in the CAPV *Community Assessment* show that over 50% of Franklin County renters are “burdened” by housing costs (paying over 30% of their monthly income to housing). The rate of homelessness, particularly unsheltered homelessness, rose during the pandemic and social services agencies and advocates project that numbers will continue to rise as rents remain out of reach even for some individuals who work full time. A shortage of accessible and affordable units of smaller sizes makes it difficult for seniors to age in place within the community, while younger families struggle to find affordable first homes to purchase. In addition, approximately 43% of all housing in Greenfield was built before 1940, and many homes across all neighborhoods in the City are in desperate need of repair and upgrade.

**Water, Sewer, and Drainage Infrastructure:** Heavy precipitation events are on the rise in Massachusetts, leading to increased flooding. The City’s 2020 *Hazard Mitigation Plan* identifies water

## CITY OF GREENFIELD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2024

infrastructure as an area that is vulnerable to natural hazards associated with climate change. Many of the City's water and sewer mains are nearly a century old and in need of replacement, both to ensure our infrastructure is more resilient to climate change and to support new developments.

**Addressing Slum & Blight Conditions:** A slum or blighted area is one where buildings and the built environment are physically deteriorated, properties are abandoned, and dilapidation risks threatening public health or safety. Addressing slum and blight requires a multifaceted approach, including historic preservation, rehabilitating buildings, conducting environmental remediation, or clearance. Greenfield's Central Commercial district has been designated as a "Slum and Blighted area" in accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 121B due to the volume of buildings in physical disrepair and a recognizable pattern of disinvestment at the time of the designation (2016). Several major revitalization projects are in the works in the district, including the Wilson's building redevelopment, but the problem of deteriorated and under-utilized properties remains. Residents and city staff alike are interested in ways to address these conditions and improve the quality and accessibility of our built environment.

**Local Economic Revitalization:** Greenfield's planning documents envision a diverse and sustainable local economy and livable, walkable neighborhoods with housing located close to small businesses and services. The City as a whole benefits from having a diversity of job and business opportunities, from locally grown and made food and beverage companies, to manufacturing, technology, and the creative and artistic economy. As a community, we can support sustainable economic development through education, entrepreneurial opportunities, and collaborative public events.

**Food security:** Rising costs of food in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic have led to concerns about growing food insecurity, particularly for children, across Western Massachusetts. Greenfield has a robust network of community meals and food pantries working to address this problem. The City can support these efforts by helping to coordinate among different agencies, encouraging creative and grassroots initiatives, and ensuring that funding levels remain stable.

**Elder Services:** The number of elders in Greenfield is projected to rise over the coming years, and this population faces some unique challenges. Among these are a lack of affordable and accessible housing, difficulties navigating health care and social services, and a need for socialization and community.

### ***2024 Development Priorities for the City of Greenfield:***

#### **Develop and Preserve Diverse and Affordable Housing**

- Support the development of new, affordable units in walking distance from transit. Increase accessibility of housing stock and produce new units of supportive housing. Increase residential density in downtown.
  - Projects: 2024-2027 Wilson's Redevelopment (various State funding, City of Greenfield ARPA funding, private funding), 2024-2025 Wells Street Shelter

## CITY OF GREENFIELD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2024

Rehabilitation and Expansion (State funds, private funding, CDBG 22-23), 2024 Neighborhood Organizing for Hope Street Lot Redevelopment, 2024 Downtown Upper Story Developments (MHP Complete Neighborhoods), 2024-2025 City of Greenfield Housing Study (EOHLC Community Planning Grant)

- Identify and address blighted, substandard, and non-code-compliant housing units across the city. Support the rehabilitation of vacant and dilapidated properties for resale as affordable first-time homebuyer opportunities.
  - Projects: 2024 CDBG Housing Rehab Program, Abandoned Housing Initiative Receivership Fund (Attorney General's Office)

### **Improve Public Infrastructure**

- Expand and upgrade municipal facilities.
  - Projects: 2024 ADA Improvements to City Hall (CDBG 21), 2024 Sidewalk Improvements (CDBG 22-23)
- Reconfigure and replace Main Street infrastructure to improve pedestrian safety and encourage walking and biking. Support climate resiliency by replacing outdated and inefficient water and drainage infrastructure on Main Street.
  - Projects: Main Street Improvement Project (Mass DOT TIP, expected 2026-2027)
- Replace outdated and inefficient water and drainage infrastructure throughout the designated Slum & Blight District.
  - Projects: 2024 CDBG Water Mains Replacement Design & Engineering
- Direct city planning efforts towards climate change preparedness and resilience.
  - Projects: 2024 Sustainable Greenfield Master Plan Update (City funds)

### **Foster Local Economic Vitality**

- Support the redevelopment of underutilized properties. Expand availability and use of Industrial zoned land.
  - Vacant Storefront District
- Coordinate among businesses, committees, and cultural organizations to promote downtown events and expand public spaces.
  - Projects: 2024 Greenfield Arts & Culture Coordination Task Force (Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Grant)
- Foster creative entrepreneurship and new small business ventures. Support small business enterprises, particularly those owned by low-income members of our community.
  - Projects: 2024 CDBG Microenterprise Assistance, collaboration with Franklin County Community Development Corporation (FCCDC), 2023-2024 Storefront Improvement Program (REDO Grant)