



Community Investment Plan 2016-18 Executive Summary

Groundwork Lawrence (GWL) creates the building blocks of a healthy community, and empowers Greater Lawrence residents to improve the quality of their lives. Recently certified as a community development corporation, GWL was founded in 1999 (incorporated in 2001) to foster and awaken the potential of Greater Lawrence neighborhoods that had experienced decades of decline in their physical and social environments. GWL lives its mission of changing places, changing lives- to bring about the sustained regeneration, improvement and management of the physical environment by developing community-based partnerships which empower people, businesses, and organizations to promote environmental, economic and social well-being.

GWL's primary service area is the City of Lawrence. Our secondary areas include two other Gateway cities, Haverhill and Methuen. Working in collaboration with our community partners, our investment goals over the next three years will be accomplished within GWL's four core work areas of: environmental and open space improvements, fresh food access programs, youth and adult education and employment initiatives, and community programming and events.

ENVIRONMENTAL & OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS GWL will promote Lawrence's identity and reputation as an affordable, prosperous and healthy green community by providing a high quality built and natural environment by renovating existing facilities, creating new recreational opportunities and restoring Lawrence's three rivers. GWL will explore how to leverage skills and capacity to connect improvements in Lawrence to surrounding communities. Over the next 3 years we expect to plant 5000 trees, initiating, planning or completing construction of 4 multipurpose pedestrian trails and anticipate managing or assisting with the development or redevelopment of 9 Lawrence parks. We will also work with Lawrence, Haverhill and Methuen to develop a pipeline of projects for future years and will update the City of Lawrence's Open Space and Recreation Plan.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GWL will promote community engagement to help low-to-moderate income residents individually and collectively achieve economic self-sufficiency, feel safe and take pride in a clean and green community. In order to keep parks and open spaces that we have developed clean and beautiful and to develop local stewards, we will continue to coordinate 2 annual community-wide volunteer cleanups each year: Earth Day/Comcast Cares Day in April and the Spicket River Cleanup in September. In the next 3 years, we anticipate engaging at least 2,500 people each year in these events. As well, we will partner with the community on civic events like the Mayor's Health Task Force S.A.L.S.A. festival and continue to facilitate the stewardship interests of smaller groups throughout the year including local corporate groups, churches and community organizations. Through an EPA cooperative agreement, we are expanding our community initiatives to include environmental resiliency with an initial program that will educate the Lawrence community about climate change, its potential impact on Lawrence neighborhoods (increased flooding) and climate change mitigation options; and about the damaging effects of cooking oil/grease/fat disposal on the city's waste water infrastructure and river health. In the next 2 years, we anticipate engaging 7,000 residents through this project.

EDUCATION & JOB TRAINING GWL and partners will develop a new generation of environmentally engaged leaders and employable residents to strengthen and expand the green economy by providing opportunities from crayons to careers. Through its education, community service and job training programs for Lawrence youth and Greater Lawrence adults, GWL cultivates respect for the environment, social awareness and healthy behavior while concurrently preparing young people to be positive role models and future leaders in their community. In the next 3 years, we anticipate serving 1,200 K-12 LPS youth during each school year and 200 during each summer with regular enrichment programming. We also intend to promote and facilitate Den Rock Park, Costello Urban Farm and Ferrous Urban Wild Park as outdoor education centers, ensuring they become standard field trip sites for local school districts. We anticipate supporting 50 part-time Green Team jobs per year. Through the Green Team, youth learn on-the-job soft skills such as public speaking, resume writing and business planning as well as skills related to urban planning, environmental stewardship, urban agriculture and community outreach. GWL partners with the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board to provide a free, intensive, 5-Week, 40 hour per week Environmental Technical Training Program that balances classroom lecture and discussion with active hands on indoor/outdoor field projects. In the next 3 years, we anticipate engaging 60 unemployed or underemployed Greater Lawrence adults in this program.

FRESH FOOD ACCESS & ACTIVE, HEALTHY LIVING GWL will increase access to high-quality fresh produce in the Greater Lawrence area thereby enabling low to middle income residents to make healthy food choices for themselves and their families and improving public health by decreasing the rate of diet-related preventable disease. GWL increases fresh food access by creating, promoting and supporting food subsidy instruments and spaces to grow and purchase fresh and/or healthy food. In the next 3 years, we anticipate managing 3 Farmers Market sites in Lawrence and Methuen from July through October of each year. We will continue to provide subsidies and enable low-income residents to make weekly payments for Farmer Dave's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares and at Farmers Markets. In the next 3 years, we anticipate helping 58 families per year afford a CSA share. In partnership with the Mayor's Health Task Force and Mill Cities Community Investments, GWL will enable Lawrence bodegas (corner stores) to increase their supply of healthy food options, to increase their financial literacy and business assets, build credit, and apply for small business loans. We will develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the Mayor's Health Task Force and bodegas to formalize their certification. In the next 3 years, we anticipate S.A.L.S.A.-certifying 30 Lawrence bodegas.