

# Gardner Urban Revitalization Plan

Urban Revitalization Plan: City of Gardner, Massachusetts  
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Prepared by:

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# Presentation Outline

- **Plan Purpose and Timeline**
- **Urban Revitalization Plan Summary**
- **Alternative Development Options and Preferred Plan**
- **Implementation Actions**
- **Questions and Answers**

# Plan Purpose

## ■ **Goals of plan**

- Plan of work to enhance, reposition and redevelop properties in Urban Renewal Area (URA)
- Stimulate and encourage private investment in URA through strategic public investments
- Enhance sense of community and pride in the downtown & provide a place where residents and visitors come to live, shop, eat and recreate

## ■ **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*

# Project Timeline

## ■ Initial public forum November 2005

- Steering Committee formed January 2006
  - Met 5 times in 2006
  - Consultant Mike Lanava on board August 2006
  - Urban renewal planning focus – demarcation of URA

## ■ RKG/BSC on board in March 2007

- Four Steering Committee meetings
- Surveys of businesses and property owners
- Interviews with Gardner businesses and institutions
- Public Forums I & II – May and July 2007
  - Excellent public turnout and response

# Plan Summary

- **Housing analysis**
- **Economic development analysis**
- **Building assessments**
- **Downtown case studies**
- **Demographic and market analyses**
- **Recommendations, strategies & preferred plan**
  - **Conceptual plans, drawings and financial analysis & pro-forma**
- **Major findings and conclusions**
  - **Stable growth compared to regional communities**
  - **Current uncertainty for potential market-based redevelopment**
  - **Overwhelming public support for revitalization**
  - ***Public investment needed to stimulate private investment***

# Preferred Plan

## ■ Informed by...

- Socioeconomic and market trends and projections
- Building assessments
- Business survey
- Public Forums I & II
- Review by Steering Committee

## ■ Many potential development options

- Limited by resources, coordination, property assemblage, etc.

## ■ Key points

- Long-term (10 to 15 year) view of URA and City
- Provide parking and support for existing businesses and property owners along Main Street
- Introduce green space and public amenities into URA
- Make connections to other public transportation options and North Central Pathway
- Narrow Rear Main Street area street(s) - *not a downtown bypass*
- Public investment as catalyst for private development***

# Development Options Cont'd

- **Two preliminary development scenarios**
  - **Development Option 1 (conservative)**
    - **Bank office (40,550 SF)**
    - **Medical office (16,200 SF)**
    - **Market rate condominiums (redevelop existing 5-story mill)**
    - **Medical office (14,400 SF)**
  - **Development Option 2 (more aggressive)**
    - **Same as above, except...**
    - **Eliminate (14,400 SF) medical office**
    - **New Police station (19,000 SF)**
    - **Main Street streetscape and Willow Street improvement**
- **Preferred Development Plan**
  - **Additional market rate condominiums (10,000 SF)**
  - **2 mixed use retail buildings (12,000 SF & 5,000 SF)**
  - **Extensive green space, park and streetscape treatments**

# Implementation Actions

- **1. Formulate local incentives to encourage investment**
  - Establish a District Improvement Finance (DIF) or Tax Increment Finance (TIF) zone(s)
  - Review, amend and promote Façade improvement program
  - Chapter 43 D permitting process
- **2. Eliminate eyesores/blighted buildings**
  - Public investment needed
- **3. Commit local resources and take advantage of all available State and Federal funding to implement identified actions**
- **4. Redevelop Rear Main Corridor and Main Street in accordance with preferred development plan**
- **5. Create public amenities and green space throughout the Study Area**
  - Pocket parks, public gathering space, bike/pedestrian ways

# Implementation Actions Cont'd

- **6. Review City's development review process every 3 to 5 years**
  - Clearly defined, ensures flexibility, business-friendly attitude, and encourages high-quality developments
  - Implement 43D expedited permitting process
  - Quality design standards
- **7. Expedite redevelopment or demolition of tax title properties**
- **8. Construct new Police HQ in downtown/Rear Main area**
- **9. Support Square 2 in promotion and expansion of (year round) festival(s) at locations within the Study Area**
  - Encourages spending and retention of existing businesses
  - Food, music, children's activities
  - Encourage participation of service organizations and community groups

# Implementation Actions Cont'd

- **10. Prioritize and reposition (at least) one of the three key properties**
  - Existing Police Station/Theatre
  - Travers Welding site
  - Former Stewart's Garage
- **11. Enhance code enforcement**
- **12. Encourage the development of market-rate housing in URA**
- **13. Create a Parking Improvement District within the downtown**
- **14. Establish a Business Improvement District (BID)**
  - Promote a progressive business climate
  - Support existing firms for maximum business retention
- **15. Reflect on the history of Gardner, but embrace new directions for the City and downtown**

# Grow Gardner – Be A Part of It!

## Gardner Redevelopment Authority

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