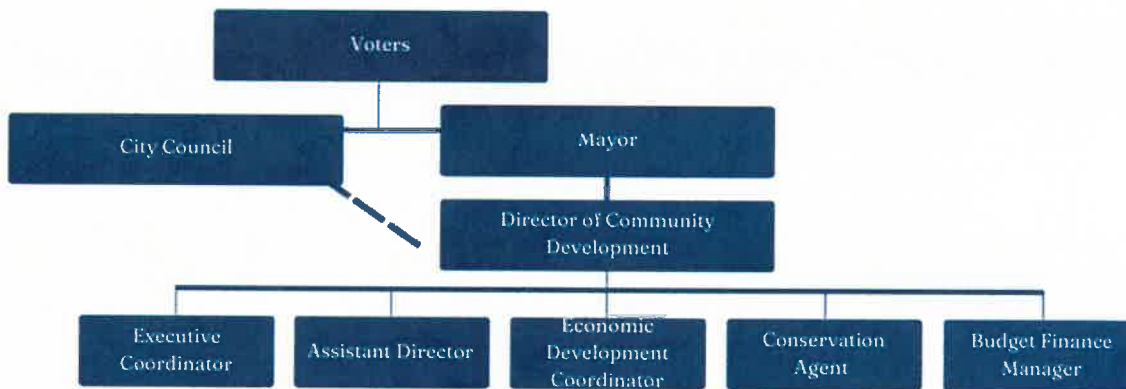


Community Development and Planning:

	FY 2024 Revised Budget	FY2025 Mayor's Recommended Budget	Mayors Budget \$ Change vs Revised FY24 Budget	Mayor's Budget % Change vs. Revised FY24 Budget
Conservation Salary and Labor	\$ 36,156.69	\$ 37,057.82	\$ 901.13	2%
Conservation Expense	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 2,284.00	\$ (116.00)	-5%
Total Conservation	\$ 38,556.69	\$ 39,341.82	\$ 785.13	2%
Planning Board Salary and Labor	\$ 36,156.69	\$ 37,057.82	\$ 901.13	2%
Planning Board Expense	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 2,284.00	\$ (116.00)	-5%
Total Planning Board	\$ 38,556.69	\$ 39,341.82	\$ 785.13	2%
Community Dev. Salary and Labor	\$ 189,304.76	\$ 196,140.39	\$ 6,835.63	3%
Community Dev. Expenses	\$ 6,350.00	\$ 6,233.05	\$ (116.95)	-2%
Total Community Dev.	\$ 195,654.76	\$ 202,373.44	\$ 6,718.68	3%



Total Department Head Budget: \$281,057.08

City Council Oversight Committee(s): Finance Committee (Community Development);
Public Welfare Committee (Planning Board); Public Service Committee (Conservation)

April 24, 2024

Mayor Michael J. Nicholson
City of Gardner
95 Pleasant Street
Gardner, MA 01440

RE: Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Narrative

Dear Mayor:

Please find below the requested information for the Fiscal Year 2025 budget for the Department of Community Development and Planning.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Department of Community Development and Planning (DCDP) FY25 budget is a level funded budget with a 5% increase in telecommunications and a 2% proposed increase for personnel.

Department Salaries & Wages – 93% of Dept Budget

The DCDP includes six department personnel including:

- Director
- Assistant Director
- Economic Development Coordinator
- Conservation Planning Agent
- Financial Program Manager
- Executive Coordinator

Each position has unique responsibilities within the DCDP that have developed over time into what they are today. Much of this relates to the City's planning efforts in areas such as complete streets, open space and recreation, economic development, and community development and planning. Work load is driven daily by both the grant funded projects that each position manages along with responsibilities the positions have with their respective committees, boards, and commissions.

The Director is responsible for the overall management of the department, with general oversight of each staff member and the various projects they administer. The Director also oversees specific grants and associated projects funded through those grants. The Director provides

technical assistance to the Planning Board and applicants proposing projects before the Board in compliance with the City's Zoning Code, Subdivision Rules and Regulations and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Zoning Act and Subdivision Legislation. The Director provides technical assistance to the Gardner Redevelopment Authority (GRA) and assists the GRA with implementing two Urban Renewal Plans, marketing, disposing and acquiring real estate, and management of other assets of the Authority. The Director oversees the development of all long-term and short-term planning initiatives for the City. 75% of this position's salary is paid by the City for compensation as the Director of Community Development and Planning, and 25% of the salary is covered by the GRA for compensation as the Executive Director of the quasi-public agency.

The Assistant Director assists the Director of DCDP in planning, organizing and directing activities, program and staff of the DCDP, including performing complex professional, administrative, and supervisory work in managing the City's Community Development Block Grant Mini Entitlement Program. The position is responsible for seeking grants, contract management for other federal, state and local programs. Provides professional assistance and direction to department staff, acts on behalf of the Director during absences, and performs related work as assigned by the Director. At any given time there are two or three block grant's open at the same time as many of the more complex projects can carry over from one year to the next. The City funds 5% of this position's salary while the Block Grant funds fund 95%. Work load for this position is delegated accordingly.

The Economic Development Coordinator identifies factors necessary to attract and retain new economic development interests, and coordinates promotional activities such as site tours, presentations for and meetings between local area business, government, real estate and development representatives, and prospective client companies. The position is the main point of contact for businesses and organizations interested in the City. The incumbent works with considerable independence and initiative under the direction of the City's Director and Assistant Director with more general direction from the GRA and the Mayor. The position is fully funded by the City.

The Conservation Planning Agent works under the general supervision of the Director of DCDP and provides skilled administrative and professional services in the execution of Conservation Commission decisions and policies for the City of Gardner, with specific attention paid to the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Gardner Wetlands Protection Ordinance. The position also conducts planning related activities on behalf of the Planning Board as required by the Director. The position assists with the implementation of the City's Open Space and Recreation Plan including the development and administration of relevant grant applications. This position is fully funded by the City.

Budget Project Manager oversees all financial activities, including general tracking, accounting, and payment of all funds received by the City through various grant sources, and periodic reviews of all invoices submitted for payments to ensure compliance with the current programmatic and financial requirements. The Budget/Project Manager serves as a "check and

balance” for all payment requests made to the Department and manages small projects for the department as needed, including Public Social Services and Housing Rehabilitation projects through the CDBG program. The CDBG grant finances 92% of the Financial Manager’s salary. The position is also funded 5% from the City budget and 3% from the GRA budget to account for handling minimal financial transactions of those two entities.

The Department’s Executive Coordinator provides administrative support to the DCDP personnel, Planning Board, and GRA Board. The position processes payments from GRA accounts as approved by the Board, establishes agendas and related packets for both Planning Board and GRA meetings, develops meeting minutes, and establishes and maintains an extensive filing system for related projects.

An overview of the DCDP projects completed over the past two years along with ongoing and proposed projects for 2024 and 2025 are outlined in the attached project summary dated April 23, 2024. The following grants have been obtained by DCDP in Fiscal Year 2024 as of the date of this correspondence:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Fiscal Year 2022/2023 CDBG | \$1,650,000 |
| 2. Site Readiness Grant (Ind. Park) | \$ 150,000 |
| 3. Planning Grant (Master Plan) | \$ 90,000 |
| 4. MassTrails Grant (Nature Trail) | \$ 500,000 |
| 5. Stanton Foundation (dog park) | \$ 30,000 |
| 6. FEMA Grant (Hazard Mitigation) | \$ 40,000 |

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Trevor M. Beauregard
Director DCDP

Department of Community Development and Planning Projects Completed in last Two Years

Downtown Infrastructure Project Phase II Construction – Installation of sidewalk, crossings, RFB, and Victorian lights on Connors & Parker Street. Completed winter 2023.

Bailey Brook Park Phase II – The City was awarded \$380,000 in PARC funding in fall of 2021. City appropriated \$39,800 for design plans and specifications in December 2021. Construction includes a multi-use court (basketball / pickleball) and a playground area with numerous play structures (some accessible). The project has been put out to bid and awarded to a contractor in the amount of \$785,365. City funding of \$480,400 will be combined with the \$380,000 of state funds for construction, which began in the spring of 2023 and was completed in late 2023.

Small Business Assistance Grant – As a continuation of the CDBG CV Small Business program that utilized \$400,000 of Block Grant funds in 2022 and 2023, the city allocated \$400,000 in ARPA funds for businesses with 50 or fewer employees for Covid-19 relief following the same model as the MicroEnterprise Grant. 10 qualified businesses were awarded a collective total of \$184,579.52. Due to lack of applicants in this funding round, the remainder of funds were reallocated to other programs.

Demolition of 14 Leamy Street – Demolition of vacant structure, elimination of slum and blight.

Subdivision Rules and Regulations – Last updated in 2006, the Subdivision Rules and Regulations should be updated to ensure compliance and consistency with MGL Chapter 41. The City appropriated \$35,000 to hire a consultant to complete this work with City personnel. In April of 2022 the City entered into a contract with BSC Group to conduct the work. The project was completed in the summer of 2023.

42-52 Parker Street Redevelopment Project – Complete gut rehabilitation of two adjacent buildings in the Downtown Urban Renewal Area. The project converted the buildings into 28 units of market rate housing. The project was completed in January of 2024.

DIF – The City in partnership with MassDevelopment completed the first phase of the District Improvement Financing (DIF) Study. The City awarded \$30,000 in MassDevelopment funds to complete the Study. The DIF Plan was completed and approved by the City Council in November of 2023. A DIF Committee has been set up to meet as needed to oversee implementation of the Plan.

Wayfinding Grant – The City was awarded a \$25,000 grant to conduct a wayfinding study in the City. The City hired a consultant to work with City personnel to establish a cohesive consistent wayfinding system for the City as a whole.

Ongoing and Proposed Projects for 2024/2025

North Central Pathway Connector Project Design – The City was awarded a \$100,000 MassTrails Grant in July of 2021 and appropriated a match of \$145,500 to initiate this project. The State awarded an additional \$145,000 to the City in April of 2022 and the City appropriated an additional \$40,000 for a match. In May of 2022 the City was awarded \$205,000 in MassTrails funding in order to complete the design plans and specifications of the NCP connector from the Park Street entrance to the skating rink to

the Park Street Park and Parking Lot (old NGRID substation) through Crystal Lake Cemetery to the rear of the new NGRID substation, and north along NGRID right of way to Route 140.

***Downtown Infrastructure Project Phase III Construction** – Construction began in the spring of 2023 at an estimated cost of \$618,750 CDBG. This project is being implemented with the Bike Trail Connector and Park Street Park and Parking Lot Projects. Completion is expected in the spring of 2024

***Park Street Park and Parking Lot Construction** – City has approved \$268,000 for construction, which began in the spring of 2023 in tandem with Downtown Phase III Infrastructure Project. Completion is expected in the spring of 2024

***North Central Pathway Connector Project (Component 1)** – Complete Streets awarded \$400,000 grant to partially fund bike trail connector from skating rink entrance along Park Street through Crystal Lake cemetery. Additional MassTrails funds of \$240,000 and City funds of \$40,000 will be used for design. Construction began in the spring of 2023 in tandem with Downtown Phase III Infrastructure Project and is expected to be completed in the spring of 2024.

North Central Pathway Connector Project (Component 2 Nature Trail) – The City has been awarded a \$500,000 MassTrails Grant along with a City match of \$220,000, which will fund trail design and construction at the back of Crystal Lake cemetery around the perimeter of the NGRID substation to the existing NGRID right of way. Construction should begin in the spring of 2024 and run into the fall of 2024.

205-213 Main Street Demolition Project – City included this project in their FY22 and 23 Mini Entitlement Block Grant application being submitted in March of 2023. Funding in the amount of \$561,700 should be available for demolition of the property in the spring 2024.

Greenwood Pool Demolition and Pavilion Project – The City has budgeted \$360,000 of CDBG funds for the demolition of the Greenwood Pool building, and an additional \$216,820 in CDBG for the construction of the Greenwood Pavilion on the same site. The City has committed to appropriating an additional \$156,180 for the project, which is slated to begin in 2024.

Maki Park Design and Development – The City is utilizing \$16,000 of CDBG funding to design the park. The City appropriated \$180,000 and allotted \$250,000 of ARPA funds for additional design work and construction. Construction is expected to begin in the Spring of 2024 and be completed in the fall of 2024.

Rear Main Street Residential (South) and Public Infrastructure (North) Project \$4.1 MassWorks Grant awarded fall 2021 for the public infrastructure project. Design began in the late summer of 2022 and has been modified three times since. Construction on the public project (north) is expected to start late in the spring/summer of 2024 and completed in the summer of 2025. The private sector residential development is expected to begin in late 2024/early 2025. The City expects to apply for an additional \$2.5-3 million MassWorks Grant in 2024 to fund the public infrastructure portion of the south project.

140 South Main Street Disposition and Redevelopment – GRA expects to dispose of the property to a viable business once the site monitoring is closed out in 2024.

Industrial Park Study – City was recently awarded \$150,500 in funding through MassDevelopment to resume the study, which started in the winter of 2023 and is expected to be completed in the fall of 2024.

Open Space and Recreation Plan – The received conditional approval in October of 2023 and is working to address comments and recommendations from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. We expect the Plan to be completed and approved by the spring/summer of 2024. Having an approved OSRP allows us to apply for many open space and recreation grants, including those noted above.

Sign and Façade Program (ARPA Funds) – The City set aside \$800,000 to provide up to \$50,000 in grant funding to qualified property owners in designated areas within the City for façade improvements. A portion of these funds can be used by qualified businesses for sign improvements. To date \$700,000 has been awarded with another \$100,000 in the pipeline for façade projects that have completed applications and implementing projects. The Sign Program consists of \$50,000 with \$25,000 expended.

Keyes Road Culvert Project – The City was awarded \$123,000 to design a new crossing to replace the existing culvert on Keyes Road. Design is 95% complete and water quality permitting is expected to be completed early in 2023. The City expects to apply for funding through MVP for construction funds in the spring of 2024.

Update Community Development / Master Plan – The City was awarded \$90,000 from the State to complete and updated Community Development / Master Plan. With matching funds to be appropriated by the City (amount TBD). The City plans on hiring a consultant to initiate this process in late the spring/summer of 2024. This is expected to be a 12-18 month planning process.

Hazard Mitigation Plan – The City was awarded \$36,000 from FEMA and will appropriate a \$4,000 match to create a Hazard Mitigation Plan so the City is eligible for FEMA and MEMA grant funding. The City expects to hire a consultant in the spring/summer of 2024 and create this plan over a 18-month timeline.

*These three projects were bid as one given their close proximity to one another.

