



Gardner Urban Revitalization Plan Public Forum



Urban Revitalization Plan: City of Gardner, Massachusetts
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Presentation Outline

- **Project Background**
- **Summary of Existing Conditions**
- **Business Establishment and Property Owner Surveys**
- **Building Assessment**
- **Public Forum**

Project Background

- **Two objectives**

- *Develop a current baseline of economic and market data which will serve as a foundation for strategic, long term planning for the downtown urban renewal area*
- *Envision and test a series of development scenarios focused on existing, tangible properties that can serve as catalysts for the larger, future redevelopment of the City*

- **Housing analysis**

- **Economic development analysis**

- **Downtown case studies**

- **Recommendations and strategies**

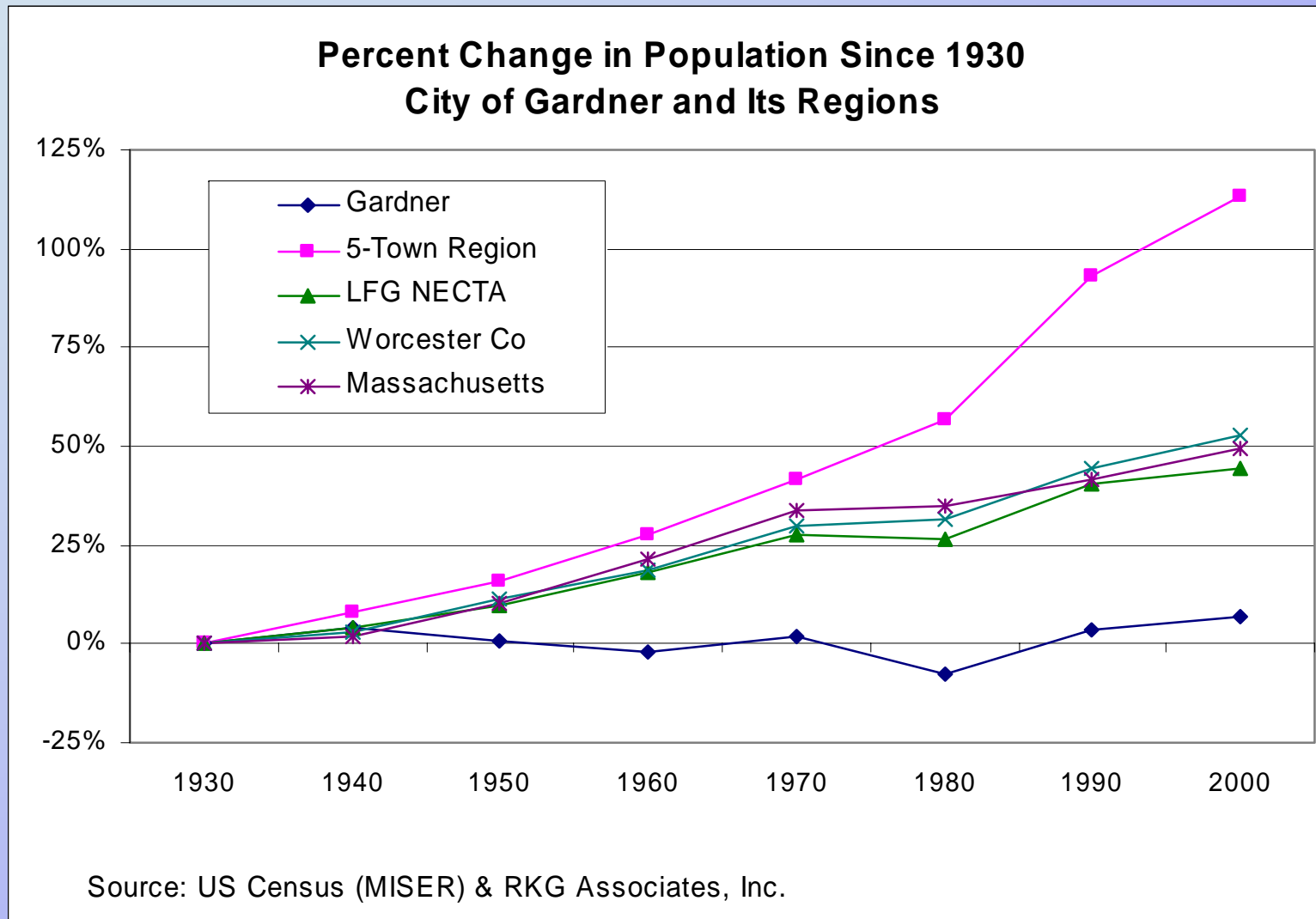
- **Conceptual plans, drawings and financial pro-forma**
- **Completion in mid to late July**

Population & Household Characteristics in 2006

	Pop.	Change since 2000	Median Age	Change since 2000
Gardner	21,386	3.0%	38.8	3.3%
5-Town Region	31,493	8.8%	38.0	3.5%
LFG NECTA	149,492	4.6%	37.6	3.3%

	H'holds	Change since 2000	Median H'hold Income	Change since 2000
Gardner	8,546	3.2%	\$41,845	11.3%
5-Town Region	11,144	8.6%	\$60,104	14.6%
LFG NECTA	57,138	4.4%	\$49,955	14.3%

Demographic Trends



Population & Household Forecasts (2011)

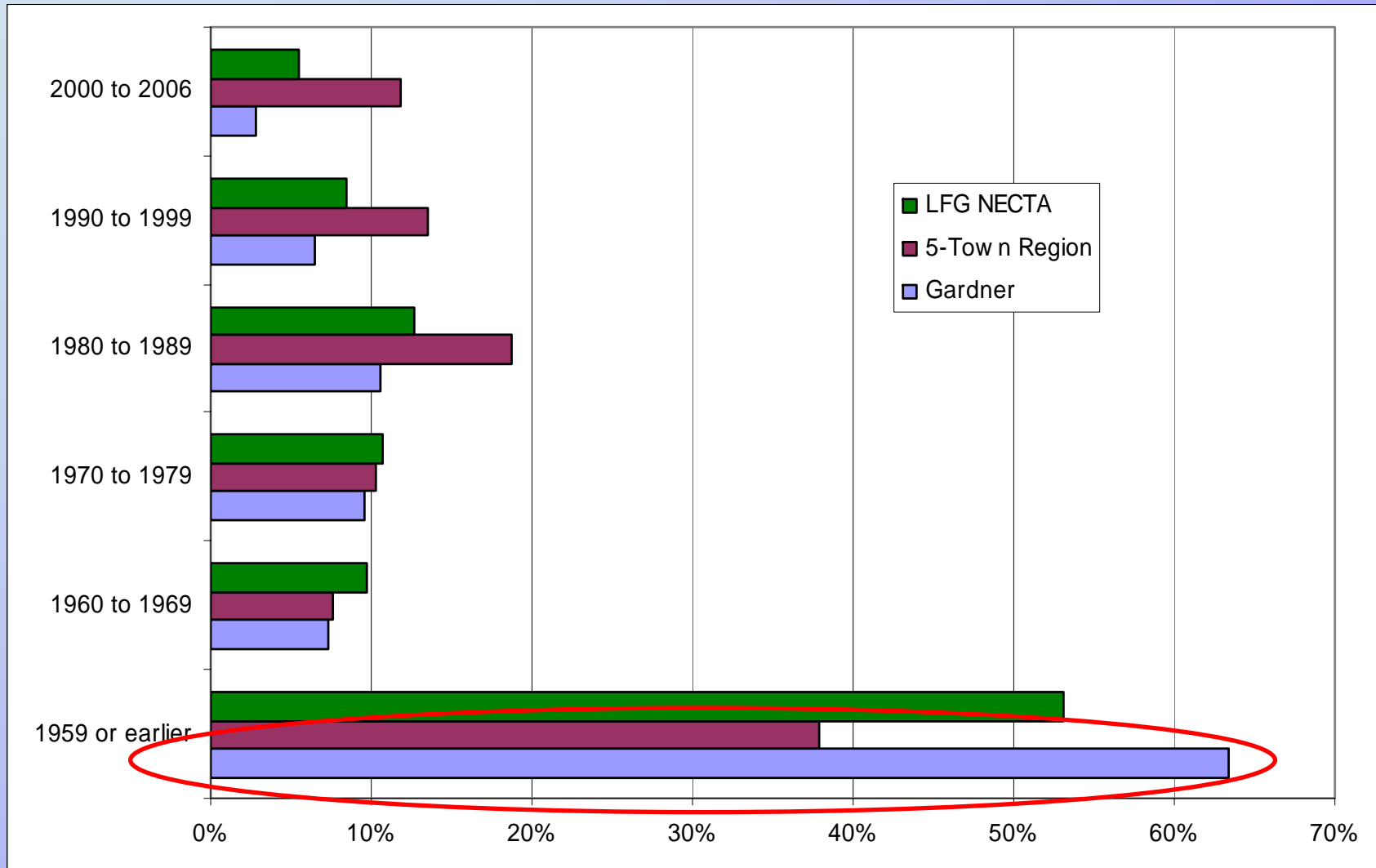
	Population	Change from 2006	Median Age	Change from 2006
Gardner	21,895	2.4%	39.9	2.9%
5-Town Region	33,523	6.4%	39.1	2.8%
LFG NECTA	154,655	3.5%	38.7	3.0%

	H'holds	Change from 2006	Median Income	Change from 2006
Gardner	8,769	2.6%	\$45,645	9.1%
5-Town Region	11,864	6.5%	\$65,565	9.1%
LFG NECTA	59,160	3.5%	\$54,259	8.6%

Housing Characteristics in 2006

	Housing Units	Change since 2000	% owner-occ'd	Change since 2000
Gardner	9,096	2.9%	59.5%	12.4%
5-Town Region	12,017	8.2%	84.8%	11.2%
LFG NECTA	60,283	4.2%	67.1%	11.3%
	Median Single Family \$	Change since 2000	Median Condo \$	Change since 2000
Gardner	\$195,000	69.6%	\$149,900	115.7%
5-Town Region	\$223,595	69.2%	\$189,750	118.7%
LFG NECTA	\$225,900	68.3%	\$192,410	102.0%

Trends in Housing Development



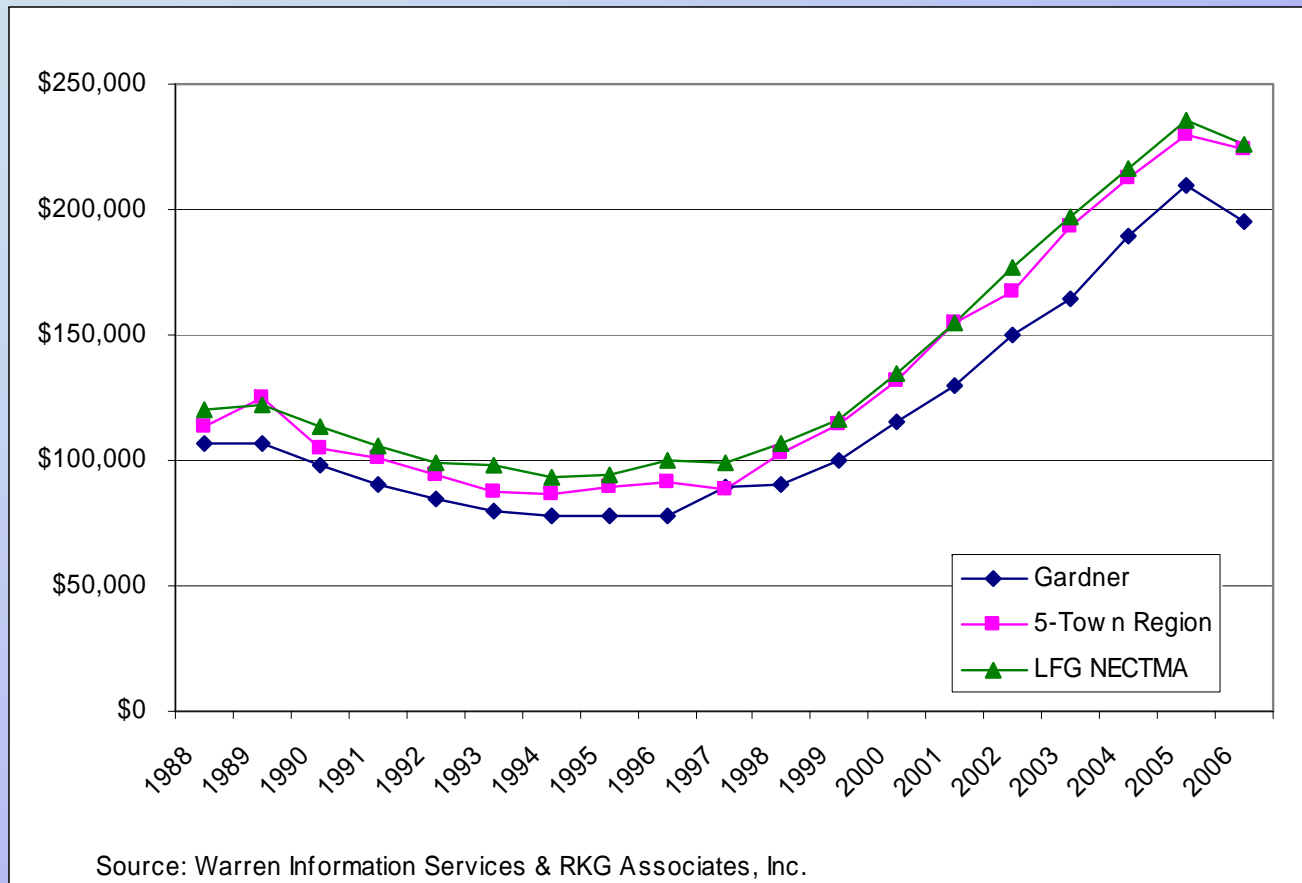
Trends in the Capture of Annual Regional Housing Production

Period	AVG. Annual Housing Production in LFG NECTA	% Capture in	
		Gardner	5-Town Region
2000 to 2006	547	8%	43%
1990 to 1999	988	12%	32%
1980 to 1989	767	13%	29%
1970 to 1979	643	13%	19%
1960 to 1969	587	11%	16%

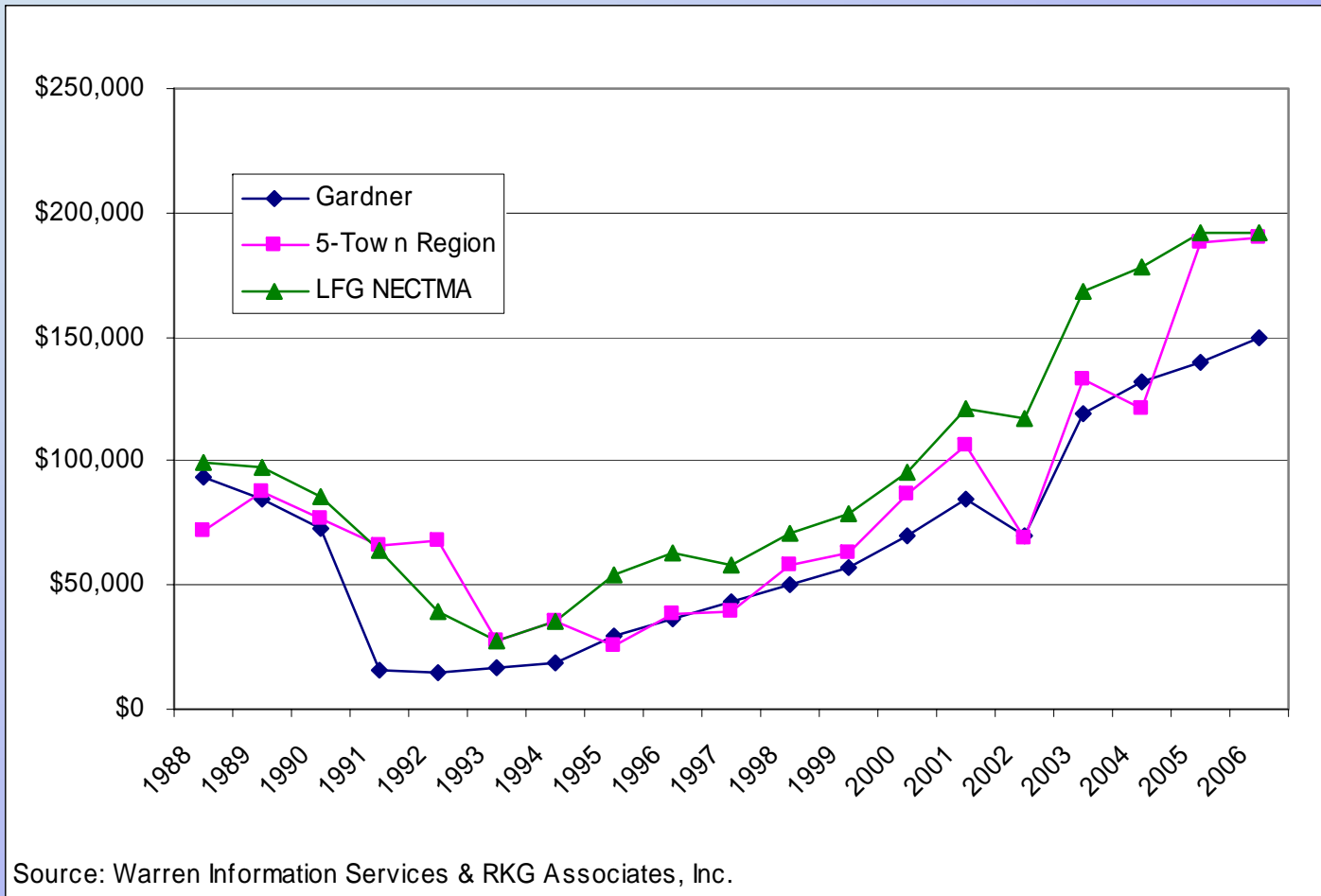
Chapter 40-B Housing

	Total Year Round Unit (2000)	Subsidized Housing Inventory	% of Total
Gardner	8,804	1,403	15.9%
5-Town Region	12,009	796	6.6%
LFG NECTA	58,916	5,369	9.1%
Gardner as % of LFG	14.9%	26.1%	
5-Towns as % of LFG	20.4%	14.8%	

Trends in Single-Family Median Values



Trends In Condominium Median Values



Pipeline Projects

- **Gardner has 8 major projects under construction or in the pipeline that may add up to 430 units**
 - 2 condominium projects (90 units)
 - 1 proposed mobile home parks (80 units)
 - 2 Assisted living projects for (100 units)
 - 3 Major single family subdivisions (up to 160 units)
 - Propose Chapter 40R project (400 to 600 units)?
- **Proposed supply equates to an 5+ year supply based on historic development trends**

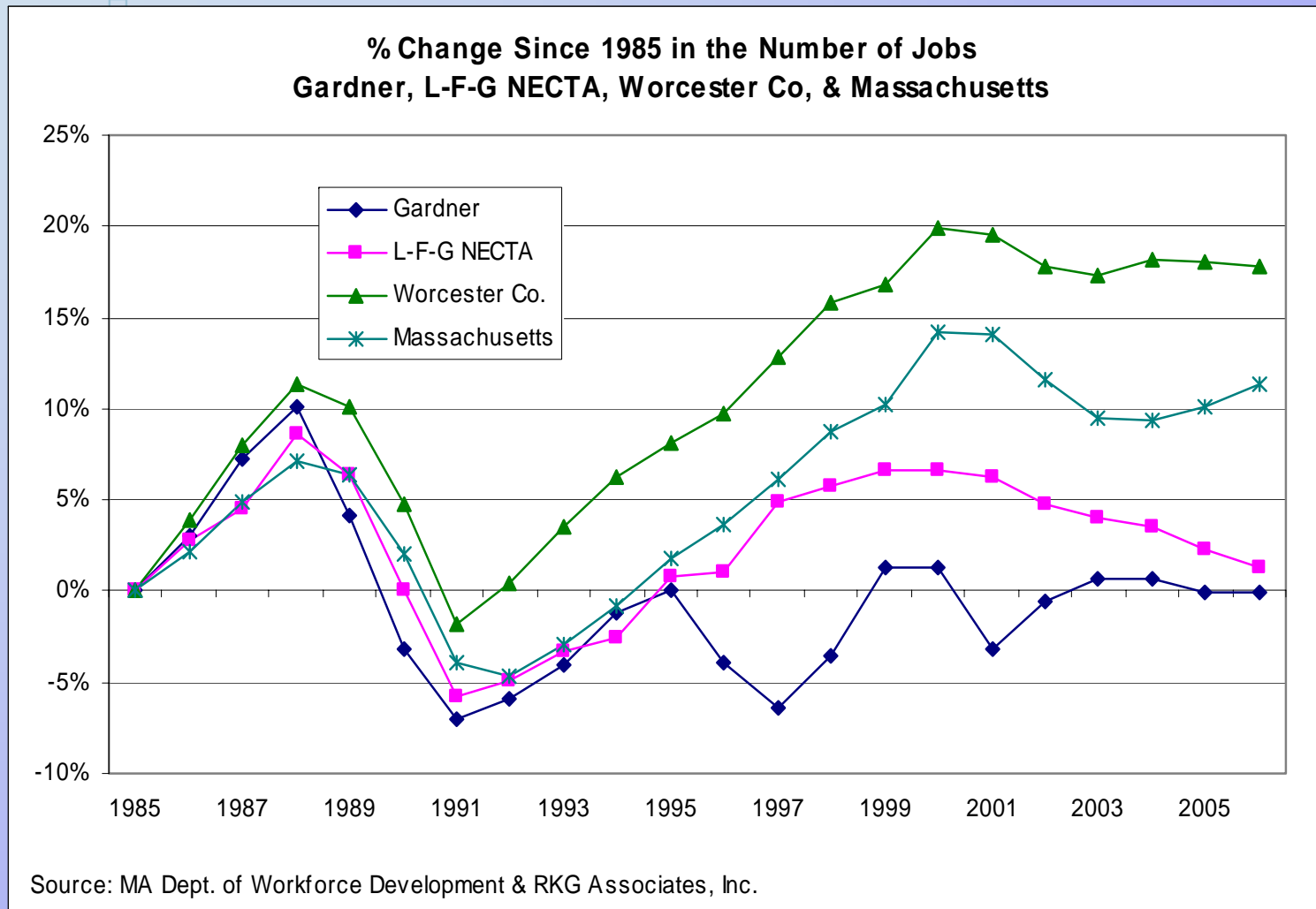
Commuting Patterns

- **Large commuting market area**

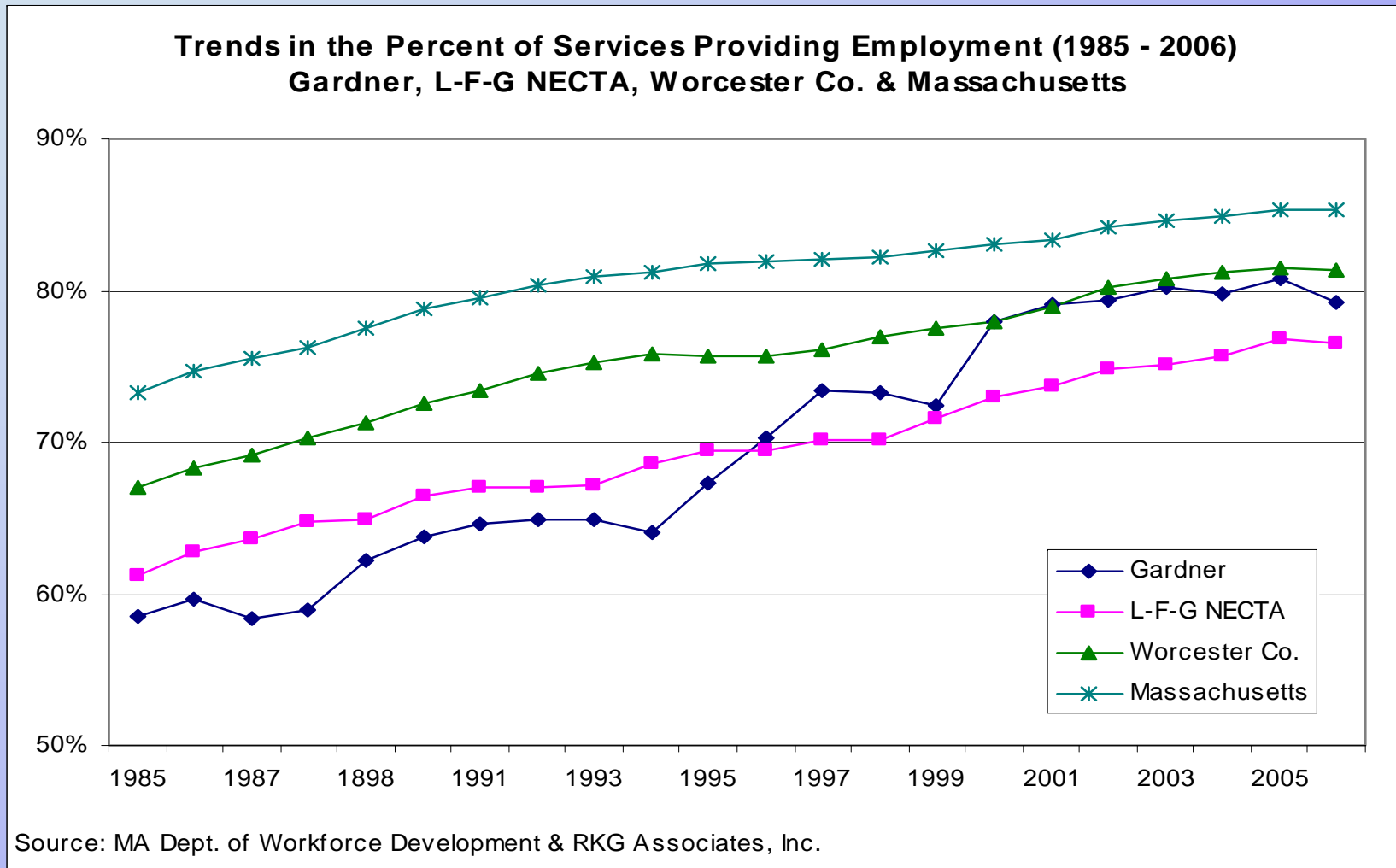
- **Place of work...**
 - Gardner appeals as a place of work for persons living locally & to the west & south

- **Place of residence...**
 - Gardner appeals as place of residence for those commuting east for work

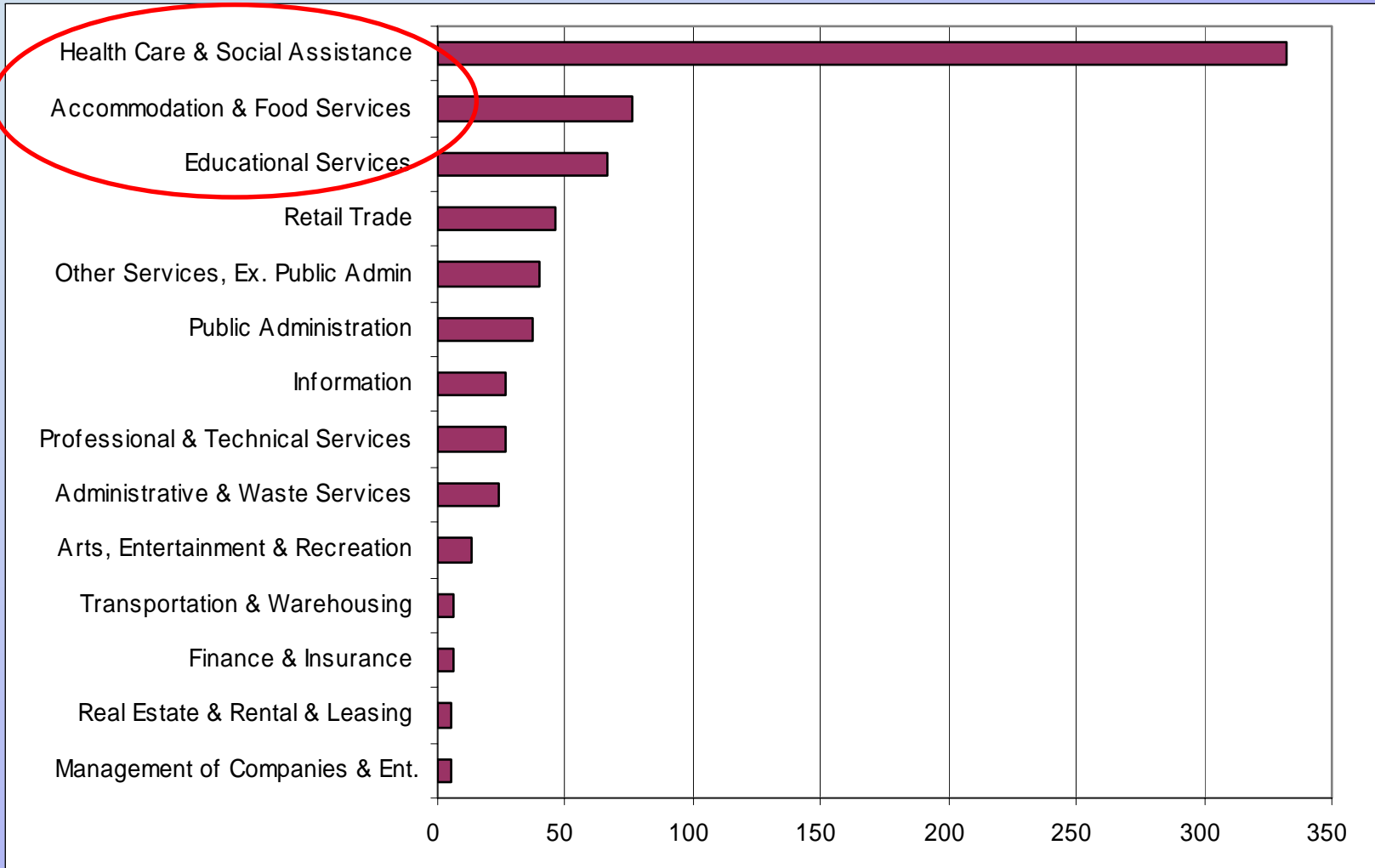
Employment Trends Since 1985



Transitioning Service Employment Base



Gardner: Employment Growth Potential by Sectors (2014)



Summary of Findings

■ Demographic

- Stable base within region(s) of stronger growth
- Gardner has older population & lower income characteristics
- Outlook is positive (additional growth forecasted)
 - **Future municipal service and infrastructure needs?**

■ Housing

- Older stock; lower concentration of owners; high percentage of Chapter 40-B housing
- Housing production is slow
- Region experienced increased capture/share of new housing
- Local pipeline of up to 430 units in Gardner
- Pricing competitive but sales are slowing
 - **Increase owner-occupancy?**
 - **Reasons or incentives needed to capture higher share of regional growth**
 - **Continue development outside of the Study Area?**

Summary of Findings

■ Market Areas

- Gardner appeals as a place of work for persons living locally & to the west/south; and appeals as place of residence for those commuting east for work
 - How to increase demand (spending) from residents commuting east?
 - How to increase demand (spending) from existing workers in Gardner?

■ Economy

- Employment is stable and in transition
- Recovery from recession was slow
- Good base in expanding sectors
- Outlook is positive (labor and land)
 - *Lower values negatively impact attracting investment*
 - Strategies to increase property values to attract/encourage investment?
 - Reposition City as service/retail/medical provider for 5-Town region?

Property Owner Survey

- **129 distributed (19 returns – 15% response)**
- **Wide cross section of new and established firms**
 - 21% less than 5 years, 16% 50 years or more
 - Half have no intention of selling/moving
- **Half do not lease space to other tenants**
 - Not marketable/usable space
- **Most owners complete routine maintenance**
 - Mostly for new tenants – typically do not pass along these costs
 - Half plan on undertaking renovations within one year
- **Few owners utilize City business services**
 - Mostly Gardner Grow Fund and Façade programs
 - Mixed response relative to permit process

Business Tenant Survey

- **170 distributed (36 returns – 21% response)**
 - Mix of service, retail, manufacturing and finance firms
 - Mostly small businesses (1 to 5 employees)
 - Middle-age family (35-54) and near senior (55-64) customer demographic

- **Most in business less than 20 years**
 - New business activity – 4 less than one year old
 - How's business? Mostly flat sales. Two firms closing
 - Customers generally within 20 miles of Gardner
- **Lease rates \$3.50/SF to \$20/SF**
- **Why Gardner?**
 - Close to customers, available/affordable space, quality of life

Business Tenant Survey

■ **Business view of study area?**

- Poor business environment
- Deteriorated over past 5 years
 - **Empty storefronts, property maintenance, overall appearance**
- Downtown is not a destination for customers

■ **Future outlook?**

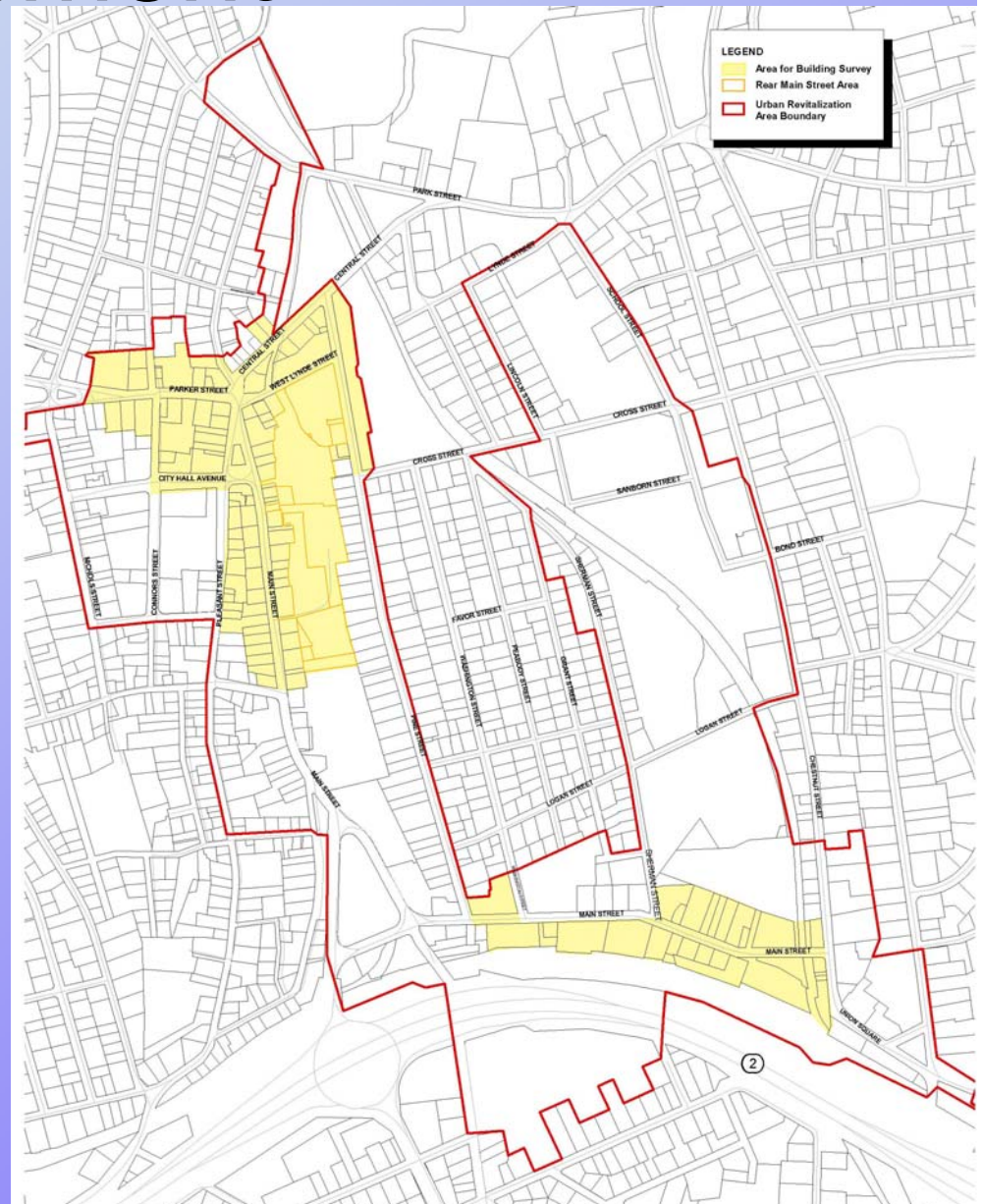
- Most businesses intend to stay, improve and expand their operations
- 25% likely to expand within 1 year, 36% within 5 years
- Obstacles include financing, market uncertainty, quality available space

■ **Gardner Redevelopment Authority**

- Most had not utilized GRA services
- Return passenger rail, business grants, remove parking meters, help renovate buildings, promote downtown, fill store fronts

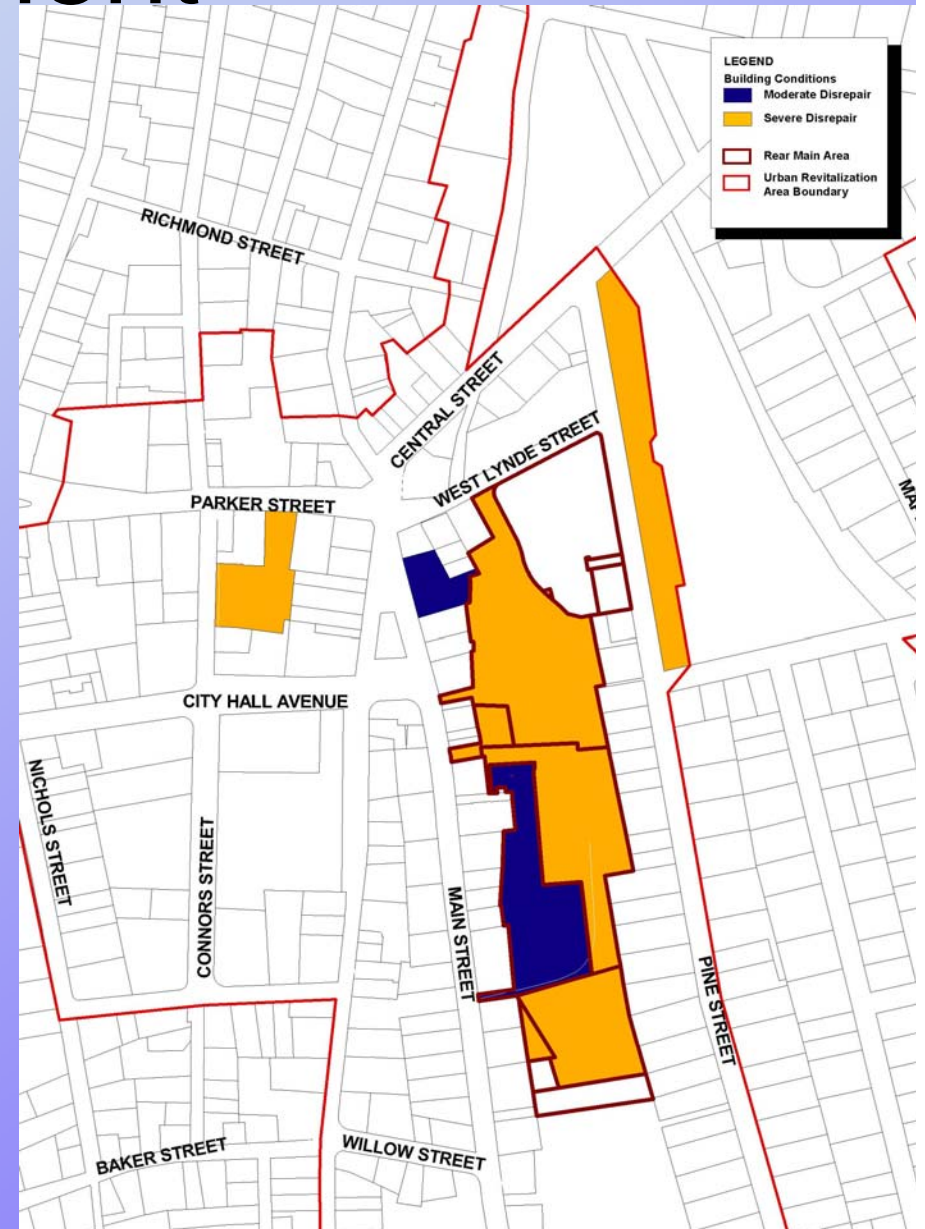
Building Assessment

- **An URP requires assessment of buildings within the district**
- **Initial exterior assessments have focused on the CBD/RMSC**
- **Many building and site conditions were evaluated**
- **Interior inspections will be needed for key buildings**



Building Assessment

- **Most buildings in the RMSC are in poor condition**
- **There is a scattering of other buildings in disrepair**
- **Assessments are still being finalized**
- **Buildings can be considered for rehab or demo**



Public Forum

- ***Purpose – provide forum to identify issues and shape the Plan***
- **Interactive**
- **Participatory**
- **Steering Committee to Listen**

- **Breakout session**
 - **Group discussion of 5 topics (10 minutes per topic)**
 - **Transportation/streets issues**
 - **Retail and commercial issues**
 - **Public amenities and green space**
 - **Housing issues**
 - **Benefits/opportunities and challenges/problems with Study Area**

 - **Presentation of group findings**

**It's Your City.
It's Your Future.
Make it Your Plan.**

Gardner Redevelopment Authority

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