



GROUNDWORK

Lawrence

Community Investment Plan 2019-21 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. 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 was selected by the community to serve the community and that ethic has been woven into the fabric of our organization from the very beginning. Lawrence is in the midst of a dramatic process of revitalization, and as such, conditions on the ground are constantly changing. For this reason, we have found that having a commitment to continual planning and community engagement to be most effective. We continually assess where there is the most potential in the community for revitalization and we act accordingly. In this way, we strive toward our longer-term outlook but remain nimble and responsive based on what's happening in our community right now.

Our primary service area is the City of Lawrence with secondary areas including the Gateway Cities of 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 the surrounding communities. Over the next 3 years we expect to plant a total of 5,800 trees in Lawrence and Haverhill, continue the planning or construction of 4 multipurpose pedestrian trails in Lawrence and Methuen, and manage the development and/or redevelopment of 4 Lawrence parks as well as assist in the redevelopment of 3 parks damaged by the gas pipeline disaster. We are also partnering with Lawrence, Haverhill, and Methuen on their pipeline of projects based on their Open Space and Recreation Plans and with Northern Essex Community College (NECC) and the City to implement a series of tactical urbanism efforts described in the newly adopted Lawrence Urban Renewal Plan.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: GWL promotes 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 clean and beautiful and to develop local stewards, we will continue to coordinate 2 annual community-wide volunteer cleanups: Groundwork/Comcast Cares Day in May 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. 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, anticipating a 10%/year increase in participants. GWL is also partnering with MHTF, Office of Planning and Development, the Council on Aging (COA)/the Center, and UMass Lowell (UML), to develop a city-wide action plan to advance age-friendly systems, policies, and practices in the city. As a team, GWL, UML, and the CoL will assess the city's strengths and identify gaps within policies, programs, and infrastructure. Areas of focus will include 9 domains: Transportation; Housing; Outdoor Spaces/Buildings; Health Services; Healthy Living; Volunteer/Employment; Social Participation/Community Supports; Safety/Crime/Neglect/Abuse/Fraud; and Immigrant Services.

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 1,300 PreK-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. Through our Green Team program, where 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, we anticipate supporting 50 part-time Green Team and 6 Summer Team Leader jobs per year. Over the next 3 years, we anticipate expanding the program so that we engage 62 youth on an annual basis.

FRESH FOOD ACCESS & ACTIVE, HEALTHY LIVING GWL will continue to increase access to high-quality fresh produce in the Greater Lawrence area, enabling low-to-moderate 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 does this 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 June through October of each year, and winter markets should HIP funding be available. We will continue to provide subsidies so that low-income residents can participate in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares and at Farmers Markets. We will continue to increase the healthy living competency of our community by introducing them to New England crops, emphasizing the importance of a diet based on healthy foods, and demonstrating how to cook with, shop for, and preserve local produce. In the next 3 years, we anticipate engaging 10% more residents each year with classes and workshops. In partnership with the MHTF and Mill Cities Community Investments, GWL will continue working with 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.