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# Restoring the Heart: A Community Vision for the Neighborhood of Aldenville

Nicholas Campbell

*University of Massachusetts Amherst, nlcampbell@umass.edu*

Eric D. Gemperline

*University of Massachusetts Amherst, egemperl@umass.edu*

Todd R. Horner

*University of Massachusetts Amherst, thorner@umass.edu*

Sean G. O'Donnell

*umass amherst, sodonnell@umass.edu*

Sierra T. Pelletier

*University of Massachusetts Amherst, spelletier@umass.edu*

*See next page for additional authors*

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**Authors**

Nicholas Campbell, Eric D. Gemperline, Todd R. Horner, Sean G. O'Donnell, Sierra T. Pelletier, Seth Taylor, and Keitlin Young

LET'S TALK  
ABOUT  
ALDENVILLE

# Restoring the Heart A Community Vision for the Neighborhood of Aldenville

Nicholas Campbell, Eric Gemperline,  
Todd Horner, Sean O'Donnell, Sierra Pelletier,  
Seth Taylor, Kaitlin Young



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## List of Acronyms

7 Peaks: 7 Peaks Planning

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

GIS: Geographic Information Systems

HAWK: High-Intensity Activated crossWalk beacon

I-391: Interstate 391

I-91: Interstate 91

LARP: Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning (a Department at University of Massachusetts Amherst)

LEHD: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics

MA-OLWD: Massachusetts Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Mass Pike: Massachusetts Turnpike Interstate 90

Mass: Massachusetts

MassDOT: Massachusetts Department of Transportation

McKinstry Farm: McKinstry Market Garden, Inc.

MPC: Master planned community

PAM: Participatory Asset Mapping

PVPC: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

PVTA: Pioneer Valley Transit Authority

Qualtrics: An online research platform that includes survey tools

Ste. Rose: Sainte Rose de Lima Parish

The Client: City of Chicopee Department of Planning & Development

The Consultant: Jennifer Stromsten

The Instructor: Dr. Darrel Ramsey-Musolf

TIF: Tax increment financing

Triple-decker: A type of multifamily home with three stories

UMass Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Amherst

## How to Read This Report

7 Peaks consists of seven Masters of Regional Planning students at the University of Massachusetts, in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning. This project fulfills the requirements of the Regional Planning Master's Program. The members of 7 Peaks are Nicholas Campbell, Eric Gemperline, Todd Horner, Sean O'Donnell, Sierra Pelletier, Seth Taylor, and Kaitlin Young.

7 Peaks was hired by the Planning Department of the City of Chicopee to devise a public engagement strategy to inform land-use interventions for the neighborhood of Aldenville. The term “Client” shall herein refer to the City of Chicopee Planning Department. The term “City” refers to the City of Chicopee.

The report is divided up into sections according to the Client's deliverables. The first chapter is an introduction that includes the project intent and goals. Chapter Two outlines the background of Chicopee, including its history, demographic data, neighborhood character, and zoning. Chapter Three discusses past reports for the UMass Regional Planning Studio. Chapter Four discusses the public engagement methodology that 7 Peaks used during the “Create Our Chicopee” campaign. Chapter Five contains the survey analysis for each section of the “Create Our Chicopee” survey. Chapter six describes some of the land-use interventions that 7 Peaks devised based on survey responses. Chapter Seven includes the conclusion for the entire project.

## Executive Summary

### Purpose

In fall 2017, 7 Peaks Planning, a group of Masters of Regional Planning Students at UMass Amherst, partnered with the City of Chicopee to create a public engagement campaign for the neighborhood of Aldenville. The purpose of this campaign was to collect residents' opinions and use the results of a public engagement process to inform planning recommendations for the neighborhood as well as guide future citywide engagement efforts. As instructed by the City, 7 Peaks sought to accomplish three primary objectives for the public engagement portion of the project:

1. Develop an outreach process that includes community survey materials that could be reused for future engagement projects.
2. Experiment with non-traditional modes of community engagement to maximize variety and volume of community response and data collection.
3. Analyze data collected from the outreach process to best inform the neighborhood visioning process and final Aldenville Vision Plan.

The following goals were outlined by the Client with regards to land-use in the neighborhood of Aldenville:

1. Develop a comprehensive understanding and graphic representation of neighborhood destinations within Aldenville and create a more connected neighborhood concept.
2. Document, analyze, and discuss neighborhood opportunities and challenges through informed

decisions based on the public engagement process that was conducted.

3. Broaden the potential for Aldenville to function as a destination for all City residents as well as visitors.
4. Document and prioritize destinations within Aldenville and propose land-use or urban design interventions to improve these destinations.
5. Utilize existing destinations as anchors to improve the larger neighborhood network of Aldenville.

### Overview

Often referred to as “The Heart of Chicopee,” Aldenville is one of the City’s nine distinct neighborhoods. Four major roads are thought to create the neighborhood boundaries: I-391 to the west, the Mass Pike to the south, and Memorial Drive to the east. The northern boundary, as proposed by the Client, follows Pendleton Avenue, an east-west route that connects Memorial Drive and I-391. The historic downtown of Aldenville surrounds the intersection of Grattan Street, Dale Street, and McKinstry Avenue. Together these roads bound the Aldenville Commons, which has functioned as the geographic core of the neighborhood since its founding.

Aldenville began as an agricultural village and, by the early 20th century, had developed into a streetcar suburb of the industrial centers of Holyoke, Chicopee Center, and Chicopee Falls. Today, with the diminishment of the City’s industrial base and the dominance of auto transportation, the neighborhood has become primarily a residential community, characterized by single-family homes. The neighborhood’s core once was the site of bustling storefront retail. Today, Aldenville’s former downtown functions more as a hub for auto traffic than a center of commercial or community life.



7 Peaks created a neighborhood-scale public engagement campaign, centered around a community survey, to better understand residents' perception of Aldenville. 7 Peaks used the results of the survey to identify key assets in the neighborhood, gain a better understanding of neighborhood boundaries and identity, and to prioritize future planning actions. The Studio team also analyzed the effectiveness of each outreach strategy, and makes recommendations for future public engagement efforts and land-use in Chicopee.

## Findings

To deliver on the Client's directives, 7 Peaks created a brand – “Create Our Chicopee” – and promotional items with the brand and survey link. The goal of this campaign was to collect residents' opinions and use the results of a community survey to inform planning recommendations for the neighborhood as well as guide future citywide engagement efforts.

The Aldenville Community Survey received 375 responses, including 182 Aldenville residents. Seventy-seven percent of respondents discovered the survey through Facebook. Respondents identified Aldenville's parks, recreation, and open space, school options; and housing options as being among its most valuable strengths. When asked, “What is most needed in the neighborhood of Aldenville?”, residents responded most frequently with retail businesses and restaurants, followed by streets and sidewalks, and community centers for seniors, children, and families.

The responses collected through the Aldenville Community Survey helped inform priorities and land-use recommendations for the neighborhood. First, the Aldenville Commons and its immediate surroundings were determined to be critical to the well-being of the whole neighborhood, containing both

important assets and challenges. This area developed as a distinct downtown and was once the focal point for community life and economic activity. Second, a majority of survey respondents identified streets and traffic problems as a priority for future improvements in Aldenville. Streets in Aldenville are characterized by wide travel lanes that encourage motorist speeding. Finally, Ray Ash Park and McKinstry Farm were identified as community-assets by the survey results. The two locations are currently not well connected, with McKinstry Farm being isolated from the Aldenville Commons, the heart of the neighborhood.

## Recommendations

For future public engagement campaigns in Chicopee, 7 Peaks recommends the following:

1. Continue the use of the “Create Our Chicopee” branding
2. Adapt the Aldenville Community Survey for each of the City's additional neighborhoods
3. Develop a stronger web and social media presence with the creation of a City Planning Department Facebook page
4. Use mail-based distribution of future surveys. Residents identified that a mail-based survey was their second most preferred option to complete a survey (the most preferred choice was an online survey taken on their computer)
5. Work with the key stakeholders identified by 7 Peaks in future planning efforts, including the possible formation of a neighborhood planning committee.

To restore the “Heart” of Aldenville, 7 Peaks recommends zoning and programmatic changes to the Aldenville Commons and surrounding area. The City should do the following:

1. Expand community programming on the Aldenville Commons
2. Create a streamlined permitting system for reserving the Aldenville Commons
3. Create a mixed-use zone in the area around the Aldenville Commons to encourage business redevelopment

Street improvements around the Aldenville Commons would increase neighborhood safety and accessibility. The mitigation strategies proposed by 7 Peaks would reduce the speed by which traffic operates in Aldenville. Improving and expanding the existing sidewalk and bicycle networks in Aldenville would increase the opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists to travel throughout the neighborhood. In order to meet these objectives, the City should do the following:

1. Repaint crosswalks and paint temporary bump-outs to calm traffic along McKinstry Avenue and to improve pedestrian safety
2. Use a Variable Message Sign to inform drivers to reduce their speed
3. Conduct a Traffic Study of McKinstry Avenue to inform future safety treatments
4. Install HAWK systems at high usage crosswalks for safer pedestrian passage

Finally, a proposed Field and Farm pedestrian path connects several of Aldenville's greatest assets to allow safe, walkable paths. These mitigations work together to help connect and promote Aldenville as a destination in the City, and revitalize "The Heart of Chicopee." The Field and Farm Pedestrian Path will link Ray Ash Park, McKinstry Farm, and other neighborhood assets while creating a safer environment for students and

residents to traverse the neighborhood. Wayfinding and historical signage will be incorporated in order to guide users along the path, while highlighting the assets and attractions. To create the Field and Farm Pedestrian Path, the City should do the following:

1. Create a 1.5-mile path that will link community-identified assets with wayfinding signage
2. Use historical signage on the Aldenville Commons to show residents what Aldenville used to look like, while providing a vision for the future
3. Provide students and residents with safe pedestrian routes to Chicopee Comprehensive High School and Lambert-Lavoie Elementary School

## Conclusion

7 Peaks exceeded its original expectations in terms of the success of the Aldenville Community Survey. Through an analysis of all 375 survey responses, key assets and priorities were identified in the neighborhood of Aldenville. These public comments and opinions were used to inform the selection of three land-use study sites: the Aldenville Commons, safe streets (with a focus on McKinstry Avenue), and a proposed pedestrian path network connecting multiple key assets in the neighborhood. The City can use the outcomes of this project to propose more in-depth planning initiatives for the neighborhood of Aldenville, as well as depend upon 7 Peaks' analysis of the public engagement campaign to inform future public participation strategies in the City's other neighborhoods.

Nota bene: All photographs in this report were taken by 7 Peaks team members during site visits, unless otherwise stated. In addition, all figures, maps, and tables in the report were developed by team members, unless otherwise stated.



# Chapter 1: Project Overview

## Introduction

The City of Chicopee Department of Planning and Development (hereafter referred to as “the Client”) has partnered with the second-year Regional Planning Studio of the LARP program at UMass Amherst for the past four years. Previous projects have looked at food insecurity, redevelopment of brownfield sites, commercial corridor improvements, and bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. This Studio project sought to test different public engagement methods for the Client through new and innovative ideas developed by 7 Peaks Planning (hereafter referred to as “7 Peaks”).

The City of Chicopee would like to know what the residents of Chicopee think about their community. Therefore, 7 Peaks developed a public engagement strategy and used the results to inform our land-use decisions. 7 Peaks’ project represents a pilot study for the City of Chicopee, with a focus on the neighborhood of Aldenville. 7 Peaks tested different engagement strategies for the Client and crafted land-use recommendations for Aldenville based on survey responses. The purpose of this project is best highlighted by the City Planner's interview with the Chicopee Register on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017:

The goal of this year's project is to gather opinions from residents and non-residents who live, work, shop, or engage in a variety of activities in the Aldenville neighborhood in order to inform a future city-wide visioning activity. The City of Chicopee selected Aldenville as a pilot study with the ultimate goal of designing a larger public engagement initiative that will query Chicopee residents on the City’s amenities. Aldenville was chosen as it represents a microcosm of the greater city—occupying a central geographic location in Chicopee and reflecting comparable demographics to the City as a whole (Viles, 2017).

As this is the philosophy of the Chicopee Planning Department, 7 Peaks sought to engage Aldenville to test engagement strategies on a smaller neighborhood of the City. The public engagement processes were accomplished through social media postings and attendance at local events by 7 Peaks. The data collected from these engagement processes were analyzed through the Qualtrics platform and the results were used to influence the sites within Aldenville where 7 Peaks would conduct their site analysis for delivery to the Client.

7 Peaks represents a merger of the two teams which started this Studio project in the fall of 2017. Originally there were seven students divided into two competing groups pursuing different engagement strategies for the Client. In order to streamline the work process and develop a cohesive branding for the engagement process, the two teams decided to merge near the beginning of the semester. This merger resulted in a greater scope of work that could be accomplished, as more stakeholders were contacted, a greater number of responses were collected, and a more extensive analysis was completed.

This report represents the culmination of 7 Peaks’ work for the Client and provides a detailed account of the process, analysis, and recommendations delivered to the Client.

## Client Directive

The Client directed 7 Peaks to create a public engagement project and a land-use project to assist with an overall Vision Plan for the neighborhood of Aldenville. Each of these projects had its own unique set of goals and objectives outlined by the Client for 7 Peaks to achieve. This Studio project sought to lay the groundwork for future engagement strategies within the City of Chicopee. Goals and objectives created by the Client to achieve this objective are discussed in the following section.

## Client Goals and Objectives

### *Public Engagement*

As instructed by the Client, 7 Peaks sought to accomplish three primary objectives for the public engagement portion of the project:

1. Develop an outreach process that includes community survey materials that could be reused for future engagement projects.
2. Experiment with non-traditional modes of community engagement to maximize variety and volume of community response and data collection.
3. Analyze data collected from the outreach process to best inform the neighborhood visioning process and final Aldenville Vision Plan.

### *Land-Use*

The following goals were outlined by the Client with regards to land-use in the neighborhood of Aldenville:

1. Develop a comprehensive understanding and graphic representation of neighborhood destinations within Aldenville and create a more connected neighborhood concept.
2. Document, analyze, and discuss neighborhood opportunities and challenges through informed decisions based on the public engagement process that was conducted.
3. Broaden the potential for Aldenville to function as a destination for all City residents as well as visitors.
4. Document and prioritize destinations within Aldenville and propose land-use or urban design interventions to improve these destinations.
5. Utilize existing destinations as anchors to improve the larger neighborhood network of Aldenville.

### *Overall Objectives*

To accomplish these primary objectives, secondary objectives served as milestones to keep the team on track:

1. Improve on the lessons from the previous public engagement project from the fall 2016 Studio bicycle and pedestrian plan.
2. Identify stakeholder groups within Chicopee to include in the engagement process and to assist with survey distribution and saturation throughout the Aldenville community.
3. Refine initial survey provided by the Client (located in Appendix I).

4. Create multiple strategies for obtaining public feedback.
5. After conclusion of the engagement process (October 13<sup>th</sup>-November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017), analyze the relevant data and format the data for submission to the Client.

7 Peaks accomplished these goals through the development of branding materials for distribution to local businesses and restaurants. Once these materials were created, 7 Peaks launched a survey through the online research platform Qualtrics. The survey was accessible through the domain name “CreateourChicopee.com,” and was open from October 13<sup>th</sup> to November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017. 7 Peaks analyzed survey results, identifying and visualizing trends in response data.

Survey results then guided 7 Peaks selection of locations within Aldenville during the land-use portion of the project. Survey responses across a variety of topics demonstrated that many of Aldenville’s most significant strengths and challenges intersect at its center, in what used to function as a small but busy downtown area: The Heart of Aldenville. This area, described in the next chapter, continues to be important to the well-being of the whole

neighborhood. Consequently, 7 Peaks’ land-use recommendations focus on the Heart’s revitalization, proposing interventions that aim to restore it as a locus of community life, cultural significance, and economic activity. Improvements in this concentrated area will radiate positive effects throughout Aldenville, increasing residents’ quality of life and charting a course towards a bright future.



## Chapter 2: Background



*Figure 1: Three members of the Aldenville Canning Club, c. 1917-1952*

Three young members of the Aldenville Canning Club standing with their jarred goods, taken some time between 1917 and 1952. The scene is representative of Aldenville's historically agricultural character. *Source: Gilbert, Russ H. via Chicopee Archives Online.*



## Introduction

This chapter includes a brief history of the City of Chicopee and the neighborhood of Aldenville. Demographic data and existing conditions are highlighted and discussed to define the existing characteristics and assumptions of Aldenville. 7 Peaks used this research to guide the various engagement strategies used throughout the project.

The chapter is broken into six main sections: Geography, Demographics, Neighborhood Character, Land-Use Policy, Transportation, and Economic Conditions

## Geography

The City of Chicopee is located in the Connecticut River Valley of Western Massachusetts, also known as the Pioneer Valley. It is situated at the intersection of I-91 and the Massachusetts Turnpike, which lends the City its nickname: “The Crossroads of New England” (Figure 2). The Connecticut River, which flows south, and the Chicopee River, which flows West, also converge within City boundaries. Chicopee sits in north-central Hampden County (Figure 3).

Chicopee is bordered both by post-industrial cities and by rural-suburban communities (Figure 3). Holyoke, to the west, and Springfield, to the south, like Chicopee, are Gateway Cities, an official designation conferred by the state legislature. Gateway Cities are midsize urban centers with below-average household income and educational attainment (M.G.L Chapter 23A Section 3A). The predominately rural-suburban communities of South Hadley, Granby, and Ludlow border Chicopee’s northern and eastern edges.

Within the City, a number of distinct neighborhoods exist, although their boundaries are unclear and unofficial. The Client has tentatively delineated nine neighborhoods (Figure 4). The boundaries as drawn take into account historic development patterns, topological features, and transportation infrastructure. The boundaries do not account for the perspectives of Chicopee residents, workers, or visitors. Through its public engagement strategy (described in Chapter 3), 7 Peaks aims to improve understanding of how these different groups, in particular residents, identify neighborhood boundaries. The origins of Chicopee’s neighborhoods are discussed in further detail in the next section.

The neighborhood of Aldenville, which is the focus of 7 Peaks’ work, lies in the center of the City and is known as “The Heart of Chicopee” (Figure 4 and Figure 5). Raised arterial highways and divided multilane roads hem in the neighborhood: I-391 to the west, the Mass Pike to the south, and Memorial Drive to the east. The northern boundary, as tentatively proposed by the Client, follows Pendleton Avenue, an east-west route that connects Memorial Drive and I-391 (Figure 5).

The historic downtown of Aldenville surrounds the intersection of Grattan Street, Dale Street, and McKinstry Avenue (Figure 5). Aldenville Commons, which has functioned as the geographic core of the neighborhood since its founding, is located adjacent to this intersection, wedged in between Grattan and Dale Streets.

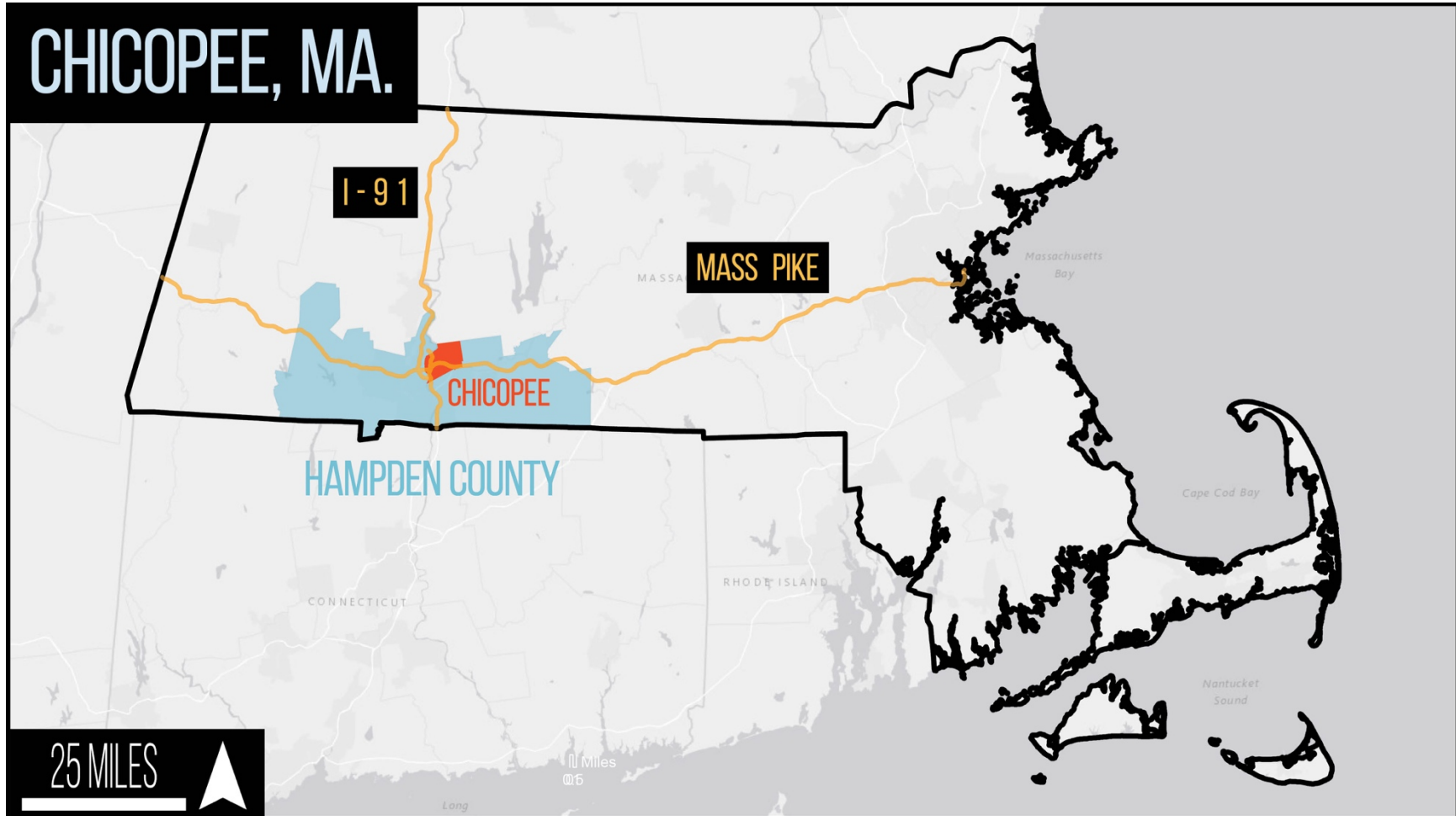


Figure 2: Map of Chicopee, Massachusetts

This image is of the City of Chicopee, Massachusetts. It shows its location within the state and Hampden County in southwestern Massachusetts. Interstate 91 (I-91) and the Massachusetts Turnpike Interstate 90 (Mass Pike) intersect the City. *Source: MassGIS ESRI*

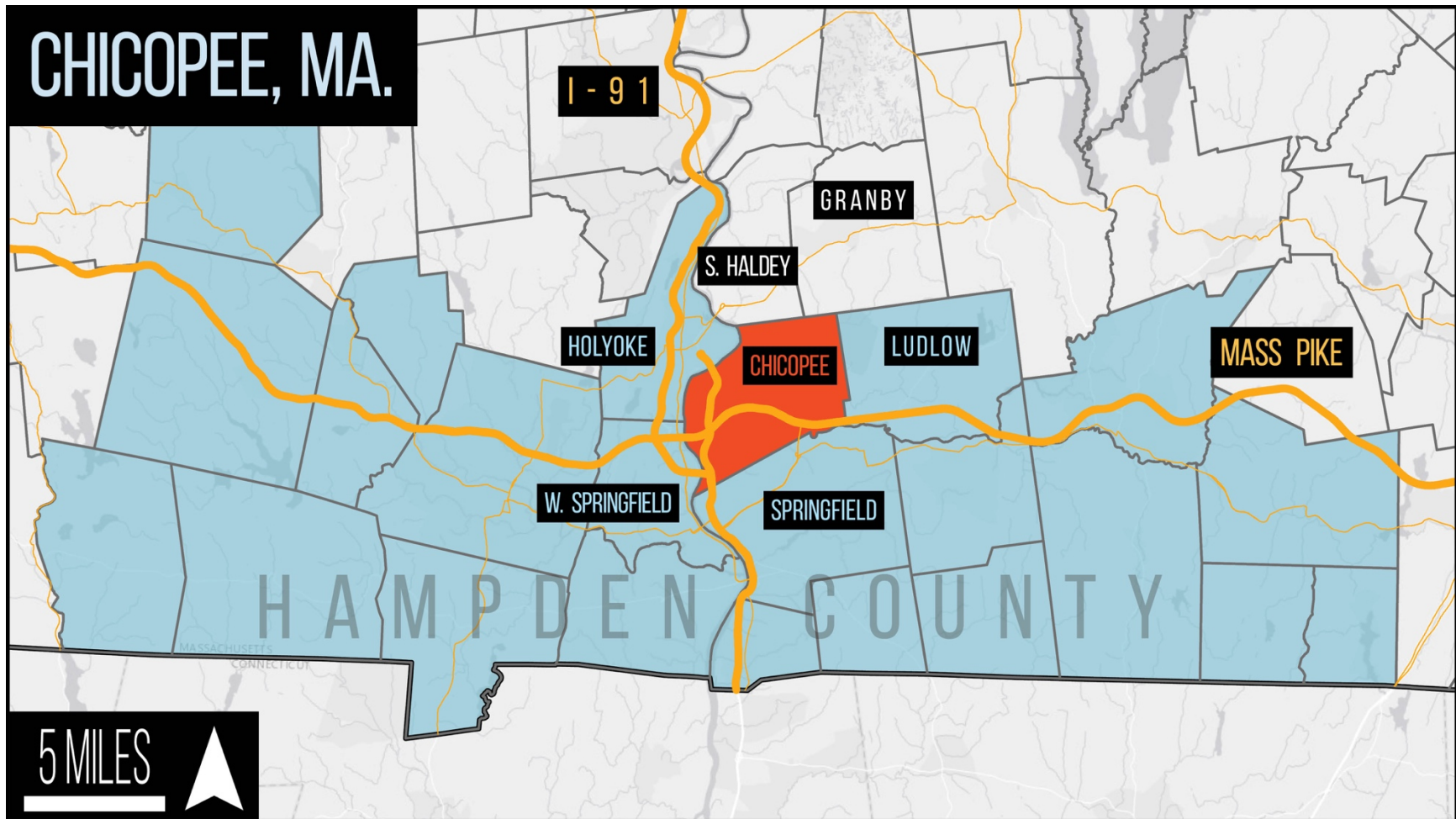


Figure 3: Regional map of Chicopee, MA and surrounding area

This image is of the region in which the City of Chicopee and surrounding towns lie. Surrounding towns include Holyoke, Springfield, West Springfield, and Ludlow within Hampden County, as well as South Hadley and Granby to the north. Interstate 91 (I-91) and the Massachusetts Turnpike Interstate 90 (Mass Pike) intersect the City. *Source: MassGIS.*

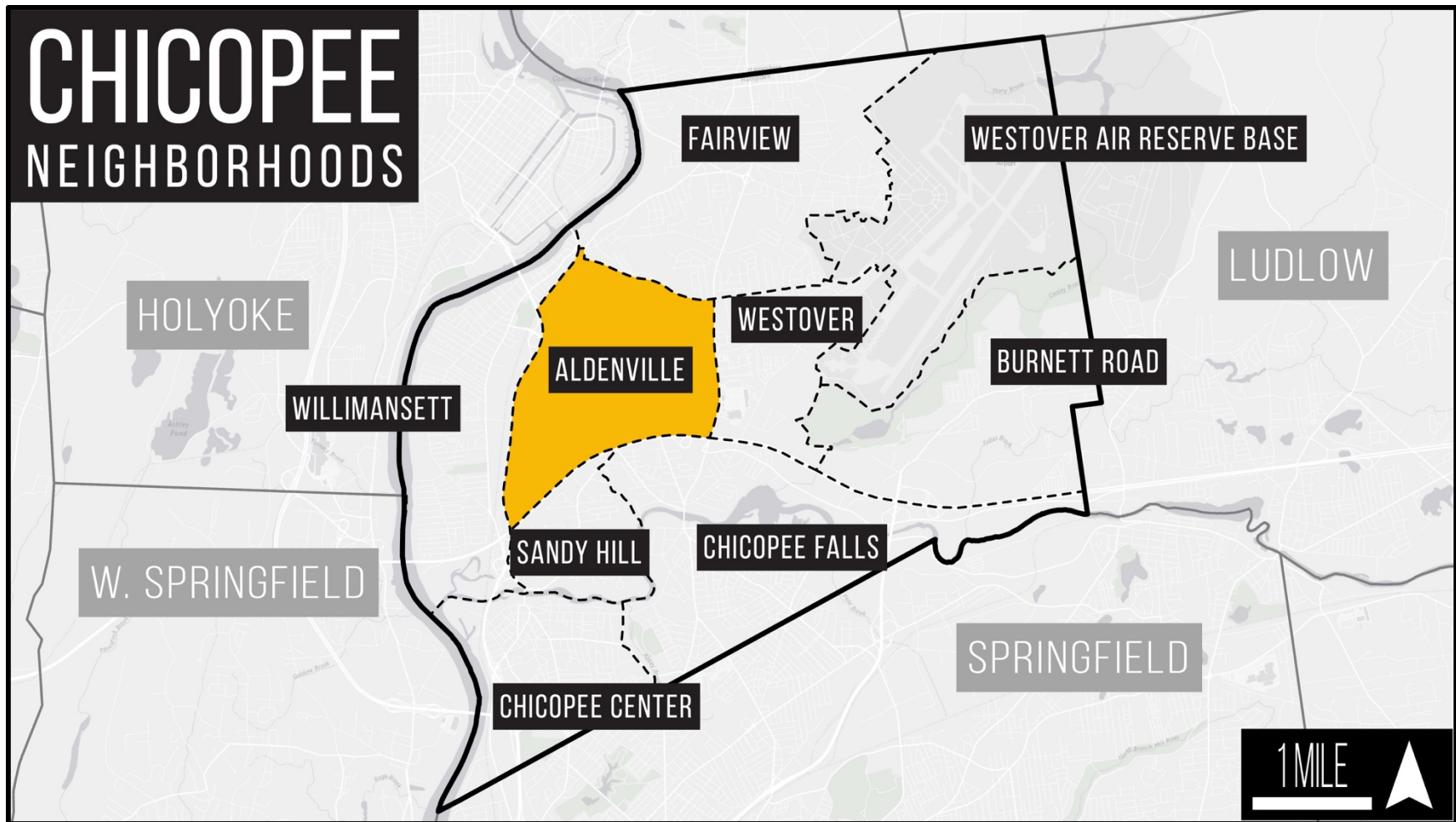


Figure 4: Map of Chicopee neighborhoods

This image is of the neighborhoods in the City of Chicopee. The map shows the neighborhoods with boundaries as tentatively proposed by the Client. Sources: Chicopee Planning Department, MassGIS, ESRI.

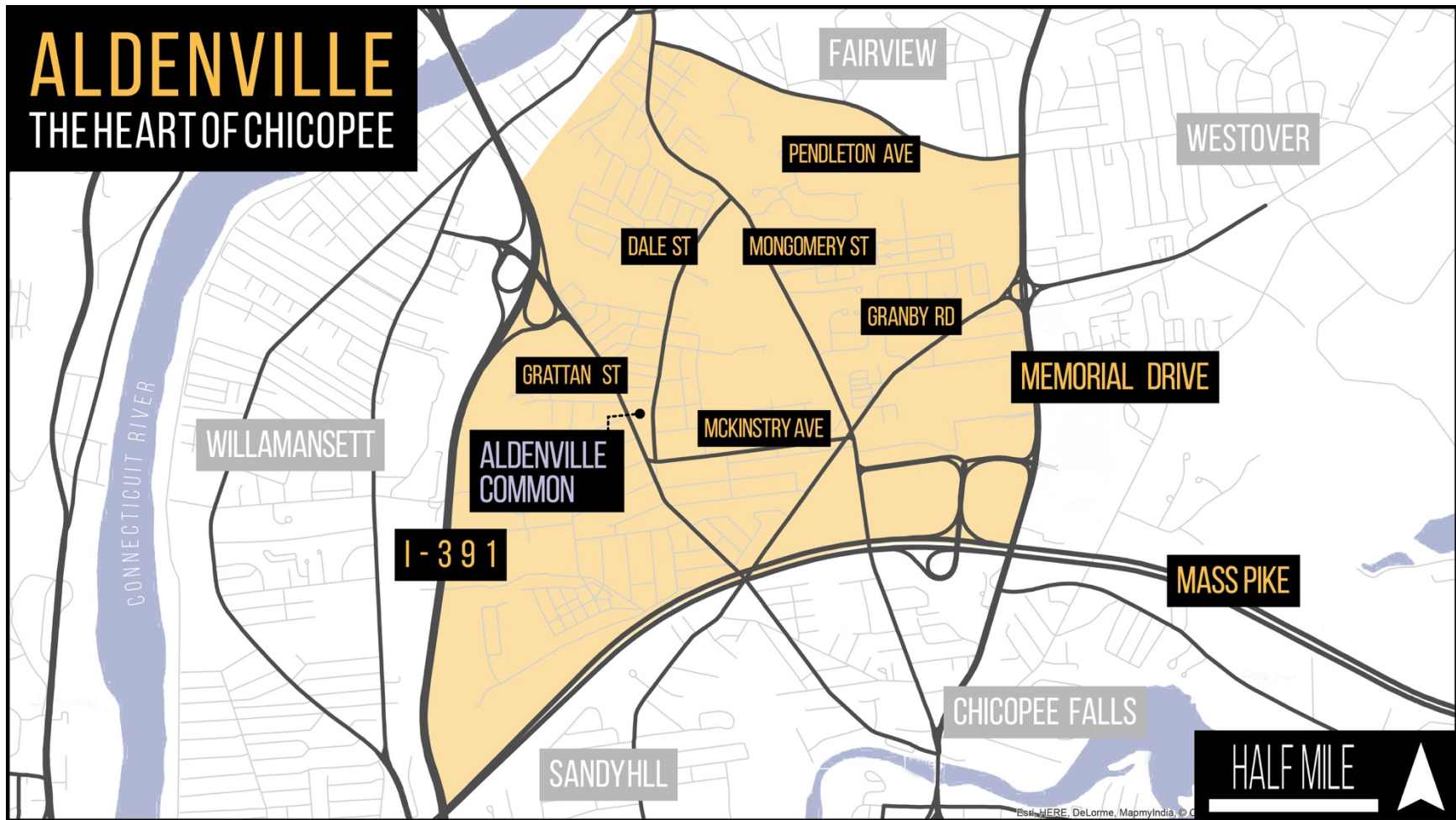


Figure 5: The major roads within the neighborhood of Aldenville

This image is a map of the neighborhood of Aldenville, which is depicted in orange. It shows the major roads within the neighborhood. Aldenville is considered “The Heart of Chicopee” due to its shape and central location within the City. *Source: MassGIS.*

# History of Chicopee

## City Origins

The City initially developed as an agricultural outpost of Springfield in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, with farmers attracted to rich alluvial soils along the Connecticut and Chicopee Rivers. Starting in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, industrial development capitalized on the large elevation drops along the Chicopee River, with factories harnessing quick currents to power a wide variety of manufacturing activities, including the production of agricultural machinery, lumber, and tires (Figure 6). Master planned company towns developed around factories in Chicopee Falls and downstream in Cabotville (known today as Chicopee Center). To the North, the village of Willimansett housed workers constructing bridges across the Connecticut River and working in the City of Holyoke.

The industrial villages of Cabotville, Chicopee Falls, and Willimansett were distinct communities when Chicopee was incorporated as a town in 1848. Even when Chicopee reincorporated as a city in 1890, the complex, hilly topography that divided the industrial villages remained largely uninhabited (Figure 7). Beginning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the agricultural settlements of Aldenville and Fairview developed within Chicopee's upland interior along roadways that connected the industrial villages (Figure 8).

Present-day neighborhoods grew out of the City's industrial villages and agricultural settlements, such as Chicopee Falls along the Chicopee River where the first river industry of sawmilling was located, and Aldenville and Fairview as farming communities. Since both industrial and agricultural clusters operated with a high level of independence from one another, none developed

into a downtown that functioned as a dominant focal point of City life. Transportation networks, including rail and interstate highways, further segmented the City, both reinforcing existing neighborhood divisions as well as cutting through traditional neighborhood units.

In addition to industrial villages and agricultural settlements, the Client has also tentatively identified Sandy Hill, Burnett Road, Westover, and Westover Air Force Base as current City neighborhoods (Figure 4). Sandy Hill developed as a residential enclave of Polish factory workers, who commuted across the Chicopee River to jobs in Chicopee Center and Chicopee Falls. Burnett Road originally developed as a sparsely settled agricultural area and now includes Chicopee State Park and sprawling suburb subdivisions. Westover Air Reserve Base was built in the lead up to World War II. The Westover neighborhood contains current and former military housing, typically brick, ranch-style homes.



*Figure 6: Trucks parked outside of Fisk Tire Company, in Chicopee Falls, c. 1920 Source: Chicopee Archives Online.*

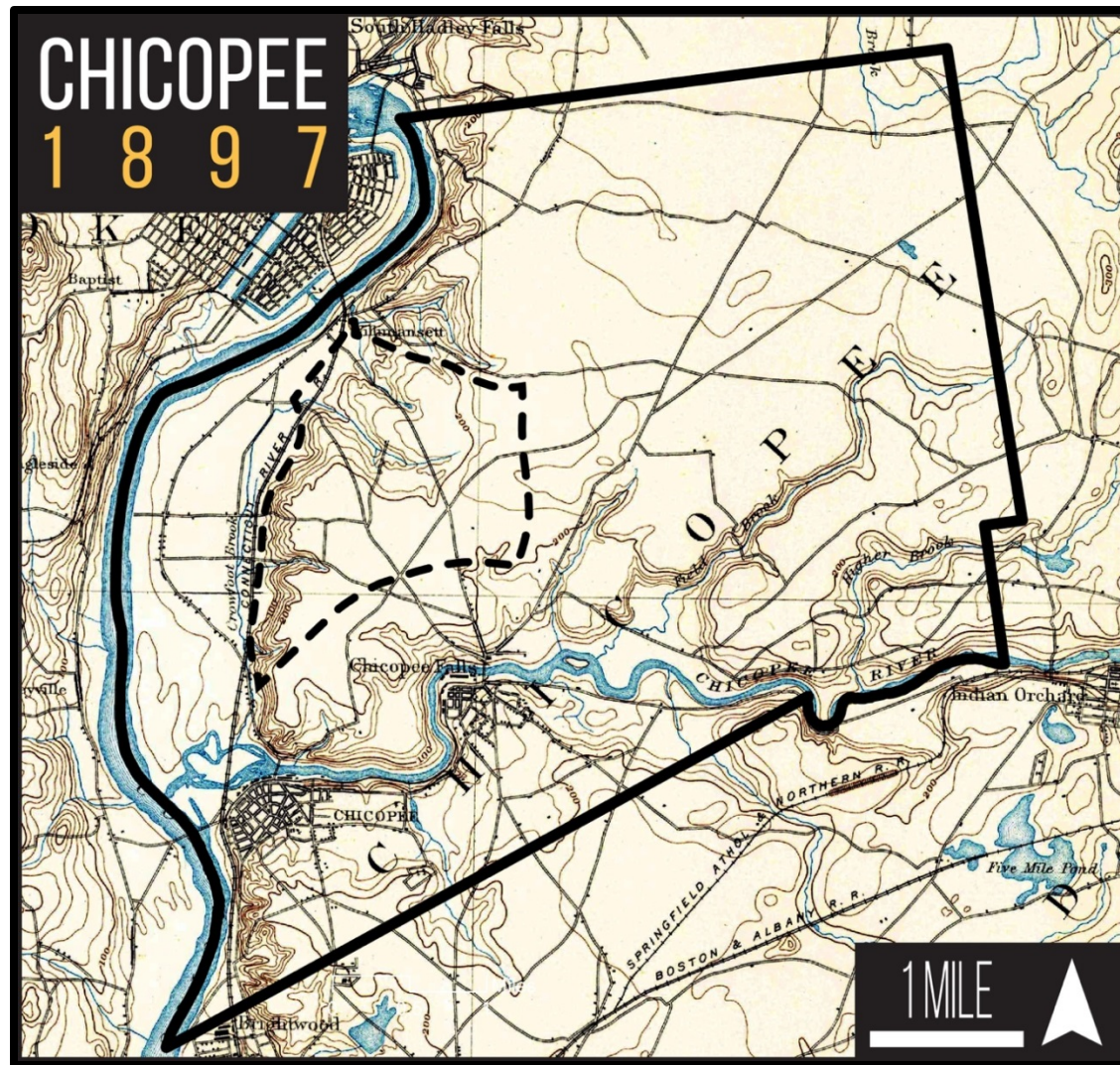


Figure 7: Historical topographic map of Chicopee, 1887

A historical topographic map of Chicopee from 1897, showing the development of the industrial villages Chicopee Center, Chicopee Falls, and Willimansett. The area bounded by the dashed line shows the future neighborhood of Aldenville. *Source: United States Geological Survey.*

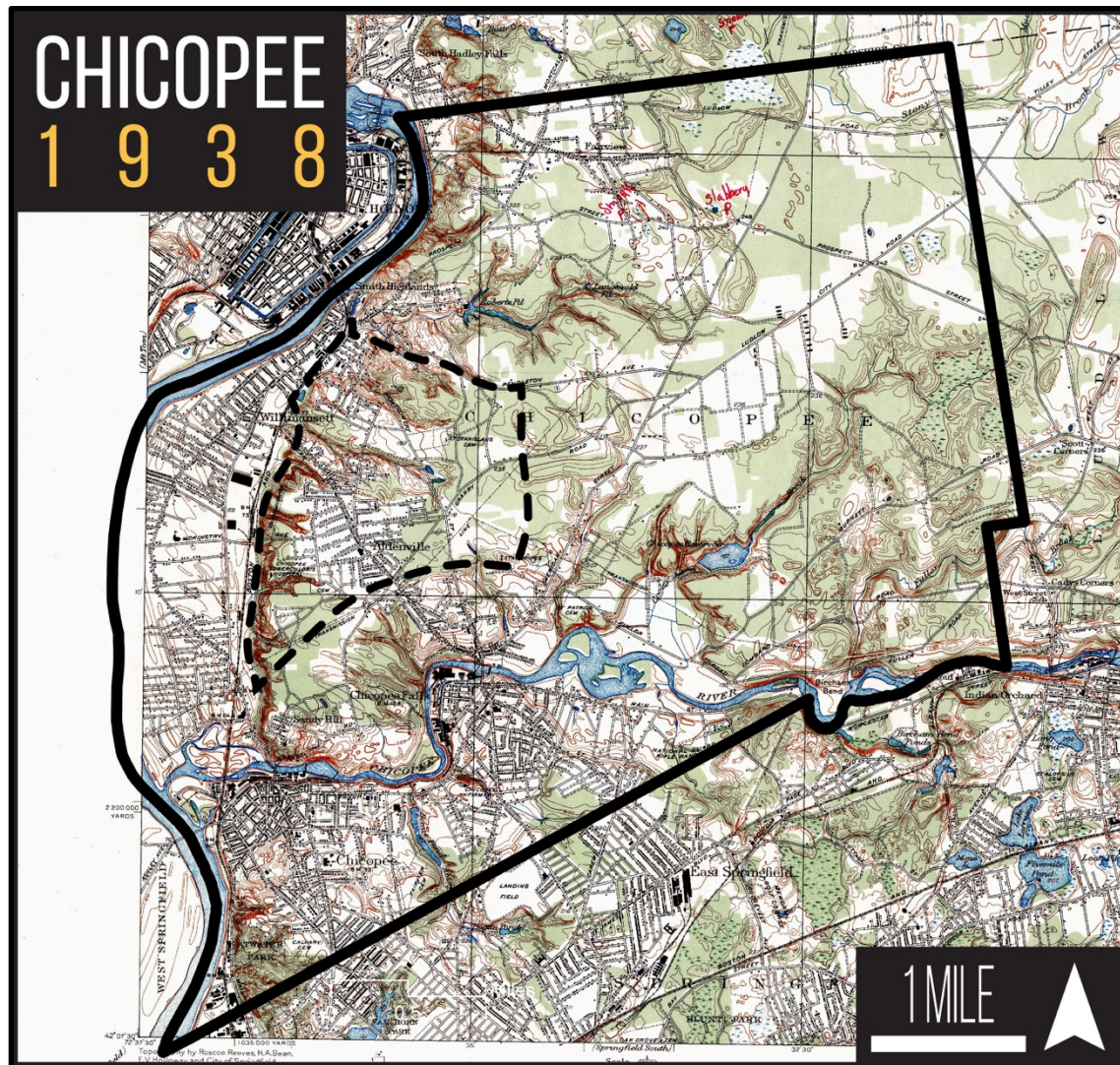
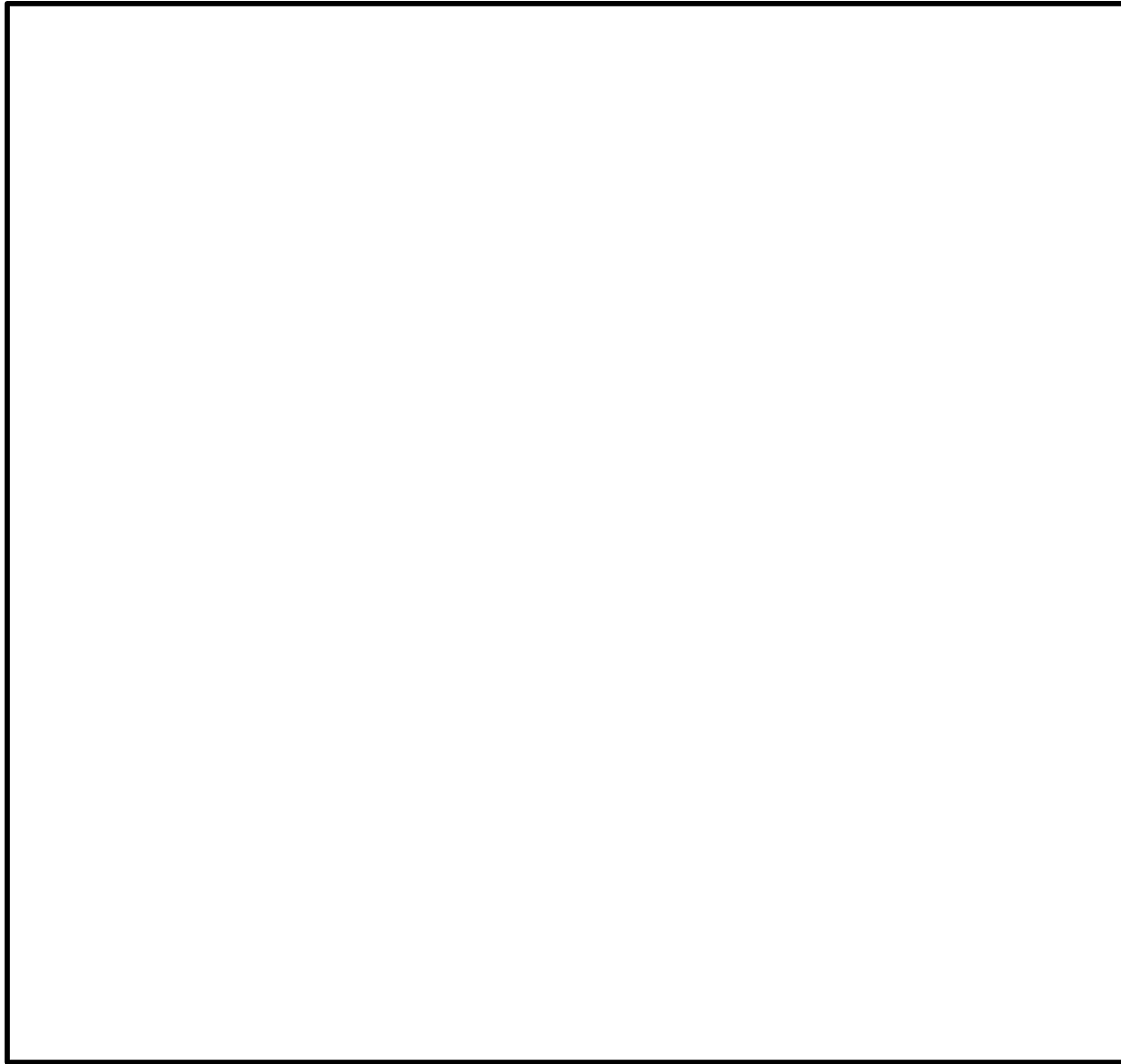


Figure 8: Historical topographic map of Chicopee, 1938

A historical topographic map of Chicopee from 1938, showing the development of the neighborhoods of Sandy Hill and Aldenville. The dashed line shows the future neighborhood of Aldenville. *Source: United States Geological Survey.*





*Figure 9: Historical topographic map of Chicopee, 1958*

A 1958 historical topographical map, showing previously established neighborhoods, as well as the Westover Airforce Base and the Massachusetts Turnpike. Future Aldenville boundaries are shown with the black dashed line. *Source: United States Geological Survey.*

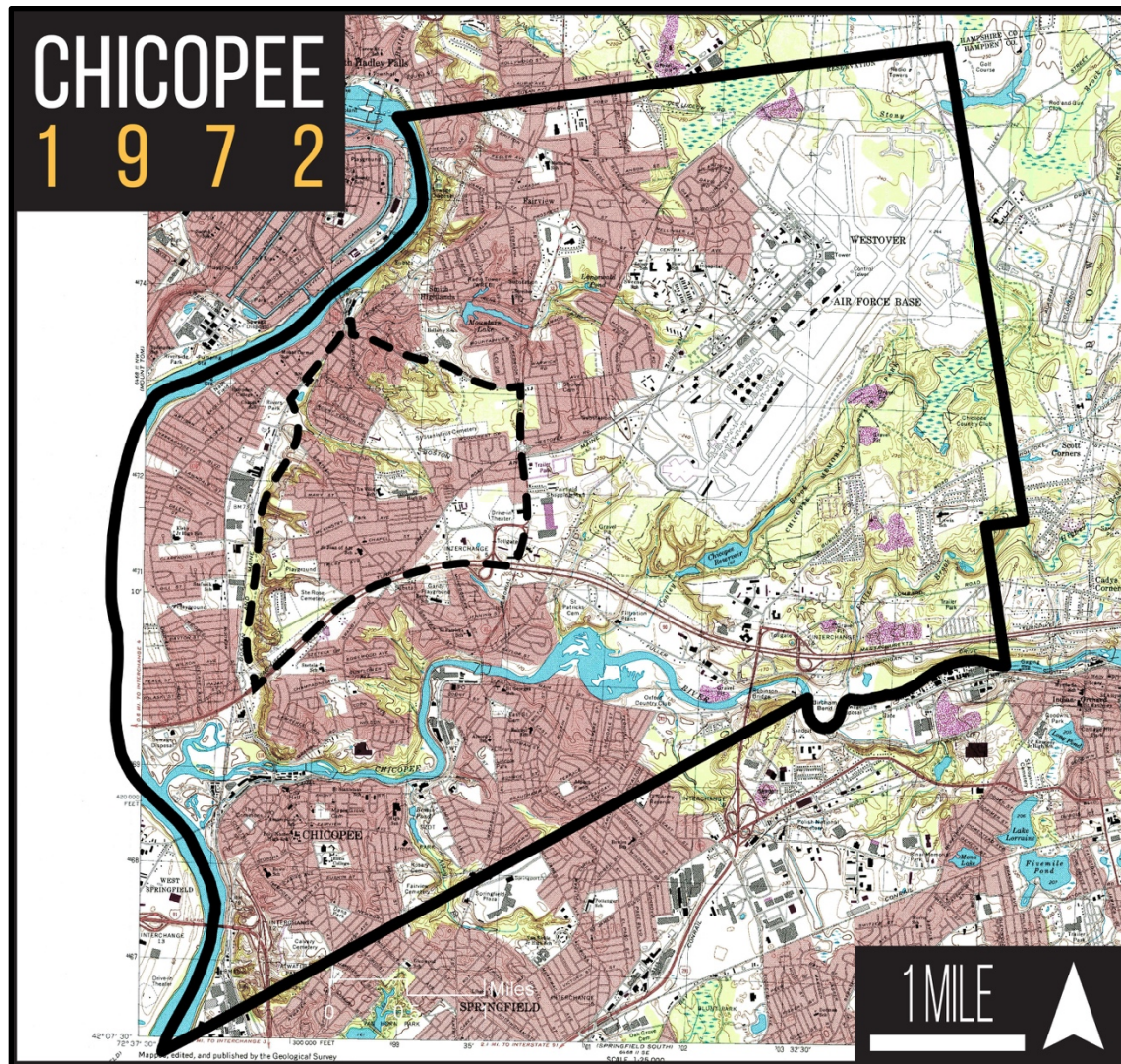


Figure 10: Historical topographic map of Chicopee, 1972

A 1972 historical topographical map, depicting the City's once distinct neighborhoods expanding towards one another, blurring neighborhood boundaries. *Source: United States Geological Survey.*

## Aldenville History

Recognizing that the City comprises a series of distinct neighborhoods, the Client tasked 7 Peaks to focus on one neighborhood in particular: Aldenville.

In the 1870s and 1880s, real estate developer Edward M. Alden accumulated 600 acres of land east of Willimansett. He planned to transform the sandy upland tract into a "little city on the hill" (Ploude-Barker, 1998, p. 104). Development accelerated once street trolley service reached the neighborhood in 1899, allowing passengers to travel to Aldenville from either Holyoke or Chicopee Falls. Alden advertised parcels on the property in both English and French in order to target prospective French-Canadian buyers. A strong French-Canadian presence remains in the neighborhood to this day.

Many Aldenville residents commuted by streetcar to work in factories in Chicope Falls, Chicopee Center, or further afield. The center of Aldenville developed into its own thriving business district, with Grattan Street as its main thoroughfare. Shops, restaurants, and offices surrounded the Aldenville Commons, located at the intersection of Grattan Street and McKinstry Avenue (Ploude-Barker, 1998) (Figure 13).

The Commons was the center of neighborhood life. Aldenville's first school was built on the Commons, and remained there until 1964. Two hospitals operated nearby. A movie theater also opened as early as the 1920s. The Sainte Rose de Lima, still an active parish, was also an early presence on Grattan Street. With the growing prevalence of automobiles, social and economic functions once concentrated along Grattan Street became more distributed to other parts of the City and beyond. Today, the neighborhood is characterized primarily by residential uses: single-family homes, triple-deckers, and some apartment

buildings located along Grattan Street. Customers travel by car to remaining businesses, further contributing to Aldenville's transformation from a village to a suburban community.



Figure 11: Tent city of prospective buyers, camping out to stake their claim in Aldenville

The image above depicts prospective buyers camping out to buy property in Aldenville. *Source: Ploude-Barker, 1998.*



Figure 12: Office of Alden Real Estate circa 1890

Alden Real Estate, located at 602 Grattan Street. *Source: Ploude-Barker, 1998.*

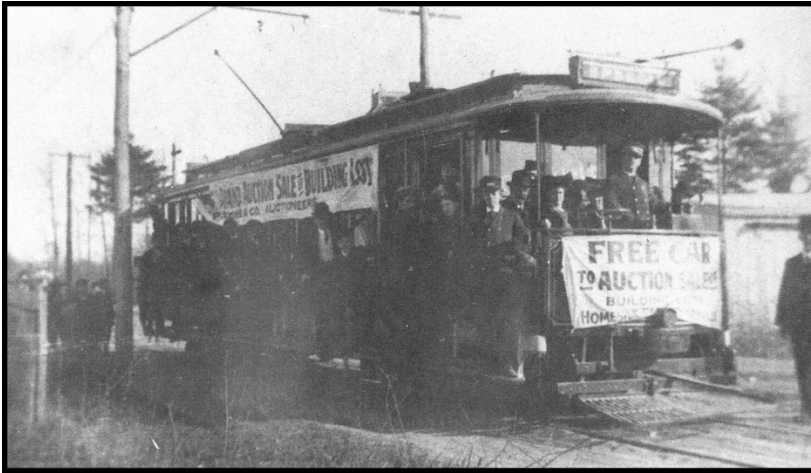


Figure 13: A streetcar heading to an Aldenville land auction

This image shows a streetcar heading to a land auction in Aldenville, packed with prospective buyers. In order to entice buyers, Alden would offer free trolley rides from Holyoke and Chicopee Falls. *Source: Ploude-Barker, 1998.*

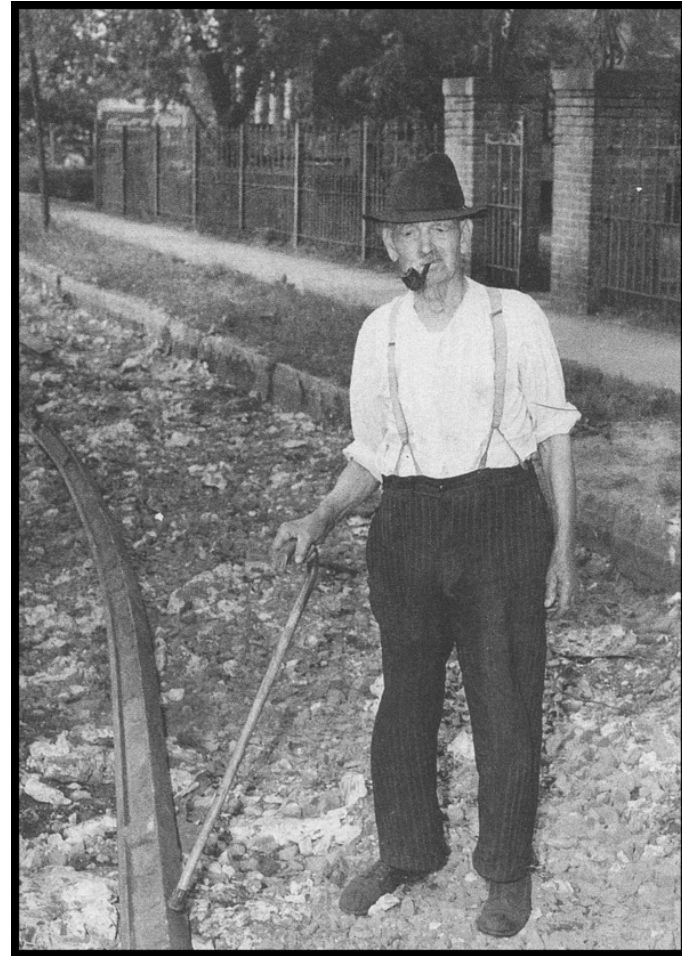


Figure 14: Marcelle Croteau

This image is of Marcelle Croteau, who built Aldenville's first schoolhouse as well as many of the neighborhoods first houses. Here he is seen watching as the streetcar tracks are removed from Grattan Street in 1936. *Source: Ploude-Barker, 1998.*

*Figure 15: Aldenville Commons and Immediate Surroundings, 1926*

This image is of the Aldenville Commons and surrounding area in 1926. It shows some of the early business and residential development along Grattan Street, Dale Street, and McKinstry Avenue, which all border the Commons. What is now the Commons (highlighted in teal) was the home of the Aldenville public school until 1964. Nearby businesses included J.A. LaMothe Druggist and a movie theater on Grattan Street. *Sources: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Chicopee Archives Online.*



*Figure 16: Aldenville Public School, early 20th century*

Aldenville Public School, standing on what is today the Aldenville Commons. *Source: Ploude-Barker, 1998.*



Figure 17: J.A. Lamothe Druggist, early 20<sup>th</sup> century

he storefront of J.A. Lamothe Druggist, c. 1900-1950, located in downtown Aldenville, across Grattan St. from what is today Aldenville Commons. The business is representative of similar small retail operations located in downtown Aldenville. *Source: Ploude-Barker, 1998.*

## Demographics

Demographic data were studied to understand the past and current conditions of the neighborhood of Aldenville. 7 Peaks used this information to gain insight into the population of the neighborhood and other factors including business conditions. This information was also utilized during the public engagement process to compare groups who participated in the process to demographic data to determine those that were underrepresented. Underrepresented groups were targeted through alternative engagement methods, as will be discussed later in this report.

## Sources and Methodology

Demographic analysis at the City-wide level is straightforward, and relies on both previous University of Massachusetts Planning Studio reports and United States Census data. Analysis at the neighborhood level, however, is more difficult. Aldenville does not fit neatly into the standard geographic units of Census demography, i.e., tracts, block groups (Figure 14 and Figure 15).

Aldenville, as defined by boundaries tentatively proposed by the Client, can be targeted for demographic analysis only by referencing Census block level data (Figure 16). The neighborhood of Aldenville contains 181 of the City's 1,439 Census blocks. The most recent demographic data available at the Census block level comes from the 2010 Decennial Census. When data are not available at the Census block level, demographic analysis relies on City-wide data as a rough proxy indicator.



# CHICOPEE

## 2010 CENSUS TRACTS

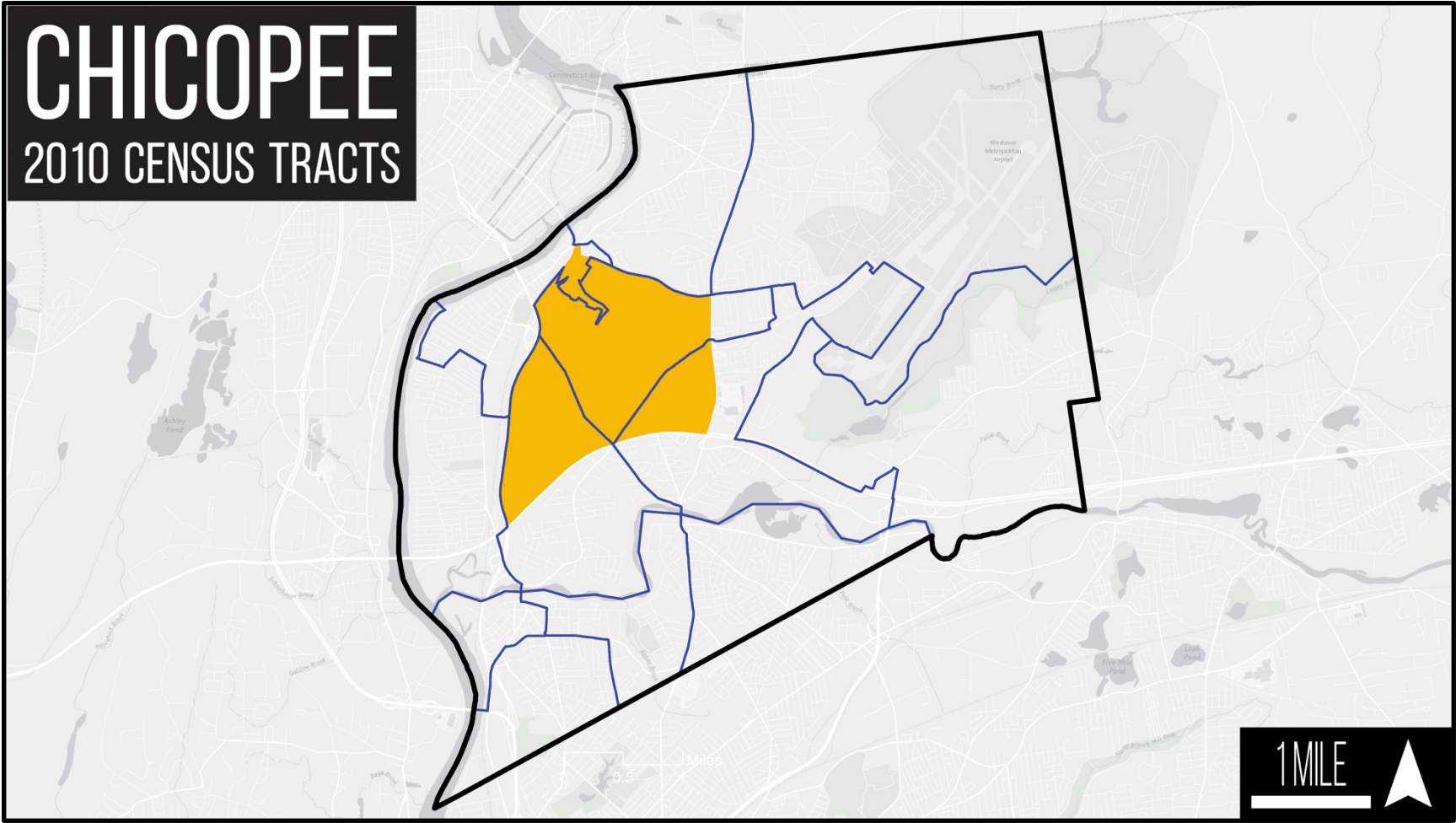


Figure 18: Misalignment of Aldenville boundaries and U.S. Census tracts

This image shows the neighborhood of Aldenville compared to U.S. Census tracts. Aldenville is shown in orange, with Census tract boundaries in navy blue. This shows that tracts do not align with the neighborhood boundaries. *Source: MassGIS.*

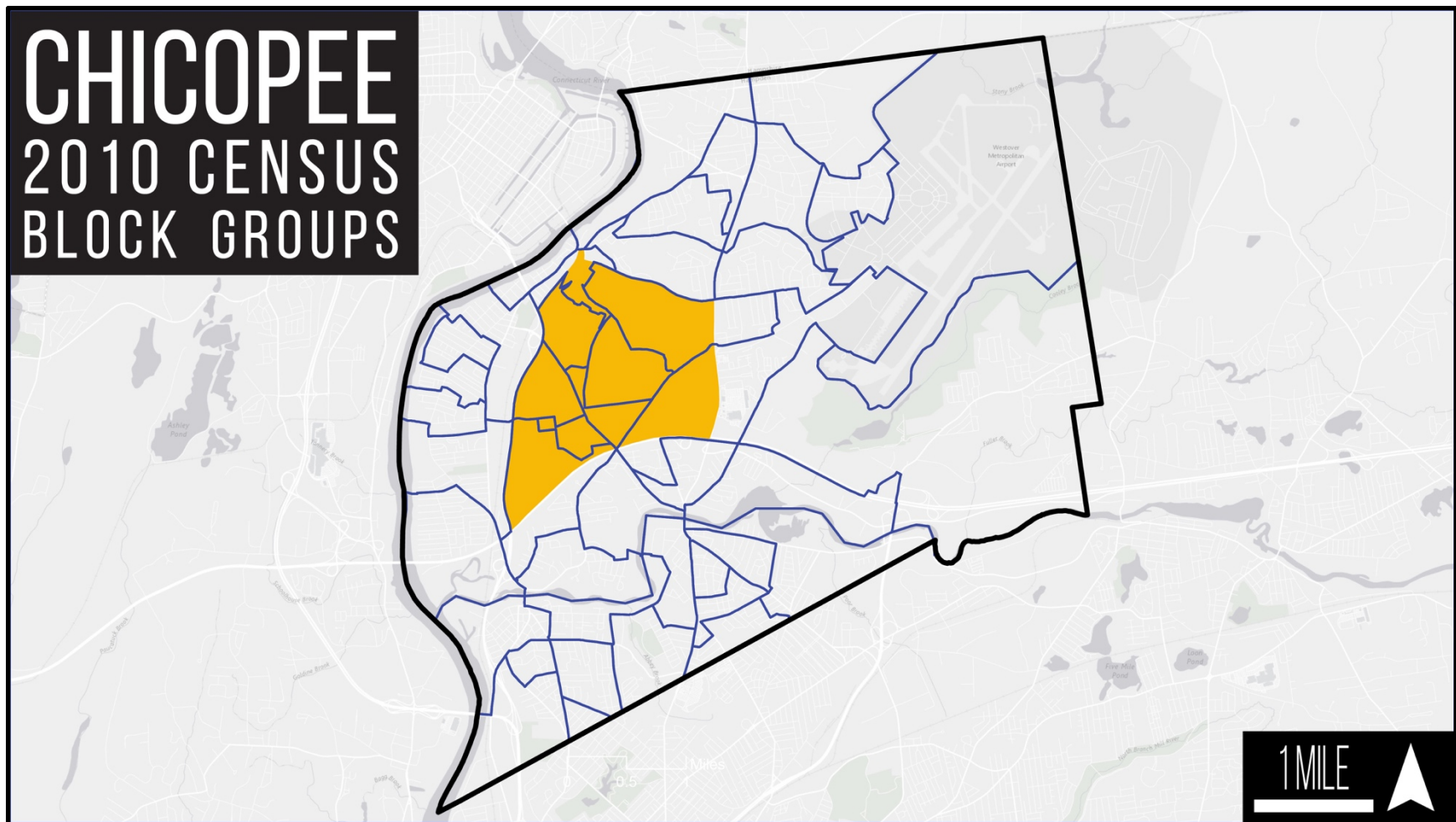


Figure 19: Misalignment of Aldenville boundaries and U.S. Census block groups

This image shows the neighborhood of Aldenville compared to U.S. Census block groups. Aldenville is shown in orange, with Census block group boundaries in navy blue. This shows that block groups do not align with the neighborhood boundaries. *Source: MassGIS.*

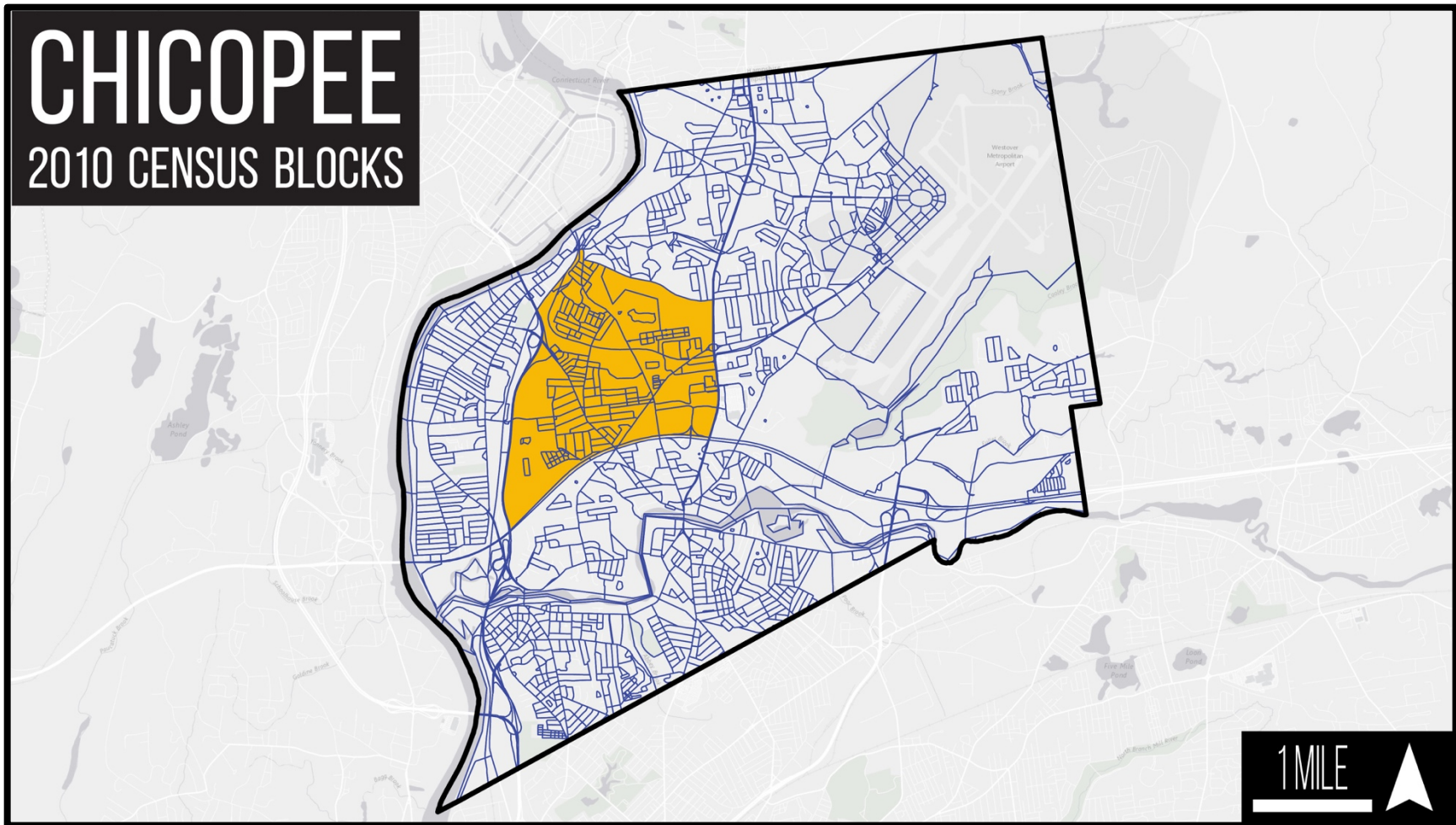


Figure 20: Alignment of Aldenville boundaries and U.S. Census blocks

This image shows the neighborhood of Aldenville compared to U.S. Census blocks. Aldenville is shown in orange, with Census block boundaries in navy blue. This shows that blocks align better with the neighborhood boundaries compared to block groups or tracts. *Source: MassGIS.*

## Population

The City of Chicopee is the second largest city in Western Massachusetts, with a population of 56,186 in 2015. Within the state, Chicopee is the 22<sup>nd</sup> largest city. It is about a third the size of Springfield, which has 153,947 residents, and about 40% larger than Holyoke, which has 40,342 residents (U.S. Census ACS, 2015).

City population peaked in 1970, at the height of manufacturing activity. From 1970 to 1980, the population declined precipitously as manufacturing facilities scaled down operations, relocated, or closed. During that time, the City lost over 11,000 residents, or about 18% of its population. Since 1980, the City's population has remained flat, hovering at about 56,000 residents (Figure 21).

The adjacent Gateway Cities of Springfield and Holyoke lost population over the same period, while the Hampden County population remained flat, growing by only about a percentage point (Figure 22). Holyoke suffered worse population loss than Chicopee, losing over 20% of its residents between 1970 and 2010. Springfield fared somewhat better, losing less than 7% of its population.

The City's stagnant population shows that it faces significant challenges with retaining residents, as well as attracting new ones.

Historic population change is more difficult to determine at the neighborhood scale due to shifts in Census block boundaries. In 2010, Aldenville had a population of 6,911, which accounted for 12.5% of the City's population. 7 Peaks used this figure to determine benchmarks for its public engagement efforts, described in Chapter 3.

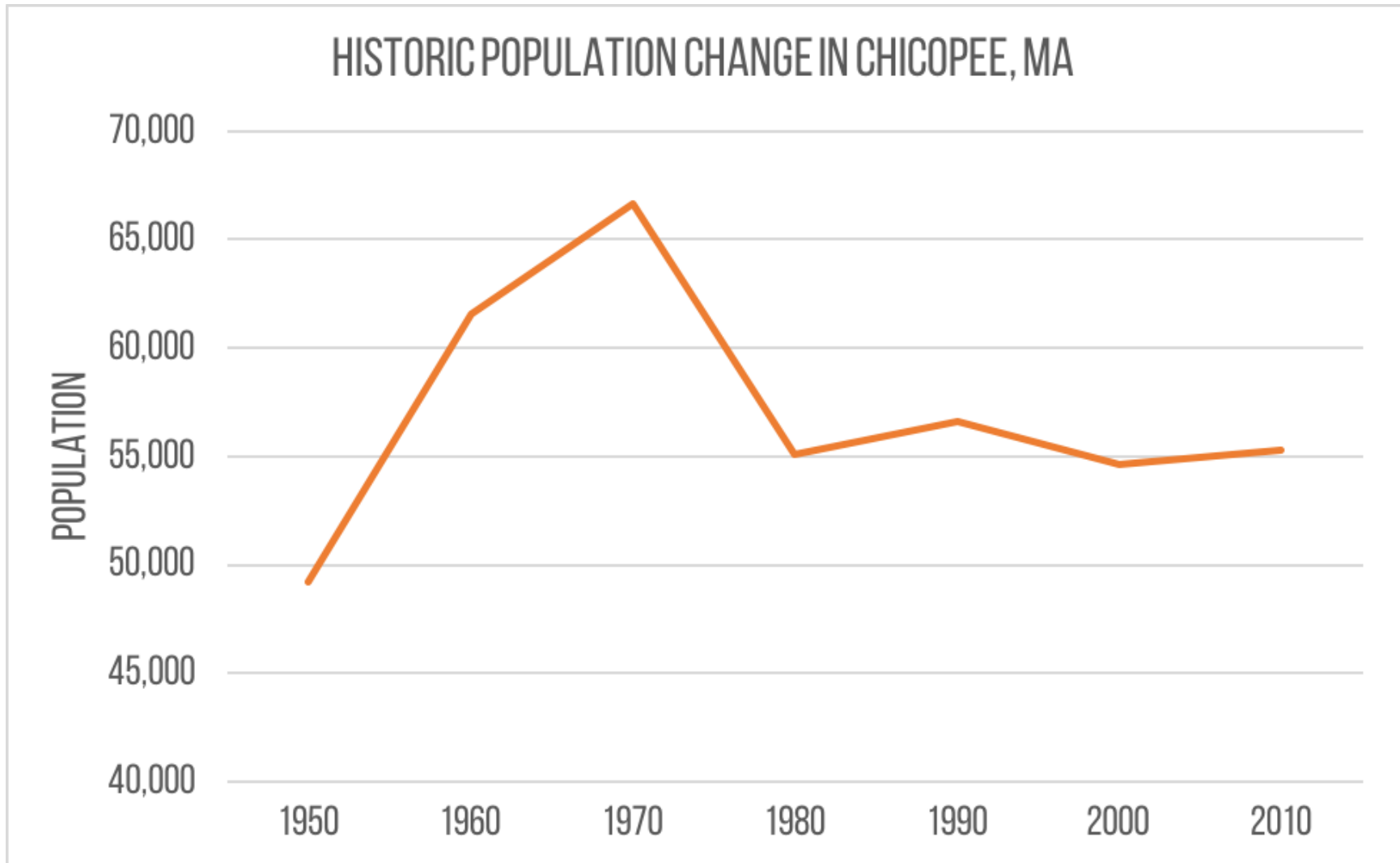
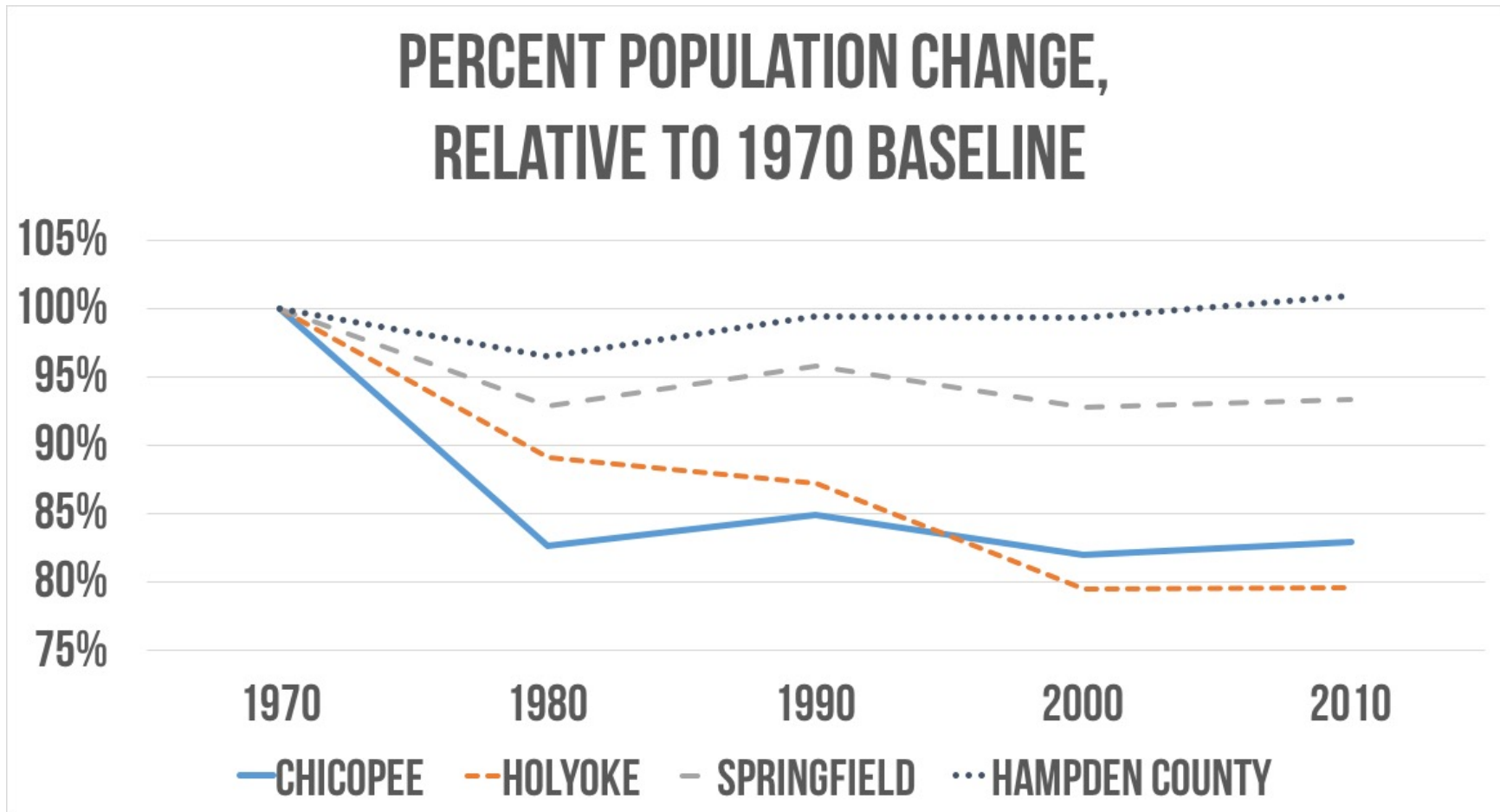


Figure 21: Population change in Chicopee, 1950-2010

This image shows the population change in Chicopee from 1950 to 2010. From 1950 to 1970, the population increased due to industry. However, from 1970 to 1980 the population declined as the economy shifted and the City lost much of its industry. Since 1980 the population has remained stagnant. *Source: U.S. Census.*



*Figure 22: Percent population change of Chicopee and surrounding cities, relative to a 1970 baseline*

This image shows the percent of population change relative to a 1970 baseline for Chicopee, the nearby cities of Holyoke and Springfield, and Hampden County in which all three cities are located. Holyoke has lost the most population of the three cities from 1970 to 2010, and the population of Hampden County has remained fairly stagnant. *Source: U.S. Census.*

## Age

The Aldenville population is slightly older than that of the whole City, primarily due to fewer young adults (18-39 years old) and more middle-aged residents (40-64 years old) living in the neighborhood. Young adults make up 27.7% of the Aldenville population and 29.2% of the Chicopee population, while middle-aged adults make up 36.5% of the neighborhood population and 34.1% of the City population (Figure 23).

While other areas of the City contain clusters of certain age brackets, Aldenville's age groups are fairly well mixed (Figure 24). Willimansett, Chicopee Center, and Chicopee Falls all exhibit significant groupings of young people. A significant grouping of senior citizens lies just east of Aldenville, on the other side of Memorial Drive. Aldenville's age groups are well mixed, reflecting an intergenerational character that could be considered a community asset.

The geographic distribution of age groupings, when considered together, also shows the density of settlement across Aldenville and the City at large. Chicopee Center and Chicopee Falls appear as individual clusters of dense settlement, separated by a clear north-south band of low population density. Willimansett is a contiguous block of residents, separated from Aldenville by sharply defined unpopulated areas, reflecting the rights-of-way of both I-391 and a rail corridor, as well as adjacent industrial-zoned land.

By contrast, Aldenville exhibits three distinct clusters of habitation within its tentatively-proposed boundaries. The primary cluster radiates out from Aldenville Commons, the neighborhood's traditional center. Another lines Granby Road in the western area of the neighborhood. The last, somewhat less dense than the other two, is situated in the neighborhood's

northeast corner and is colloquially known as "Willimansett Heights," reflecting the neighborhood's elevated position and close proximity to adjacent Willimansett. Its distinct population cluster and colloquial identity beg the question of whether the area's residents would adjust the Client's tentatively-proposed boundaries. Chapter 4, "Survey Analysis," will explore this question.

# AGE DISTRIUBTION OF ALDENVILLE AND CHICOPEE

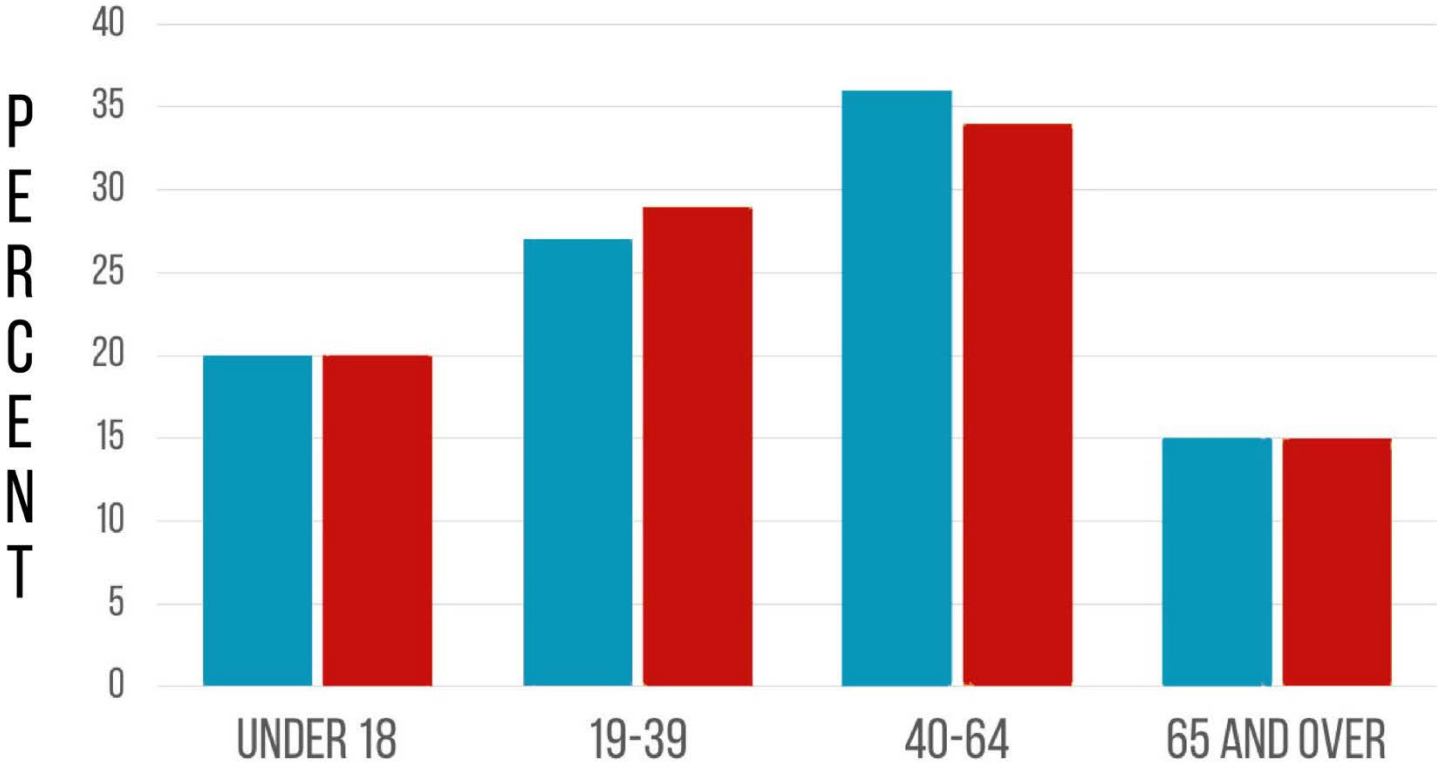


Figure 23: Age distribution of residents of Aldenville and Chicopee

This image shows the age distribution of the neighborhood of Aldenville and City of Chicopee. Aldenville is fairly representative of the City as a whole, with slightly fewer residents in the 19-39 age range. *Source: U.S. Census.*



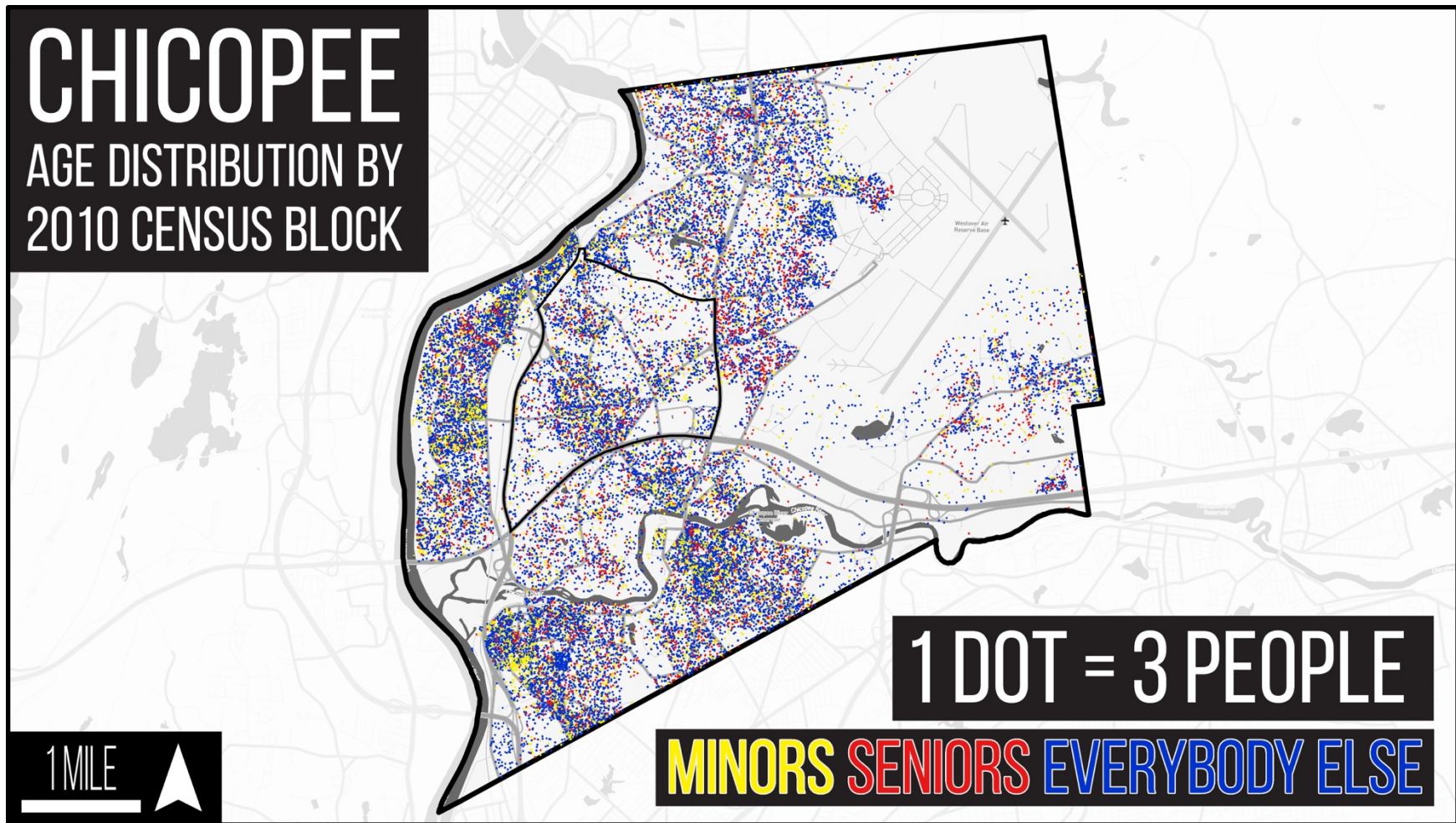


Figure 24: Age distribution of Chicopee residents, by 2010 U.S. Census block

This image is a dot density map of the age distribution of Chicopee residents by 2010 U.S. Census block. Minors, shown in yellow, are residents aged under 18, while senior are those aged 65 and over, shown in purple. All other residents aged 19-64 are shown in blue. Age groups in Aldenville are fairly well mixed, while in some other parts of the City age groups are more clustered. Sources: MassGIS, 2010 U.S. Decennial Census.

## Race/Ethnicity

The racial/ethnic population distribution in Aldenville skews whiter than the rest of the City. While 84.2% of Aldenville residents identify as White non-Hispanic, only 79.5% of Chicopee residents do. At the same time, a smaller proportion of Aldenville residents identify as Hispanic than in the City at large (10.2% versus 14.8%) (Figure 25).

While some City neighborhoods contain distinct clusters of minority populations, the geographic distribution of Aldenville's minority population exhibits a lower degree of spatial definition (Figure 26). In Willimansett, for example, discrete blocks of Hispanic residents appear in the neighborhood's center and towards its northern tip. Prominent clusters of Hispanic residents also appear in Chicopee Center and Chicopee Falls. The most racially diverse pocket of the City lies adjacent to Westover Air Reserve Base, including significant African-American and Hispanic populations. The racial diversity is likely attributable to the civilian and military workforce employed on the base.

While Aldenville lacks similarly prominent clusters of minority residents, it does include somewhat less salient, yet still significant groupings. The population cluster that radiates outwards from Aldenville Commons is predominately White, reflecting the French-Canadian population that originally settled the village and that remains a significant presence to this day. Ancestry data is not available at the Census block level, but, according to 2015 American Community Survey estimates, over 25% of Chicopee residents claim French or French-Canadian heritage, as compared to about 10% statewide.

Small clusters of Hispanic residents exist away from the Aldenville's historic core, most notably to the west of Granby road and towards the neighborhood's northwest corner, in

Willimansett Heights. Both of these areas reflect lower rates of homeownership, as discussed in the section below on housing tenure. The fact that these minority groupings exist in Aldenville, but towards its fringes, calls into question how well Hispanic residents are integrated into Aldenville community life. The fact that Hispanic clusters are associated with higher rates of renters also suggests that these residents might have a significantly different relationship to Aldenville, with perspectives and goals distinct from those of the whiter population living towards the neighborhood's core.

## RACE/ETHNICITY OF ALDENVILLE AND CHICOPEE

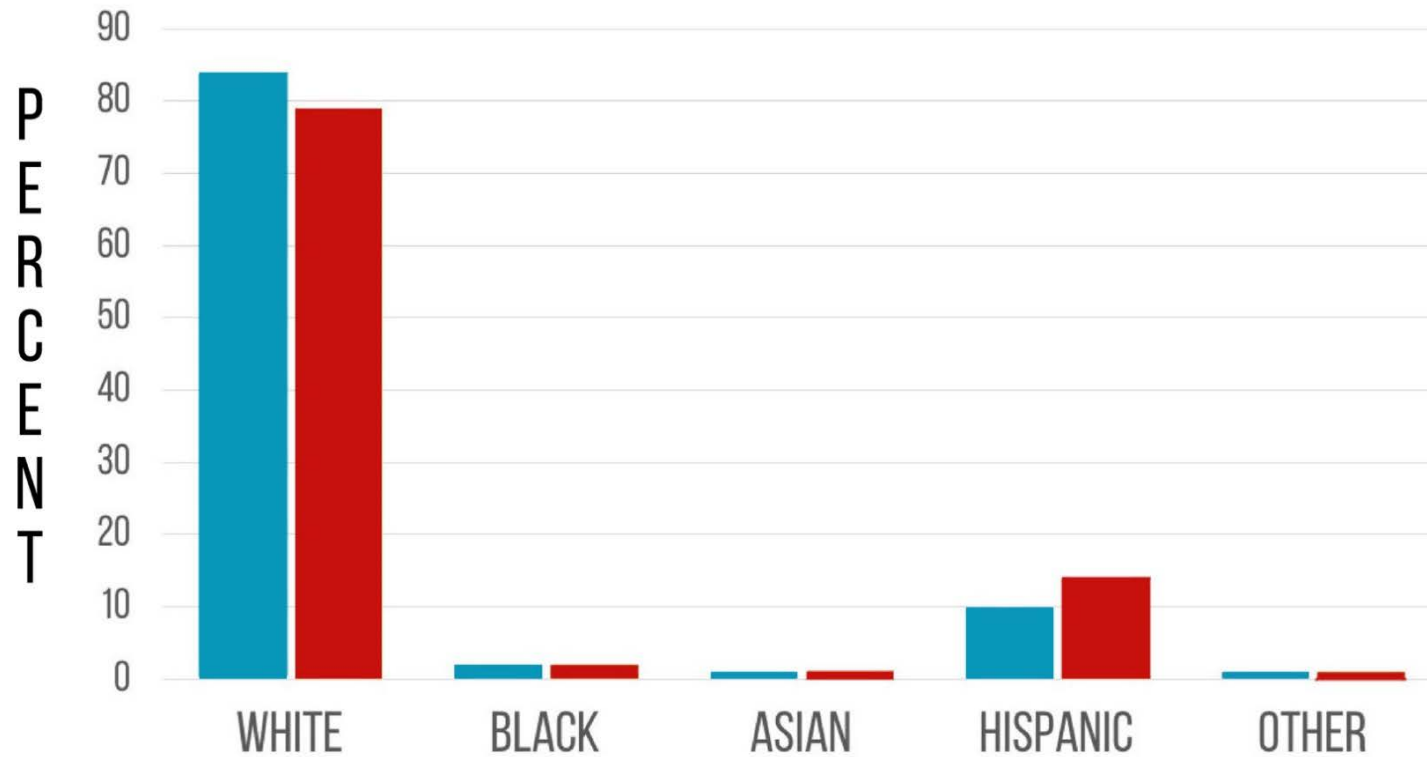


Figure 25: Race/ethnicity of residents of Aldenville and Chicopee

This image shows the race/ethnicity of residents of Aldenville and Chicopee. Aldenville has a higher percentage of White non-Hispanic residents, while the City as a whole has more Hispanic residents. The percentages of Black, Asian, and Other are similar among the neighborhood and City. *Source: U.S. Census.*

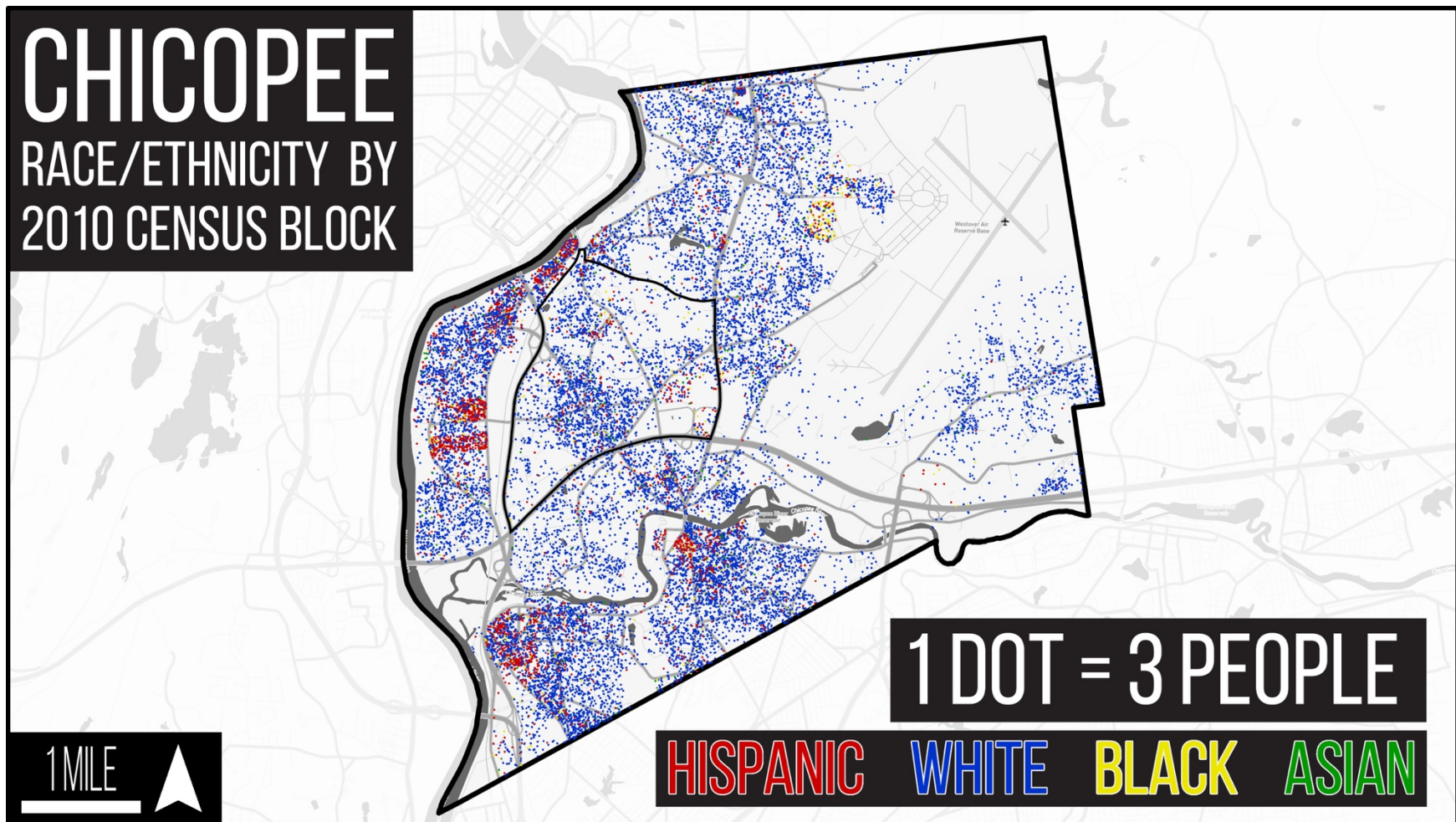
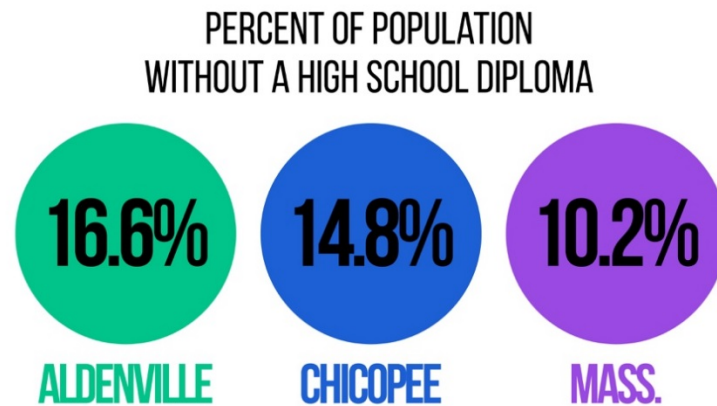


Figure 26: Racial/ethnic distribution of Chicopee residents, by 2010 Census block

This image shows the racial/ethnic distribution of Chicopee residents by 2010 U.S. Census block. The labels “White,” “Black,” and “Asian” refer to individuals who self-identify as non-Hispanic. Hispanic residents are shown in green, White non-Hispanic residents in blue, Black residents in yellow, and Asian residents in red. Aldenville has a majority of White residents and less clustering of races/ethnicities compared to other areas of the City, i.e., in the South and West. Sources: U.S. Decennial Census, ESRI, MassGIS.

## Educational Attainment

About 17% of Aldenville residents and 15% of Chicopee residents 25 years or older lack a high school degree (Figure 27). The rate is about the same as Hampden County and slightly higher than that of the State, where about 10% of residents lack a high school degree.



AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY, 2015 5-YEAR ESTIMATES. ALDENVILLE - CENSUS TRACTS 8106.01, 8110, 8111.01, 8112. DATA APPLIES TO POPULATION 25 AND OVER

Figure 27: Percent of Aldenville, Chicopee, and Massachusetts residents 25 years and older that lack a high school degree

This image shows that Aldenville and Chicopee have fewer high school graduates over age 25 than the State. *Source: U.S. American Community Survey, 2015.*

## Income

The City's median household income is somewhat lower than that of Hampden County, and significantly lower than that of the State. In 2015, the City had a median household income of \$47,684, while Hampden County's was \$50,461 and the State's was \$68,563 (US Census ACS, 2015). Median household income has remained flat since 1990 statewide, while Hampden County and the City of Chicopee have both experienced a decline of about 10% (Figure 28).

## Languages Spoken

Chicopee has higher rates of English proficiency than either Hampden County or the State as a whole. Less than 5% of Chicopee households are limited English-speaking, while almost 7% of Hampden County households and almost 6% of Massachusetts households are (US Census ACS, 2015). Of the 3,751 individuals in Chicopee that speak English less than very well, 1,651, or about 44%, speak Spanish as their primary language (Figure 29). Other prominent languages among limited English-speakers include Polish (638 individuals) and Portuguese (597 individuals). Although only a small segment of the City population is limited English-speaking, these individuals are likely among those least represented by local democratic processes. Any public engagement process should take special steps to minimize the effects of language barriers.

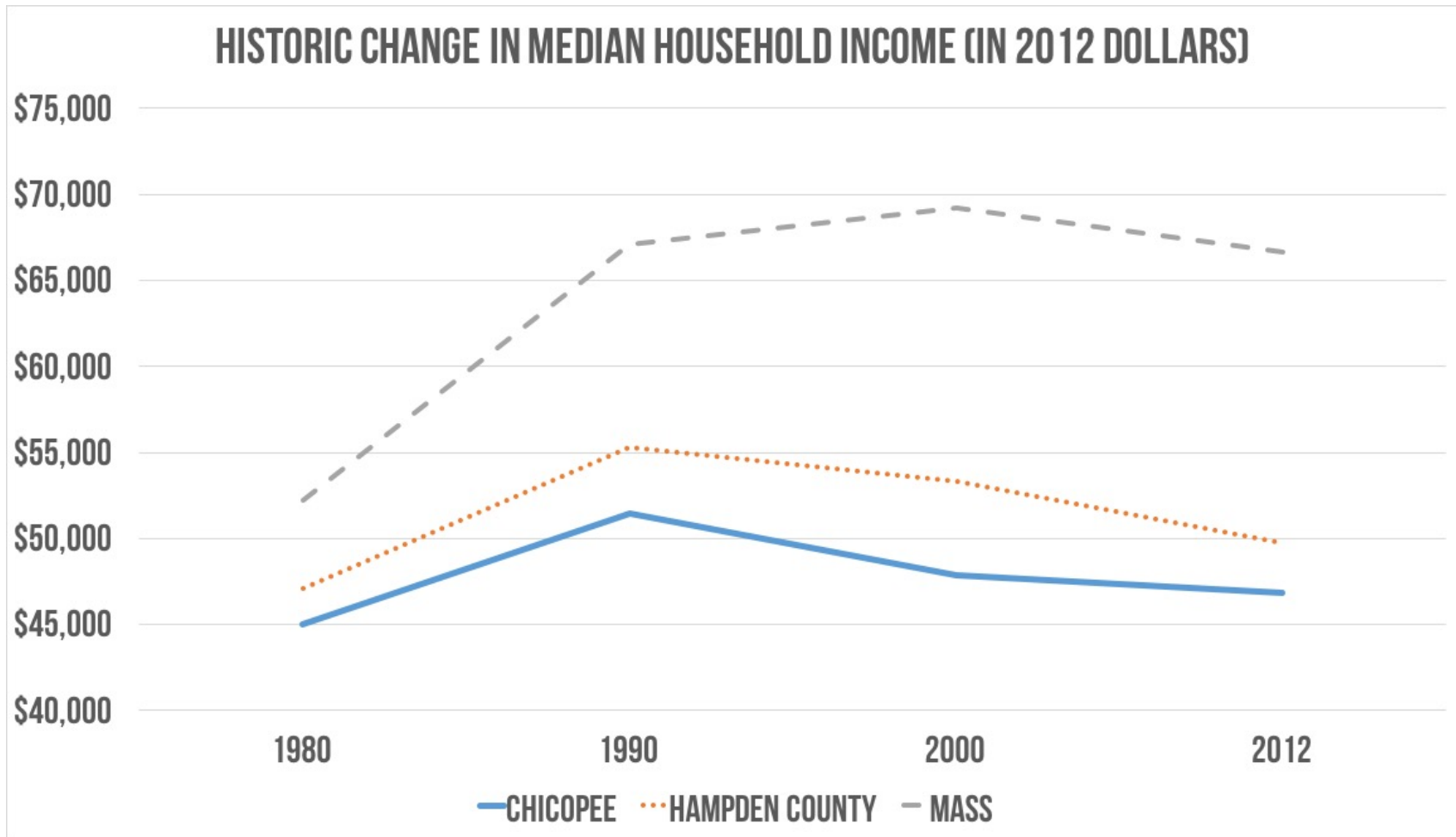


Figure 28: Historic change in median household income (in 2012 dollars)

This image represents the change in median household income from 1980 to 2012, in 2012 dollars. It shows that Chicopee’s median household income is somewhat lower than that of Hampden County, and significantly lower than that of the State. The City and County saw income increase from 1980 to 1990 then gradually decline, while the State had an increase from 1980 to 1990, a more modest increase 1990 to 2000, and a decrease from then until 2012. *Source: U.S. Decennial Census.*

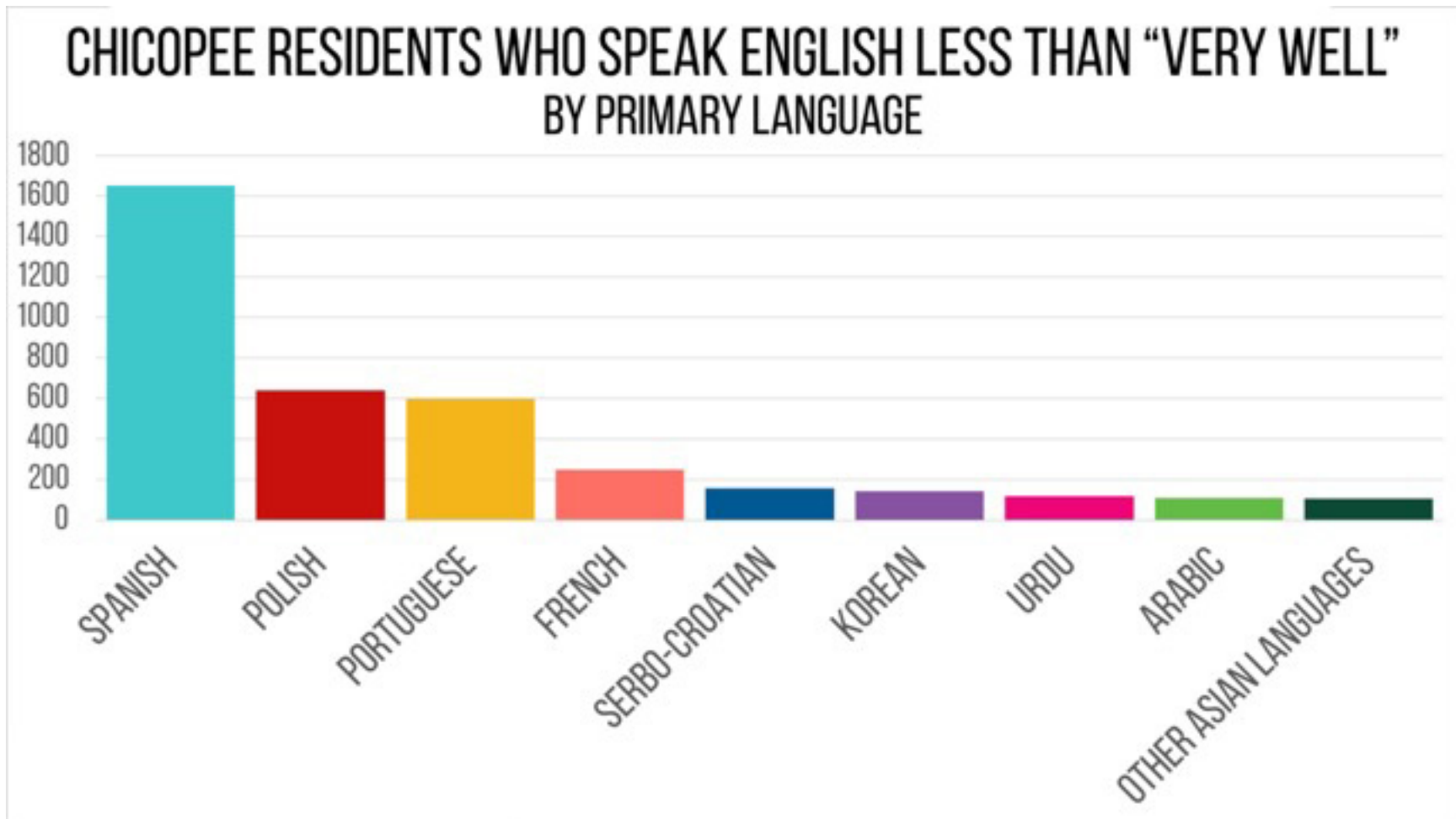


Figure 29. Languages spoken among Chicopee residents who state they speak English less than very well

This image shows the languages that Chicopee residents speak among those who state they speak English “less than very well.” Spanish is the most popular language spoken among these individuals, followed by Polish and Portuguese. *Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey.*

## Neighborhood Character

Land-use conditions were studied in order to understand the past and current built and natural environment of the neighborhood of Aldenville. 7 Peaks used this information to gain insight into neighborhood character, assets, housing, zoning, and other factors. This analysis was considered when constructing public engagement methods and creating land-use recommendations, which will be discussed later in this report.

Aldenville began as an agricultural village and, by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, had developed into a streetcar suburb of the industrial centers of Holyoke, Chicopee Center, and Chicopee Falls. Today, with the diminishment of the City's industrial base and the dominance of auto transportation, the neighborhood has become primarily a residential community, characterized by single-family homes (Figure 30). Although busy traffic corridors cut through the neighborhood (e.g. Grattan Street, Granby Road, and McKinstry Avenue), residential side streets are virtually untraveled by those who do not live along them (Figure 31). Although some of these side streets lack sidewalks, pedestrians are free to amble along their edges, unimpeded by auto traffic. In many of these residential areas, the din of traffic along Grattan and other busy thoroughfares fade behind trees and houses, rendering audible birdsong, playing children, and the hum of insects.

The neighborhood's core is located at the intersection of Grattan Street, Dale Street, and McKinstry Avenue and once was the site of bustling storefront retail. Today, Aldenville's former downtown functions more as a hub for auto traffic than a center of commercial or community life. For example, the block along Grattan Street, just north of McKinstry Avenue once held multiple well-patronized business establishments, including a

pharmacy and market (Figure 32). About the same time, a movie theater and appliance shop were located on the same block. Today, a good portion of the block lies vacant or condemned (Figure 33). Historic structures on the block have vanished or been haphazardly modified, marring their architectural value.





*Figure 30: Single-family homes in Aldenville*

This image is a photograph of closely-situated single-family homes, which typify many residences surrounding Aldenville's historic neighborhood core.



*Wellington Avenue in Aldenville*

*Figure 31:*

This image is a photograph of Wellington Avenue, a tree-lined residential street about one block north of McKinstry Avenue in Aldenville. This shows that the neighborhood contains both busy streets like McKinstry Avenue and low-traffic residential streets outside the area immediately surrounding the Commons.



Figure 32: The Hammersley's Building, c. 1919

This image is a photograph from circa 1919 of the Hammersley's Building, on the corner of Grattan and Providence Streets, one block north of the intersection of Grattan Street and McKinstry Avenue. The first floor is occupied by J.A. Lamothe Druggist and Aldenville Cash Market. *Source: Chicopee Archives Online.*



*Figure 33: The Hammersley's building, 2017*

This image is a photograph of the Hammersley Building, taken in October 2017. It now has a modified first level, half of which is occupied by TD's Pub, a local sports bar. The first level beside TD's Pub is unoccupied. This image also shows that the adjacent buildings are vacant. This once vibrant storefront area is now mostly unoccupied and indicative of business loss in Chicopee.

## Assets

Although Aldenville faces challenges surrounding its historic core, the neighborhood contains a variety of unique assets. For example, the historic Aldenville Commons, although no longer the site of the neighborhood public school, is now a valuable patch of greenspace in the center of an area largely paved over by roadways and parking lots. A new gazebo in the Commons provides space for events during the year's warmer months. The park has a well-maintained lawn and is lit by quaint lampposts (Figure 34).



Figure 34: The gazebo located in the Aldenville Commons

Nearby, Lucky Strike serves as an anchor neighborhood business, providing one of the few sit-down dining opportunities in downtown Aldenville (Figure 35). The restaurant has been in operation since the late 1940s, and has been doing business at its

current location on Grattan and Providence Streets since the mid-1950s.



Figure 35: The restaurant Lucky Strike across from the Aldenville Commons

The Parish of Sainte Rose de Lima, which was established in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, provides a historic architectural focal point near Aldenville's center (Figure 36). The church served a predominately French-Canadian Catholic congregation and still attracts a full congregation during weekend services and special ceremonies.



*Figure 36: Sainte Rose de Lima Church*

This image shows the Sainte Rose de Lima Church, located on Grattan Street, north of Chapel Street in Aldenville.

McKinstry Farm, located along Montgomery Street, is the sole remaining vestige of the neighborhood's agricultural origins (Figure 37). It is the only active commercial vegetable operation in the City, with 10-15 acres in production. The business also includes a seasonal farm stand, which provides the only source of fresh produce within walking distance of many Aldenville residences.



*Figure 37: Vegetable fields at McKinstry Farm*

This image shows McKinstry Farm's vegetable fields, planted with asparagus and seeded with winter rye.

Ray Ash Memorial Park, in the southwest corner of Aldenville, offers residents a variety of active recreation opportunities, including a well-maintained playground and a brand new, handicapped handicapped-accessible swimming pool (Figure 38 and Figure 39).



*Figure 38: Playground at Ray Ash Park*

Taken together, these assets represent a variety of potential leverage points sprinkled across the Aldenville landscape, which, if integrated and capitalized upon, could reestablish neighborhood cohesion and improve quality of life. The land-use section of this report will explore potential policies and programmatic interventions that will address residents' top priorities.



*Figure 39: Swimming pool at Ray Ash Park*

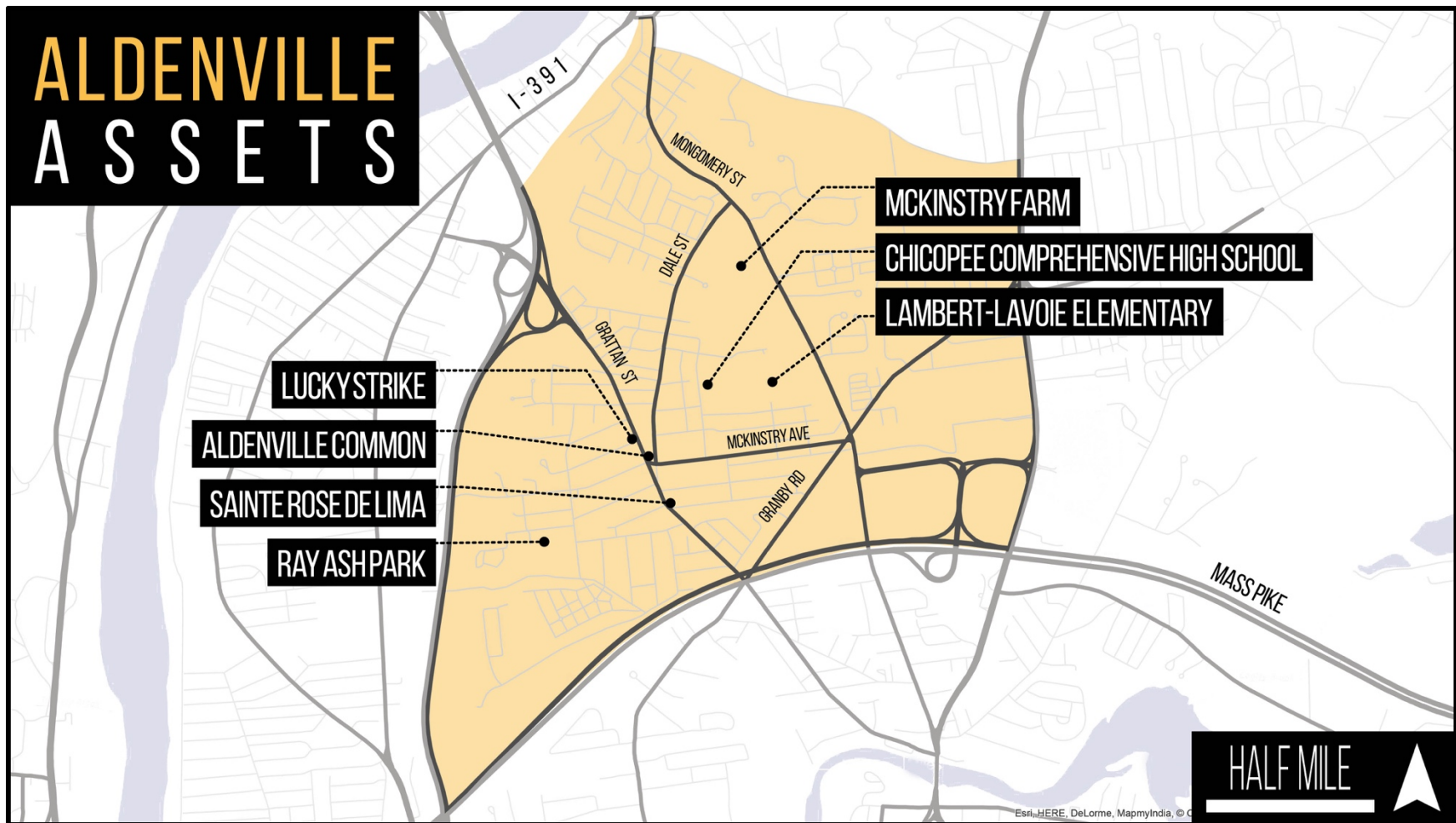


Figure 40: The relative locations of some of the identified assets in Aldenville

This image shows some of the key assets within Aldenville. These assets were determined through analysis of public engagement responses, which will be discussed later in this report. *Source: MassGIS.*



## Housing

Of the 2,315 parcels that exist in Aldenville, 1,632, or 70%, are currently occupied by single family homes (MassGIS). Single family homes also dominate housing stock in terms of units, constituting 54% of the neighborhood's 3,009 units. Single-family homes range significantly in type and lot size. Although most of the neighborhood's single-family homes near the Commons form a tighter suburban network, the fringes of the neighborhood are divided into spacious lots in cul-de-sac development (Figure 40).

Aldenville is dotted with other housing types, most notably duplexes, which constitute 15% of total housing units, and three-family homes, often in the form of triple-decker structures (Figure 42).

Most houses were built before 1940 and less than 3% were built in the last 15 years (US Census ACS, 2015).



*Figure 41: Sprawling cul-de-sac development in northeast Aldenville*



*Figure 42: Triple-decker residence in Aldenville*

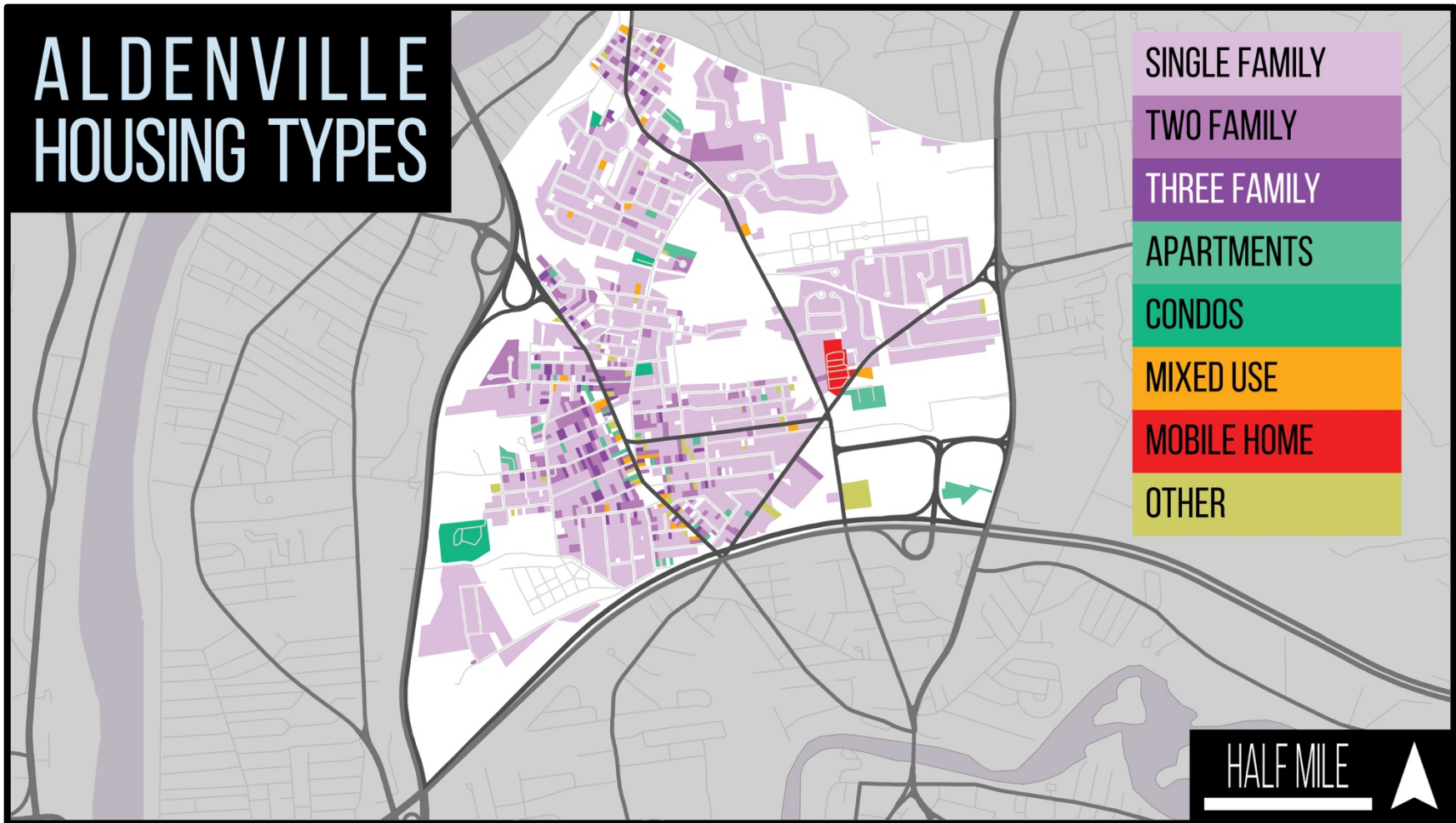


Figure 43: Housing Types in Aldenville

This image shows housing types in the neighborhood of Aldenville. A variety of types can be seen, even on the same street. Single-family homes are the most common. Most two- and three-family homes can be found near Grattan Street and the Commons. *Source: MassGIS.*

## Housing Tenure

City-wide, about 59% of Chicopee's housing is owner-occupied and 41% is renter-occupied (US Census, 2010). Aldenville has higher home-ownership rates than the City as a whole, with about 65% of units owner-occupied.

Although most housing units are owner-occupied in Aldenville, the neighborhood has significant pockets where rented units prevail. Most significantly, the area of the neighborhood west of Grattan Street and north of McKinstry Avenue contains many renter-majority blocks, which can be inferred from the low home ownership rates depicted in Figure 46. The area is characterized by single-family homes, duplexes, and triple-deckers (Figure 44). Another significant renter-majority pocket is located to the southwest of Granby Road (Figure 45).

Taken as a whole, Grattan Street, Aldenville's main commercial corridor, is lined by a fairly even mix of homeowners and renters. These two groups likely hold a variety of perspectives on housing density and building styles, for which any proposed land-use changes will need to account.

## Housing Vacancy

The City has an overall housing vacancy rate of 5.6%. This rate is 1.3% for home-owner occupied units and 1.3% for renter-occupied ones (US Census, 2010). Aldenville has slightly higher residential vacancy rate than the City as a whole, at 6.3% (Figure 47). The neighborhood has high pockets of residential vacancy along Grattan Street and near the intersection of the Mass Pike and Memorial Drive (Figure 47).



Figure 44: Triple-decker in Aldenville

This image is a photograph of a triple-decker located on Mary Street, west of Grattan Street, a renter-majority area in Aldenville.



Figure 45: Townhouse Court Apartments in Aldenville

This image shows townhouse apartments near the intersection of Granby Road and Montgomery Street.

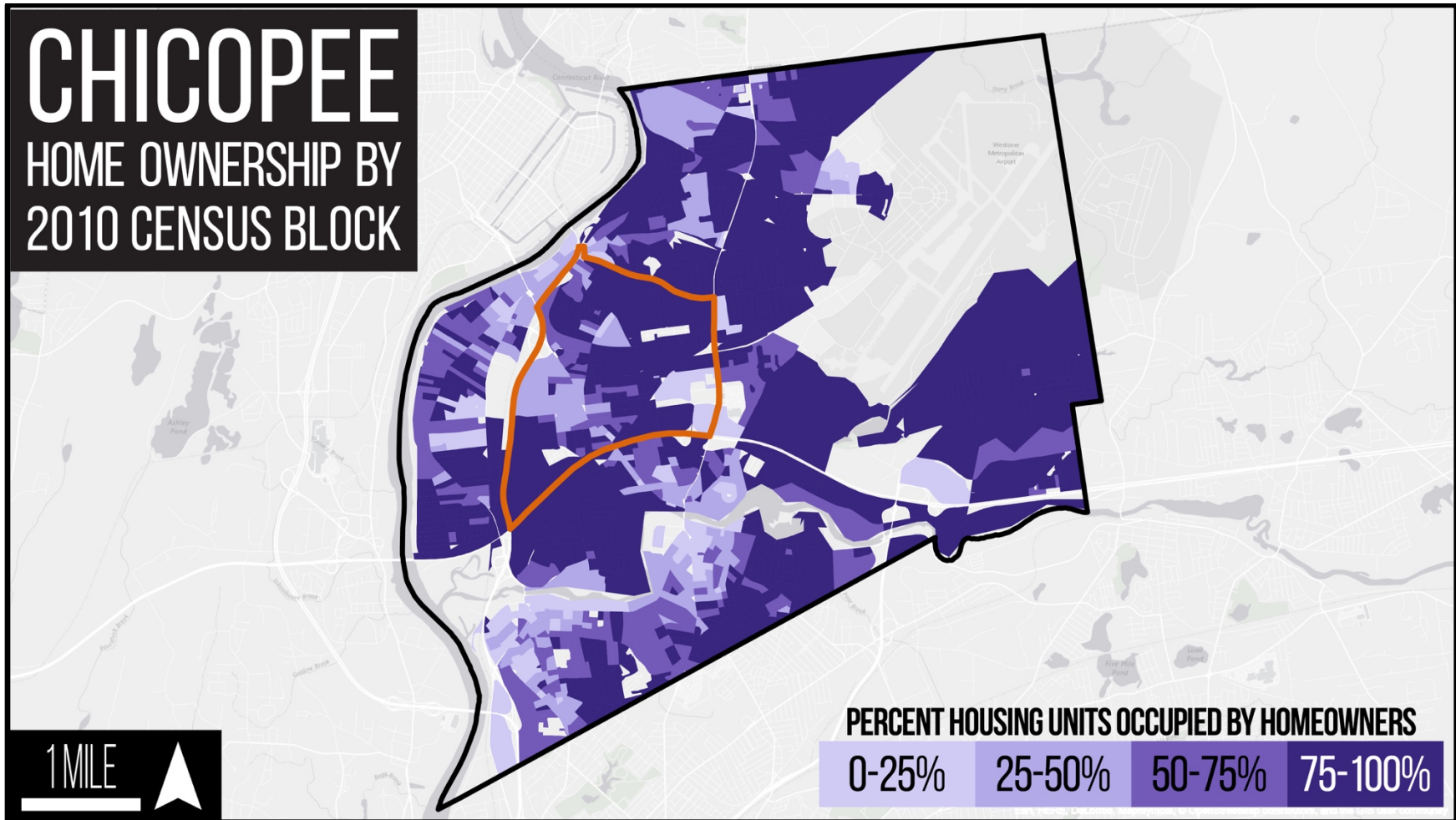


Figure 46: Chicopee home ownership by 2010 Census Block

This image shows the percent of housing units occupied by homeowners in the City of Chicopee. The orange line represents the boundaries of Aldenville. Most of the neighborhood residences are owner-occupied. The blue scale represents rates with lighter blue having a lower percentage owner-occupied homes and darker blue having a higher rate. Aldenville has a relatively high percentage of owner-occupied homes. *Sources: MassGIS, U.S. Decennial Census.*

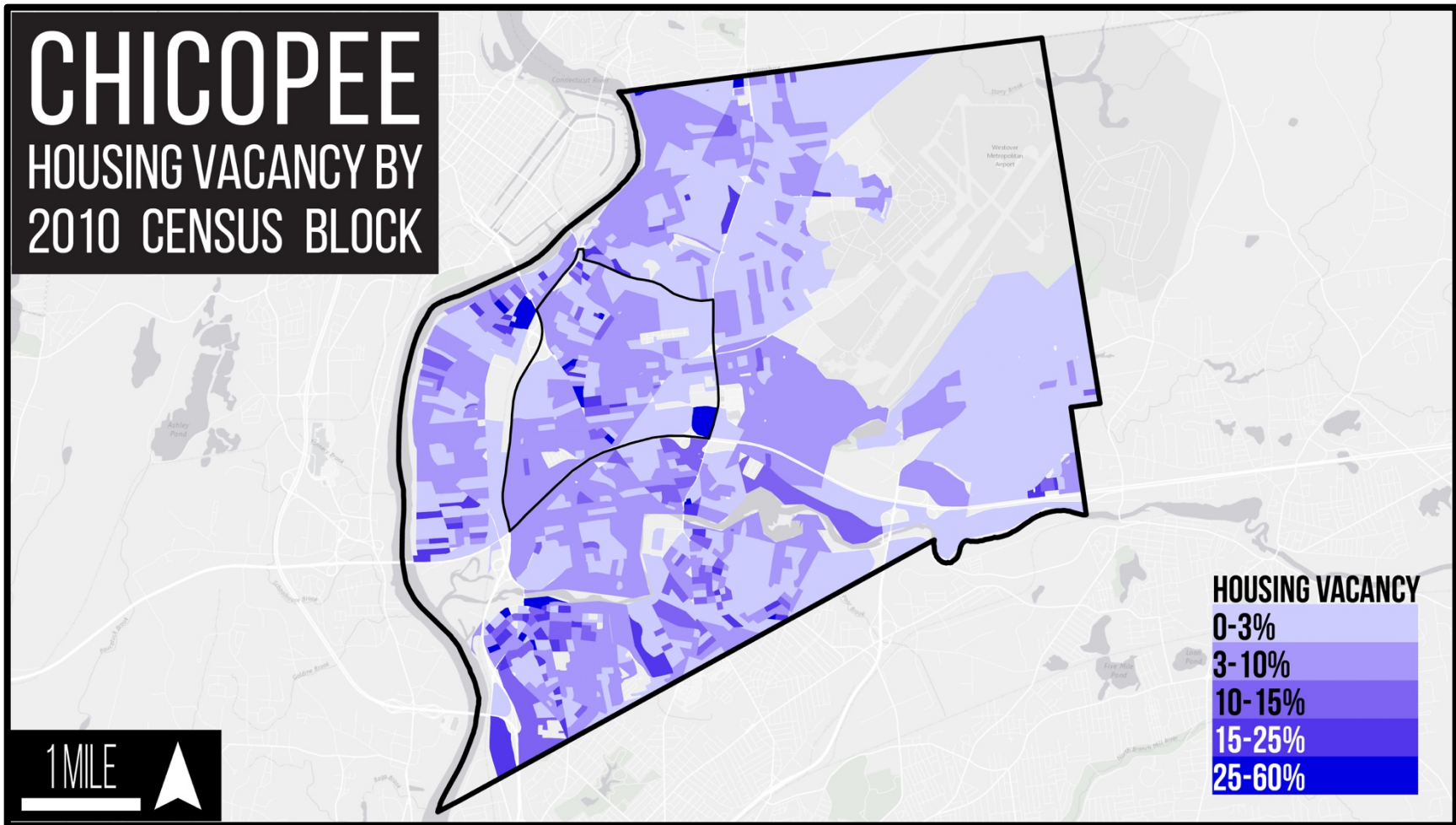


Figure 47: Map of Chicopee showing housing vacancy rates

This image shows housing vacancy rates in Chicopee. Aldenville is outlined in black within the City boundaries. The blue scale represents rates with lighter blue having a lower percentage of vacancy and darker blue having a higher rate. Most of Aldenville is has a housing vacancy rate under 10%, although there are clusters along Grattan Street and in the southwest with rates above 25%. *Source: U.S. Decennial Census.*

# Land-Use Policy

## Current Uses

Chicopee currently encompasses an area of 22.91 square miles of land (15,260 acres) and 1.13 square miles of water (670 acres). Overall, residential use is the primary land-use type, occupying 5,011 acres within the seven neighborhoods of Fairview, Chicopee Falls, Willimansett, Aldenville, Chicopee Center, Sandy Hill, and Burnett Road (Carlisle et al., 2016).

The second most common land-use is undeveloped land, with a total of 4,257 acres. Transportation is roughly 2,347 acres, which characterizes the City-wide dependency on motor vehicles for travel as well as the prioritization of automobiles over other forms of travel. Commercial and industrial land in Chicopee accounts for approximately 1,200 acres of land (Department of Planning & Development, 2015).

## Zoning

Chicopee does not have a comprehensive master plan to guide planning and, therefore, the Zoning Bylaws have acted as the guidelines for growth. Chicopee has 16 different zoning districts: four residential zones, two commercial zones, four business zones, three industrial zones, one mixed-use zone, and four overlay zones. Overall, the predominant zoning district throughout the City is the Residential A district, which is characterized mostly by single-family, detached housing (Department of Planning & Development, 2015)..

The neighborhood of Aldenville includes mostly Residential A, Residential B, Business A, and Business B zones. Much of the higher density Residential B parcels as well as the Business A and

Business B parcels are concentrated along the downtown corridor near the Aldenville Commons.

Zoning District	Permitted Uses
Residential A Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single-family detached dwellings</li> <li>• Churches and other places of worship</li> <li>• Cemeteries adjacent to or in extension of existing cemeteries</li> <li>• Private schools and colleges</li> <li>• Greenhouses accessory to a farm or private residence</li> <li>• Governmental services</li> <li>• Farms, nurseries and truck gardens</li> <li>• Utilities transmission facilities and rights-of-way</li> <li>• Golf courses</li> <li>• Accessory uses</li> </ul>
Residential B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single-family detached dwellings</li> <li>• Two-family residences.</li> <li>• Churches and other places of worship</li> <li>• Cemeteries adjacent to or in extension of existing cemeteries.</li> <li>• Private schools and colleges.</li> </ul>

Zoning District	Permitted Uses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenhouses accessory to a farm or private residence</li> <li>• Governmental services</li> <li>• Farms, nurseries and truck gardens</li> <li>• Utilities transmission facilities and rights-of-way</li> <li>• Golf courses</li> <li>• Accessory uses</li> </ul>
Residential C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single-family dwellings</li> <li>• Two-family dwellings</li> <li>• Three-family dwellings</li> <li>• Multifamily dwellings (four or more units)</li> <li>• Governmental services</li> <li>• Accessory uses</li> </ul>
Residential D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile homes</li> <li>• Accessory buildings</li> <li>• Recreation buildings</li> <li>• Management buildings</li> <li>• Maintenance buildings</li> </ul>
Commercial A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessory</li> <li>• Commercial greenhouses</li> <li>• Educational services</li> <li>• Finance, insurance and real estate services</li> <li>• Membership clubs</li> <li>• Personal services</li> </ul>

Zoning District	Permitted Uses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional services</li> <li>• Repair services other than for automobiles, trucks and motorcycles</li> <li>• Retail trade without outdoor storage</li> <li>• Welfare and charitable services</li> </ul>
Commercial A-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessory</li> <li>• Finance, insurance and real estate services</li> <li>• Personal services</li> <li>• Professional services</li> <li>• Welfare and charitable services</li> </ul>
Business A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessory uses</li> <li>• Automobile parking</li> <li>• Automobile service stations</li> <li>• Automotive trade</li> <li>• Business and professional services</li> <li>• Commercial greenhouses</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Eating and drinking places without the consumption of</li> </ul>

Zoning District	Permitted Uses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>alcohol, with or without live entertainment</li> <li>• Educational services</li> <li>• Entertainment assembly</li> <li>• Finance, insurance and real estate services</li> <li>• Funeral and crematory services</li> <li>• Hotels and motels</li> <li>• Membership clubs</li> <li>• Personal services</li> <li>• Repair services other than for automobiles and truck</li> <li>• Retail trade with or without outdoor storage</li> <li>• Welfare and charitable institutions</li> <li>• Lodging house</li> <li>• Motor vehicle repair services</li> <li>• Animal kennels</li> </ul>
Business B District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessory uses</li> <li>• Automobile parking</li> <li>• Automotive service stations</li> <li>• Automotive trade</li> <li>• Business and professional services</li> </ul>

Zoning District	Permitted Uses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial greenhouses</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Contract construction services</li> <li>• Eating and drinking places without the consumption of alcohol, with or without live entertainment</li> <li>• Educational services</li> <li>• Entertainment assembly</li> <li>• Finance, insurance and real estate</li> <li>• Funeral and crematory services</li> <li>• Hotels and motels</li> <li>• Membership clubs</li> <li>• Motor freight transportation</li> <li>• Personal services</li> <li>• Repair services other than for automobiles and trucks</li> <li>• Retail trade, with or without outdoor storage</li> <li>• Utilities: offices, equipment storage and maintenance</li> <li>• Welfare and charitable institutions</li> </ul>



Table 1: Zoning Table of uses in Chicopee	
Zoning District	Permitted Uses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wholesale trade</li> <li>• Lodging houses</li> <li>• Motor vehicle repair services</li> <li>• Animal kennels</li> </ul>
Business C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motor freight transportation</li> <li>• Warehouse and storage</li> <li>• Hotels and motels</li> <li>• Eating and drinking places without the consumption of alcohol, with or without live entertainment</li> <li>• Drive-in restaurants</li> <li>• Automotive service</li> <li>• Automotive trade</li> <li>• Lodging houses</li> <li>• Motor vehicle repair services</li> </ul>
Central Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail uses without outdoor storage</li> <li>• Personal, business and professional services</li> <li>• Automobile parking</li> <li>• Eating and drinking places, with or without live entertainment, without the consumption of alcohol</li> </ul>

Table 1: Zoning Table of uses in Chicopee	
Zoning District	Permitted Uses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repair services other than for automobiles and trucks</li> <li>• Educational services</li> <li>• Entertainment assembly</li> <li>• Hotels and motels</li> <li>• Welfare charitable institutions</li> <li>• Membership clubs</li> <li>• Residential uses in a building used for business or commercial purposes</li> <li>• Accessory uses</li> </ul>
Industrial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abattoirs</li> <li>• Ammonia, chlorine or bleaching powder manufacture</li> <li>• Asphalt manufacture or refining</li> <li>• Celluloid manufacture, except in isolated, fire-resisting buildings</li> <li>• Coal tar products manufacture</li> <li>• Creosote manufacture</li> <li>• Distillation of coal, wood or bones</li> </ul>

Zoning District	Permitted Uses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explosives or fireworks manufacture</li> <li>• Fat rendering</li> <li>• Fertilizer manufacture or potash refining</li> <li>• Glue or size manufacture or processes involving recovery from fish or animal offal</li> <li>• Gypsum, cement, plaster or plaster of paris manufacturer</li> <li>• Sites for dumping grounds</li> <li>• Junkyards and junk storage, auto salvage yards</li> <li>• Linoleum manufacture</li> <li>• Petroleum refining</li> <li>• Pyroxylin plastic manufacture or the manufacture of articles there from</li> <li>• Radium extraction</li> <li>• Rubber or gutta-percha manufactured from crude or scrap material</li> <li>• Sewage disposal plant, except where controlled by the municipality</li> </ul>

Zoning District	Permitted Uses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sulphurous, sulphuric nitric or hydrochloric acid manufacture</li> <li>• Tar distillation</li> <li>• Tar roofing manufacturer</li> <li>• Sports assembly</li> <li>• Any use allowed by special permit in Business A or B Districts</li> <li>• Medical marijuana facilities</li> </ul>
Garden Industrial Unit Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industrial uses,</li> <li>• Office uses, including research and development activities</li> <li>• Business and professional services</li> <li>• Financial, insurance and real estate services</li> <li>• Aviation or aviation services</li> <li>• Warehouse and distribution</li> <li>• Contract construction services</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Accessory uses</li> </ul>
Garden Industrial Unit Development II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industrial uses</li> </ul>

Zoning District	Permitted Uses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office uses, including research and development activities</li> <li>• Business and professional services</li> <li>• Financial, insurance and real estate services</li> <li>• Communications, telecommunication uses, call centers and telemarketing uses</li> <li>• Recreational and sporting uses, including instructional and commercial uses, excluding sports assembly</li> <li>• Aviation or aviation services</li> <li>• Retail sales only as an accessory to a permitted principal use</li> <li>• Accessory uses</li> </ul>
Mixed Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dwellings or multiple dwellings</li> <li>• Community centers</li> <li>• Hotels or inns</li> </ul>

Zoning District	Permitted Uses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Churches, synagogues or other places of worship or religious use</li> <li>• Offices</li> <li>• Private trades, businesses, professional or technical schools or colleges or other educational institutions or uses</li> <li>• Private clubs, restaurants or fast-food restaurants, provided that a fast-food restaurant shall not include a drive-through</li> <li>• Artist's studio</li> <li>• Private or public theaters</li> <li>• Recreational buildings or uses</li> <li>• Parks or open spaces</li> <li>• Municipal government or institutional uses</li> <li>• Outpatient or inpatient hospitals, surgical centers or medical facilities</li> <li>• Medical office buildings, clinics or testing laboratories</li> </ul>

Table 1: Zoning Table of uses in Chicopee	
Zoning District	Permitted Uses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business, commercial or office buildings with or without dwellings above the first floor</li> <li>• Light manufacturing, assembly or other light industrial or research operation</li> <li>• Warehousing</li> </ul>

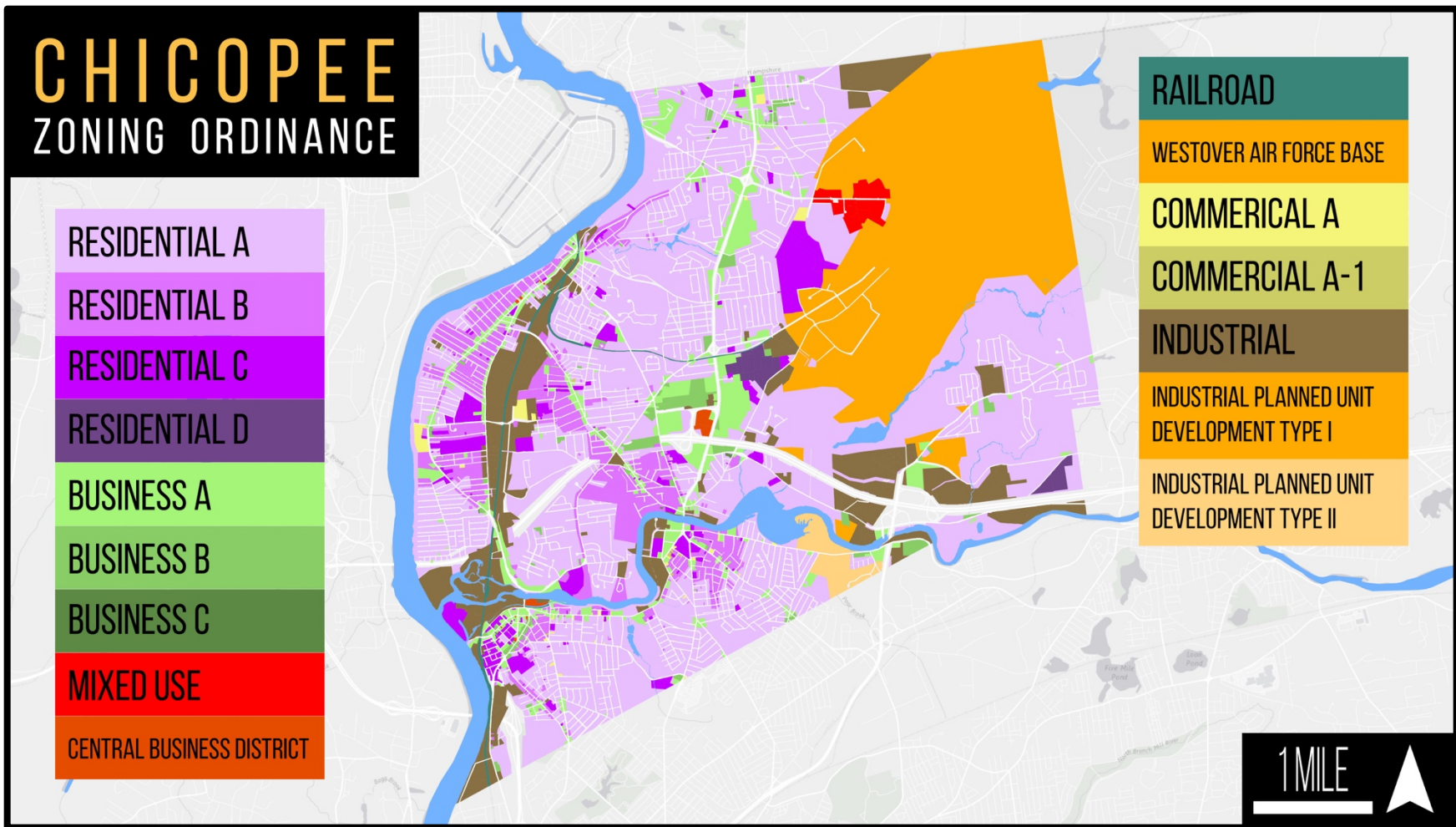


Figure 48: Chicopee Zoning Ordinance

This image shows the zoning map of the City of Chicopee. The City has 16 different zoning districts. Most of the City is zoned residential, with Residential A being the most common, which permits single-family, detached homes. *Source: Chicopee Department of Planning & Development.*

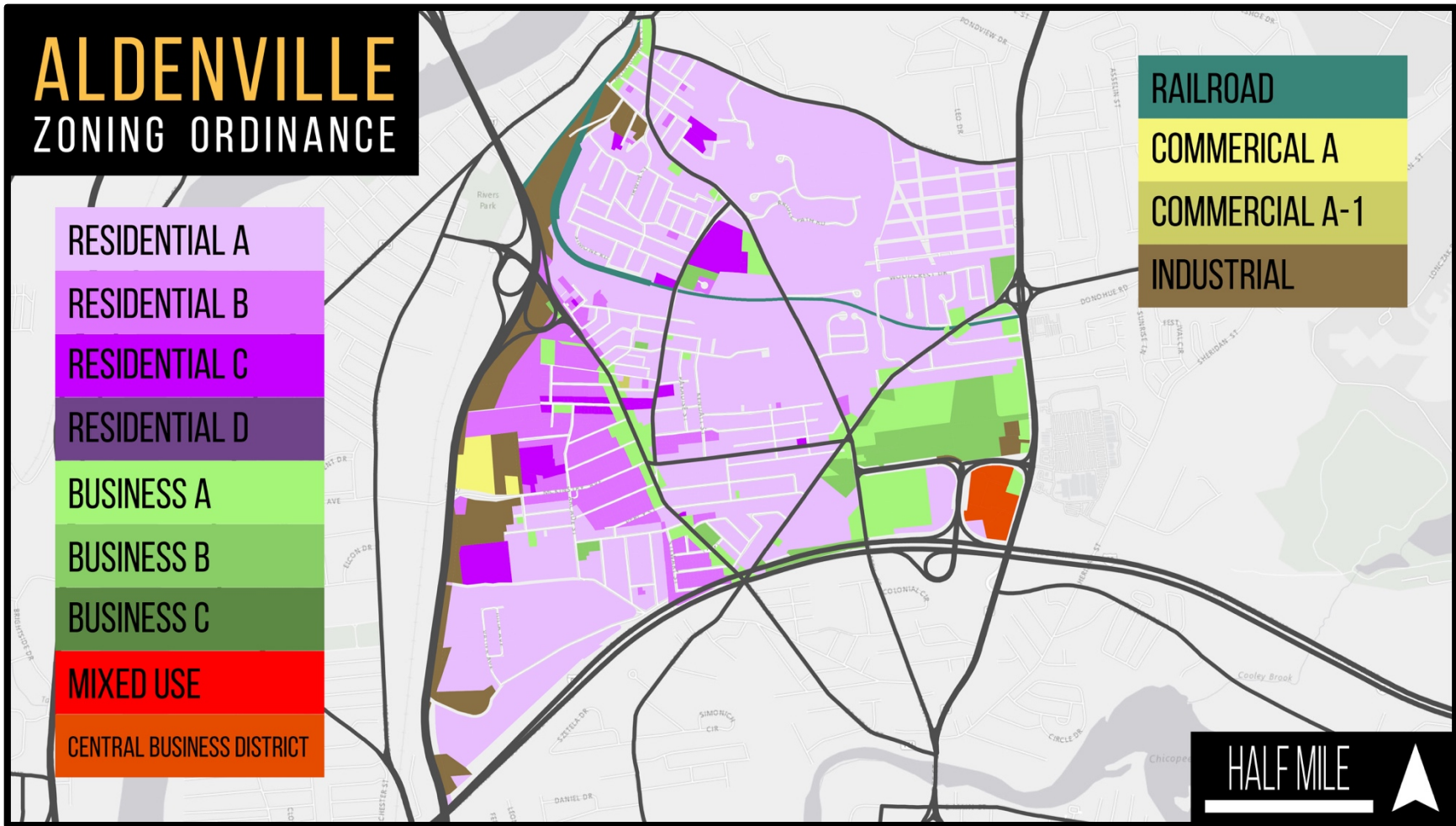


Figure 49: Aldenville Zoning Ordinance

This image shows the zoning map of Aldenville. Most of the neighborhood is zoned residential, with Residential A being the most common, which permits single-family, detached homes. Although most of Aldenville is residential, the southeast contains more business zones. The western border contains industrial zones. Business A zones can be seen along Grattan Street. *Sources: Chicopee Department of Planning and Development.*

## Property Tax

According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Chicopee has lower property tax rates than neighboring cities. (Property tax rates, or "mill rates," are measured in dollars of tax per \$1,000 of property value). In Fiscal Year 2017, the City had a residential mill rate of \$17.31 and a commercial mill rate of \$32.49. By Comparison, Holyoke had a residential mill rate of \$19.17 and a commercial mill rate of \$39.72. Springfield had a residential mill rate of \$19.66 and a commercial rate of \$39.07. All three Cities, however, have property tax rates significantly higher than the State average of \$15.31 for residential property and \$18.60 for commercial property (Figure 50 and Figure 51).

In Chicopee, both residential and commercial property taxes have shown upward trends since the beginning of the Great Recession in 2008, flattening somewhat in the last three years (Figure 52 and Figure 53).

MUNICIPALITY	RESIDENTIAL MIL RATE
SPRINGFIELD	\$19.66
HOLYOKE	\$19.12
GRANBY	\$18.87
LUDLOW	\$18.13
SOUTH HADLEY	\$17.56
W. SPRINGFIELD	\$16.99
CHICOPEE	\$16.91
MASS AVERAGE	\$12.89

Figure 50: Residential Mil Rates of Chicopee and surrounding communities

MUNICIPALITY	RESIDENTIAL MILL RATE
HOLYOKE	\$39.86
SPRINGFIELD	\$38.60
W. SPRINGFIELD	\$33.21
CHICOPEE	\$31.17
GRANBY	\$18.87
LUDLOW	\$18.13
SOUTH HADLEY	\$17.56
MASS AVERAGE	\$16.00

Figure 51: Commercial Mil Rates of Chicopee, and surrounding communities

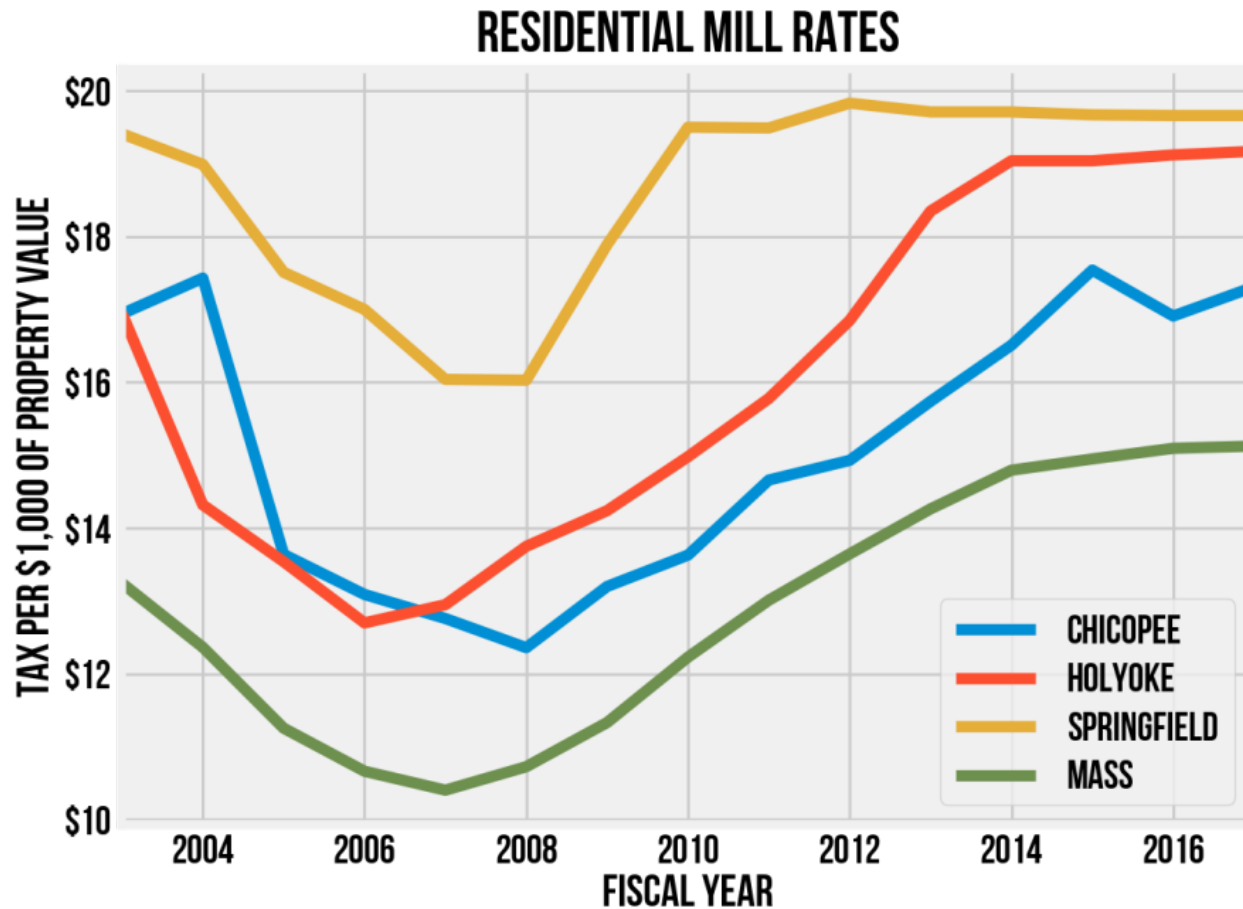


Figure 52: A comparison of residential mill rates for various locations in Massachusetts

This image shows residential mill rates (tax per \$1,000 of property value) of Chicopee, Holyoke, Springfield, and the State of Massachusetts, from 2004 to 2016. The three cities have higher rates than the state as a whole, but Chicopee has a lower rate than Holyoke and Springfield. *Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue.*



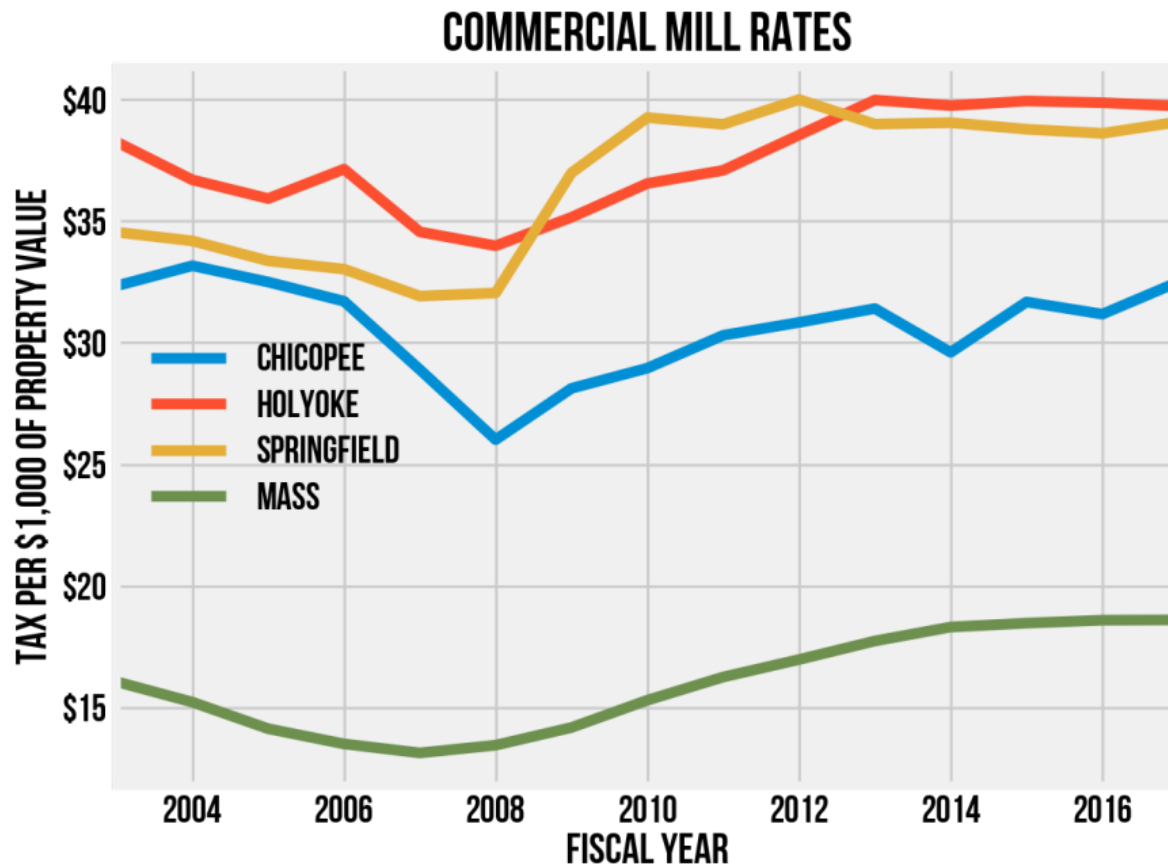


Figure 53: A comparison of commercial mill rates for various locations in Massachusetts

This image shows commercial mill rates (tax per per \$1,000 of property value) of Chicopee, Holyoke, Springfield, and the State of Massachusetts, from 2004 to 2016. The three cities have higher rates than the state as a whole, but Chicopee has a lower rate than Holyoke and Springfield. *Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue.*

## Transportation

### **PVTA Bus Route**

The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) has a few bus routes that run through the City. The P21 goes to Holyoke and Springfield. The X90 and G1 go to East Longmeadow via Springfield. There are very few stops outside of the City center neighborhood or commercial area (PVTA, 2015).

Only one line travels through Aldenville, the X90. The X90, also known as the “Inner Crosstown,” runs two schedules: “A” Trips and “B” Trips. Only “B” trips travel through the neighborhood (Figure 54). “B” Trips run on an hourly basis, and have only one scheduled stop in Aldenville, located at Grattan and Meadow Streets. The X90 offers no service to Aldenville on Sundays.

Public transit does not provide Aldenville residents with a direct route from the neighborhood’s core to the major retail centers that run along Memorial Drive. Riders on the X90 must first travel south to Chicopee Falls, then loop back north towards Walmart and surrounding shopping plazas.

The lack of direct connectivity between the center of the neighborhood and retail on Memorial Drive poses a challenge for Aldenville residents without a car. Without retail and healthy food options within the neighborhood, carless residents must find time during the workweek (or during abbreviated Saturday bus service) to make the roundabout trip to Memorial Drive shopping plazas.

The X90 is the 13<sup>th</sup> most used PVTA route, with 299,098 riders in FY18 (PVTA). Available data does not distinguish between “A” Trips and “B” Trips nor specify rate of use in Aldenville.

Since the route serves both downtown Holyoke and Springfield, much of the ridership could be attributed to these dense downtown areas.

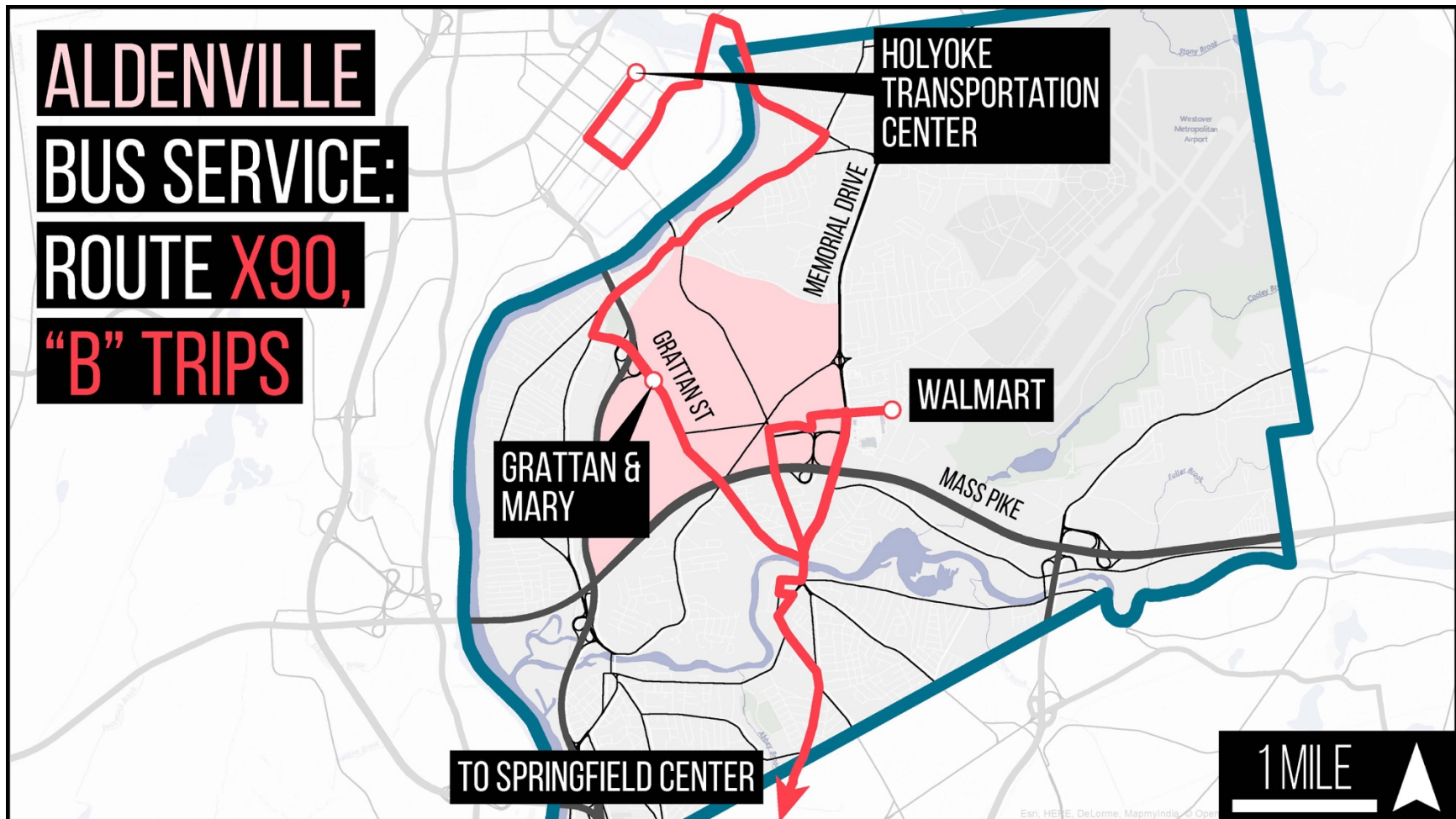


Figure 54: PVTA route map of Aldenville service area

This image shows the route map of the PVTA Aldenville service area. The one bus trip that runs through the neighborhood, Route X90 “B” trip, is shown in red. The neighborhood of Aldenville is highlighted in pink. “B” trips run from the Holyoke Transportation Center to Chicopee, along Prospect Street/Buckley Boulevard/Meadow Street, down Grattan Street, up to Walmart via Memorial Drive, and down to Springfield Center. This route map shows that there is only one bus route and one bus stop within Aldenville, demonstrating the neighborhood’s limited public transit. *Source: PVTA*

## Sidewalks and Pedestrian Accessibility

Sidewalks line the side of the Aldenville's busiest streets, at least on one side (Figure 55). Some sidewalks, such as along McKinstry Avenue, are narrow and commonly obstructed by fire hydrants and trash cans set out for curb collection (Figure 56). Most side streets lack sidewalks.

Although crosswalks exist at the busiest intersections (e.g., the one at the Commons), they are not present along long stretches of busy thoroughfares, such as Grattan Street. While curb cuts exist at some crosswalks, others run into curbs or corners lacking sidewalks (Figure 57).

Many intersections lack pedestrian signals, and, where do they do exist, they are either entirely non-functional, such as at the intersection of Granby and Grattan Streets, or require pedestrians to wait for excessively long periods of time. When pedestrians do cross busy intersections, they often dart through traffic, giving rise to serious safety concerns.



*Figure 55: Looking north up Grattan Street (on the left) and Dale Street (on the right)*

This image shows Grattan and Dale Streets coming north toward the Commons. Sidewalks line both sides of Grattan Street, while Dale is, for the most part, lined on one side.



*Figure 56: Fire hydrant obstructs sidewalk on McKinstry Avenue*

This image is a photograph showing a fire hydrant obstructing the sidewalk on McKinstry Avenue, in between Granby Road and Grattan Street.



*Figure 57: Intersection of Montgomery Street and Granby Road*

This image is a photograph showing the intersection of Montgomery Street and Granby Road. It shows the lack of pedestrian signal and curb cuts at this location.

## Road conditions

Aldenville's major thoroughfares—Grattan Street, Dale Street, and McKinstry Avenue—are relatively free of major potholes. However, some side streets show signs of deferred maintenance, with large cracks and gaps in pavement (Figure 58).



*Figure 58: An example of deferred or poor maintenance in Aldenville*

## Street grid

The intersection of Grattan and Dale Streets has existed since the late 19th century and provided the focal point around which the historic neighborhood core developed. Quiet residential side streets line these busy thoroughfares. McKinstry Avenue, which runs from Willimansett through the Commons and to Memorial Drive, is also a busy neighborhood cut-through route (Figure 59).

## Alternative trails

Chicopee is beginning to develop a pedestrian-bike network that runs along the City's major rivers. The Connecticut RiverWalk and Bikeway will run along 2.8 miles of the river's levee system and is set to begin construction in the summer of 2019. The Chicopee Canal and RiverWalk borders the downtown Dwight Manufacturing Company Canal and will eventually extend to the neighborhood of Chicopee Falls, running along the southern banks of the Chicopee River.

The neighborhood of Aldenville currently lacks any planned pedestrian or bike pathway. In the land-use section of this report, Seven Peaks proposes a pedestrian pathway that connects major neighborhood assets: Ray Ash Park, Aldenville Commons, Lambert-Lavoie Elementary School, Chicopee Comprehensive High School, and McKinstry Farm.

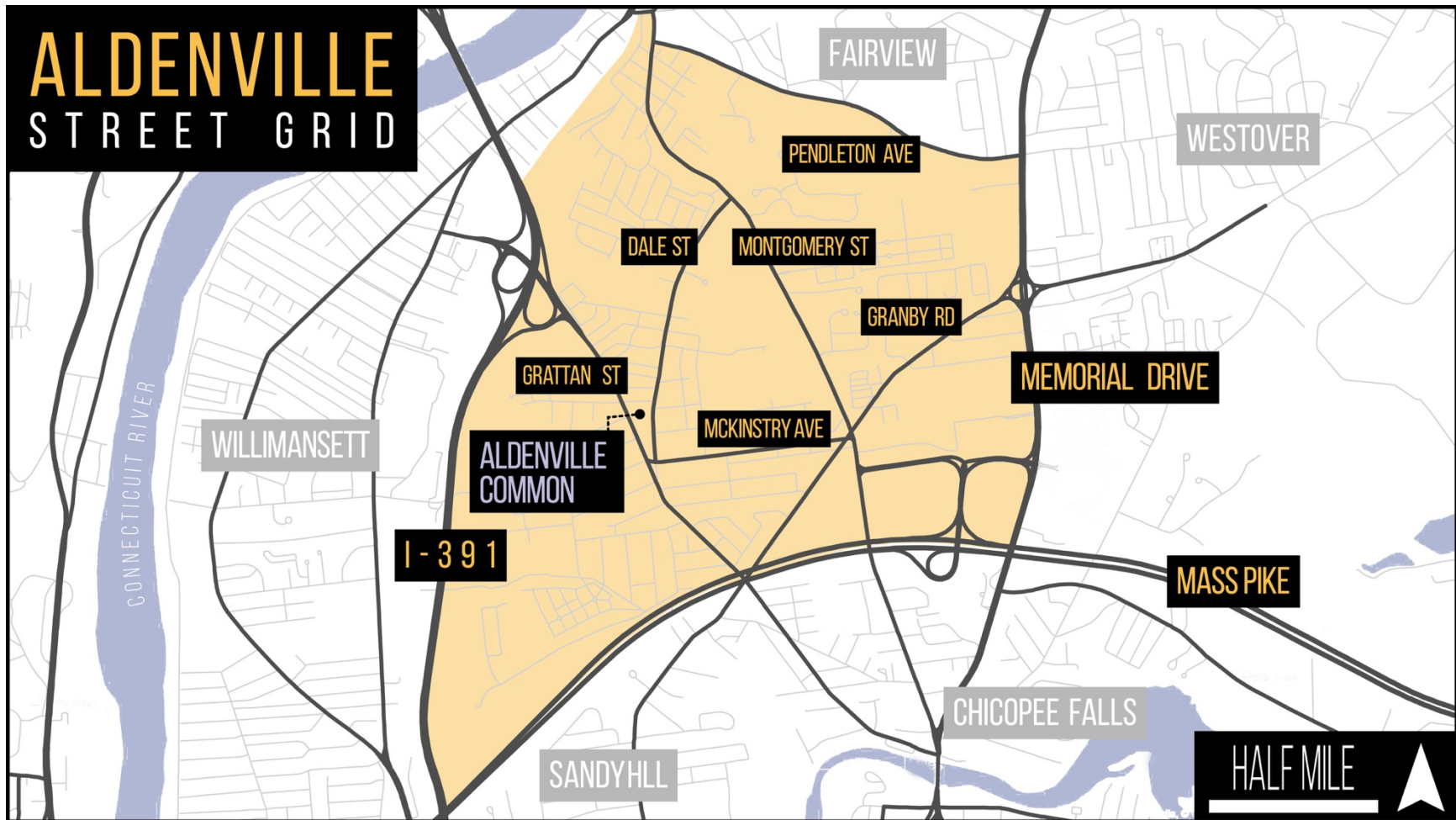


Figure 59 Aldenville street grid

Street map of Aldenville showing: the elevated arterial highways of the I-391 and the Mass Pike; the major divided road of Memorial Drive and major traffic corridors, including Grattan Street, McKinstry Avenue, Granby Road, and Montgomery Street. *Sources: MassGIS, ESRI.*

## **Economic Conditions**

Aldenville's economic conditions were examined by 7 Peaks to gain an understanding into occupations and unemployment. This economic information furthers 7 Peaks' understanding of the neighborhood's conditions. This information was also taken into account in determining land-use recommendations, which will be discussed later in this report.

### **Occupational Profile**

According to the Massachusetts Office of Labor and Workforce Development (MA-OLWD), 19,456 people worked in Chicopee in 2016, remaining approximately flat since 2001 when 20,560 worked in the City. The composition of the City's job market, however, has shifted significantly, with the manufacturing job sector dropping by almost to half of its 2001 level (Figure 60). During the same period, the retail, education, food service, and health sectors saw significant job growth, somewhat balancing the loss of manufacturing jobs. Overall, however, the City's job market shrunk by over 1,000 jobs, or about 5%. Health care jobs especially grew over the last 15 years, increasing by 782 jobs for 46.2% growth (Figure 61). Westover Airforce Base is the primary employer with 5,500 employees (Westover Air Reserve Base, 2017).

Very few people who live in Aldenville also work there.

According to Origin-Destination data from the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program, only 122 of the 3,322 job-holding Aldenville residents, or 3.7%, work within the Client-proposed neighborhood boundaries. Furthermore, only 18.7% of job-holding Aldenville residents work within the City, demonstrating the neighborhood's bedroom community character.

The occupational profile of individuals who live in Aldenville shares some similarities with the profile of individuals who work there (Figure 62). Most notably, the health care and social assistance sector is a major source of employment for both populations. About 1 in 5 people who live in Aldenville work in the health care and social assistance sector. The same figure roughly holds true for people who work in Aldenville. Combined with Origin-Destination LEHD data, the implication is that health care and social assistance workers who live in Aldenville are commuting to jobs outside the neighborhood, while health care workers who live outside the neighborhood are commuting into Aldenville to fill similar jobs. A full understanding of the phenomenon would require further research, and begs the question why Aldenville health workers are traveling outside the neighborhood to find employment when similar jobs are within the neighborhood's own boundaries.

### **Unemployment**

Chicopee's current unemployment rate is about 5% (MA-OWLD, 2017). Since 1990 this rate has averaged 6.7%, with the lowest at 2.5% in 2000 and highest at 12% in 2010. The unemployment rate in Chicopee has remained slightly higher than the State average over the last 15 years (Figure 63).



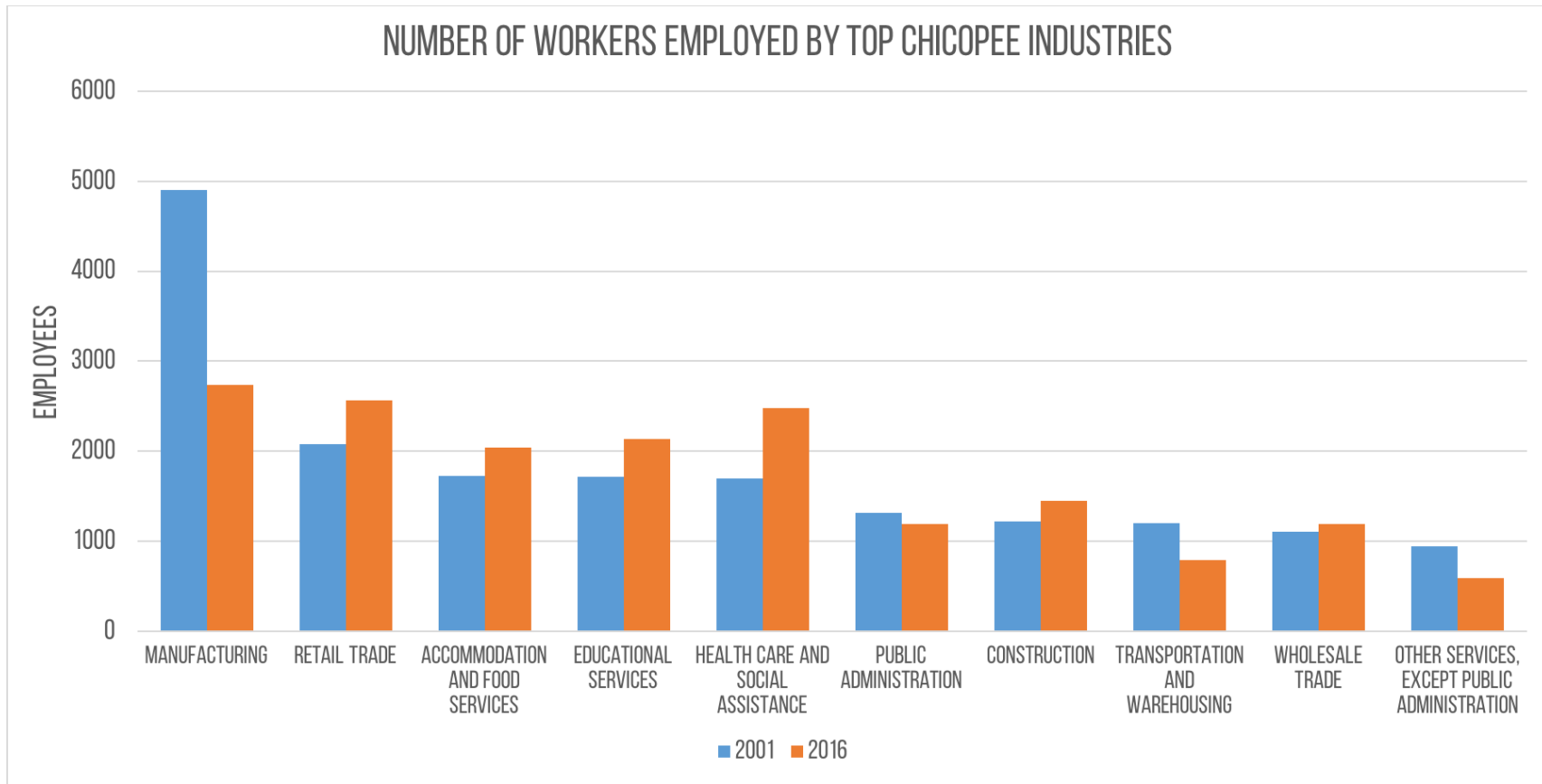


Figure 60. Number of workers employed in top Chicopee industries, 2001 and 2016

This image shows the number of workers employed in the top industries in Chicopee in 2001 and 2016. The number of workers in each industry in 2001 is shown in blue and the number in 2016 is shown in orange. This graph illustrates that manufacturing declined significantly during this 15-year period. It also shows that all other top industries grew except public administration, transportation and warehousing, and other services (except public administration). *Source: Massachusetts Office of Labor and Workforce Development.*

Description	Average Monthly Employment		Percent Change
	2001	2015	
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	165	270	63.6%
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,693	2,475	46.2%
Professional and Technical Services	180	226	25.6%
Educational Services	1,719	2,137	24.3%
Retail Trade	2,081	2,563	23.2%
Construction	1,219	1,450	18.9%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,728	2,042	18.2%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	168	188	11.9%
Wholesale Trade	1,108	1,187	7.1%
Finance and Insurance	358	356	-0.6%
Public Administration	1,312	1,189	-9.4%
Information	443	396	-10.6%
Administrative and Waste Services	757	560	-26.0%
Transportation and Warehousing	1,204	786	-34.7%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	939	589	-37.3%
Manufacturing	4,907	2,738	-44.2%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	397	165	-58.4%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	77	0	-100.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20,455</b>	<b>19,317</b>	

Figure 61. Percent change in top Chicopee employment industries, 2001-2015

This table shows the percent change in the top employment industries in Chicopee in 2001 and 2015. It is ordered from the highest percent increase to the highest percent decreased, from top to bottom, respectively. Increases in industry are shown in green and decreases are shown in red. The table demonstrates that the real estate and rental and leasing industry has dramatically increased. Professional and technical services, education services, and retail trade also having marked increases. Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting has had the most drastic decline; this industry is now non-existent. Manufacturing and management of companies and enterprises are among those who have had significant decreases in this 14-year period. *Source: Massachusetts Office of Labor and Workforce Development.*

Occupational Profile of People Who Work vs. People who Live in Aldenville

Sector	Work in Aldenville		Live in Aldenville	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	4	0.2%	9	0.3%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0.0%	4	0.1%
Utilities	0	0.0%	31	0.9%
Construction	308	12.3%	179	5.4%
Manufacturing	89	3.6%	368	11.0%
Wholesale Trade	28	1.1%	157	4.7%
Retail Trade	679	27.2%	394	11.8%
Transportation and Warehousing	35	1.4%	111	3.3%
Information	10	0.4%	47	1.4%
Finance and Insurance	93	3.7%	147	4.4%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	51	2.0%	45	1.4%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	46	1.8%	108	3.2%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0.0%	51	1.5%
Administrative and Waste Management	156	6.2%	144	4.3%
Educational Services	0	0.0%	335	10.1%
Health Care and Social Assistance	538	21.5%	672	20.2%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	0	0.0%	31	0.9%
Accommodation and Food Services	386	15.4%	269	8.1%
Other Services except Public Administration	77	3.1%	126	3.8%
Public Administration	0	0.0%	104	3.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2500</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3332</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Figure 62: Occupational profile of people who work versus people who live in Aldenville.

This image shows the occupational profile of those who work in Aldenville (shown in green) versus those who live in Aldenville (shown in blue). The disparity of the two types of industries is apparent. *Sources: Massachusetts Office of Labor and Workforce Development and U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics.*

## HISTORIC TREND OF CHICOPEE UNEMPLOYMENT

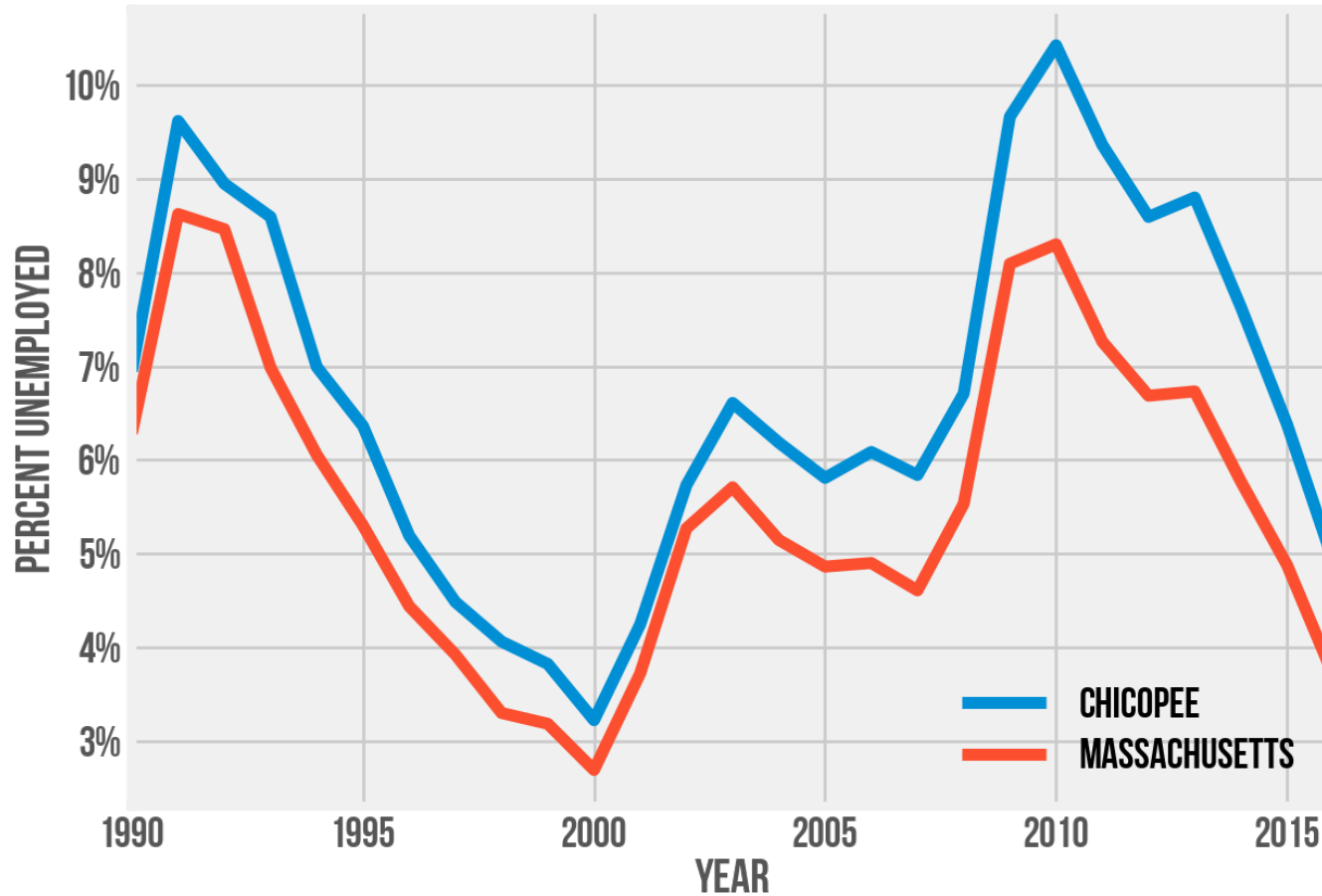


Figure 63: Historic trend in Chicopee and Massachusetts unemployment

This image shows the unemployment rates of Chicopee and Massachusetts from 1990 to 2015. Chicopee is shown in blue and the State is shown in red. They have followed a similar trend of periods of increase and decrease, but the City has maintained a slightly higher unemployment rate than the State during this 25-year period. *Source: Massachusetts Office of Labor and Workforce Development*



# Chapter 3: Precedent Studies

## Previous Plans in Chicopee

In order to contextualize the Aldenville pilot project, 7 Peaks consulted previous Studio projects and plans for the City of Chicopee. The following section details the major points of the various reports as well as the most important findings and recommendations as they relate to this Studio project. All of the following reports offer improvements and solutions to important assets within the City of Chicopee. The public engagement portion of each project is documented and was used to formulate project goals and milestones for 7 Peaks.

### Networks of Opportunity: A Citywide Vision for Pedestrian and Bicycle Pathways in Chicopee, Massachusetts (2016)

#### What is the problem?

The City of Chicopee developed with a central core and the neighborhoods of Chicopee are divided by the major roads that intersect the City. Thus, the City is not very pedestrian- or bicycle-friendly. A special focus is placed on students walking or cycling to school since no bus service is provided for students living within a mile of an elementary school, 1.5 miles of a middle school, and 2 miles of a high school. Due to these constraints of the school system, an evaluation of the safety of sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities was necessary to assess how safe it was for students to walk to school. Pacer Planning, a consulting firm created by the fall 2016 Regional Planning Studio class at UMass Amherst, partnered with the City of Chicopee Planning Department to address some of those problems by focusing on safer paths to school for school-aged children.

#### Who is/are the author(s) that did the work?

The report was developed by Pacer Planning, with oversight from the Chicopee Planning Department. Pacer Planning was a consulting firm created by the fall 2015 graduate Regional Planning Studio students at UMass Amherst.

#### How much time did the author(s) have to do the work?

Pacer Planning completed the data collection of this report during the fall semester of 2016, and the report was finalized early in the spring of 2017.

#### What issues did the author(s) outline?

This report sought to increase local and regional connections between the City's schools, parks, and other amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists. The Client provided the following goals:

1. Divide the City into sectors, or cohesive spatial sub-units, which provide an aerial lens through which the City can be understood.
2. Identify key destination points within these spatial sub-units.
3. Propose improvements to existing paths and identify new potential paths that connect the City's sectors and destinations.
4. Use public engagement to inform recommendations related to improvements to pedestrian and bicyclist networks.

#### Do any of these issues sync with our Studio project?

One of the goals of 7 Peaks Planning is to improve sidewalks and bike lanes for Aldenville. Pacer Planning has similar recommendations for Chicopee as a whole. One of the major foci for Pacer Planning was on safe paths to school. Aldenville contains several schools, such as Bellamy Middle and Lambert-Lavoie, which could benefit from sidewalk improvements.

Therefore, more children would be able to walk safely to school instead of being driven by a parent.

*What, if any, public engagement process did the author(s) use?*

Pacer Planning conducted seven interviews with school administration officials, City employees, Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) members, and school administrators. Interviews were done in person and by telephone. The interview and survey period lasted from October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016, to November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The interviews were with four principals, two vice principals, and one representative from the City Engineer's office. For the in-person and phone interviews, respondents were asked a series of questions pertaining to their comfort level with students walking to school.

In addition to the interviews, Pacer Planning created and distributed an electronic survey which received 106 responses within a week. The survey contained the same questions as the interviews, additional questions pertaining to the factors that guide parents' decisions to allow or not allow their children to walk to school, and demographic questions about respondents. The most significant safety issues were found to be speed of traffic and sidewalk safety. Many parents also stated that they might consider allowing their children to walk to school if the City of Chicopee could implement traffic calming measures and improve sidewalk accessibility.

*Recommendations*

1. Improve pedestrian access across the City of Chicopee to enhance the safety and walkability for residents.
2. Create more points of entry to the Chicopee River and incorporate these paths into the existing path network to enhance access to the river for recreational purposes.

3. Collaborate with each of the City's schools to assess support for the Safe Routes to School program in order to receive funding for projects related to student walker safety.
4. Encourage the City to update City-wide planning documents to standardize pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure implementation strategies.
5. Create a bike lane and a pedestrian footpath under the utility corridors adjacent to Bellamy Middle School, which is located in Aldenville.

*Summary*

Several aspects of the Chicopee bicycle and pedestrian plan are applicable to the current Studio project. Many of the major roads in Aldenville such as McKinstry Avenue and Grattan Street have minimal sidewalks and few crosswalks. Speeding traffic makes it unsafe for crossing pedestrians. This aligns with Pacer Planning's recommendations for enhanced pedestrian access across the City of Chicopee. The focus on Bellamy Middle School was pertinent to the project because the school is located at the edge of Aldenville neighborhood. There is a consistent focus on enhancing connectivity between schools and parks.

The use of the electronic survey for the bike and pedestrian plan was similar to the survey 7 Peaks used for Aldenville. In addition, 7 Peaks conducted several informal interviews with key stakeholders including the School Superintendent. The current Studio project used Facebook to reach out to a number of stakeholders.

The lessons from Networks of Opportunity can be applied to the current project being undertaken by 7 Peaks. Specifically, Aldenville Commons, Grattan Street, and McKinstry Avenue will be the major targets for land-use interventions for 7 Peaks.

## Open Space & Food Access in the City of Chicopee (2015)

### *What is the problem?*

The City of Chicopee lacks accessible healthy food options. Furthermore, the City hopes to spur sustainable economic development and revitalization through the creation of open space, recreation, and food accessibility. Once a booming industrial site, Chicopee Falls has a high percentage of low-income populations. In addition, there are several contaminated brownfields sites in the City which inhibit access to open spaces and food. The plan identified three properties that would address Chicopee's vision of sustainable economic development and enhanced food security and provided design and land-use interventions to help the City achieve its goals.

### *Who is/are the author(s) that did the work?*

The report was developed by PEACE Planners with the guidance of the Chicopee Planning Department. PEACE Planners was a consulting firm created by the fall 2015 graduate Regional Planning Studio students at UMass Amherst.

### *How much time did the author(s) have to do the work?*

The project was done during the fall 2015 semester. This period lasted roughly three-and-a-half months.

### *What issues did the author(s) outline?*

The authors identify three properties that will address the City of Chicopee's vision of sustainable economic revitalization. These properties are the Baskin Property warehouse, RiverMills South (formerly Uniroyal), and Delta Park. These three sites were all connected along the Chicopee Riverwalk. PEACE Planners created intervention timelines for each property, including short-term, mid-term, and long-term actions.

### *Do any of these issues sync with our Studio project?*

The Open Space & Food Access Plan explores the issues of food insecurity and accessibility, which relates to the limited choices of restaurants and stores in Aldenville. Furthermore, the Open Space & Food Access Plan deals with the adaptive reuse of abandoned buildings. Aldenville has vacant buildings that could be redeveloped. This plan and our Studio project both address issues of transportation and connectivity within Chicopee.

### *What, if any, public engagement process did the author(s) use?*

PEACE Planners used two different strategies to engage different members of the public to understand the community's wants and needs. They held a public meeting involving a participatory mapping exercise that prompted discussion on the Baskin Property, RiverMills South, and Delta Park. They also had a stakeholder meeting on the Baskin Property where people came to tour the property, give recommendations, and share ideas.

### *Recommendations*

1. Develop phase plans for development of the Baskin Property, RiverMills South, and Delta Park.
2. Determine the City's needs for the RiverMills South property, and once those needs are determined, determine cost estimates that suit the needs of local residents.
3. For the Baskin Property, create a Food Policy Council to create policies that facilitate access to fresh, healthy food for all residents of Chicopee.
4. Open up a year-round indoor farmers' market inside the Baskin Property building.
5. The City should connect Delta Park to the proposed Chicopee RiverWalk and also incorporate more public engagement into this park redevelopment process.



### *Summary*

7 Peaks used the focus of the Food and Open Space Plan to formulate sections of the survey that was distributed within Aldenville. As this report highlighted the importance of food and open space, 7 Peaks wanted to determine whether any of the obstacles to food security had been addressed by investigating residents' opinions of healthy food availability. While 7 Peaks did not directly improve on the properties identified within this report, their locations and amenities were used to guide the analysis of the sites chosen by 7 Peaks.

PEACE Planners did a more extensive land-use analysis of their properties than 7 Peaks, and because of this, PEACE was limited to two public meetings on the three chosen properties. These had low resident attendance. This reinforced the idea of historically low participation rates in Aldenville and Chicopee and led 7 Peaks to develop alternative, innovative approaches to successful engagement.

The lessons from PEACE Planners' public engagement and land-use were utilized by 7 Peaks to formulate a different engagement approach. The work done on the three properties was loosely emulated through 7 Peaks' work on the locations determined through the survey analysis.

## Memorial Drive Revitalization (2014)

### *What is the problem?*

Memorial Drive is an automobile-oriented road that consists primarily of big-box stores, fast food restaurants, hotels, and other businesses. Historically, lax zoning laws have allowed for big-box stores such as the Home Depot and Walmart to dominate the landscape, creating a difficult environment for local businesses to compete. This pattern has led to auto-oriented sprawl. Memorial Drive is not pedestrian-friendly, with inconsistent sidewalks, no bike lanes, and only 14 crosswalks on the entire 3.7-mile stretch. The width of the road poses a challenge for pedestrians who wish to cross the road. Furthermore, big-box stores produce less tax revenue than denser mixed-use development.

### *Who is/are the author(s) who did the work?*

The report was written by Hills House Planners (HHP), working with the City of Chicopee. HHP was a consulting firm created by the fall 2014 graduate Regional Planning Studio students at UMass Amherst.

### *How much time did the author(s) have to work?*

HHP completed this report during the fall 2014 semester. This period lasted roughly three-and-a-half months.

### *What issues did the author(s) outline?*

HHP identified strategies to increase the tax revenue by retrofitting existing parcels with mixed-use developments. They also outlined the lack of pedestrian-friendly amenities. Furthermore, they examined the impervious surface that was created with the construction of parking lots. There was a 10% vacancy rate in the entire corridor. HHP identifies three

commercial sites that will be repurposed to enhance pedestrian mobility.

HHP identified three specific sites that were priorities for repurposing. Site #1 contains a number of auto-oriented businesses, many of which are vacant. Site #2 consists of Walmart, the Home Depot, and an array of other stores and restaurants. Pedestrian amenities are minimal, creating numerous conflicts with vehicles. Site #3 consists of U-Haul, Town Fair Tire, and a few other businesses which are eyesores to residents in the adjacent neighborhood.

*Do any of these issues sync with our Studio project?*

The Memorial Drive Revitalization plan examines issues pertaining to pedestrian circulation safety. Aldenville contains several streets with similar issues. Grattan Street and McKinstry Avenue are notorious for having very few crosswalks. Geographically, Memorial Drive is considered a boundary of Aldenville. Therefore, some of the traffic from Memorial Drive might spill over onto Montgomery Street and McKinstry Avenue within Aldenville.

*What, if any, public engagement processes did the author(s) use?*

HHP conducted a public engagement workshop that involved a dot-voting mapping exercise. This activity captured community members' feelings regarding assets and threats of the Memorial Drive corridor. Flyers were distributed to businesses on Memorial Drive to advertise the meeting. Only 18 people showed up, 10 of whom were Chicopee residents. Participants used green, yellow, red, and blue dots to identify positive, transitional, negative, and priority areas, respectively. After the groups presented their dot maps to the participants at the meeting, HHP processed all of the input and translated the data into viable recommendations for improvements along the corridor.

*Recommendations*

1. Implement a series of regulatory tools such as commercial-residential zoning overlay, performance zoning, floor/area ratio standards, and mixed-use zoning.
2. Implement a Complete Streets plan for Memorial Drive that includes bike lanes, improved sidewalks, and street trees.
3. Work with Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) to determine the feasibility of creating narrower vehicle lanes and smaller roundabouts (instead of rotaries).
4. Partner with PVRTA to increase bus service.
5. Replace underutilized parking areas with infill development.

*Summary*

The lessons from the Memorial Drive Plan are applicable to 7 Peaks' project in Aldenville in several ways. The concerns raised about sidewalks and crosswalks gave us ideas about what questions to formulate for the survey. Even though Aldenville does not have big-box stores like Memorial Drive does, the traffic patterns and street layouts in Aldenville reflect a car-oriented culture. Like Memorial Drive, Grattan Street and McKinstry Avenue are hostile to pedestrians because there are very few traffic calming elements for cars speeding along these avenues.

Another key takeaway from the Memorial Drive Plan was the methodology HHP used for public engagement. In theory, a dot-mapping exercise is a beneficial way to gain public input to determine which sites are assets and which ones need improvement. However, since only 10 City residents (and only 18 people total) showed up, this strategy failed to capture a large

portion of Chicopee's population. Therefore, 7 Peaks decided that a survey would be a more feasible method for reaching out to residents.

HHP's Memorial Drive Plan served as a blueprint for land-use in many ways. HHP identified many sites, such as the shopping center with Walmart and Home Depot. One of the issues they identified was a lack of zoning regulations that would facilitate pedestrian circulation as well as aesthetics. One observation was that zoning boundaries did not align with parcels, splitting some parcels into multizone areas. Incompatible zoning uses abut each other and create an unpleasant pedestrian experience. Similarly, the vacant storefronts in Aldenville demonstrate apathy towards building appearance, which can be attributed to flaws in zoning regulations.

Sidewalks and crosswalks are a high priority in Aldenville. Restaurants and stores will get a lot of attention as well. The lessons from the Memorial Drive Plan will guide Chicopee's Planning Department in identifying specific locations for interventions in addition to the locations and corridors suggested by 7 Peaks.

## Connections: The Open Space & Recreation Plan for the City of Chicopee (2016)

### *What is the problem?*

Changes in departmental staff and administration in the City of Chicopee created the need for deeper conversations to be held about the Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP). The City makes updates to the plan every seven years, and the 2016 OSRP is the most recent iteration, updating the 2007 OSRP, and provides the “the municipality and residents a prioritized plan to guide activities and investments in the coming years...” while allowing the City “...to be eligible for state, federal, and non-profit funding for park land improvements and land conservation” (p. 9). The current update emphasizes building modern recreational facilities connected by a network of parks and trails, specifically looking to create more access opportunities to the Connecticut and Chicopee Rivers.

### *Who is/are the author(s) that did the work?*

The 2016 Open Space & Recreation Plan was developed by the City of Chicopee Planning Department and Parks & Recreation Department, with technical assistance provided by Conservation Works LLC.

### *How much time did the author(s) have to do the work?*

In March 2015 the City launched its public engagement campaign to gather feedback on the OSRP. Three public neighborhood meetings were held in March 2015 and a public survey (with 492 respondents) was live from March 24<sup>th</sup>– April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

### *What issues did the author(s) outline?*

The community survey found five distinct categories: bike and pedestrian accessibility / alternative forms of transportation; recreation; land conservation; food security; and facilities and

improvements. A desire for bike paths was the top identified priority among survey respondents (58.9%) with a vast majority of respondents supporting the development of new greenways and multi-use paths (85.4%). Respondents ranked land conservation as their second highest priority (50.4%).

When asked to prioritize open space, respondents felt that the land conserved should "...be preserved for recreation and outdoor education purposes: active recreation (76.8%), access or outdoor recreation (75.8%), passive recreation (75.4%), and access to rivers, streams and ponds (74.6%)" (p. 84), just edging out land for conservation purposes (72.8%). Residents were unsatisfied with their recreational options. Many (58.9%) felt that they were underserved despite the City operating 29 municipal parks. A majority of respondents (75.4%) reported that they leave the City to seek recreational opportunities. The third highest priority identified was issues related to food security (30.5%). The City is aware of the need for a more substantial farmers' market, with only one existing one day a week during the summer under the I-391 overpass.

#### *Do any of these issues sync with our Studio project?*

Food access and pedestrian networks were two areas identified through the Aldenville project public engagement campaign conducted by 7 Peaks from October 13<sup>th</sup> – November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017. To address these issues, 7 Peaks is proposing the development of two pedestrian trails to better connect assets in Aldenville while helping to address issues of traffic congestion. Further, 7 Peaks is proposing the development of a Sunday farmers' market on the Aldenville Commons, making use of Alden Credit Union's parking lot (closed on Sundays) to help improve food access. During the public engagement process for the OSRP, just under one percent of Chicopee's population responded to the survey, with roughly 79 of the responses coming from Aldenville, the

focus of 7 Peaks' Studio project. This response rate helped inform 7 Peaks' baseline estimates for the engagement campaign.

#### *What, if any, public engagement process did the author(s) use?*

The City of Chicopee used two public engagement methods. First, three public meetings were held in 2015 with Spanish and Portuguese translators' presence if needed: March 19 in Chicopee Center at the Portuguese American Club; March 25 at General John J. Stefanik School; and March 31 at Chicopee Falls Branch Library. Second, a public survey was available online via Google Forms from March 24<sup>th</sup> – April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015, with hard copies available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. The survey garnered 492 responses, 79 of which were from the Aldenville neighborhood.

#### *Recommendations*

The 2016 OSRP identified five goals and the associated actions the City can take to accomplish the goals:

1. The recreational needs of all residents are met regardless of age, race, sex or ability.
  - Maintain current high standard of care of existing infrastructure and programs, making improvements as needed.
  - Create accessible and universal programming to benefit all residents.
  - Coordinate recreational programs between City departments and non-profit groups.
  - Improve access to parks for all residents.
2. Citizens are aware of the value of cultural, natural, and historic resources that the City contains.
  - Emphasize natural resources and cultural character through educational programming.

- Get children and seniors involved in environmental programs.
  - Make sure there is active communication between City departments regarding open space issues.
  - Make educational information about the City's rich history readily available.
3. The protection of Connecticut and Chicopee Rivers, as they have value through open space and recreational opportunities.
    - Create better access to both rivers and improve the shoreline.
    - Develop incentives for developers to incorporate open space.
    - Continue working with regional agencies to coordinate river restoration and protection projects.
  4. The protection of ecologically important resources such as wetlands and other various groundwater recharge areas.
    - Use local wetlands for educational purposes.
    - Identify and abate water polluters.
    - Protect and expand wildlife habitat.
    - Deal with brownfields in a way that supports the ecological integrity of the surrounding area.
  5. Make urban agriculture an important part of the community that helps provide fresh food and air to the residents.
    - Create local policies and regulations that support farming in the community.
    - Venues for locally grown food to be sold year-round.
    - The creation of community gardens for residents.

### *Summary*

The 2016 Open Space & Recreation Plan provided important information for 7 Peaks regarding community participation and response rate for public engagement events. The survey component of the plan received 492 respondents, with 79 (16.1%) coming from the Aldenville neighborhood. This allows for 7 Peaks to create an expected response baseline for the survey component of the Studio project.

Beyond providing baseline numbers, the plan demonstrates City residents' desire for the creation of bike paths, which was ranked as top priority among survey respondents (58.9%). A vast majority of respondents support the development of new greenways and multi-use paths (85.4%). 7 Peaks will take the findings made in the 2016 OSRP and incorporate them into recommendations made for Aldenville.

The first and fifth goals emphasized in the 2016 plan provided guidance visions for 7 Peaks' Aldenville recommendations. 7 Peaks wants to create a trail network to better connect the parks and recreational assets in Aldenville and greater Chicopee. By doing so, 7 Peaks hopes that all residents will have better access to recreational opportunities, thus fulfilling the first goal of the 2016 OSRP. Beyond the trail network, 7 Peaks will try to address the fifth goal of the plan through the creation of a farmers' market in Aldenville Commons to provide healthy food options for residents.

## Comparative Plans and Precedents

To provide context for the Aldenville Studio project, 7 Peaks consulted several reports completed by members of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at UMass Amherst as well as comprehensive, master, village, and corridor plans of various cities and towns. The following section discusses the key points of the reports and plans as well as the most important findings and recommendations as they relate to this Studio project. The public engagement portion of each project that had one is documented and was used to formulate project goals for 7 Peaks.

## Amherst Comprehensive Planning Study: Defining Village Boundaries & Open Space Preservation Strategies

### What is the problem?

Amherst is a suburban town of around 38,000 residents. The Amherst Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC) carried out a visioning process for the Town in the late 1990s, publishing *Amherst Visions* in 1998. This plan recommended that the Town engage in a comprehensive planning process for growth and development consistent with Town goals. However, it was unable to secure funding via Town Meeting for this process, although in 2000 they were able to begin a Build-out and Future Growth Analysis using data from MassGIS and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) to determine the amount of developable land and projections for future population and resource loads (Applied Geographics, Inc., & Philip B. Herr & Associates, 2002). The Town enlisted help from UMass Amherst for several components of the plan in order to continue this planning effort: open space preservation, village boundary definition, and village center design. The Town has had marked growth and seeks to preserve its open space and rural character while accommodating growth.

### Who is/are the author(s) that did the work?

The UMass Amherst Graduate Landscape Planning Studio of 2004, directed by then Assistant Professor Robert L. Ryan, completed this work.

### How much time did the author(s) have to work?

They had the length of a fall semester (roughly three-and-a-half months), in addition to one author editing the report during the spring semester for publication the following May.

### What issues did the author(s) outline?

The Town has a traditional rural character from its agricultural past and scenic views from its topography, but population growth and the shift to a service economy have led to issues surrounding development and build-out, resulting in sprawl and a need for open space preservation. Development has often been concentrated in Village centers, but the Town has not conducted detailed studies of all of them. This project focused on three of them (North Amherst, Amherst Center and the East Amherst Common, and South Amherst and Echo Hill) to define their boundaries and looked into how they could manage growth. The Town wants to concentrate development in these centers in order to avoid sprawl and preserve open space while making them attractive, mixed-use, walkable, and bikeable.

### Do any of these issues sync with our Studio project?

The authors examine defining village boundaries and village centers as well as their capacity for infill, much like we are doing with Aldenville. Although their methods for this come from Town documents and committees while ours primarily originate from public engagement, we also consulted City resources during our land-use study and recommendations. They also seek to expand on the Town's planning efforts toward creating a sense of neighborhood and identity like we are in Aldenville. Additionally, the authors look at open space preservation, and 7 Peaks pursued plans for a trail connecting Ray Ash Park and McKinstry Farm to ensure better access to open space areas.

### What, if any, public engagement processes did the author(s) use?

They consulted some individuals regarding areas of concern and their expertise; however, the number of individuals, who they were, and what their expertise was is not mentioned in the report. They also presented their findings at a public meeting to about 30-40 people at the conclusion of the project. Otherwise, they did not have a public engagement process.

### Recommendations

The authors make several recommendations for the three villages of focus.

1. The Planning Department should use Viewshed Protection Overlay Districts to reduce impact to important viewsheds by limiting or preventing development and vegetation removal.
2. The Planning Department should have more woodland protection for subdivisions and other areas as opposed to only in wooded areas.
3. Protect and replace street trees in existing neighborhoods; the Town currently only requires these trees in new residential development. The authors did not specify who would be responsible for this.
4. The Planning Department should make cluster development a more attractive option compared to conventional development.
5. The Planning and Zoning Boards should lessen current barriers to infill development, including reexamining zoning restrictions that prevent potential infill areas from building.
6. The Planning Department with assistance from Neighborhood Associations should have Design Review Guidelines that include concepts of Town character so that business and residential development are in line with them.

## South Hadley Design Assessment Report

### What is the problem?

The Town of South Hadley requested assistance in furthering the goals of their 2010 Master Plan. To help the Town evaluate future developments according to the Master Plan, a toolkit of design guidelines, evaluation recommendations, assessment criteria, and identification of priority focus areas was created. This toolkit was developed for reference to be used by the Town review board in the future to help guide decisions on proposed redevelopment and expansion of integral downtown areas.

### Who is/are the author(s) that did the work?

The South Hadley Design Assessment was completed by UMass Amherst's Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning (LARP) as well as Architecture and Design (A+D) faculty and students. The Town of South Hadley believed that the LARP and A+D Departments at UMass Amherst were uniquely equipped to assist in the furtherance of its 2010 Master Plan.

### How much time did the authors have to do the work?

Data collection and priority focus areas were identified in the summer and winter of 2011. The South Hadley Design Assessment was drafted in 2012, with a final report published in 2014 by LARP and A+D faculty.

### What issues did the authors outline?

The Town of South Hadley asked for the identification of priority areas by the LARP and A+D team for future development of building and streetscape design guidelines. An inventory of relevant and significant structures and streets was compiled and delivered to assist South Hadley in understanding the rationale behind the priority areas identified. In addition, an inventory of key structures and processes that similar towns of similar sizes have undertaken were documented to assist in furthering the 2010 Master Plan.

### Do any of these issues sync with our studio project?

The identification of priority focus areas is similar to the goals 7 Peaks hopes to accomplish with the Aldenville pilot study. In doing this, 7 Peaks would inform the City of Chicopee where the most important assets are located within Aldenville and how to improve those areas for the benefits of residents and tourists alike. While 7 Peaks is not building off of an existing master plan, ideally the Aldenville pilot project will serve as the groundwork for a larger Aldenville and Chicopee Visioning Process that the Client will undertake in the future.

### What, if any, public engagement process did the authors use?

The majority of the research was conducted by traveling throughout South Hadley to document existing structures and features and capturing that data in a reference format. A separate report was completed by another group of LARP and A+D students working in South Hadley that documented public participation and Studio charrettes conducted in advancement of the 2010 Master Plan.

### Recommendations

The LARP and A+D team made several recommendations for the Town of South Hadley.

1. Start implementation of the toolkit with easily achievable objectives to inform and engage the public.
2. After the success of these easier objectives, the team believes that the introduction of more complex ideas contained within the research would advance the goals of the 2010 Master Plan.
3. The creation of a preliminary design assessment for future planning and redevelopment in the Town to evaluate plans based on its building and streetscape design guidelines.



4. The LARP team identified priority focus areas for South Hadley to target first in their master plan, as a pilot project for greater and more complex redevelopment strategies to achieve the goals of the 2010 Master Plan for South Hadley.

## Town of Ludlow Master Plan. Part I: Envisioning 2030

### What is the problem?

In developing a Master Plan, the Town of Ludlow needs to reconcile tension between many residents' aspirations for new growth and others wanting to maintain the City's character as it is. The traditional zoning regulations and codes, low levels of public engagement, and short-term planning are no longer effective in the face of these challenges.

### Who is/are the author(s) that did the work?

The Town of Ludlow's Planning Department contracted with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) to assist in the development of their Master Plan. UMass Amherst graduate students in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning (LARP) assisted the PVPC in the development of the Master Plan and community vision.

### How much time did the author(s) have to do the work?

The project began in June 2009 by PVPC and was completed as a UMass Amherst LARP Graduate Studio project in December 2009.

### What issues did the author(s) outline?

The Town must act on five overarching issues it develops its long-term Master Plan. The first includes overhauling existing land-use regulations; these regulations are inadequate to manage current and future growth and have been unevenly applied. Secondly, the Town must address the low availability of affordable housing; it has not met the state standard of 10% affordable housing. Thirdly, the Town should improve access to parks and recreation in the downtown areas (where it is currently lacking). Fourth, the Town must better protect its natural, historical, and cultural assets. Farmland, historic buildings, and

natural resources are all threatened due to under-regulated development. Finally, Ludlow should develop a Capital Improvements Plan to better manage the Town's infrastructure and finances. To meet these financial goals, the Town must also expand its capacity to acquire funding from both public and private sources.

#### Do any of these issues sync with our Studio project?

There are parallels between the goals of the Town of Ludlow as they developed their Master Plan and the City of Chicopee. Both municipalities are faced with the challenge of maintaining the quality and active use of their natural, cultural, and historical assets. Working to increase access to recreation and open space – particularly by developing more walkable streets and neighborhoods – are also key pieces of 7 Peaks' land-use recommendations to the City of Chicopee.

#### What, if any, public engagement process did the author(s) use?

In June 2009, PVPC began the project with community stakeholder interviews with 50 community members. In October 2009, PVPC conducted a community survey for residents of the Town available in English and Portuguese. The results of the survey were not made available in this report. In November 2009, a visioning workshop was facilitated by the LARP graduate students. The details of this workshop were not available, and its results were to be published in a final report to PVPC and the Town of Ludlow.

#### Recommendations

As this was a first step in the design of a Master Plan, and not the final report, recommendations were framed as tentative.

1. For housing, the report recommends promoting more housing stock for low-income families, elderly residents, and municipal workers such as teachers.

2. To preserve Ludlow's cultural and historic resources, both regulatory and non-regulatory recommendations were proposed. To improve regulatory capacity, the report recommends adoption of the Community Preservation Act in order to preserve key assets and open space, and to develop and enforce local regulation to better manage the National Register Historic Districts within the Town. For non-regulatory interventions, the report suggests increased education efforts around local resources (with an emphasis on tourism), improved pedestrian and bike pathways through historically and environmentally valuable areas, as well as increased local programming in the form of festivals and celebrations by the Town and citizen groups.
3. In its recommendations, the report proposes a bike and hiking greenway connecting downtown Ludlow to the northern area of town and its multiple conservation areas. Improved access to the Chicopee River conservation lands, playgrounds, and Chapin Elementary School were included as anchors of this greenway trail.

## Economic Development Plan Town of Warren, Massachusetts

### What is the problem?

As mill industry has dwindled in the Town of Warren, so has its commercial and industrial tax base. In order to cover municipal expenditures, the town has raised residential tax rates, which residents view with concern. The proposed Economic Development Plan suggests policy changes to encourage new economic activity, retain still existing manufacturing operations, and enhance resident quality of life.

### Who is/are the author(s) that did the work?

UMass Amherst Regional Planning (RP) graduate students completed the work as an RP Studio final project, and under the auspices of the UMass Center for Economic Development.

### How much time did the author(s) have to work?

The report does not specify a work schedule, but presumably the students had a semester to complete the plan.

### What issues did the author(s) outline?

The primary issue that the authors outlined is stagnant economic growth within the Town of Warren, as evidenced by a dwindling commercial tax base and high commercial vacancy rates in the Town's two Village Centers: Warren and West Warren. Poorly maintained buildings blighted the Village Centers. A prime example is the Warren Community Center building, which lies vacant in West Warren Center and requires renovations. A lack of architectural uniformity also prevented the Village Centers from coalescing into vibrant, distinct focal points of community life and business activity.

### Do any of these issues sync with our studio project?

Although the Town of Warren (population 5,000) is significantly smaller than the City of Chicopee (pop. 56,000), the economic depression facing its downtown core is quite similar to that affecting the center of Aldenville (pop. 7,000). Both require strategies to attract investment to their respective traditional downtowns. While the decline of the mill industry has affected both communities, Aldenville faces the additional challenge of competing with corporate retail establishments along Memorial Drive, including Walmart, Home Depot, and a host of fast food restaurants.

The authors' recommendation of a Central Business District (CBD) has ties to the Aldenville project. CBDs encourage mixed-use development while prohibiting more intensive commercial uses. The Center of Aldenville could benefit from a CBD designation. The majority of the property along Grattan Street, Aldenville's major commercial corridor, is zoned Business A, which allows residential uses only by special permit. The City's CBD ordinance, already in place on select parcels around the City, allows certain residential uses by right. A CBD in Aldenville would provide potential investors with greater flexibility to redevelop and would support the creation a walkable neighborhood center.

### What, if any, public engagement processes did the author(s) use?

A mail survey was sent to 2,000 Warren residents. Over the course of three months, 810 completed surveys were received, for a response rate of over 40%. Survey questions focused on possible development scenarios for the Town of Warren. Respondents favoring new growth outnumbered those who discouraged it by a 2 to 1 margin (44% vs. 22%). The authors offer minimal description of the survey instrument or results. Survey length, format, or specific questions are not specified,

leaving unknown why or how the survey elicited such a strong response rate.

In addition to the survey, a focus group was held with residents and business owners in West Warren, one of the Town's main developed areas. Focus group input provided invaluable historical insight on business and development patterns in the Town. The report does not specify the focus group's date, time, or the number of attendees.

### Recommendations

The report recommends a wide variety of short-term and long-term interventions to spur economic growth, including zoning improvements, business incentive programs, and funding streams.

1. Update zoning to better manage growth.
2. Target specific development areas, including Village Centers, mill complex, infill of brownfields and other sites, redevelopment and reuse of older buildings, and highway corridors.
3. Establish a Central Business District (CBD) in Warren's Village Centers to attract development.
4. Make design and aesthetic updates to buildings and signage to promote cohesiveness and attractiveness and help establish Town character.
5. Improve infrastructure, including updates to road and parking networks; sidewalks; street trees; and utilities such as water, sewer, wireless access, and phone lines.

## Creating a Successful Wayfinding System: Lessons Learned from Springfield, Massachusetts

### What is the problem?

When visiting a place for the first time, it is wise to familiarize yourself with the environment around you. A wayfinding system "...is a holistic concept that focuses on making the environment easier to read and understand" (Lu, 2016, p. 3) and the current wayfinding system in Springfield, Massachusetts is ineffective. Lu provides recommendations on how to improve the signage in Springfield based on case study precedence and interviews with people in the City. Lu hopes that the recommendations will allow for easier pedestrian travel in downtown Springfield and the associated benefits, such as increased foot traffic for storefronts and health benefits from physical exercise. The overall aim of the project is to develop recommendations that can provide guidance for other cities and towns while using Springfield as an example.

### Who is/are the author(s) that did the work?

Yanhua Lu wrote this Master's Project as part of her requirements for her Master's in Regional Planning at UMass Amherst. Michael DiPasquale was the project chair and Ethan Carr was a committee member.

### How much time did the author(s) have to work?

The work does provide a start date. A majority of the work appears to have occurred over the 2016 spring semester, including the survey which was conducted across five locations in downtown Springfield using convenience sampling and took place between February and March 2016. The final product was submitted for November 2016.

### What issues did the author(s) outline?

Wayfinding is an important component to the urban environment. Allowing residents and visitors to have a spatial concept of their location provides a more pleasurable experience. Through the survey, Lu identified problems with Springfield's current wayfinding system, which consists of 46 temporary signs placed around the City. The current signs are too small to be read or noticed, they lack character, are not bilingual, and do not provide adequate information.

#### What, if any, public engagement processes did the author(s) use?

A survey was created by the UMass Design Center in Springfield and given to residents and visitors in spring 2016 to see how familiar they were with downtown metro area. The survey had 103 respondents that were selected with convenience sampling at five locations in downtown Springfield. Nearly half of the responses (50) were from the Tower Square Food Court, with other responses coming from the Quadrangle (18), YMCA (15), Classical Condominiums (10), and the Peter Pan Bus Station (10).

#### Do any of these issues sync with our Studio Project?

This project seeks to understand, in part, walkability in the neighborhood of Aldenville. Lu found that the majority of respondents were willing to walk 1-3 miles (72%), which is far greater than the .25-mile/5-minute rule. Generally, survey respondents knew how to get around Springfield and made the choice to travel via automobile. However, that choice was influenced by the lack of perceived safety and interesting features and storefronts in the downtown area. Increased safety and more active storefronts were incentives to getting more people to walk. According to the survey, 25% of respondents did not know the time it took to get to a destination by foot, making a good case for increased directional and informational signage in the City. Chicopee is an auto-oriented City much like Springfield that could benefit from increased wayfinding signage and safety measures to encourage walkability.

Wayfinding informs you when you have arrived as well as where you are going and the path you will take. 7 Peaks wants to enhance the neighborhood identity for Aldenville, one where residents and visitors can not only get around, but have a connection to the neighborhood. The path 7 Peaks is proposing to develop will link the asset of Ray Ash Memorial Park to McKinstry Farms via a connection that will highlight the Aldenville Commons and increase pedestrian access to a high school (Chicopee Comprehensive) and a middle school (Lambert-Lavoie). 7 Peaks wants to develop a common theme for Aldenville, much like the C-5 Galaxy (the main plane of the 439<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing based in Westover Air Force Reserve Base, Chicopee MA) statues for greater Chicopee will allow residents to better identify to their neighborhood. 7 Peaks is exploring the possibility of using "Fleur-de-lises," hearts, and C-5 Galaxies in proposed wayfinding signs to honor Aldenville and Chicopee's culture. The quantification of time it will take to walk these proposed paths might incentivize someone who before was unsure of use to try out the trail. Additionally, safety and pedestrian-oriented improvements will be suggested for main corridors in order to encourage walking.

#### Recommendations

Lu made a few recommendations to the City of Springfield regarding their wayfinding signage in order to make it more effective and promote the City's character.

1. Make the existing 46 temporary signs larger and more unique.
2. Include bilingual options on the signage.
3. Add historic and cultural information to the signage.

## Creative Placemaking: A Case Study Exploration of How Creative Economy Strategies Can Provide Potential Opportunities for Revitalization in Downtown Chicopee, MA

### What is the problem?

Chicopee, a former industrial center in western Massachusetts, is experiencing a stagnant economy and high vacancy rates in commercial buildings. The City wanted to increase downtown visibility while bolstering its economy by attracting the creative class to the area. The creative class includes people employed in creative, innovative sectors such as web development, design, music and entertainment, science, and art who are oftentimes attracted to vibrant places with a diverse mix of culture and recreation. Chicopee's Downtown at the time was characterized by vacant and underutilized storefronts, a lack of recreation, blighted streetscapes, and an overall degradation of neighborhood character and appeal. The author attempts to identify development strategies to attract the creative class to the neglected Downtown of Chicopee.

### Who is/are the author(s) that did the work?

Laura Selmani wrote this Master's Project as part of her requirements for her Master's in Regional Planning at UMass Amherst. Selmani's project chairs included Mark Hamin, Professor of Regional Planning, as head chair member; and Frank Slegers, Professor of Landscape Architecture, as a committee member.

### How much time did the author(s) have to work?

The project was finished in August of 2014, but the report does not have a start date or timeline.

### What issues did the author(s) outline?

The author outlined many broad issues that the City, and especially the Downtown area, was facing that needed to be addressed in order for the area to be attractive to the creative class. First, Downtown Chicopee lacks the appropriate commercial activity necessary to support both the current population as well as the creative class they desire to bring in. Second, empty and blighted buildings, including storefronts, diminish the aesthetic quality of the Downtown, making it less attractive to new business and residents. Third, Downtown Chicopee lacks activities and things to do, both during the day and in the evenings, once again making it less attractive to new businesses and residents. Lastly, a lack of mixed-use zoning keeps the creative class from being able to work and live in the same areas.

### Do any of these issues sync with our Studio project?

While 7 Peaks' Studio project is not focused directly on attracting the creative class, the neighborhood of Aldenville suffers from some of the same issues as the Downtown neighborhood did in 2014. These include blighted and underutilized buildings, a lack of mixed-zoning, and few things to attract people to the area.

### What, if any, public engagement processes did the author(s) use?

The author did not use public engagement in this project. Instead, the author analyzed the Downtown's physical characteristics, location, demographics, historic significance, and economic and business data. Selmani also reviewed best practices in literature and reviewed creative placemaking efforts in three Gateway cities in Massachusetts: Easthampton, Pittsfield, and Holyoke. Selmani then used the best practice data to create recommendations for the Downtown neighborhood.

While the framework of using best practice studies is effective, the author's findings were broad and did not lead to specific land-

use recommendations. The author researched what was accomplished in these places but not how they were done.

### Recommendations

The author's recommendations are broad but help to create a guideline for the initial processes that the City needs to be involved in to attract the creative class to Chicopee. These recommendations to the City of Chicopee include:

1. The City needs to provide services and cultural amenities to the preexisting population while considering future populations.
2. The City must support live-work space for creative professionals. This could be better accomplished with mixed-use zoning and mixed-use buildings.
3. To attract the creative class, the City must provide low- and moderate-income housing.
4. The City must support the development of vacant and underused properties in the area, including brownfield properties.
5. Support the establishment of a community and cultural center and renovate the existing Rivolvi Theater.
6. Support the establishment of a cultural office or creative economy coordinator position within the city. Also, have this coordinator or group establish periodic cultural events in the area.
7. The City needs to use historic significance to brand the area, making it more attractive while giving it an identity. Designing and performing streetscape improvements can help to revitalize the character of the Downtown.
8. The City must support remediation and redevelopment of Former Steam Plant and Delta Park into open space.
9. Encourage the development of downtown arts organizations and galleries, businesses, cultural centers, affordable residences, and nightlife activities.

10. The City should create one or more Downtown Districts, which will create sense of place while allowing for Downtown-specific zoning laws to encourage appropriate use and development.

## Thinking in Circles: A Systems Theory Approach to Public Participation in Planning

### What is the problem?

The most commonly used public participation techniques such as public meetings and planning commissions are ineffective and exclusive because they do not reach out to underrepresented populations such as the elderly, non-English speakers, and residents who do not own a car. Furthermore, some of these methods operate on the principle of one homogeneous “public.” Many researchers lump marginalized categories of people (i.e., low-income, women, and people of color) into a single category. Since different groups have historically experienced different forms of discrimination, many solutions must be devised to accommodate every group. Stephen Meno aspires to determine how public engagement can be more inclusive and why more communities have not adopted such methods.

### Who is/are the author(s) that did the work?

Stephen Meno wrote this Master’s thesis as part of his requirements for his Master’s in Regional Planning at UMass Amherst. His committee consisted of Flavia Montenegro-Menezes and John R. Mullin, professors in the LARP Department, as well as Jane E Fountain from the Political Science Department.

### How much time did the author(s) have to work?

Meno submitted his thesis in September of 2016. There was no clear start date mentioned in the document.

### What issues did the author(s) outline?

One important factor that Meno identified was the importance of relationships between community members and city government officials. One of the case studies concerns Amherst Together, a

collaboration between the Amherst Regional Public School Systems (ARPS) and the town of Amherst. The goal of this initiative was to gather information on residents’ perceptions of themselves and their community. One of the issues that emerged in this process was the limited reach of state laws. Massachusetts’ State Enabling Comprehensive and Zoning Act mandates public participation as part of all land-use changes. However, the extent of this law does not ensure that these processes are inclusive of underrepresented populations such as the elderly and non-English speaking people.

What, if any, public engagement processes did the author(s) use? Meno discusses two case studies: one in Amherst, Massachusetts and the other in Vallejo, California. As part of Amherst Together, students from UMass, Amherst College, Hampshire College, and ARPS distributed a survey that was targeted towards underrepresented demographics such as the elderly, non-English-speaking residents, and college students. There was no pre-set agenda for this engagement initiative, which allowed residents to openly express their ideas of how they defined themselves and how they felt about their place within the community of Amherst. The number of respondents was not mentioned in the thesis.

In 2008, Vallejo filed for Chapter 9 bankruptcy to freeze its \$16 million debt. In 2012, the City government established a participatory budget project to engage the residents to solicit their feedback on how funds should be allocated. The City of Vallejo partnered with Participatory Budgeting Project, a nonprofit that assists people with participatory budgeting. The main goals of this endeavor were to promote government transparency with funding, transform democracy, and engage with the community. The process started with residents brainstorming their ideas for how money should be spent. With the help of experts, these ideas were transformed into proposals. Residents subsequently voted



on these proposals. Slightly less than 4,000 residents participated in this initiative. This cycle occurs annually, lasting from February to November. This participatory budgeting program has occurred every year since 2013. This process is inclusive because all residents over 16 years old are eligible to vote. Furthermore, the ballots and other materials were in both English and Spanish. Finally, residents had the option of voting online, attracting younger demographics.

#### Do any of these issues sync with our Studio project?

Like the case studies in Amherst and Vallejo, 7 Peaks is trying to establish community engagement techniques that are bottom-up and involve traditionally underrepresented segments of the population. Historically, public participation has involved a small number of residents attending public meetings at City Hall. The use of an online survey allows has the potential of reaching out to a younger demographic. However, online engagement can be problematic for populations who do not have access to the internet. With an online survey, fraud is likely to occur. Therefore, 7 Peaks has created alternatives to the online surveys such as Feet on the Street, paper surveys, and interviews with local stakeholders such as the Superintendent of Public Schools.

#### Recommendations

The following steps should be implemented by the Amherst and Vallejo's respective City Governments and their Planning Departments.

1. Promote and foster a culture of discussion and value sharing.
2. Local governments should be as transparent with engagement processes as possible.
3. Target outreach methods to represent as many demographic groups as possible.

4. Do not set a rigid agenda for public participation. Leaving survey questions as open-ended as possible will allow for introspection (self-reflection) in which residents to identify their own desires for a better community.
5. Create a balance where regulations encourage communities to achieve certain goals while allowing a significant degree of flexibility.
6. Before deciding on which method for participation is the most appropriate, evaluate the context of the city/town or even region.

# Comprehensive, Master, Village, and Corridor Plans

## Town of Framingham Master Plan, Part 2: Master Land Use Plan – 2014 Update

### What is the problem?

Framingham is seeking to make an update to their Master Plan, the first in 23 years, in order to “harness the energies, insights and lessons learned from both governance of the Town and from the public about how to improve the quality of life in Framingham through better land use polices” (p. 2). Framingham needs to continue to update its Master Plan so that there is a unified framework and agenda for government departments and boards to follow, as well as ensure that the City is able to be healthy and sustainable in both economic and natural development. The Master Plan looks to provide Framingham with the means to address the issues associated with redevelopment as the City, much like Chicopee, is at near build-out. Master Plans are important in any municipality in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as they give legitimacy to amendments that were made on the basis of thoughtful planning. A town or city with a master plan has the ability to self-govern better than one without it. The Master Land Use Plan has been adopted by the Framingham Planning Board in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 41 Section 81D.

### Who is/are the author(s) that did the work?

The Town of Framingham Master Plan, Part 2: Land Use Master Plan was developed on behalf of the Framingham Planning Board by The Cecil Group, Inc., FXM Associates, and BETA Engineering. An updated version was completed in 2014 by Wayne Feiden, FAICP, of Feiden Associates.

### How much time did the author(s) have to work?

Part II of the Master Plan was started in 2011 and completed in 2012. The Master Plan was updated two years later in July 2014 by a different consultant. The latest update contains technical revisions to the Master Plan.

### What issues did the author(s) outline?

Framingham wants to protect its unique character, which is much like that of Chicopee’s, “a large Town with villages and neighborhoods with distinct identities” (p. 14). It is a place with diverse landscapes, neighborhoods, and community character. The strength of the City comes from the human, physical, social, and economic diversity; its location; and its strong sense of community. The Master Plan is the document that allows Framingham to self-govern effectively and ensure that it can maintain and grow its identified strengths. It is an all-encompassing document that deals with issues that a city of 68,000 people deals with, from land-use controls to community relationships.

In the 2014 Master Plan Part 2 update, seven core principles were outlined that Framingham should focus on to make Framingham more livable:

1. Community Character – Continue to support the village centers, landmarks, and cultural and natural features in Framingham.
2. Environmental Value – Continue to maintain the quality of the environment, natural resource ecology, public health, living conditions, and property values.
3. Economic Development – Use public and private investment in redevelopment while focusing on the infusion of new capital to improve the built and natural environment.

4. Downtown – Strengthen the downtown area, allow for residents to identify with the neighborhood cultivate a sense of place.
5. Network of Transportation – Transit is one of the biggest problems in Framingham, with the automobile being the root cause. The creation of alternative transit networks will go a long way in benefitting the Town.
6. Clearing Planning and Development Processes – Make the planning process more clear and consistent for both private and public land-use projects.
7. Sustainable and Resilient Community – Take into consideration how each action that Town makes will meet the need of the current population without diminishing from the needs of future residents.

**Do any of these issues sync with our Studio project?**

Framingham and Chicopee are two municipalities in Massachusetts which at one point were very much alike. Framingham’s proximity to Boston has allowed for better economic conditions, with a higher median household income of \$68,219 compared to Chicopee’s median household income of \$47,684. The Cities can both be considered medium-sized, with populations of 68,326 for Framingham and 55,298 for Chicopee. Both developed with a history of distinct villages and grew prosperous with industrialization. Issues that the two places currently face include congestion and traffic, downtown redevelopment, and the preservation of open space and conservation land. One area that Framingham was particularly conscious of was the keeping of distinct neighborhood villages through the creation of edge and transition policies, which seek to better identify the cultural assets and potential pedestrian connections. The idea of quantifying neighborhoods and highlighting their value and assets is something the City of Chicopee has asked 7 Peaks to do. The City also wants to

delineate boundaries in the City so that the government can better serve its residents. Three of the seven goals that have been identified in Framingham’s Master Plan Part 2 sync with what 7 Peaks is doing in Aldenville – community character, economic development, and networks of transportation – and the recommendations made for those goals warrant further examination.

**What, if any, public engagement processes did the author(s) use?**

In the process of creating the Master Plan, the Framingham government asked residents to provide input on the priorities considered most important to the future of City. A key part of the public engagement process was the use of a City-wide survey. The survey had a total of 876 completed responses, with 91.58% of the respondents living in Framingham. The survey was comprised of 22 questions that respondents could answer online. The survey was live from January 26 – February 27, 2011. This information was not provided in the Master Plan report and was found through the local newspaper, *The MetroWest Daily News* (Ameden, 2011). Also not reported in the Master Plan was the use of public meetings that the Town held in various neighborhoods, like Nobscott, to help raise awareness for the Master Plan.

**Recommendations**

The Master Plan recommends implementing the land-use actions on the basis of short- and long-term actions as well as new and innovative approaches to land-use management.

Short-term recommendations are of critical importance and should be performed within 1-4 years.

1. Framingham should review its current zoning and make updates as needed.
2. Create a live-work space to attract working professionals and energize the downtown.

3. Examine the creation of new commercial districts through overlay zoning.
4. Develop a City-wide transportation plan with an emphasis on complete streets and healthy community initiatives through the examination of signage and the creation of new parking standards to improve pedestrian travel.
5. Use sustainable site design and green infrastructure.

Long-term recommendations are developed so that Framingham will be a healthy community, both in the human and ecological populations.

1. Implement the Open Space & Recreation Plan.
2. Continue support of agricultural and horticultural land uses.
3. Create historic preservation incentives.
4. Improve transit qualities and options.
5. Develop air rights for congested areas.

## 21st Century Warwick, City of Livable Neighborhoods, Warwick Comprehensive Plan 2033

### What is the problem?

Warwick's Comprehensive Plan aims to address and alleviate the City's issues. Warwick suffers from multiple issues: an overcrowded transportation network, open space and access and connectivity, diversifying the tax base, downtown revitalization, aesthetic conditions, and reclaiming community character. Furthermore, the State of Rhode Island requires that municipalities prepare a comprehensive plan with a 20-year vision and a 10-year implementation plan that is consistent with the State's planning goals. The Plan is designed to help Warwick begin meeting the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century so that it can continue to be competitive as a place to live, work, play, and do business for many decades to come.

### Who is/are the author(s) who did the work?

A team of different government officials and consultants created Warwick's Comprehensive Plan: Goody Clancy (lead consultant), Veri/Waterman Associates, Gordon Archibald Inc., Mount Auburn Associates, Susan Joan Moses Associates, and Warwick's Planning Department.

### How much time did the author(s) have to work?

The Comprehensive Planning process occurred from 2011 until 2014. Statewide Planning approved of Warwick's updated plan on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

### What issues did the author(s) outline?

The authors outlined 10 major issues facing the City of Warwick. This list has been reduced to the seven issues relevant to Aldenville and Chicopee. These include:

1. Warwick is auto-dependent, has poor connectivity along its major roadways, and does not have the appropriate infrastructure for multimodal transportation. These issues stem from multiple circumstances: location of the airport; older road systems that have exceeded their capacity; subdivision layouts; a lack of pedestrian and bicycle networks and connections; and the alignment with the coast and streams.
2. Warwick needs improved access to and opportunities for quality open space within the City.
3. Warwick is mostly comprised of single-family detached housing. The City needs to plan where and how to provide high-quality housing for the aging population, people of all income levels, and people with different housing preferences.
4. Warwick needs to maintain a diversity of land-use that promotes a stable tax base.
5. Warwick's commercial districts lack character, function, and appropriate aesthetic regulation for these areas.
6. Warwick needs to further revive and promote its traditional villages, specifically to protect and enhance their mixed-use characters.
7. City Center is the major downtown area for the entire City, but it needs multiple improvements: multimodal access; a new theater to drive people from the rest of the State; and a planning framework for new development.

[Do any of these issues sync with our Studio project?](#)

Warwick is slightly larger than Chicopee in terms of both population (82,604 as of 2010) and size (49.62 square miles of both land and water), but they both suffer from some of the

same issues and have similar conditions (Avedisian, et al., 2014). Like Chicopee, Warwick is characterized by a steady, aging population. Also, Warwick has very little undeveloped land, so improvements must come through the redevelopment of previously developed land and upgrades to current infrastructure and amenities. Furthermore, Warwick suffers from multiple transportation issues: an outdated transportation network not designed for the current capacity, a lack of appropriate connections between neighborhoods, and a need for multimodal transportation.

[What, if any, public engagement processes did the author\(s\) use?](#)

Warwick Comprehensive Plan is based on a substantial community engagement process that was designed to find out what residents, business people, and other stakeholders were thinking about the future of the City. All results and updates from meetings and actual progress on the plan were published on a comprehensive plan specific website. The engagement process included numerous different methods of engagement.

First, City-wide web-based survey yielded 691 responses. This equates to a 0.8% response rate out of a population of 81,579 people. Second, interviews were conducted with City staff and with citizens representing diverse interests. Third, an advisory committee was created, made up of boards and commissions and other stakeholders met eight separate times throughout the update process.

Fourth, nine “communities of place” meetings were held in each of the nine city wards, where residents voiced their opinions about issues specific to neighborhoods and locations. Attendance measured between 5 to 25 attendees for each individual meeting, with a total of 125 people between all nine meetings. Each

meeting included a brief presentation, individual and small group exercises facilitated by the planning team, and then reports back to the entire group. The presentations highlighted current conditions within each ward and compared each ward to the entire City as a whole.

Fifth, two “communities of interest” meetings were held, including one on the environment, parks, and open space, and the other on transportation issues. At each meeting, the consultant team provided a presentation highlighting current conditions on the topic, which were later posted to the project website. Most of meeting time was dedicated to small group discussion where attendees discussed the biggest issues and potential improvements for several categories related to the topic. The plan does not mention how many people attended these events.

Sixth, a presentation was given to the Rotary Club and economic development focus groups. This provided additional economic development input. The economic development specialist on the consultant team gave an economic development presentation to the Rotary Club as an initial step to engage the business community in the planning process. The plan did not mention how many people attended these events.

Seventh, two open house meetings were held at the Buttonwoods Community Center. These drop-in events allowed attendees to come at any time during the open house and spend as much or as little time as they wished. These events occurred on Mondays and lasted from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Attendees could informally discuss issues with members of the consultant team and Warwick planning staff. The purpose was to seek comment on and guidance for priorities developed as goals, policies, and strategies for the initial drafts of the Comprehensive Plan. Materials at the

open house included a set of maps on display boards and six display boards with key issues, goals, and strategies from the plan, and handouts included a draft Executive Summary in the form of a mini-poster and a short questionnaire asking for feedback on key strategies. Less than 20 people attended these events, so the materials were left on display at the Warwick Public Library for people to view them for a week. Seventeen people filled out the short questionnaires. While 20 people is not a lot for two public events, the City’s decision to leave the materials on display was a logical and cost-effective way to get more input.

Lastly, two Planning Board public workshops were held to elicit feedback on the draft plan.

### Recommendations

The authors outlined 10 recommendations to guide Warwick until 2033. This list has been reduced to the seven relevant to Aldenville and Chicopee.

1. Warwick needs to make the City Center into a new hub of growth and economic development. This can be done by promoting mixed-use, transit-oriented development; aesthetic improvements to the public realm; and the development of a more frequent commuter-rail service.
2. Historic village centers need to be made into hubs of walkability, amenities, events, and mixed-use development.
3. Compact development options must be promoted to preserve open space. Conservation subdivision design should be required for the last remaining open space parcels zoned for residential development.
4. Warwick should promote walkable Neighborhood Activity Centers by establishing zoning to incentivize the mixed-use redevelopment of neighborhood shopping centers at major intersections.

5. The City will create the Warwick Innovation District to revitalize the City's economic base. This proposed district will attract technology, advanced manufacturing, and office development with appropriate zoning and development initiatives.
6. Warwick must retain its role as a regional retail center by establishing the Bald Hill Enhancement Corridor Design Overlay District to bring design and function improvements. This will allow the City's important tax base to continue to be competitive.
7. Connectivity will be enhanced throughout the City by the creation of "green corridors" of bicycling and walking routes.

## City of Buffalo Land Use Plan

### What is the problem?

Most municipal zoning codes in the United States segregate land-use into mutually exclusive areas, contradicting traditional urban development patterns and deterring the creation of mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods. The Land Use Plan in the City of Buffalo establishes a new vision for land-use policy that focuses urban form rather than permitted uses. By focusing on the character of the built landscape, as opposed to its use, the Plan encourages development that matches the character of traditional urban neighborhoods and that supports the creation of mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly communities.

### Who is/are the author(s) that did the work?

The plan was developed under the auspices of the Mayor's Office and the Office of Strategic Planning. The consultant team included five firms: Camiros, Ltd., Fisher Associates, Goody Clancy, Urban Design Project, and Watts Architecture and Engineering.

### How much time did the author(s) have to work?

The Buffalo Green Code was announced on Earth Day 2010. The Land Use Plan was adopted in September of 2016. (The UDO was approved on January 3, 2017, going into effect on April 3, 2017).

### What issues did the author(s) outline?

In 2006, the City of Buffalo updated its Comprehensive Plan in order to "provide a road map for reversing declines in employment, population, and environmental quality" (p. 1). The City's Land Use Plan, updated in 2016, translates the broad goals of the Comprehensive Plan into specific development policies, which set the foundation for revising the City's zoning code, known as the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The

Land Use Plan, the UDO, and several other related plans are known together as the Buffalo Green Code.

The Land Use Plan sets forth issues and objectives under three main categories: grow the economy, strengthen neighborhoods, and repair the environment. To grow the economy, the City needs to adjust land-use policy to reflect the shift from heavy manufacturing to knowledge-based enterprise. While manufacturing required large lots, the new economy demands dense, mixed-use places that facilitate connections between people and organizations. To strengthen neighborhoods, their centers need to be reinforced by encouraging mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development. Infill development in urban neighborhoods also protects the environment by directing pressure away from valuable open space.

#### Do any of these issues sync with our studio project?

The center of Aldenville suffers from commercial blight and auto-centric transportation patterns. Aldenville, like neighborhoods in Buffalo, needs new policies to support mixed-use development in its traditional core.

Also, like Buffalo, the City of Chicopee currently has a “flat” zoning code, where, for the most part, permitted uses are mutually exclusive in each zone. For example, business activity is not allowed in residential areas and vice versa. The zoning scheme contradicts historic building patterns and facts on the ground in most of the City’s neighborhoods, including Aldenville. For example, along Grattan Street near Aldenville Commons, most of the adjacent parcels are zoned Business A, which does not permit residential uses. The zone prohibits new development from matching the mixed-use historic structures that once housed Aldenville’s village center. In Chicopee, a “place-based” zoning scheme similar to Buffalo’s would empower developers to

invest in mixed-use projects critical for re-establishing cohesive neighborhood centers, including in Aldenville.

#### What, if any, public engagement processes did the author(s) use?

A broad range of engagement activities informed the development of the City’s Land Use Plan. Over 4,000 individuals (or about 1.5% of the City’s population) participated through a variety of forums, including workshops, open houses, and stakeholder meetings. Attendance and response rates for individual outreach efforts are not specified, leaving in question the success of each. The report lists Facebook and Twitter followers as participants, but does not specify how they were engaged, casting doubt on the degree of online participation. The City of Buffalo should have more clearly delineated the specifics of its outreach effort in order to demonstrate wide public support for the plan.

#### Recommendations

The primary recommendation of the Land Use Plan is to switch from a traditional zoning scheme, which divides municipalities into single-use zones, to a “place-based” scheme, which instead regulates neighborhood form and character.

1. Create a place-based planning program with three distinct place types: neighborhoods, districts, and corridors. Neighborhoods encourage mixed-uses of similar form, districts specify specialized single-uses, and corridors connect neighborhoods and districts to one another. Each place type should then be divided into subtypes. For instance, the neighborhood type is subdivided into downtown neighborhoods, central, streetcar, and edge.
2. Utilize the Plan’s transition analysis, which shows how existing zones could map to proposed zones, taking into account the input of neighborhood residents. The analysis includes an assessment of how the transition could affect



the amount of land available for residential, commercial, and other uses.

## Alexandria Master Plan and Citywide Chapters

### What is the problem?

In 1987, the City of Alexandria determined that the Adopted Consolidated Master Plan the City created in 1974 be updated and revised. This resulted in the creation of a master plan task force to compose 14 small area plan chapters and six text chapters for the City of Alexandria, and was adopted in 1992 by Ordinance No. 3576. The City wanted to create a more focused Master Plan through the development of 14 distinct small areas within the City limits. This would allow each area or neighborhood to develop its own unique character, while maintaining a sense of cohesiveness through guiding principles in the Master Plan.

### Who is/are the author(s) who did the work?

The City's Department of Planning and Community Development, the Planning Commission, City Council, other relevant agencies, and a task force designed to assist the agencies, all contributed to the creation of this comprehensive plan.

### How much time did the author(s) have to work?

The Planning process initially lasted five years (1987-1992), and chapters were added or updated on an as-needed basis through Master Plan Amendments and posted online. As this Master Plan is considered a living document, small areas were added to the initial 14 as neighborhoods developed, and the City of Alexandria Master Plan currently consists of 18 small area plans.

### What issues did the author(s) outline?

Alexandria wanted to detail specific development and preservation efforts in the different portions of the City with its creation of its Master Plan. This was accomplished by formally creating their initial 14 small area plans and defining the explicit

natural and artificial boundaries that enclose these areas. As the Master Plan was created as a living document, the plan for each small area has been amended to fit the evolving needs of the City, and new areas have been added, bringing the total number of small area plans to 18. All of these smaller plans seek to create a harmonious set of land uses that preserves the overall character of Alexandria, enhance residential neighborhoods, maintain a sufficient economic base, and increase open space and parkland within the City for their residents.

#### Do any of these issues sync with our Studio project?

The authors outlined numerous small area plans, which vary in size from a couple thousand individuals to tens of thousands. The population of Alexandria is around 150,000 people, which is approximately three times the size of Chicopee. While Alexandria is a larger city, their small area plans focus on areas of comparable geographic and demographic scale to Chicopee and Aldenville.

The primary goals that the Master Plan seeks to accomplish line up with our project, and the manner in which these are accomplished is completed through an innovative approach. By breaking their Master Plan into 18 smaller area plans connected through an overarching narrative, the city was able to develop each area to have its own character and have each area be linked together by commonalities between them. Developing its plan in such a focused manner is something that Chicopee should look into to ensure the development of neighborhood identities and distinct character for each neighborhood and eliminate the one-size-fits-all approach to zoning. Each area is distinct from one another, but should be linked together through common themes and design choices to give the City a cohesive feel.

What, if any, public engagement processes did the author(s) use? Alexandria, Virginia, utilized numerous public meetings in each small area to formulate the vision for that specific neighborhood.

The overall plan incorporated multiple agencies' and community groups' feedback in order to capture the views of the residents and business owners.

#### Recommendations

In addition to specific suggestions within the small area chapters for each of those neighborhoods, the Plan makes several general recommendations for the City of Alexandria in regard to their master plan.

1. Create individual plans for “small areas” within the City so they can retain their unique identities and assets and plans can be area-specific.
2. Update the area chapters and add new small areas on an as-needed basis.
3. Provide a cohesive city master plan, including zoning and land-use, that harmonizes the small areas.

## Northampton King Street Corridor

What is the problem?

The King Street Corridor is a four-lane roadway with a curb-to-curb distance which varies between 54 and 60 feet. The posted speed limit is 30 mph. The Corridor is an important North-South commercial corridor for the City of Northampton's downtown. However, with heavy traffic volume, high number of crashes, and the lack of bicycle or pedestrian accommodations, it is not functioning to its potential as a City resource.

#### Who is/are the author(s) that did the work?

Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. is a company that specializes in transportation planning and engineering, among other planning and design services. They were retained by the City of Northampton to conduct this corridor study.

#### How much time did the author(s) have to do the work?

The duration of the study is not included in this report.

#### What issues did the author(s) outline?

The King Street Corridor has four major issues which this report attempts to address: (1) heavy traffic volume, (2) numerous driveways, (3) high crash experience, and (4) the lack of pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. King Street receives traffic volume of 16,000 to 22,000 vehicles per day, with a peak traffic count of 850 to 1,050 vehicles per hour. In addition to nine intersections, there are approximately 57 driveways within the one mile studied for local businesses. One-hundred and fifty crashes occurred within the study area between 1999 and 2001. The Corridor is also unfriendly for pedestrians and cyclists with unmarked crossings, narrow sidewalks, and no buffer between the car and bike lanes.

#### Do any of these issues sync with our Studio project?

The issues identified with King Street are very similar to the conditions which we have observed and are attempting to address on Grattan Street and McKinstry Avenue in Chicopee. All streets

have high traffic volume, high crash experience, and a perceived lack of pedestrian and bike accommodations.

#### What, if any, public engagement process did the author(s) use?

Over the course of the study, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. held four meetings with public officials, stakeholders, and the public at large. The first was an initial "kick-off" meeting with City Staff and the Transportation Committee. The second was a walking tour of the corridor with City staff and identified stakeholders. The third meeting was an evening design charrette with City officials and the public. The final meeting was with the Chief of Police and Traffic Safety Officer. The numbers in attendance and the specific outcomes of these meetings are not included in the report. The consulting firm did not state how they measured the success of these meetings or their outcomes.

#### Recommendations

Recommendations were classified as near-term (two to five years) or medium-term (five to ten years) proposals.

In the near-term (by 2008), the City should do the following:

1. Reduce the number of curb cuts along the whole corridor in half.
2. Provide more safe pedestrian and bike crossings.
3. Establish a northern gateway into the King Street Commercial District and Downtown.
4. Through land-use and streetscape interventions, create a transition to the Downtown beginning at Finn Street
5. Widen sidewalks and decrease slope of ramps to be in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
6. Incorporate a bike lane in each direction by narrowing traffic lanes. Monitor the use and effectiveness of these lanes.

In the medium-term (by 2013), the City should do the following:

1. Confirm the effectiveness of the bike lanes, make changes and formalize as available.
2. Plan traffic signal coordination along the length of the corridor.
3. Complete the extension of the Rail Trail with a crossing on King Street.
4. Improve the transition between highway business district and downtown through land uses and a narrow traveled way.
5. Improve corridor aesthetics with closer building placement to the street (by amending zoning), providing green spaces, pedestrian amenities, reducing corridor scale, and unifying corridor appearance with signage and streetscape.

## Downtown Turners Falls Livability Plan

### What is the problem?

Turners Falls is a village in Montague with a population of about 4,500 and which has seen marked economic decline in recent decades due to the shifting economy moving from industrial mills to service industry, leaving a lack of jobs and some downtown businesses and services in decline. Current trends show that residents want denser, more walkable communities with vibrant downtowns moving into the future, so the Town of Montague wants to make this village a place to attract populations and increase economic development while being sustainable and encouraging walking and biking.

### Who is/are the author(s) who did the work?

Dodson & Flinker, Landscape Architects and Planners and Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates completed this work for the Town of Montague.

### How much time did the author(s) have to work?

The public engagement process began in October 2012 and continued into April 2013. The report was published in June of 2013.

### What issues did the author(s) outline?

Turners Falls' low rental rates have the potential to attract young people, but a lack of jobs and cost of renovating structures into living spaces prevent this. The village needs to define its identity and goals and use these to create a vision for the future and more vibrant downtown. The Town and village are "off the beaten path," in a rural area with no major suburbs or cities nearby, so despite their efforts to attract more populations with more diverse income, they need to do more to achieve this. There is an emerging culture of art, creative industry, and entrepreneurs, but the strength of the regional economy is uncertain due to its

stagnant population, towns with declining economies from the post-industrial era, and general hardship felt by many rural communities that lack job opportunities, monetary and social resources, and good Internet access which is needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Additionally, there are vacancies and underutilized ground-level storefront properties. Livability and quality of life need to be increased so that residents can enjoy their neighborhood and the Town can retain its population.

#### Do any of these issues sync with our Studio project?

Much like the downtown Turners Falls project, Aldenville's Heart around the Commons is the primary focus of our project. 7 Peaks is making recommendations for improving connectivity for multimodal transportation, utilizing and decreasing vacant properties, and improving livability in a neighborhood, all while involving the public and working toward a neighborhood identity and vision for the future. Trying to maintain good housing stock, promote economic development, attract visitors, and give residents more reason to spend time in their neighborhood are all aspects both projects have in common.

#### What, if any, public engagement processes did the author(s) use?

The authors and Town began with the creation of an Advisory Committee of Town officials and several key stakeholders, which communicated with other Town officials and the authors to create and carry out a participation plan. A Working Group of 30 stakeholders was also created, including residents, business owners, club and community organization members, and other community members. This Group carried out a two-day charrette that had 50 participants to help people explore scenarios for the downtown's future, after which they continued to define the implementation plan.

#### Recommendations

The authors make several recommendations for the village of Turners Falls:

1. The Town, Planning Department, and Housing & Redevelopment Authority should improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, wayfinding, and social service availability.
2. The Planning and Zoning Boards should enact design changes for Avenue A and Third Street to increase functionality.
3. The Town, Parks & Recreation Department, RiverCulture, Downtown Partnership, Event Coordinators, local businesses, and private partners should have more community events and recreation activities.
4. The Planning Department, RiverCulture, and Downtown Partnership should keep current businesses and attract new ones.
5. The Planning Department should expand policy for economic development, incentives, and regulatory programs.

## Sustainable Lowell 2025

### What is the problem?

In the city of Lowell, some neighborhoods lack consistent community policing and other safety measures. Some neighborhoods in Lowell contain vacant and foreclosed houses and storefronts. While Lowell has made significant pedestrian improvements to its downtown area and surrounding neighborhoods, there is a lack of consistent sidewalks and bike lanes on many streets surrounding schools and other amenities. This can be a problem for children walking or riding their bikes to school. While Lowell boasts many scenic parks and river walks, these spaces are not evenly distributed throughout the City. Furthermore, there are sections of the riverfront that do not provide access for recreation. Another issue with Lowell is food deserts. Many residents do not have grocery stores that sell produce and other healthy foods within a quarter-mile walk of their houses.

### Who is/are the author(s) that did the work?

The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) of Lowell formed a steering committee to execute the plan. This committee consisted of members of the DPD, such as the Economic Development Officer, the Community Development Director, and the Urban Renewal Project Manager.

### How much time did the authors have?

The Steering Committee completed the project between the winter of 2011 and the fall of 2012, approximately a year and a half.

### What issues do the authors outline?

The DPD identifies parts of Lowell that are park-poor, meaning residents do not live within ¼ mile of a park. A connected system of parks and greenways has been identified as an

important component of promoting recreational activities. Some of the existing greenways are fragmented. For example, the Riverwalk does not extend along the full length of the Merrimack River in Lowell. Many residents also do not live within walking distance of grocery stores that provide fresh, healthy food. Some buildings and houses in Lowell have fallen into disrepair. They point to a lack of zoning measures that require inspections of these properties.

### What, if any, public engagement processes did the author(s) use?

DPD used a multi-pronged approach to identify how residents envision Lowell moving forward. Residents weighed in on how they felt about neighborhood appearance, amenities available such as parks, grocery stores, and schools, and their opinions about the availability of sidewalks, bike lines, and public transportation. Furthermore, residents provided input on increased community policing as well as strategies for occupation of vacant stores and houses. Research America, Inc., a consulting firm, was hired to conduct telephone interviews with 800 households in Spanish, English, Portuguese, and Khmer (the Cambodian language). In addition, there were five visioning sessions in the same languages. A total of 160 community members attended these sessions. Some of the topics covered were Housing & Public Services, Transportation & Mobility, Economic Development, Open Space & Natural Resources, and Community Identity.

The telephone interviews were advantageous because they did not require residents to attend any meetings. By conducting the interviews in four different languages, the DPD was able to reach out to a wide cross section of Lowell's population. However, a telephone interview can be problematic because it does not provide much flexibility if the respondent is unavailable at the time the DPD made the calls. One thing that the Sustainable Lowell 2025 Plan did not specify was whether they tried calling

every household. For an apartment complex, it is possible that they only managed to reach the landlord and were unable to call individual tenants. The visioning sessions allowed for residents to be informed of existing conditions in Lowell and to provide ideas for moving forward. However, it is unclear whether the attendees were able to chime in with their own ideas for neighborhood development

The DPD collaborated with Emerson College and members of six local youth organizations to provide an online participatory planning tool. Lowell Telecommunications Corporations provided a computer lab for Lowell residents. One-hundred and seventy-five people participated in this activity. This activity was beneficial because it reached out to populations who lacked computer or internet access. The Sustainability Snapshots Photography Contest encouraged residents to think about aspects of their City that they would like to be able to pass on to future generations. Residents took snapshots of aspects of Lowell that they took pride in and submitted them to the DPD. Photos depicted various amenities such as parks, historic structures, downtown shops, and other features that are part of Lowell's heritage. By encouraging residents to submit photos in a bottom-up fashion, the DPD was able to use input from the community that would be incorporated into Sustainable Lowell 2025.

#### Do any of these issues sync with our Studio project?

Like Aldenville, parts of Lowell contain vacant properties which detract from the appearance of the neighborhood. Sidewalks and bicycle paths are another concern that pertain to both locations. In Aldenville, residents have stated that community policing is not strong enough to curb some of the perceived increased drug dealings that have occurred. Lowell similarly lacks community policing. Lowell has some places where pedestrian safety is undermined by the lack of adequate crosswalks. This is similar to Grattan Street and McKinstry Avenue, where speeding traffic and

a lack of crosswalks discourage pedestrians, especially school children, from using these roads. Like Aldenville, parts of Lowell lack access to fresh, healthy food within walking distance of every residence.

#### Recommendations

All of these recommendations are to be carried out by Lowell's City Council, the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the City's Administration. Different departments might have different responsibilities but some strategies might require collaboration.

1. The City Council and the City's Administration Board should encourage the legislature to amend the Community Preservation Act to provide more tools for Lowell to protect neighborhood character in low- to moderate-income neighborhoods.
2. The Zoning Board of Appeals should ensure that zoning codes are up-to-date to reflect continuously evolving community needs.
3. The City Council should prioritize community policing strategies to build trust among residents.
4. The Zoning Board of Appeals should implement policies that mitigate the negative impact of vacancies.
5. The Zoning Board of appeals should encourage mixed-use development that is compatible with historic land-use patterns.
6. The City Council should establish long-term, reliable funding resources for parks and open spaces that are resilient to market changes.
7. The Parks Department should expand the network of recreational spaces and forests throughout the City and region to enhance access to all residents regardless of location. They should also improve networks and

connections between existing spaces such as the greenways along the river.

8. The Planning Department should create more community gardens to enhance access to locally-sourced food.





# Chapter 4: Public Engagement

## Introduction

To move forward in planning and visioning for the City of Chicopee, 7 Peaks was directed by the Client to create a public engagement campaign, where public opinion would be collected and applied to planning recommendations for the neighborhood of Aldenville. These proposed and tested community engagement strategies used can help inform future public participation efforts. The engagement process had three primary goals:

1. Develop an outreach process that includes community survey materials that could be reused for future engagement projects.
2. Experiment with non-traditional modes of community engagement to maximize variety and volume of community response and data collection.
3. Analyze data collected from the outreach process to best inform the neighborhood visioning process and final Aldenville Vision Plan.

Addressing these goals, 7 Peaks designed and deployed a City-wide community survey to gather public opinion and a public engagement process that sought to collect the opinions of people across Chicopee who have a connection to the neighborhood of Aldenville. A community survey was developed, deployed, and analyzed to make specific recommendations for the neighborhood to begin its Visioning Process. This two-month public engagement process is discussed in detail in the following chapter.

In September 2017, 7 Peaks met with the Client for input for the neighborhood of Aldenville. To promote the survey, branding materials were created under the slogan of "Create Our

Chicopee." To test public engagement strategies, 7 peaks distributed digital and printed materials, and attended five community events. The public engagement campaign received 375 completed surveys. The results of the community survey were analyzed and synthesized to make recommendations for future planning in Aldenville. This public engagement process is summarized in Table 2. The following chapter documents 7 Peaks' public engagement process over the course of the semester.

<b>Table 2:</b> Summary of the goals and deliverables of community engagement in Aldenville	
<b>Client Goals</b>	<b>7 Peaks' Actions</b>
<b>1. Develop an outreach process that includes community survey materials that could be reused for future engagement projects.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Designed and deployed a City-wide community survey to gather public opinion and input for the neighborhood of Aldenville. The survey can easily be modified and deployed in Chicopee's other neighborhoods.</li> <li>b. Branding materials were created under the slogan of "Create Our Chicopee" and the website CreateOurChicopee.com.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Experiment with non-traditional modes of community engagement to maximize variety and volume of community response and data collection.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Designed and distributed printed materials (business cards, postcards, posters, fortune cookies, and banners).</li> <li>d. Digital distribution (Facebook, along with City and community websites).</li> <li>e. Community events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Lorraine's Harvest Run</li> <li>b. Spooktacular</li> <li>c. Bellamy Middle School Craft Fair</li> <li>d. Chicopee Willimansett Flea Market</li> <li>e. Chicopee Senior Center</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>3. Analyze data collected from the outreach process to best inform the neighborhood visioning process and final Aldenville Vision Plan.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>f. The Aldenville survey received 375 completed responses from Chicopee residents. 182 of these responses were by residents of Aldenville (this surpassed the original goal of 175).</li> <li>g. Results of the community survey were analyzed and discussed to inform future planning in Aldenville.</li> <li>h. The survey used mixed methods – recording and analyzing quantitative and qualitative information – to better understand residents' perspectives and opinions on Aldenville.</li> </ul>

# Literature Review

## Introduction

Public engagement encourages members of a community to become involved in a plan or project through different activities and events designed to incorporate and encourage public feedback on proposed changes in a community. Mail- or internet-based surveys, interviews, focus groups, design charrettes, and public meetings have been shown to be effective means of engaging with a wide range of publics. Recently, advances in social media and data collection platforms have facilitated the use of the internet in the public engagement process. The use of web platforms, such as Qualtrics and Metroquest, have enabled planning departments across the country to engage a broader audience than is typical of a local meeting at a library or other public space. By expanding the accessibility of engagement methods, staff at agencies and cities can include key stakeholders and residents in the designs and proposals for a community.

Historically, not all projects designed for a community or public space have involved a thorough and effective public engagement process. Failing to include residents and stakeholders in public engagement projects results in projects designed by planners and engineers sitting on the umpteenth floor of their office building, with no inclination to include the local perspective or experience in projects. Successfully integrating planners and engineers within the public that they are working for results in designs and projects that are in touch with the thoughts and opinions of residents and which may lead to a deeper, more fulfilling, project. A large component of successful projects, therefore, is the successful execution and evaluation of an in depth public engagement process that involves key stakeholders and residents in the data collection.

This literature review explores the concept of public engagement in planning, what effective methods of engagement have been tested, what methods did not work quite as well, and new, experimental methods of engagement that may yield better, more inclusive results. Using research from various journals, newspapers, and other sources, the following literature review examines the importance of public participation, what factors can affect participation and perspectives, and the use of the internet and other modern technology to engage with multiple segments of a population to ensure a representative process is undertaken. 7 Peaks used the following research to understand and expand on successful engagement strategies conducted by other planning agencies and consultants to better develop and shape the engagement process for the Aldenville Community Survey.

Following this brief introduction, the first section explores the importance of public engagement, and the lessons that 7 Peaks took away from the compiled research. The next section looks at what factors can affect levels of participation and public perspective in a public engagement, and what elements can influence an agency's ability to understand and engage with their public. Next, 7 Peaks discusses the use of online survey platforms and social media to engage with communities and stakeholders to solicit feedback on proposed projects. Lastly, this literature review will conclude with recommendations to the Client focused on improving future public engagement methods in Chicopee.

## The Importance of Public Engagement

In this section on the importance of public engagement, several ideas will be discussed. In the first report, Irvin and Stansbury (2004) examine what affects whether engaging the public is worthwhile. In the next paper, Mooney (2015) argues that including stakeholders gives credibility to plans and

representation of locals. O'Hara (2001) examines the need to include local development needs and residents' skills rather than only experts. Sirianni (2007) looks at the collaboration of city- and neighborhood-level officials and stakeholders. Petts (2007) discusses the value of gatekeepers of local knowledge and the benefit of local narratives in planning. Atkinson (2016) examines involving youth in outreach and planning efforts. Collectively, these papers will demonstrate why public engagement is crucial to planning.

The benefits of enhanced community participation in government decision making are promoted throughout the planning and governance literature. Dissent is rare, as is a discussion of the costs of citizen participation when compared to representational forms of decision making. Irvin and Stansbury step back from the dominant discussion of "how to" engage and rather discuss the question of whether to at all by conducting a broad review the literature on public participation. Irvin and Stansbury identified place-based features that may predict the relative success of community participation programs and create a litmus test to determine whether to allocate resources to citizen participation. Low-cost indicators included key stakeholders being geographically close (in order to be able to meet easily on a regular basis), a homogenous community requiring fewer representative stakeholders, and a citizenry that readily volunteers for community-wide projects. Community participation was likely to have the greatest benefit when topics were gridlocked in government, in areas where hostility to government was high, in areas where key stakeholders wielded a high level of influence and were willing to serve as representatives, and where the issue was of high interest to these key stakeholders.

Overall, Irvin and Stansbury laid out which indicators to consider before moving ahead with a costly and time-intensive public

engagement project. However, missing from the paper was any level of detail about methodology – which body of literature were they drawing from, what types of articles were omitted, and what justification was there for choosing the articles they did. The structure of the paper was also a bit difficult to follow; there was no clear hierarchy of ideas and how they fit into the overall thesis of when to allocate resources to community engagement. While the academic rigor could have been improved, the position the authors took was novel. Much of the public participation literature assumes greater participation is better. In practice, however, planning offices have scarce resources. Planners must consider the opportunity cost of their efforts (i.e., how else could those resources be spent?). By assessing the problem or project at hand, and referring to the indicators outlined (where cost may be low and the benefit is high), planners can be more informed about the potential impact of increased engagement.

What benefits are gained by increased community involvement in downtown revitalization efforts? Macon, Georgia, is a city of 155,000 people, and is characterized by historic neighborhoods and many long-time residents. To guide their revitalization efforts, the city interviewed over 2,000 stakeholders about what they would like to see represented in a community plan. Stakeholders – as identified in the article – are limited to major employers, small business owners, and residents. Mooney argues that community involvement in the process gave greater credibility to the plan and transformed the original objectives of city officials. For example, stakeholders emphasized the need for walkability in their community and the city responded by creating a new neighborhood park. One park specifically was identified as unsafe by the focus groups, and – with public support – was affixed with a fountain with a public plaza to alleviate those concerns. Macon also provides guidance in thinking about balancing revitalization with maintaining community character.

Rather than trying to save every building and feature, planners should identify those that are singular to the neighborhood and, if gone, would change its character.

As 7 Peaks assesses the public participation efforts in Aldenville, the case of the city of Macon helps demonstrate the benefits of linking community engagement to neighborhood revitalization. Beyond addressing criticisms of a top-down planning process or just engaging in token public participation, public engagement can help guide the process, frame priorities, and identify overlooked sites. 7 Peaks wants to promote what residents believe are the top assets and base recommendations around consistently top-ranked priorities. As 7 Peaks identifies the open-ended responses, people have a strong fondness for the history of Aldenville, and historical features like the Commons and the Lucky Strike. 7 Peaks wants to highlight these as assets that are key in the overall identity of Aldenville and have that be reflected in final deliverables.

Traditional models of economic development only consider expert-based assessments of development means while ignoring local development needs and resident skills. O'Hara believes that understanding residents' needs and skills should be the starting point for identifying development potentials, especially at the neighborhood scale. O'Hara conducted a survey of 444 households focused in two inner city neighborhoods in Schenectady, New York, a city of 65,000 residents. 1,398 people responded to the survey from the 444 households, but the author did not specify overall response rate. Survey results indicated a strong concern for quality of life issues, such as a need for recreation, human services, and neighborhood improvements, as opposed to direct economic issues such as job creation. Simultaneously, the respondents identified that employment job skills coincided with community needs. Despite the match

between neighborhood needs and skills, O'Hara identified barriers to economic development: the lack of effective communication between residents and decision makers; and the lack of valuation systems that properly assess the value of social and environmental contexts and their contributions to local development.

Many cities, especially in the Northeastern United States, have been crippled by deindustrialization, disinvestment, and residential flight. Schenectady and Chicopee are both smaller cities with similar populations and both have suffered from deindustrialization. Common development strategies that aim to attract businesses and new residents have thus far been unsuccessful. Therefore, identifying development strategies that seek to build upon existing and potential markets in the local community may lead to greater success and economic stimulation while providing much needed services to residents. Neighborhood based development initiatives may integrate residents into the workforce while providing for local needs. There are many cases where city officials aim to reinvigorate a neighborhood or downtown area by attracting new companies, but they oftentimes do not consider the needs and skills of those already residing in these places.

In the development of its neighborhood planning, the City of Seattle created a unique policy process for collaborative design and coordination between city- and neighborhood-level officials. Sirianni used a two-pronged methodological approach to explore Seattle's neighborhood planning efforts: (1) 33 semi-structured interviews with planning officials and neighborhood stakeholders active from 1985 to the present, and (2) an examination of the developed neighborhood plans, adoption and approval rubrics, a city-developed planning toolkit provided to neighborhood groups, as well as news coverage of the process and other

relevant planning documents. Based on the data collected during the semi-structured interviews, Sirianni identified five components to be key to the City's neighborhood planning successes. The first was the development of a Neighborhood Planning Office (NPO). The NPO hired project managers with diverse skill sets (land-use, housing, community organizing, finance) as relational organizers among neighborhood stakeholders. Second, the city encouraged each neighborhood to develop a neighborhood-specific plan, or be left to defer to the Citywide comprehensive plan (completed the previous year); all 37 neighborhoods "targeted for growth" chose to create their own plan. Third, the city gave each neighborhood a \$10,000 grant to define a community vision together with identified major stakeholders. Fourth, when the city agreed that the vision was developed democratically and with a viable vision, each neighborhood was allowed \$60,000-\$100,000 to conduct the second phase, where the key stakeholders and the NPO project managers (and often hired consultants) together developed detailed proposals for the neighborhood. Lastly, all relevant city departments evaluated the plans to confirm feasibility and consistency with the city's comprehensive plan.

The step-by-step chronology of Seattle's neighborhood planning process can provide a lot of guidance for cities aiming to develop a neighborhood planning approach. However, several important details about methodology were inadequately explained. Regarding the 33 semi-structured interviews: how were these people selected, what was the total number in the population that this sample was drawn from, and how was the information recorded? Similarly, the author mentioned that planning documents were reviewed and examined, but did not specify which articles and reports. Sirianni did not mention the methods of coding or analysis used in this study. Sirianni also did not discuss points of disagreement among the data (which one might

anticipate when discussing successful neighborhood planning – a concept open to interpretation).

Social issues tend to take a backseat to scientific ones in environmental or resource management. What is best for the environment may not always align with the interests of society, and thus purveyors of knowledge become critical gatekeepers in moderating the differences between the two competing sides. Petts' research sought to elevate social considerations on a more equal footing with customary norms by highlighting the value of learning gatekeepers and the privileging of local narratives. These interactions were observed in a group setting, where participants were assigned roles and told to contribute to a wetlands restoration project (n=75). This interaction was structured around a common agenda, with experts guiding participants and answering questions as the engagement process continued.

Petts' research highlights the importance of the link between individual and organizational learning through the often-ignored lens of expert learning. Organizations may present a biased viewpoint when presenting data to the public, and individuals may not fully comprehend all aspects of the plan or proposal they are looking at. Experts can mediate these two competing views and better inform the individual and the organization when it comes to the conveyance of data. Petts observed this occurrence in her research, as participants trusted the experts that were in attendance and created a third type of categorization when defining concepts during the river restoration study. Experts were forced to alter their initial presentations in order to present data and information in a clear and concise manner to all participants in order to account for the differences in knowledge amongst participants.

With public participation, it is important to include various groups, yet some are often left out of the process. Recently, planners have striven to incorporate the voices of high school students because this demographic tends to be ignored. According to Atkinson, young people tend to be more open-minded to change than their adult counterparts. They are more open to mixed-use development and better sidewalks. They do not have deeply entrenched mindsets about their community as their older counterparts. For example, some high school students were interested in zoning because it determined whether they could walk to stores and restaurants without relying on their parents to drive them. Youth are also more eager to use the latest technologies to assist in planning.

Several cities, such as Edina, Minnesota, have added student representatives to their planning boards. This allows them to get them involved in their local government. Even though these youth under 18 are unable to vote, their input is incorporated into plans for the city. Biddeford, Maine's planning department teamed up with some high school teachers to involve students in a project called Community Heart and Soul. In one instance, students interviewed their grandparents to gauge their thoughts on the city's "glory days." With the input from the students and their grandparents, Biddeford launched a series of initiatives to improve their downtown area and some of the adjacent mill buildings.

In summary, these reports show that a city must understand its community in order to guide neighborhood revitalization. Involving locals, including those of diverse perspectives and demographic characteristics, gives greater credibility to plans and ensures that they are in line with the community's needs, wants, and goals; they are gatekeepers of local knowledge invaluable to the planning process. Stakeholders play a significant role in

outreach projects due to their knowledge and connections within a community and high degree of influence, and their interests should be met with planning practices. Experts can help guide participation and community members during the engagement process. Throughout the engagement process, it is important for a city to consider the success and cost-effectiveness of different outreach methods.

## What Affects Public Participation and Perception

In this section regarding what can affect public participation and perception, some different factors influencing the public will be discussed. In the first paper, Pradhananga and Davenport (2017) examine how community attachment and perceived neighborhood efficacy influence locals' opinions and level of civic engagement. Next, Walker (2015) discusses the relationship between local activism and involvement, and readiness for redevelopment. Glaser et al. (2006) examine government-based versus neighborhood-based approaches and their effects on participation. Kang and Kwak (2003) look at residential characteristics and media usage influence on civic involvement. Hollander (2013) examines public perspective on population decline. These reports will collectively show that there are various factors that influence residents' opinions and levels of civic participation.

Pradhananga and Davenport discussed how a lack of citizen involvement and issues with sustaining interest lead to projects that have little support and/or do not meet residents' needs, creating a waste of resources and negative attitudes from residents. They examined the effect of community attachment (i.e., emotional and social connection to place and environment), environmental concern, and perceived neighborhood efficacy (i.e., ability to influence change and solve problems) on the



opinions and level of civic engagement of residents. They utilized a mail survey with multiple-choice and ranking/scale questions that was created using concepts from literature review and pretesting on project partners. The survey was sent to 1,000 residents within census tracts of the study area and received a 36% response rate. A majority of respondents (58%) stated that it was important to them to have opportunities to be involved in water issues and that they were concerned about stormwater runoff; however, less than a third of respondents said they would be actively engaged in discussions or meetings about it. Furthermore, the researchers found that social neighborhood attachment had a significant effect on civic engagement but environmental attachment did not, and that environmental concern and neighborhood efficacy led to increased civic engagement. Pradhananga and Davenport suggest that future research include face-to-face methods, examine self-reported versus actual engagement, and include more determinants of civic participation.

Public participation is key in determining land-use changes, redevelopment, and policies as well as gauging understanding and support for proposed plans. Many planning projects often lack substantial public engagement and do not include measures of community attachment and efficacy and how they affect residents' levels of civic involvement. As this study shows, even participants who state they want to be more involved are not always willing to attend meetings about projects. Planners may want to consider learning how to increase public involvement in order increase awareness of potential projects, input, and support. The disconnect between wanting to participate and finding effective ways of doing so needs to be researched and resolved.

Walker studied the relationship between neighborhood activism and readiness for transit-oriented mixed-income redevelopment

(TOMIR), which involves redeveloping an area to include proximity to transit, multimodal transportation options, and housing stock for various income levels. Residents of a neighborhood may be civically involved and prepared for change at varying degrees, and in the case of TOMIR with its history of gentrification and displacement, it is important to understand residents' readiness and feelings about redevelopment. Variable definitions for activism and readiness were all based on previous literature on community engagement interventions and readiness, and Walker's hypothesis was that increased readiness for TOMIR was associated with greater social engagement and activism. Walker conducted a pilot survey with local residents (n=30), and the finalized quantitative survey (advertised through flyers and door-knocking) received 386 responses. In-depth interviews were conducted with 25 individuals from one of the neighborhoods. The limitations of this research include a low sampling rate, self-selection bias, a lack of generalization to a wider population due to only two neighborhoods within one city being studied, and the cross-sectional study design that makes it unclear in which direction the variables influence one another.

Walker's qualitative results showed that there were three main reactions to redevelopment: 1) 56% of respondents were involved in organizations and were more prepared for and open to change; 2) 36% were neutral toward change, and many of them had barriers such as physical and mental health or substance use that prevented their involvement in neighborhood activism, while others were apathetic about change or uninformed; 3) 8% were against change and uninvolved, had low levels of social cohesion and collective efficacy, and found it easier to accept neighborhood problems than change. The study implies that grassroots organizing, a variety of collaborators in planning processes, and strong social networks can help prepare residents for neighborhood redevelopment, and those who are low in

readiness may benefit from individual- or household-level interventions. The results also imply that having higher rates of involvement and activism may benefit communities and residents. The number of variables, complexity of concept definitions and analysis, a very localized area, and relatively small sample size lead to a recommendation for more research in this field. However, the mix of quantitative and qualitative and how respondents were approached were appropriate outreach methods.

Glaser, Yeager, and Parker discussed a deepening divide between people and their government as well as increased skepticism and distrust. They sought to find the best method for communication between citizens and their government to increase engagement by looking at government-based approaches including Citizen Participation Organizations (CPOs) that focus more on professional expertise to guide decision-making and limits the amount of influence citizens have, and neighborhood-based organizations (NBOs) that promote more grassroots democratic participation and focus on neighborhood well-being but often are more costly and time-consuming. A questionnaire containing a series of Likert scale questions was mailed to 5,970 registered voters from a random sample for which researchers received a 33% response rate. They found that citizens were unlikely to communicate often with CPOs (7%) or attend meetings, while NBOs were more successful at collaboration with citizens and more focused on the well-being of neighborhoods. Less than half of respondents perceived CPOs as successful at bringing people together, while over 75% perceive NBOs as successful at this. In general, the researchers were able to conclude that NBOs are the preferred form of communication for residents.

Exploring the best communication method to keep residents in touch with their government can promote participation as well as

increase efficacy and trust in leadership. People often feel removed from their local government and vice versa, but maintaining and increasing this contact can help resolve that issue. Glaser, Yeager, and Parker demonstrate the neighborhood groups are more effective than government-based ones for public outreach. Increasing involvement via utilizing residents' preferred method of communication can benefit the community.

While past studies have shown the importance of how long people reside in a place and media usage in civic involvement, few studies have examined the combined effects of both variables. Kang and Kwak investigated how individual- and neighborhood-level residential characteristics (such as length of residency and demographics) are related to individuals' civic participation and whether the effects of communication variables, such as television usage, on civic participation vary depending on these residence-related factors. This study used a two-year, pooled data set from a pre-existing telephone survey of 830 residents of Madison, Wisconsin, which had a 53% response rate. Level of civil engagement, individual length of residence, interpersonal network, and media use regarding civic participation were all measured by a phone survey. Regression was used to examine the relative contributions of length of residence, neighborhood stability (how long people stay within that neighborhood), and media usage to civic engagement. Kang and Kwak found that the longer someone has resided in a community, the more stable that neighborhood was, and the more socially connected the person was, the more likely he or she was to participate in civic activities. Furthermore, it showed that media such as television and newspaper regarding civic issues had a larger impact on those living in a neighborhood with lower residential mobility.

Kang and Kwak utilized survey data from another project that they did not conduct, and they did not comment on the effectiveness of telephone usage. It is important to understand who is most likely to be civically involved in a community. Understanding levels of civic involvement can allow for local governments to either focus on interacting with those groups, or to come up with new and innovative ways to get other residents involved. For instance, different methods of engagement may be necessary to engage with long-term residents versus those who have only lived in a place for a short amount of time. Similarly, understanding the types of outreach media and who they reach can also lead to a planning office or organization developing multipronged methods of outreach to involve as many people as possible.

How do residents of shrinking cities perceive the challenges and opportunities associated with population decline? Hollander explored this question through the case study of New Bedford, Massachusetts. In order to gather resident perspectives on population decline, Hollander conducted fifteen interviews with local officials and community leaders, held focus groups in the three New Bedford neighborhoods (6-10 residents per group), and conducted follow-up interviews with focus groups participants (3-5 follow-up interviews per focus group). Three major themes emerged: blaming the “other,” absentee landlords, and real estate market stagnation. Although many residents identified negligent absentee landlords and market conditions as main drivers of neighborhood problems, many still blamed new, low-income residents for worsening neighborhoods conditions.

Hollander’s findings show the importance of balancing public engagement with planning expertise when considering issues of urban policy. For example, interviewed residents repeatedly told Hollander that the City of Boston had a policy of sending its

poor residents to New Bedford, a theory that the researcher debunked. Although listening to resident perspectives is a key component of public engagement, so is the distribution of accurate information.

In summary, these reports on what effect public participation demonstrate that more emotional and social connection people have to their neighborhood and the greater their perceived efficacy, the greater their level of participation. Length of residency, media usage, social networks, and neighborhood stability also have a positive correlation on level of civic engagement. People are more likely to participate when neighborhood organizations conduct outreach as opposed to city governments. A city should consider how ready and interested a community is in changes; if they are not prepared or in favor of redevelopment, their attachment to community and quality of life can decrease. Balancing expertise with involving the general public can help lead to a more informed community with more educated perspectives.

## Use of Internet and Other Modern Technology

In this section on the use of internet and other modern technology, the effects and benefits of each will be discussed. The first report by Evans-Crowley (2010) shows that the public organizes on social media primarily when they are against planning projects and do not have significant influence on the planning process. Afzalan and Evans-Crowley (2015) examine how social media members perceive and use forums and whether they influence planning. Schweitzer (2014) looks at Twitter users’ attitudes through their tweets about transportation agencies and what affects them being more positive or negative. Evans-Crowley and Hollander (2010) explore the potential contribution of web-based tools on planning. DeSouza and Smith (2014)

discuss the ability of online civic platforms to gather public opinion and wisdom. Arieff (2010) discusses a text-messaging-based software that allows residents to communicate with local agencies. Lee and Kwak (2012) examine how agencies can be more effective in engaging and responding to the public on social media. Brabham (2012) examines the effectiveness of crowdsourcing models and why people engage in them. Al-Kodmany (2006) discusses the use of GIS in planning. Collectively, these reports will discuss how technological and internet-based methods can be used in public engagement.

Social media is a popular place for people to discuss local issues and events, yet it is unknown whether social media has an impact on the planning process. Evans-Cowley examined the extent to which the public and planners are using social networking sites to organize the public around place-based planning issues. The author used content analysis of social media sites to identify and analyze 98 place-based planning groups in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada. Thirty-four group administrators from the 98 place-based planning groups (35%) agreed to be surveyed to determine group goals, achievement of those goals, and satisfaction with group progress. Then 18 town planners from the locations of those 34 groups (53%) were interviewed on the effects that these groups have on the local planning process. This study found that the public primarily organizes to oppose development projects and that these public social media groups have minimal influence on the planning process.

The public social media groups in this study formed in response to proposed development. The study is not clear as to whether it found any groups that were created for planning in general, such as a public-created community development group, as opposed to the groups created in response to development. Furthermore, it does not identify key stakeholder groups, such as organizations,

which may support or oppose development projects. It may be important for planners to use these study results to better understand how people think and how they can also have an online presence.

Can online neighborhood groups help facilitate local planning processes? Do they foster bottom-up discussion of planning issues, or do they require planner oversight to ensure inclusive, effective communication? Afzalan and Evans-Cowley investigated these questions by performing survey and content analysis on three Facebook groups: one based in the United Kingdom, one in Canada, and one in the United States. Surveys were conducted to examine how members perceive and use the forums, as well as how group members relate to one another. From the three groups combined, 143 out of 983 members (14.5%) responded to survey. Through content analysis of neighborhood Facebook group discussions, broad categories of comments emerged: asking for help, informing others about neighborhood events, expressing personal experiences, and buying/selling. (The authors do not specify total number of comments analyzed for content.) Findings from both the survey and content analyses showed that although neighborhood Facebook groups provide an important venue for local information sharing, discussion does not focus on planning-related issues. Afzalan and Evans-Cowley suggest that most neighborhood Facebook groups would require a planner liaison or moderator to focus discussion on neighborhood planning topics.

In neighborhood planning, time and resource constraints limit planners' capacity to conduct stakeholder outreach. Organizing public meetings, design charrettes, or focus groups can be labor intensive. If planners could leverage online neighborhood groups as forums for discussing planning-related issues, they could

perhaps reach a greater quantity and wider variety of neighborhood residents. As Afzalan and Evans-Cowley note, although not all residents participate in online neighborhood groups, such groups may provide a gateway for engaging residents who have not historically participated in traditional planning processes. More research is required to fully assess the effectiveness of different engagement methods when applied to online neighborhood groups.

Using a sample of 64,000 Twitter messages, Schweitzer examined whether social media users perceive transportation planning and management in a positive or negative light. She also explored whether different types of online interaction between transportation agencies and their constituents affects the tone in which transportation services and management are discussed online. Using a machine-coding algorithm, Schweitzer analyzed the level of sentiment of Tweets about ten major North American transportation agencies. She then compared the mean sentiment of these tweets against control tweets about other topics. On average, tweets about transportation agencies were more negative than those about most other public services. In addition, Twitter users tweeted more positively about transportation agencies that engaged users in a more conversational style, as opposed to merely blasting online announcements.

Schweitzer shows that when a transportation agency acknowledges the particular concerns and questions of Twitter users, the tenor of online discussion regarding that agency's services becomes more positive. Even slurs tweeted in reference to that agency's patrons decreased in number. This study suggests that planners who are concerned about improving public transportation should pay attention to how public transit is discussed on social media. Social media, like any media, can

impact how successfully planners can advocate for expanding services that improve urban sustainability, equity, and quality of life.

Interactive digital technologies and social media have become ubiquitous in our everyday life, yet these new tools have not yet been used to their greatest potential in public participation in planning. How do web-based tools like Facebook and Second Life lend themselves to public participation in planning that may be different from other formats? Evans-Cowley and Hollander identified four case studies using keyword searches to find communities that are using these tools and explored their potential contribution to the planning profession.

The cities of Aspen, Colorado and Austin, Texas were examined for their use of Facebook in planning efforts. Aspen created a city-run Facebook page in 2008 for its updated Aspen Area Community Plan to target a younger demographic (high school age and young professionals). They attracted only a limited number of people (52 including city staff members), when their goal was to engage with at least 1,000 residents. The city concluded it was an effective tool to alert people about events and local news, but not to solicit feedback from locals. The case of Austin centered around three citizen-initiated Facebook groups created to oppose a Walmart development project. One of these groups influenced the project and helped foster a 60-day suspension period where increased neighborhood input was required. Boston and Acton, Massachusetts were used as case studies for Second Life – a virtual reality platform where people create and interact with digital places. Both Second-Life-based initiatives were led by university partners, along with the cities, and the Boston case study was intended to inform the city's master planning. In both Boston and Acton, there were technological challenges limiting people to only participate on-

site; however, the city officials were able to receive some input on the physical design of small areas of these cities.

It seems there is still a long road ahead to effectively using digital tools in public participation. Evans-Cowley and Hollander did an exceptional job in detailing their research methodology, including how they selected their case studies (including the search portals and specific keywords used). The authors were also very measured so as not to overstate success, but rather they qualified the organizers' own comments on the projects. The limitations of these digital tools are also very interesting to note – when (if at all) should someone be banned from a community Facebook group? How do we try to overcome the accessibility and technological hurdles of Second Life? Second Life is not a well-adopted platform, and public reach is going to be reduced if public opinion can only be collected in a supervised setting. These are points to consider as public participation becomes more digitized.

Whether working in the public, private, or non-profit sector, planners are often tasked with proposing solutions to complex policy problems. Limited time, resources, and lived experience of planning staff, however, circumscribe the range and depth of solutions that they are able to imagine. Desouza and Smith discussed a range of online civic platforms that allow planners to tap the collective intelligence of constituents. Online civic platforms allow constituents to initiate their own discussions regarding public policy or to respond to government calls for input on specific topics. The information produced from online civic platform conversations can then help planners craft policy proposals that better reflect the collective wisdom and values of the communities they serve.

The widespread adoption of smartphones combined with the flexibility and convenience of online communication provides a ripe opportunity for elevating rates of public participation. Which platform is used and how that platform is utilized determines how open and inclusive online discussion will be. Some platforms grant the public full narrative control, while others allow government to orchestrate conversation. Planners should capitalize on the advantages that online communication provides, but should not consider online engagement a panacea for addressing power dynamics and issues of equity in planning.

Cities of all sizes would like to be able to solicit public opinion in a way that is time- and cost-effective, and receives meaningful input from its citizens. However, even with the increased prevalence of smartphones, this has been an ongoing challenge for cities. Public participation software, titled “Give a Minute”, attempted to address this challenge. Give a Minute is a text-messaging-based way for residents to speak directly to local agencies, non-profits, and advocacy groups working in the area. At the time of this commentary by Arieff, the software was being used by the cities of Chicago and Memphis, and expected to be adopted in Indianapolis, New York, San Jose, and Grand Rapids. When first launched in Chicago, the “Give a Minute” campaign was advertised on local billboards, on public transit, and in the local paper. The poster posed the question: “Hey Chicago, what would encourage you to walk, bike, or CTA more often?” A thousand responses were received in the first two weeks, ranging from a reduction in fare cost, to improving safety on the streets, to making the train ride more enjoyable. The overall intention of the initiative was to crowdsource new ideas for the city and to create a direct line to the organization, agency, department, etc. who are interested in the feedback. This software demonstrates how democratic decision making can be improved through cell-based methods. As people begin to produce common concerns

or recommendations, the active agency can facilitate and connect these individuals and provide resources to support the aims.

Arieff did not answer several questions including which specific organizations or agencies were using the program and what actions resulted from its use. However, “Give a Minute” demonstrates one potential method to translate complaints about your local area into an exchange with decision-makers. This type of campaign also suggests that a simple straightforward question, advertised in multiple platforms, can outperform face-to-face meetings or workshops in terms of breadth of participation. Finally, the precedent of “Give a Minute” helps lay out the context in which a mobile survey (in the case of the Aldenville Community Survey) is attempting to address challenges in public engagement by making the survey simple, straightforward, and specific in the questions that are asked.

A growing interest in serving the public good through online engagement and problem solving has led to the creation of crowdsourcing models. Crowdsourcing models seek to leverage the collective intelligence of online communities to accomplish specific tasks. One such model is Next Stop Design, an attempt to use crowdsourcing for public participation strategies in transit planning. To determine the effectiveness of crowdsourcing models, Brabham interviewed 23 Next Stop Design participants to identify their motivations for participation in the online engagement project (n = 23). Brabham sought to understand why participants chose to partake in the crowdsourcing engagement, and her results ranged from seeking personal recognition for their input to a desire to learn new skills as reasons for participating.

Brabham’s interview analysis showed that participants had multiple reasons for engaging through online design processes. The interviews focused on the Next Stop Design platform, a

website where participants could submit designs for various plan components that the planners were working on. The planners leveraged these ideas into a design competition, where all those interested in the project could vote on which design of their peers was what they wanted to see in their community. Soliciting citizen designs through websites and allowing for a design competition is a novel approach to a typical design charrette or focus group setting. This process allows for those who may not typically participate in person the ability to present their ideas in a neutral setting with minimal barriers to engagement. While this method engaged numerous people of all backgrounds, those not skilled at computers or design programs may not be able to participate without an in-person alternative to the design process.

While Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can be a valuable tool in assessing community assets, the software package has limitations. GIS data is not applicable to individual sites and areas within a larger community. A planning team from the University of Chicago Illinois (UIC) collaborated with community leaders from three neighborhoods in Chicago that have historically been havens for immigrants and have experienced poverty and lack of housing. One of the goals of UIC’s planning team was to demonstrate how GIS can be used in tandem with other, more traditional methods, such as pencil and paper. Another goal was to create a vision for future development that fosters community engagement in planning decisions. As part of a participatory, collaborative approach to redesigning the neighborhoods, community leaders sought to tap into the technical capabilities of GIS software, including local data, parcel maps, and photographs. At community workshops, residents provided input on improvements they would like to see in their neighborhood. Members of the planning team translated residents’ ideas into graphics and diagrams on an electronic sketch board.

The team found that GIS data is not useful for gathering qualitative information such as residents' feelings and perceptions of their neighborhoods. Much of the GIS data available was organized by census tract, which was meaningless to residents. Other issues with GIS were the availability of data. Residents and community organizations wanted information on environmental issues, infrastructure and utilities, crime, planning, and zoning issues, most of which were beyond the scope of the data available on GIS systems. Furthermore, the complexity of computer software prevents planners from creating rough sketches of desired neighborhood improvements that are constantly subject to modification. However, the coupling of GIS data points with images and other forms of visual media allows for residents to easily visualize the physical context of their neighborhood. For example, a photograph of a school or park coupled with the physical location of the place allows the reader to easily identify where this place is in relation to the surrounding area. For rough neighborhood sketches, pencil and paper should still be used to create room for changes. Therefore, GIS can be a valuable component of community engagement if the software is used in conjunction with other forms of technology as well as traditional techniques that do not involve technology.

In summary, the internet and other modern technology provide low-cost, wide-reaching avenues for public engagement. Social media groups run by residents allow them to discuss planning issues but often do not result in influence on them. Having government agencies and other partners more involved in social media with more interaction with the public can help increase their participation and influence on planning. Crowdsourcing models can be effective and exciting for residents, as opposed to standard workshops or charrettes that may have low attendance. Lastly, GIS data can assist in the public engagement process but

are not the most effective way for the public to understand spatial data.

## **Overall Conclusions & Recommendations**

Participation is important in planning in order to understand local perspectives and plan in line with community needs, wants, and goals. The Client should continue with neighborhood- and City-level engagement as Chicopee moves forward with planning initiatives. They should employ various types of outreach, such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups, while analyzing the success and cost-effectiveness of each method. Having key stakeholders or gatekeepers of knowledge for each neighborhood can help guide and inform locals. The Client should also seek diverse publics for greater representation of perspectives.

The Client should increase perceived efficacy by having more interaction with local groups and residents and including them more often in planning practices. People will be more likely to engage when NBOs are involved, so the city government (Mayor, Council Members, Planning Department, and others) should work with these organizations to engage the public. They should research residents' readiness for redevelopment, level of community attachment, and level civic involvement. The results should be used to target areas with minimal participation and explore options to increase this, such as with more outreach including by local organizations or individual- and household-level interventions to keep them informed of prospective changes and gather their input. Chicopee should utilize experts to distribute information to the public so they have accurate knowledge on topics at hand.

Regarding the internet and other technology, the Client should more actively engage with social media groups and create a Planning Department Facebook page to encourage more



planning dialogue online and greater participation. They should have staff that is able to collect public input and respond to them with feedback in a timely manner as well as specific strategies, protocol, and/or scripts for interacting with social media users. If feasible, a text-messaging-based service like “Give Me a Minute” or crowdsourcing models could also be effective in allowing more communication between residents and City agencies. Although the creation of these may be time-consuming, carry a cost, and require more staff, their ability to reach more people may prove worth the time and effort and in fact prove more feasible than multiple in-person meetings. The Client should also consider using GIS in tandem with other public engagement methods as well as internally so the Planning Department can better document specific locations and areas the public has discussed.

## Community Survey

The community survey is central to the Client's goals to better understand public opinion and to help guide planning efforts in Aldenville. The following section details the development process of the Aldenville Community Survey and the goals 7 Peaks developed to chart the success of the public engagement process. The entire process, from revising the initial draft given to 7 Peaks by the client, to the opening of the survey to the public, took place between September 20<sup>th</sup> and October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

### Initial draft survey

The Client met with 7 Peaks on Wednesday, September 20, 2017 in the LARP Department's Design Building to discuss the Client goals of the Studio project. 7 Peaks was presented with a draft community survey developed over the summer between the Client and Instructor. The original survey is available in Appendix I of this report. 7 Peaks reviewed the preliminary survey questions collectively with the Client and Instructor, along with Jennifer Stromsten of Lewis & Stromsten LLC (hereafter referred to as "the Consultant"), and discussed what the Client wanted to achieve by collecting data on each series of questions included in the initial survey.

The original survey was organized into the following categories:

- Assets in Aldenville
- Areas of Caution
- Deficient or Needs Improvement
- Priorities for Aldenville
- The City's Report Card for Aldenville
- Who are you?

The Assets in Aldenville section was designed to understand where residents shop, eat, and spend their time in the neighborhood. These questions also had the purpose of trying to better understand neighborhood boundaries by asking whether respondents considered a range of different businesses and landmarks to be within the boundaries of the neighborhood. The Client requested that 7 Peaks draft similar questions for schools and parks in addition to the provided list of businesses. Finally, included in this section were several questions about the Aldenville Commons, viewed by residents as an asset, located within the center of the neighborhood of Aldenville. The Client wanted to better understand how often the Aldenville Commons was used by residents, how people traveled to use the Aldenville Commons, and what activities occurred on the Aldenville Commons and surrounding area.

Areas of Caution and Deficient or Needs Improvement sought to understand what residents view as blighted or troublesome features of the neighborhood. The sections were divided into multiple categories: crime, transportation, infrastructure, vacancy and blight, garbage collection, and others. The Client also wanted respondents to detail specific streets which need improvement and recommend improvements for those streets. Additionally, the Client wanted 7 Peaks to further elaborate on questions related to schools and parks to further expand the breadth of data collected by the survey. Priorities for Aldenville was intended to better understand residents' most immediate priorities for the neighborhood. The overarching question, "If you had ten minutes with the City Council, what would you say are the two priorities needed for the Aldenville neighborhood?" was designed to prompt these responses.

The final section, “Who are you?”, asked respondents to describe their relationship to the neighborhood as well as demographic information. These data would be used to assess differences in opinions across categories of people (e.g., by age, education, employment, household characteristics, etc.). Finally, this section asked respondents to give their preferred method of contact for future surveys and to rank the options in a preferred order, to inform the Client of the best method of future engagement to build off of the results of this project.

## Revising the survey

After an initial review of this survey on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 7 Peaks spent the next three weeks collectively reviewing the given survey with assistance and regular feedback from the Instructor, Consultant, and Client. 7 Peaks used the following goals and principles to guide revision of the Aldenville Community Survey:

- (1) Increase accessibility
- (2) Inform priority-setting through ranking
- (3) Better understand respondents' strength of opinions through the use of a Likert scale
- (4) Promote the use of photographs when discussing specific places or landmarks
- (5) Increase use of open-ended responses to allow for self-expression
- (6) Reduce the completion time

First, the accessibility of the survey design and format was as a major guiding principle as 7 Peaks revised the initial survey provided by the Client. 7 Peaks reviewed the survey's appearance in mobile and desktop format to ensure all changes were clear on both platforms. Once completed, 7 Peaks created and formatted a paper copy of the survey for distribution. In each case, the

various formats were tested for legibility and ease of use for those with an 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. An 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level was chosen for the survey questions to ensure that as large a public as possible could take and comprehend the survey.

Second, after revisions, 7 Peaks decided to create ranking options for respondents to focus on neighborhood assets and priorities for Aldenville by changing the ordering of a series of statements. By asking respondents to rank neighborhood characteristics and then analyzing the results, 7 Peaks determined that better, more in-depth recommendations could be made for the Client across varying timeframes. Recommendations based on survey results will be proposed to the Client in the following timeframes: 6 months, 1-2 years, and 3-5 years.

Third, 7 Peaks worked to better understand and quantify respondents' intensity of opinions. Rather than using binary (i.e., yes or no) options, 7 Peaks decided to use a Likert scale for 19 of the survey questions. Respondents were provided with the following options for various statements about the neighborhood: Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. This scale allowed 7 Peaks to aggregate and quantify the strength of opinion of all respondents as well as no opinion with a neutral option provided. Unlike a binary choice, Likert options provide a greater depth of insight into how respondents feel about the statement presented in front of them, allowing for more conclusive findings and recommendations.

Fourth, the integration of images identifying neighborhood buildings and other places into the survey added a wide range of benefits to the final community survey. The photographs created a visual break to the pages of questions that were text only, designed to maintain respondent interest and engagement. The images gave visual cues when the name of a place was not well

known or misinterpreted by respondents, increasing the validity of responses. Finally, by using high resolution images 7 Peaks took in the field, the photos demonstrated in a tangible way that 7 Peaks had embedded themselves in the community and spent time learning and documenting the different strengths and weaknesses of the community.

Fifth, the increased use of open-ended responses was one of the most important guiding goals, and arguably transformed the final survey in the most significant way. 7 Peaks decided to allow optional open-ended responses beneath each subject heading to capture respondents' overall thoughts about what 7 Peaks may have missed in the survey questions about Aldenville. In addition, respondents were provided another open-ended question in the final section of the survey to capture any other comments or feedback respondents had that was not covered in previous survey sections. This way, 7 Peaks could capture opinions and ideas in respondent's own words, unfiltered by the pre-determined categories. The open-ended responses could provide valuable quotes the Client could use to support and advertise future engagement initiatives and projects.

The sixth and final guiding principle 7 Peaks had was to shorten the overall completion time of the survey by making the questions concise and easy to navigate. This goal was repeated perhaps more than any other in internal discussions as 7 Peaks crafted the survey. Based on information gathered by the popular online survey platform MetroQuest, the number of respondents who complete an online survey drops off significantly when a survey is longer than five minutes (MetroQuest, 2016). To retain respondents and ensure a high rate of completion for respondents who begin the survey, the final survey was designed for a completion time as close to five minutes as possible. 7 Peaks determined that if the optional open-

ended responses were left blank, the survey could be completed in five minutes. Eight to ten minutes seemed to be most common time for completion based off of testing conducted prior to launch, and these tests included writing multi-sentence comments in the open-ended sections.

The overall process for survey revision was just over three weeks. During this time, 7 Peaks went through multiple iterations to better meet the above objectives while still trying to capture the purpose of each survey heading provided to 7 Peaks by the Client in the original version.

## Pre-testing

Prior to the survey's launch, 7 Peaks pre-tested the survey on the fall 2017 Planning History and Theory class at the University of Massachusetts. Four of the team members introduced the project, the Client's goals, and how 7 Peaks was attempting to meet those goals with the use of a community survey. 7 Peaks provided a link to the survey to the entire class and went through the survey on a projector question by question. The feedback allowed 7 Peaks analyze the clarity and content through those not involved in the creation of the survey. A student requested that 7 Peaks clarify the purpose and intent of the survey, which resulted in the survey's landing page being improved to increase the clarity of the project.

## The Final Survey

The final survey used for distribution can be found in Appendix II. 7 Peaks made the survey publicly accessible on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The survey consisted of 11 sections:

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>1. Building Appearance</b>               | <b>7. Restaurants and Retail</b>  |
| <b>2. Transportation</b>                    | <b>8. Schools</b>                 |
| <b>3. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space</b> | <b>9. Priorities</b>              |
| <b>4. Aldenville Public Life</b>            | <b>10. Tell Us About Yourself</b> |
| <b>5. Neighborhood Identity</b>             | <b>11. The Last Word</b>          |
| <b>6. Housing Affordability</b>             |                                   |

Sections One through Seven – Building Appearance; Housing Affordability; Transportation; Restaurants and Retail; Parks, Recreation, and Open Space; Schools; and Aldenville Public Life – all contain a section of Likert scale options asking respondents’ level of agreement with a given statement. Each section also contained a space for respondents to include optional open-ended comments. Together, these seven sets of questions were intended to capture and quantify as many features of the neighborhood as possible into concise thematic areas, and to closely match the initial survey areas of greatest importance to the Client.

Section Eight, titled ‘Priorities’, asked two questions: "What are Aldenville's greatest assets?" and "What in the neighborhood needs the most improvement?" For each question, respondents were asked to rank the same seven neighborhood features. The features were closely aligned with the headings of the first seven sections of the survey, with two notable exceptions. Building Appearance and Housing Affordability were both absent from the list, and Employment Opportunities and Community Centers for Seniors, Children, and Families were added to the priority questions.

Section Nine focused on Neighborhood Identity. In this section, respondents were asked to select all photos of businesses, restaurants, and other landmarks that respondents identified with

the neighborhood of Aldenville. By asking these questions, 7 Peaks was able to provide the Client with a better working definition of where the neighborhood boundaries of Aldenville actually are, in contrast to the presently defined boundaries. The answers in the Neighborhood Identity section also indicate whether or not the current boundaries are porous and may require adjustments, or are a point of disagreement among residents.

Section Ten, Tell Us About Yourself, was intended to gather demographic and other personal information about who responded to the survey. This section asked respondents about their residency, relationship to Aldenville (e.g., live, work, or shop there), education, employment, age, race and ethnicity, income, and household makeup. The section also inquired as to how the resident heard about the survey and how to best contact the respondent in the future if another survey is conducted. These two questions allow the Client to better understand what outreach methods conducted by 7 Peaks worked best for Aldenville residents, while also providing support for methods that were beyond the scope of 7 Peaks engagement process, such as a mail-based survey.

Section Eleven, ‘The Last Word’, asked respondents to express comments and suggestions on any topic that 7 Peaks did not cover in this survey and any additional thoughts they may have. Respondents were also able to include their email for a copy of the final report in 2018.

In the future, 7 Peaks recommends that the Client use this survey as a template for other neighborhoods in Chicopee. The Client can adapt the locations in the Neighborhood Identity section to reflect different locations around the 7 other neighborhoods of

Chicopee. All other sections of the survey can be reused for future engagement projects through minor language alterations to reflect the different neighborhoods of Chicopee. Maintaining consistent questions across the different neighborhoods of Chicopee can make the analysis and comparison of results more efficient for the Client. This increased efficiency would allow the Client to better understand each neighborhood's distinct assets and make planning decisions based on these competitive advantages easier.

## Website platform (Qualtrics)

To effectively and efficiently engage with the residents of Aldenville, 7 Peaks wanted to create a survey through an online platform to increase the accessibility and distribution of the engagement process. 7 Peaks selected Qualtrics as the survey platform because UMass students and faculty can acquire a free license through agreements with Qualtrics. Qualtrics advertises itself as a company that specializes in improving the experience for every stakeholder that uses their platform (Qualtrics, 2017). As an interactive platform, Qualtrics' surveys are accessible by mobile phone, computer, and tablet. In addition to providing an accessible survey platform, Qualtrics generates basic graphics and charts of the collected responses, allowing for preliminary data analysis with minimal physical manipulation of the data. 7 Peaks utilized these graphics to provide weekly updates to the Client and Instructor, before developing more in-depth and detailed images of the collected data.

The Qualtrics platform provided many benefits to 7 Peaks' data collection process. These benefits were further amplified by the methods chosen to distribute the survey to the residents of Aldenville. To ensure that the results were representative of the population in Aldenville, 7 Peaks had to determine who was online and if alternative methods of engagement should be developed and deployed to address the demographic groups that are not as active online as others.

7 Peaks discovered that according to a 2013 poll from the Pew Center for Research, 85% of American adults use the internet, with the results displayed in Figure 64. This graphic is from a 2013 study of adult internet adoption, and highlights how dramatic the adoption of the internet has been over the last 30 years. In 1995, 14% of adults in America used the internet, and

this rate increased to 85% in 2013. 7 Peaks recognizes that this total number includes adults who use the net with varying levels of frequency, proficiency, and for varying purposes. However, the data still paints a picture of how widespread internet adoption has become, and show the potential benefits that can be gathered from a robust online community engagement process (Pew Research Center, 2016).

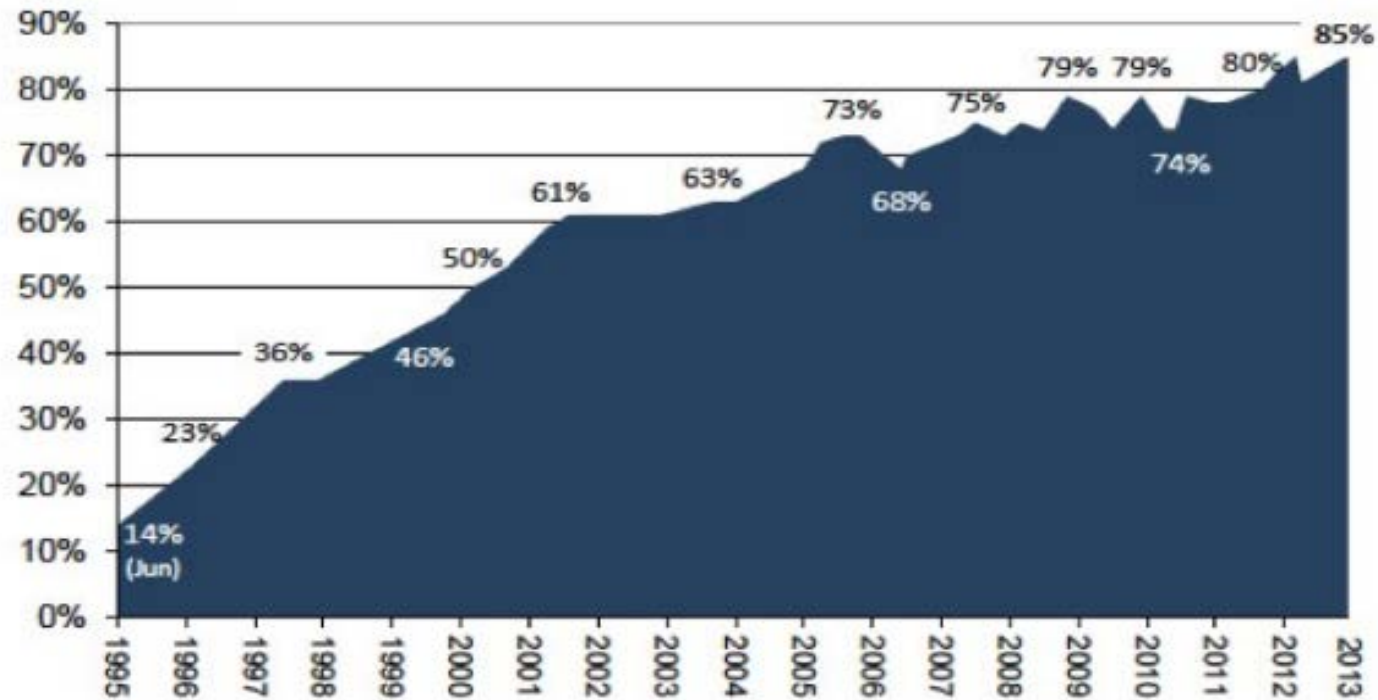
The challenge for 7 Peaks, however, is that while the vast majority of American adults use the internet, different segments of the population are better-represented than others. While 85% of all adults use the internet, only 61% of seniors are online. As Figure 64 shows, poorer adults and adults without any college education are two of the least represented groups online. For these groups to be given equal opportunity to voice their perspectives and opinions, online engagement tools should be coupled with other techniques, like face-to-face interviews or paper-based surveys. On the positive side, differences in race are much less pronounced. Also encouraging for 7 Peaks' goals was the fact that adults who live in cities are significantly more likely to be online than those in the countryside.

Although there are differences in online representation, the picture is changing rapidly. Smartphone adoption among seniors, for example, has quadrupled over the last five years (Figure 65). Overall internet adoption among seniors has even slightly outpaced that of the general adult population. Broadband internet access, tablet usage, and social media usage also demonstrate sharp upward trends, both among seniors and the general adult population.

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## Internet adoption, 1995-2013

*% of American adults (ages 18+) who use the internet, over time. As of May 2013, 85% of adults use the internet.*



Source: Pew Research Surveys, 1995-May 2013.

More: <http://pewinternet.org/Trend-Data/Internet-Adoption.aspx>

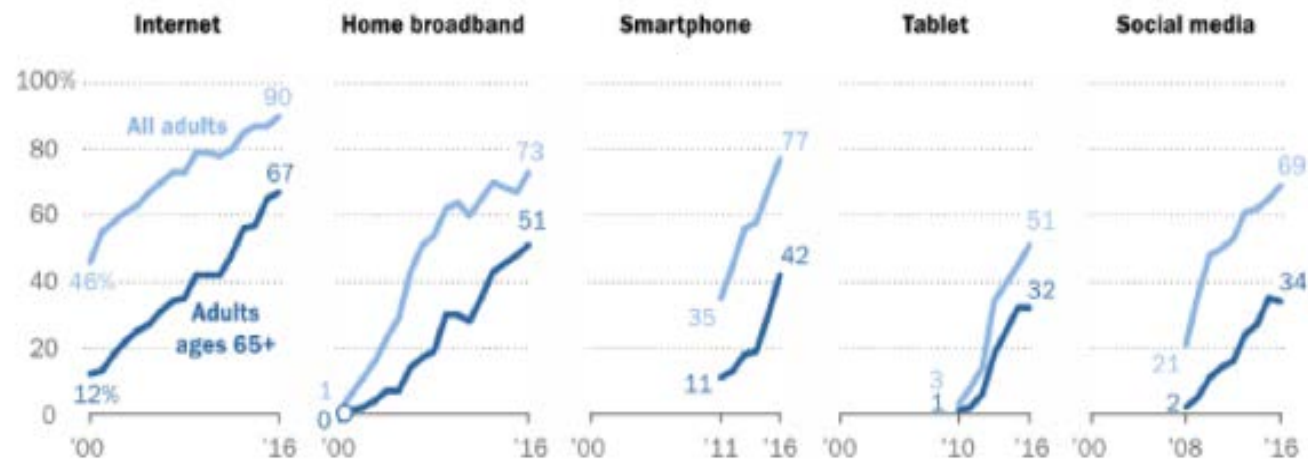
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Figure 64. Percent of American population online



## Smartphone adoption among seniors has nearly quadrupled in the last five years

% of U.S. adults who say they have or use the following



Source: Survey conducted Sept. 29-Nov. 6, 2016. Trend data are from previous Pew Research Center surveys. "Tech Adoption Climbs Among Older Adults"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 65. Smartphone adoption by seniors, 2000-2016

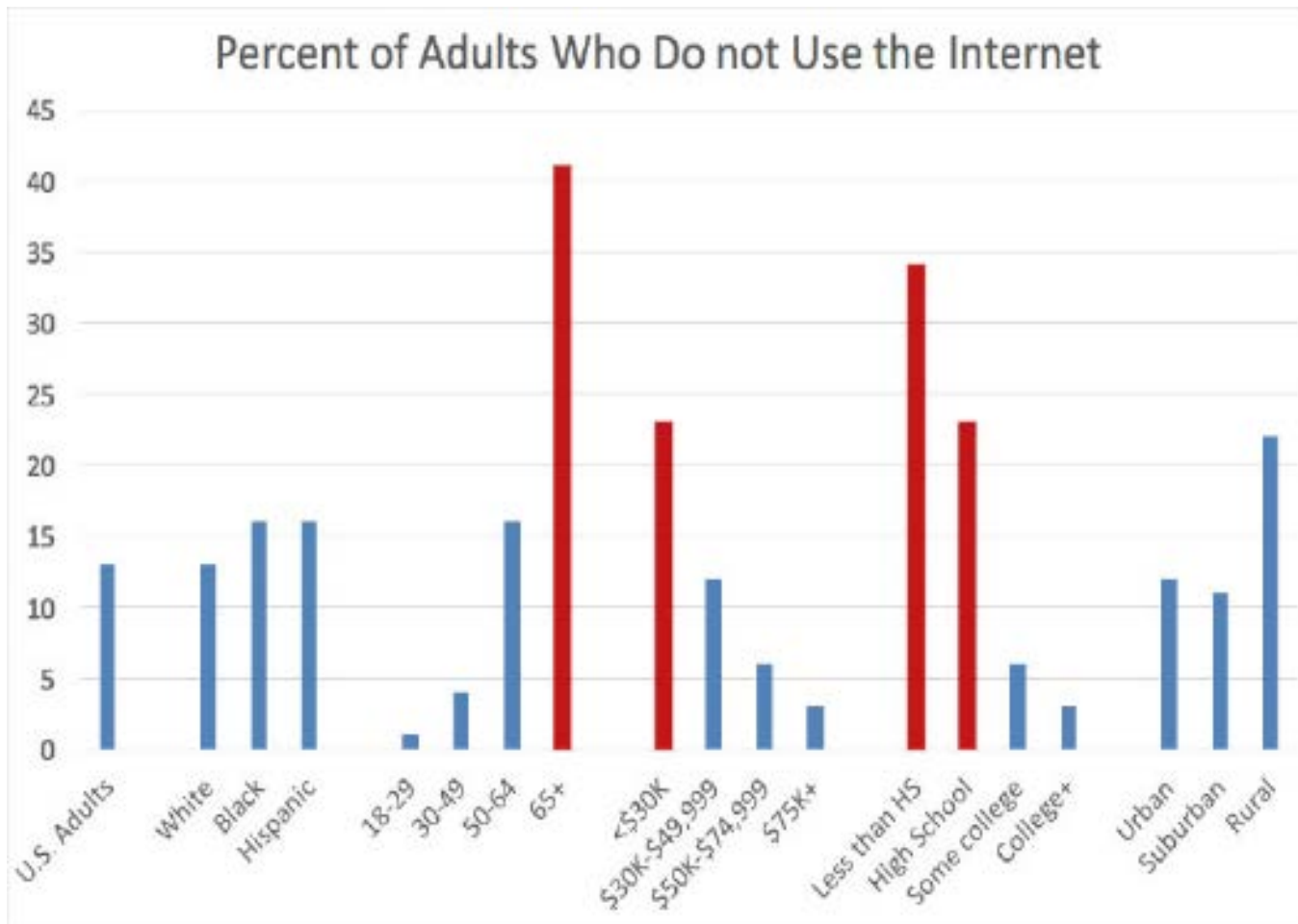


Figure 66. Percent of adults who do not use the internet

In addition to internet access, two other important factors to consider when developing an online engagement strategy is the survey duration and cost of implementation. Leveraging social media networks as well as frequently visited websites helps get the word out quickly. When responses come in, digital data collection enables easy tabulation of quantitative data and categorization of open-ended responses. Table 3 is from a presentation given by the Metro Nashville Planning Department, and shows the cost-effectiveness of different engagement strategies that Nashville used when updating their comprehensive plan. The tools listed near the bottom—MindMixer and MetroQuest—are online engagement platforms. While the cost-per-response for each engagement strategy will vary place-to-place, the vast difference between online tools and face-to-face meetings gives us a sense of the savings to be realized.

To fully recognize the cost benefits of an online survey, 7 Peaks suggests that the Client invest in the purchasing of a domain name through the domain hosting website, NameCheap. 7 Peaks was able to acquire the domain name CreateOurChicopee.com for five years at \$10.29 per year, for a total of \$51.45. This domain name allowed 7 Peaks to maintain consistent branding across the various methods of engagement for the survey, and enabled greater access to survey. 7 Peaks established a redirect link through the NameCheap domain hosting, which automatically routed users to the Qualtrics survey from the CreateOurChicopee website.

## Paper survey

7 Peaks created a hard copy of the electronic survey developed through Qualtrics. This copy of the survey was printed and delivered to the library and the Planning Department, and accompanied 7 Peaks at the various public events that were attended. The paper survey is shown in Appendix II. 7 Peaks brought paper surveys to the following public events within Chicopee:

- RiverMills Senior Center
- Lorraine's Harvest 5k Run
- Bellamy Craft Fair
- Spooktacular

All paper surveys were collected and transcribed by 7 Peaks to ensure data integrity. A total of six paper surveys were completed and returned to 7 Peaks before the survey close date.

## Spanish survey

To expand the target audience of the engagement process, 7 Peaks translated the Aldenville Community Survey into Spanish and provided the translation to the Client and is shown in Appendix III. As Spanish is the third most spoken language in Chicopee, based on 7 Peaks demographic research, the translated survey was delivered to the Client in the event residents of Aldenville and Chicopee requested a Spanish version of the survey.

**Table 3: Cost Effectiveness of engagement strategies  
(\$/Response)  
Source: Metro Nashville Planning Department**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Cost Per Response (\$)</b>
Events	47
Focus Group	43
Open Houses	19
Textizen	9
Book-a-planner	9
MindMixer	8
MetroQuest	3

## Benchmarks of success

7 Peaks investigated several sources to determine the appropriate benchmarks to measure the success of the Aldenville Community Survey engagement process. The benchmarks of success that 7 Peaks used to evaluate the progress of the Aldenville Community Survey were partially inspired by previous engagement efforts in Chicopee from past Studio projects.

In 2014, Hills House Planning held a workshop for Memorial Drive Revitalization that had 18 people in attendance; 10 of whom were Chicopee residents. PEACE Planning, the 2015 LARP Studio project team, held a public workshop and stakeholder meeting and yielded minimal participation from residents. In the 2016 LARP Studio project, Pacer Planning collected 106 responses in a week through an online survey posted to the Chicopee Police Department's Facebook page. To supplement this data, Pacer Planning conducted seven interviews with school administrators and a safety official of Chicopee. Based off these past Studio projects, 7 Peaks sought to accomplish a broader, more informative engagement process. The Open Space & Recreation Plan developed by the Client received just under 500 responses, or less than 1% of the population of Chicopee (Department of Planning and Development, 2015).

To complement the past Studio projects and the 2015 Open Space Plan, 7 Peaks reviewed the Holyoke Participatory Asset Mapping (PAM) project. This project was led by Dr. Flavia Montenegro-Menezes of the UMass LARP Department, along with the Consultant and several Regional Planning students. The purpose was to collect information about Holyoke's cultural assets through public engagement. The information collected was then provided to the elected officials and residents of Holyoke. Data collection was conducted for a year and received 1,000

responses, or about 2.5% of the city's total population through surveys, interviews, and door-to-door solicitation (PAM Project, 2017).

The PAM project is similar to the Aldenville pilot study, as 7 Peaks explored the assets of Aldenville from the public's perspective. Using the PAM project as the primary guideline, 7 Peaks sought to collect 2.5% of the neighborhood of Aldenville's population. This percentage would amount to roughly 175 respondents from the neighborhood with an approximate population of 7,000. 7 Peaks sought to gather an overall representative sample based on the current demographics of Aldenville, and this goal is reflected in the different events that were attended by the team. Furthermore, a sample proportion of 2.5% provides a level of statistical significance in social sciences, as 2.5% of a population is considered representative of the population. To supplement the depth of data analysis, 7 Peaks sought to collect additional responses from Chicopee residents in other neighborhoods.

7 Peaks prepared weekly progress reports on survey responses to analyze who was responding, and if those respondents were helping 7 Peaks achieve the benchmarks of success. These reports were delivered to the Client and provided early insight and guidance as 7 Peaks began planning the land-use component of the Studio project.

# Promotional Design

## Introduction

7 Peaks discovered that public engagement campaigns that created successful branding to accompany their engagement strategy were more successful in engaging their intended audience. Branded campaigns use logos, slogans, and imagery to accompany surveys, meetings, or other methods of engagement to increase their visibility and effect, giving potential respondents an image or a phrase to identify with. The purpose of marketing a public engagement method is to make the process stand out from all the other events of someone's life so that the data collection instrument is noticeable and enticing. This is important because the creation of a survey or a meeting does not guarantee that people will participate; participation is typically contingent on a personal connection or desire to improve one's community.

## Inspirational branding designs

7 Peaks discovered numerous examples of successful public engagement campaign marketing in the Planning field; Nashville Next and Toronto Talks Transportation are both examples of effective branding and marketing that inspired 7 Peaks branding creation process.

### *Nashville Next*

Nashville Next was Nashville, Tennessee's 2040 updated Comprehensive Plan. In 2011, civic leaders and planners decided that they wanted residents to steer the comprehensive plan visioning process. Planners wanted residents of the city to guide community growth within the city through 2040. Nashville administered a survey that was available online, through text, and by paper handouts. To get people involved in the visioning process, Nashville developed a creative branding campaign. The "Nashville, it's time to pick" imagery was wildly successful.

Imagery depicted local children in a park picking things such as a guitar, a flower, and even a nose. Images of people combined with a witty catchphrase and an urgent call to action made the campaign successful. An example of one of the images used throughout Nashville's 2040 Comprehensive Plan is shown in Figure 67. Over 10,000 participants, or 1.6% of Nashville's population, provided over 15,000 responses (Sledge, 2014).

Nashville Next successfully involved more people in the comprehensive planning process because of its creativity. From this study, 7 Peaks learned that images of people and the mentioning of a place (in this case, Nashville) can create a sense of familiarity and increase public involvement. Furthermore, a slogan that tells someone to do something, such as telling someone that "It's time to pick" urges people to respond. Also, this campaign inspired 7 Peaks to try creative branding to get more respondents on the surveys.



*Figure 67: One of the most popular images from the Nashville Next campaign*

### *Toronto Talks Transportation*

In 2013, Toronto, Canada conducted a public engagement process to discuss transportation alternatives for the 2013 Long Range Transportation Plan. Toronto is known for heavy traffic and congestion, therefore, the Toronto Planning Department wanted to gather public feedback on to improve the transportation situation in the city. The Toronto Planning Department allowed residents to provide feedback on transportation issues through online comments and in-person interviews.

"Feeling Congested?" signs were created and placed throughout the city. They mimicked road repair signs and were even placed along normally congested roadways. The signs said "Feeling Congested? Toronto Talks Transportation," which elicited an emotional response while asking for people to participate. The logo also appeared on handouts and flyers throughout the city. Between phase one and phase two of the process, Toronto engaged over 20,000 (0.71% of the population) responses about key policy elements of the official plan review, including the new Decision-Making Framework and the Bicycle Policy Framework (City of Toronto, 2017).

Toronto Talks Transportation inspired 7 Peaks to create branded materials to distribute and display throughout Chicopee to garner more participation by eliciting an emotional response from potential respondents. Toronto Talks Transportation also taught 7 Peaks that the placement of materials, such as along a congested highway, is important and can elicit more responses.





Figure 68: The most used graphic from the Toronto Talk's Transportation campaign

## The Branding: Create Our Chicopee

Working with the Client, 7 Peaks created specific goals for the branding of the public engagement campaign. 7 Peaks aimed to create a brand that would inspire people in both Aldenville and Chicopee to involve themselves with the community planning process.

The Client and 7 Peaks decided that branding materials should be simple, clean, and easily comprehensible so that people from different backgrounds could recognize and understand the message being conveyed. Branding needed to create a call to action, either by creating urgency or asking a question to make people feel as though they needed to respond. Materials selected were designed to be reusable and scalable, so the Client could use the promotional materials and branding going forward if the Aldenville Community Survey was successful. Lastly, they needed to inspire a sense of community and togetherness, while creating recognition and pride in the City. The Client had the final say in the design, and all designs required Client and Instructor approval before 7 Peaks could proceed.

Through branding and logo creation, the Client and 7 Peaks wanted to inspire a community of public engagement within the City of Chicopee. Hopefully, a successful branding campaign will inspire people to become more involved in the future, possibly by responding to subsequent surveys, or attending a community meeting or focus group events. Public engagement should not just be a one-time process regarding a singular event or issue, but rather a conversation between the City and residents to create a place where everyone wants to live and actively creates the community that is desired.

## Promotional Materials

The promotional design process, from the design of the logo to the creation of the paper materials, took approximately three weeks. Logo creation lasted two weeks, while the promotional materials took one week. Throughout the process 7 Peaks worked with the Client and Instructor to develop the materials. The Client gave the final approval of each promotional item. The Create Our Chicopee campaign involved the creation of an overall logo to represent the survey and project brand. The logo appeared on all promotional materials:

- Promotional cards
- Flyers
- Business cards
- 4- by 10-foot signs
- Fortune cookies

Table 4 breaks down each promotional item by the tools used to create them, the cost, the amount ordered for the project, and the amount of time required for each item to be printed or delivered.

**Table 4: Cost per public engagement tool**

<b>Promotional Item</b>	<b>Tools Used</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Amount ordered for project</b>	<b>Amount of time to print/delivery</b>	<b>Amount Used</b>
<b>Logo</b>	Logojoy.com/Adobe Illustrator	\$0	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Promotional Cards</b>	Adobe Illustrator / 244	\$300	1,750	2 business days	1,600
<b>Business Cards</b>	Adobe Illustrator	\$130	1000	2 business days	1,000
<b>Flyers</b>	Adobe Illustrator	\$0	n/a (printed by client)	1 business day	70
<b>4x10 banners</b>	Adobe Illustrator	\$640	4	2 business days	3
<b>Vinyl stickers*</b>	Adobe Illustrator	\$170	3	2 business days	2
<b>Fortune Cookies</b>	<a href="https://fortunecookieplanet.com/">https://fortunecookieplanet.com/</a>	\$164	1,000	1 week	1,000

## Designing the Brand

Nashville Next and Toronto Talks Transportation inspired 7 Peaks to develop a logo and campaign name to create consistent branding for the entirety of the public engagement campaign. The logo and campaign name creation process took approximately two weeks and involved multiple discussions with the Client and the Instructor. Logo creation involved a two-part process: the creation of a campaign name and the design of the physical logo itself.

### *Campaign name creation*

As previously stated, the goals of the branding were to inspire a sense of community, create a call to action, and create a recognizable and relatable image. 7 Peaks worked with the Client to fashion a campaign name and a logo that accomplished these three goals. The evolutionary process of the name and logo included discussions between the Client and 7 Peaks, with 7 Peaks tweaking and redesigning the name and logo based off the Client's input. This process began with deciding upon the target of the logo name. Then, the creation of the name evolved in three stages:

- "What's Good, Chicopee?"
- "You Choose Chicopee"
- "Create Our Chicopee"

### *Focusing on Chicopee*

The first thing considered regarding the name was whether to cater to the neighborhood of Aldenville or City-wide scale. Instead of using "Aldenville" to spark interest, 7 Peaks decided to create branding for the entire City of Chicopee. Using "Chicopee" in the name would include people from outside the neighborhood, but take the focus from the neighborhood. The use of "Aldenville" would create more focus on the

neighborhood, but the specificity of the brand could potentially dissuade people from outside of the Aldenville neighborhood from participating in the survey. Furthermore, the City name would be scalable for future public participation projects. Therefore, 7 Peaks decided that the brand name would include the City's name to create the reusability and scalability for future City-wide community involvement, accomplishing one of the Client's goals for the engagement process.

### *Campaign Name 1: "What's Good, Chicopee"*

The first iteration of the branding campaign name was "What's Good, Chicopee?". The intent of "What's Good, Chicopee" was to use an easily understandable colloquialism to attract people to the survey. Asking "What's good?" creates a call to action and directly asks people to share their thoughts and opinions about the City. While 7 Peaks' decision to use a colloquialism was not based directly on a specific campaign name, the Nashville Next campaign used a call to action. 7 Peaks and the Client decided that the name would not appeal to older residents and did not inspire strong enough feelings of involvement. In the future, a colloquialism may be effective, but the brand name should be catered to the population.

### *Campaign Name 2: "You Choose Chicopee"*

The second iteration of the branding campaign name involved "choosing" Chicopee. These included "You Choose Chicopee," "Choose Your Chicopee," and "We Choose Chicopee." The intent was that "Choose" insinuated that people would help to choose the future of Chicopee, specifically through the survey. "Choose" acted as a call to action for people to respond to the survey, informing them that residents have a choice and a voice in the future of Chicopee. 7 Peaks changed the pronouns from a singular to plural to denote a sense of community, since the community would be choosing what residents envisioned for the

City. Like the first campaign name, the idea of creating a call to action was taken from the Nashville Next project.

7 Peaks and the Client did not continue using "Choose" because the survey questions were not clear in what, if anything, the respondents would be choosing. "Choose" also denotes feelings of being given a list of things to pick from instead of helping to create an overall vision for the future. The use of "choose" did not reflect the bottom-up nature that the Client sought from the logo. Overall, when creating a campaign name and logo, choosing an action word which does not limit involvement, and the use of inclusionary pronouns, such as "our" and "we," results in a reusable and relatable brand.

### *Campaign Name 3: "Create Our Chicopee"*

The third and final branding campaign name used "create" instead of "choose." 7 Peaks intended for the word "Create" to call respondents to action, because "create" asks people to do something while letting people know that their ideas and thoughts will be considered. This contrasts with having respondents "choosing" what they wanted from a provided list. "Create" was considered a more bottom-up brand name, as "create" denotes personal expression. After considering "Create Chicopee" and "You Create Chicopee," 7 Peaks decided once again that a plural pronoun would further show a sense of community. Once again, the idea of a call to action was inspired by the Nashville Next campaign.

The Client chose "Create Our Chicopee," which then appeared on all the branding materials created and distributed. 7 Peaks chose the to inspire a sense of community by having the City's name in the title and using plural pronouns, and by also creating a call to action with the use of "Create."

### *Logo design*

7 Peaks developed different iterations of logos using Adobe Illustrator and Logojoy, a website that develops basic logos, to visually represent "Create Our Chicopee." The development of the logo graphics occurred simultaneously with the development of the brand name. This process took roughly two weeks and involved input from the Client and Instructor, and consisted of multiple revisions.

### *Logo Design 1*

The first series of logos were simple with a focus more on the creation of the name and not the graphic representation of the brand. These initial iterations included the proposed names and basic backgrounds. Color was not considered at this point in the logo design process. The intent was to create simplistic imagery that could be easily understood and that would not detract from the campaign name. 7 Peaks did not have a precedent to inform this piece of the logo design process. The first prototypes of the logo can be seen in Figure 69 and Figure 70.

The Client agreed that the simplicity of the logo was important, but that the designs could be better aimed towards the project and the City. At this point, 7 Peaks began creating logos in Adobe Illustrator, instead of Logojoy. While simplicity is effective in communicating a message, 7 Peaks felt that conveying the message in a professional looking manner was important.



Figure 69: One of the first designed logos, using Logojoy



Figure 70: Another example of an early logo created in Logojoy

### Logo Design 2

The second logo shows a highly stylized acronym for "Choose Your Chicopee," "CYC," with the full name underneath the image and is shown in Figure 71. The intent was to design a stylized logo to abstractly represent "Choose Your Chicopee" and some of the issues prevalent in Chicopee. No precedent influenced this idea directly. 7 Peaks and the Client believed that the acronym with the name underneath would help to train people to recognize just the graphic logo itself until the logo became more recognizable. The graphic symbolizes the act of making a choice, with the "Y" representing a forked road. The letter "C" on either side represents the benefits and appeal of both directions.

7 Peaks believed that this idea of a diverging road was pertinent because of the transportation issues mentioned in previous reports and by the Client. Overall, the Client believed that the Choose Your Chicopee logo was too busy, and that simpler design presented in previous logos was more effective. 7 Peaks learned that symbolic images may look professional and nice, but effectiveness is lost when an explanation is needed for the graphic.



Figure 71: The highly stylized Choose Your Chicopee logo created in Illustrator



Figure 72: The We Choose, Chicopee logo created in Illustrator using Stockphoto

### Logo Design 3

The third iteration of the graphic was "We Choose, Chicopee." The intent of this design was to use an image of people to create familiarity. Recalling the Nashville Next graphics, the Instructor and the Client believed that using images of people in the logo would create more interest in the engagement process. Using Adobe Stockphoto, 7 Peaks found a photo of people standing together and then used Illustrator to put the brand name above the stock image. The image, Figure 72, shows the people pointing, but this was not intentional. 7 Peaks thought that like Nashville Next, photos of people from the Chicopee community could be used to create a sense of recognition and pride.

The Client approved of the graphic, but believed that the image would be more beneficial as a flyer. The Client also commented that the people pointing in the image may not convey the appropriate message and could appear accusatory to residents. Overall, 7 Peaks learned that pictures of people may create familiarity with a place and process, but a busy image with a lot of color may not be effective as a logo.

### Logo Design 4

The fourth graphic, Figure 73, included an outline of the City map in blue, nestled within a yellow ring with "Create Our Chicopee" written out across the map. The intent of this logo was to create something that better represented the City. At this point in the process, 7 Peaks and the Client decided that the colors of the logo should be both recognizable and relatable to the City itself. 7 Peaks used the City emblem for inspiration, shown in Figure 74. 7 Peaks chose blue and yellow as the main colors of both the logo and the promotional materials.



Figure 73: The first iteration of the Create Our Chicopee logo

While the Client liked the simplicity of the logo, they were unsure if people would recognize the middle element as the map of Chicopee. Also, both the Client and 7 Peaks thought that the logo looked somewhat dated and that the logo could be more creative.



Figure 74: The City of Chicopee seal

### Logo Design 5

The fifth and final logo design is a stylized acronym for the campaign name, "Create Our Chicopee." The intent of this logo was to create something reminiscent of the City emblem that was both creative and simple. The letters of the acronym for "Create Our Chicopee," "COC", are interlocking, creating an attention grabbing and colorful logo. The logo is shown in Figure 75. The brand name is overlaid on top of the logo to clarify the meaning. Once again, the Client and 7 Peaks believed that leaving the full name in the logo would train people to identify and recognize the logo in the future. This final logo appeared on all promotional materials used throughout the project.

The Client approved of this logo due to the balance between simplicity and creativity and its reflection of the City emblem.



Overall, no members of the public commented on the appearance of the logo. 7 Peaks struggled to determine if the logo generated interest in the survey and yielded more responses. At the very least, the logo created a more professional public appearance for the survey initiative.

### *Recommendations*

In the future, the Client may benefit by involving the community in the creation of an engagement logo and branding campaign. While 7 Peaks aimed to create something recognizable and reusable that would create community and pride, a more bottom-up process may achieve this effect to a greater degree. For instance, the Client could hold a design idea competition and market the competition through local schools and community organizations, as well as online through social media. This would allow more people to engage in design process, while also sparking interest in the campaign before the engagement process begins, potentially increasing the engagement rate. As outsiders, 7 Peaks discovered the difficulty in deciphering what the community may respond and relate to in terms of branding logos and graphics. Including communities and residents in the branding process could further the community of engagement within the City that 7 Peaks and the Client are attempting to foster.

7 Peaks discovered that consistent branding is a way for public engagement campaigns to attract more respondents to a project. To accomplish this, 7 Peaks and the Client sought to develop and design a campaign name and a logo. The goals of the design process included the creation of a simple and comprehensible logo, a call to action, scalable and reusable materials, and to inspire a community of public engagement within Aldenville and Chicopee. The final product included a blue and yellow acronym

for "Create Our Chicopee." 7 Peaks does not know the amount of responses that were influenced by the logo design and phrasing, but the detail that went into the branding created a professional appearance for the project and materials. 7 Peaks believes that future branding creation in Chicopee should be community-based and use the lessons discussed within this chapter to enhance the desired outcomes.



*Figure 75: The final Create Our Chicopee logo*

## Promotional Materials

7 Peaks, with the assistance of the Client, designed and created different promotional materials using Adobe Illustrator. These materials consisted of promotional cards, flyers, business cards, 4-foot by 10-foot banners, fortune cookies, and a wooden speech bubble. All promotional items took roughly one week to design. The goals of the promotional materials included increasing the visibility of the engagement campaign and directing respondents to the survey link that was prominently displayed on all materials.

### *Promotional cards*

The intent of the promotional card for 7 Peaks and the Client was to create a small handout that advertised the online survey. The cards were small enough (4 inches by 6 inches) to be easily passed out at community events or to people walking through the neighborhood (see Figure 77). Simultaneously, the promotional cards needed to catch the attention of people passing by enough to be left in strategic places such as community centers and businesses for people to pick up and take home.

Furthermore, 7 Peaks wanted to design something that could potentially be mailed in the future, if the Client decided to continue the project through utility bill deliveries or every-door direct mail, a service of the United States Postal Service. Peaks considered the precedent set by the Nashville Next campaign, which used handouts to increase the response rate of their surveys. Nashville's handouts included brand imagery and instructions on how to take the survey. Nashville Next used a text messaging service as well as an online survey to get people to take the survey.

While Create Our Chicopee did not use a text messaging system, 7 Peaks decided to instead create a handout similar to Nashville's with key information regarding the online survey included in an

easily understood manner. An example of the promotional card used as inspiration is shown in Figure 77.

**All right, Nashville. It's time to pick.**

Pick Nashville's future! **TEXT THE LETTER** of what's most important to you to **(615) 270-4565**.

**A** Access to Services    **D** Economic Development    **G** Children & Youth    **J** Transportation Spending  
**B** Access to Parks    **E** Greenway Access    **H** Residential Character    **K** Transit Access  
**C** Water & Sewer    **F** Housing Affordability    **I** Natural Features    **L** Walkability

**NEXT STEP:** We'll suggest a Future based on your choice.  
 Agree? Text **"YES"**    Disagree? Text **"NO"**    Want a different Future? **TEXT THE LETTER** of the one you like.

**B** **BUSINESS AS USUAL**  
 Jobs: in existing areas  
 Houses: in many places  
 Transit: stays mostly the same

**G** **CENTERS WITH INFILL**  
 Jobs: in major centers around county  
 Houses: in centers and existing neighborhoods  
 Transit: connects centers to each other

**D** **DOWNTOWN AND PIKES**  
 Downtown grows a lot  
 Houses and jobs: near major streets  
 Transit: leads mainly downtown

**nashvillenext**

**Text123** Service provided by Text123.com. We do not store or use your phone number. You must first be using text messaging.

Figure 76: The Nashville Next promotional flyer

An example of the flyers Nashville's Planning Department used for Nashville Next's 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The flyer provides a nice balance of graphics and information, and is visually appealing and simple to read.



*Figure 77: The promotional card*

The promotional card text that was delivered to Collective Copies to print the promotional cards. The text of the of the card highlights the CreateOurChicopee website, as well as the logo created for the engagement process.

Colors, font sizes, and placement were all considered when designing the promotional card, and only one design was created. 7 Peaks designed a very simple card with a solid blue background. 7 Peaks did not use any photo images on the promotional card due to fears that the information would not stand out in contrast to any included images. The Client agreed that the simple layout was better than a busier design. The final promotional card is displayed in Figure 78.

The two things that are the most noticeable include the “Create Our Chicopee” logo and the internet link to the survey. The card also mentions that the survey is focused on Aldenville. Since time is oftentimes a prominent issue with surveys, 7 Peaks advertised the survey as taking less than ten minutes on a mobile platform. In case people desired to complete a paper version of the survey, or if they had questions, the phone number to the Chicopee Planning Department was placed at the bottom of the card.

7 Peaks distributed cards throughout the neighborhood of Aldenville. 7 Peaks walked throughout Aldenville, visiting local businesses and restaurants in the neighborhood, with a focus on the Grattan Street corridor and businesses around the Aldenville Commons, such as Angela's Restaurant and Lucky Strike. Businesses within Aldenville, but not around the Aldenville Commons, such as Al's Diner and Arnold's Meats were visited by car. Non-Aldenville specific places, such as the Chicopee Public Library and City Hall, were also provided stacks of promotional cards. Twenty-four different places in Chicopee received and displayed promotional cards for the survey, and are listed in Table 5. As the engagement process took place, promotional materials were replenished as needed at the various locations. 7 Peaks checked in with the businesses either by visiting in person or by phone to make sure materials were still available to the public.

Promotional cards were also used at community events as a distributable item. 7 Peaks handed out cards at Lorraine's Harvest Run, the RiverMills Senior Center, Spooktacular, and the Bellamy Middle School Craft Fair. At Spooktacular specifically, 7 Peaks taped promotional cards to candy to ensure that parents received information on the survey. 7 Peaks ordered 1,750 promotional cards and distributed 1,600 of those cards throughout the neighborhood and the City.



*Figure 78: The 4x6 promotional card*

The promotional card, actual size. A white background was added to the card to call out the information.

**Table 5:** The various businesses that received and displayed promotional cards

<b>Alden Credit Union</b>	Boys and Girls Club of Chicopee	Gary's Barber Shop	Mike's Variety
<b>Aldenville Liquor Store</b>	Brother's Pizza	Golden Blossoms Flowers and Gifts	Puss and Pups Boutique
<b>Al's Diner</b>	Chicopee Public Library	Great China Restaurant	RiverMills Senior Center
<b>Angela's Family Restaurant</b>	Citgo Station	His 'N Hers	Shop Smart
<b>Arnold's Meats</b>	D&N Nail Salon	Honeyland Farms	Sign Techniques
<b>Ayotte and King</b>	Dance Dynamics	Labrie and Pouliot, P.C	TD's Sports Pub
<b>BayState Rug and Flooring</b>	Exclusive Hair Design	Lucky Strike Restaurant	Tiger Mart
<b>Beaulieu and Sons</b>	Four Jet Discount Furniture	McKinstry Farm, Inc.	Valley Opportunity Council



## Flyers

7 Peaks designed flyers for display in businesses, community centers, and at community events to further advertise the online survey. The flyers were meant to advertise the survey to residents visiting businesses and community centers within both the City of Chicopee and Aldenville, and to advertise directly to people patronizing and visiting these places.

Again, 7 Peaks was inspired by the Nashville Next public engagement campaign. Nashville Next created flyers as a second part of their "It's time to pick" campaign. Planners created maps depicting what Nashville could look like in the next 25 years, and asked people to choose which maps were the most appealing. Flyers with information on the survey, including how and where to take survey, were hung up throughout Nashville. An example of one of the flyers Nashville used can be seen in Figure 79. 7 Peaks decided to use this as a model for flyers with the Create Our Chicopee information.

**All right, Nashville.  
It's time to pick.**

More than 10,000 of you told us what you want for Nashville in the next 25 years. Now, it's time for you to Pick Your Nashville. Tell us which of these maps, created from your ideas, best matches your priorities. If you like some parts of a map but don't like others, that's cool, too. What's important is that you choose which map looks most like the Nashville you want to see now and in the future.

So come on—let's get to pickin'!

**TAKE THE SURVEY ONLINE**  
Visit [NashvilleNext.net/pick](http://NashvilleNext.net/pick)  
to take the survey online

Malia, age 3

**PICK YOUR NASHVILLE**

**n**  
nashvillenext

[/NashvilleNext](https://www.facebook.com/NashvilleNext) [@NashvilleNext](https://twitter.com/NashvilleNext) [Talk\\_NashvilleNext\\_Net](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Talk_NashvilleNext_Net) 615.970.6600

Figure 79: An example of a flyer created by Nashville Next

Like the promotional card; text hierarchy, clarity, and colors were considered during the developmental process. The most noticeable text on the posters is the logo and the survey website. 7 Peaks, with the Client's advice, decided to use pictures of people to elicit more responses. Originally, 7 Peaks wanted to use pictures of people from the Aldenville community to encourage and spur involvement, however, the Client decided that photos of 7 Peaks members were appropriate for the posters to save time in the creation of the posters. Six different posts were created, each with a different member of 7Peaks holding the speech bubble developed by the team. The flyers are displayed on the following pages. The decision to use images of 7 Peaks over residents' images saved 7 Peaks valuable time with regards to soliciting volunteers and having them sign waivers for their photos to be used in the materials. The only other possible version of the poster was a larger version of the promotional card, but the Client believed that pictures of people would be more interesting and attention grabbing to the public.

To create a more interesting visual, 7 Peaks created a wooden speech bubble to help symbolize the "Let's talk about Aldenville" phrase. 7 Peaks then digitally inserted "Join the conversation" over the speech bubble as a call to action. Originally, 7 Peaks considered writing things that people may ask for, such as "more playgrounds" onto the bubble, but the Client decided that this may sway survey respondents to respond in a specific manner.

7 Peaks distributed the flyers in the same manner and at the same time as the promotional cards. Most of the flyers were hung up inside of business windows, which allowed for the information to reach both those visiting the business and those just walking by the location. Some businesses and locations hung the items on bulletin boards with other information. Two businesses, and the flyer that was displayed at the business, are shown in Figures 80 and 81.

The library hung up a flyer near its public computers, so people interested could take the survey right there. 7 Peaks also used flyers to promote the survey at events by attaching them onto display tables. Overall, 7 Peaks was able to display 25 out of 70 flyers in local establishments, as well as providing business and promotional cards to any establishment that preferred smaller materials rather than a larger flyer.



**Let's talk about  
Aldenville!**

**Take the Online Survey**

**[CreateOurChicopee.com](https://CreateOurChicopee.com)**

**Less than ten minutes on your phone**

**For a paper survey, contact the Chicopee Planning  
Department  
413-594-1485**



**Let's talk about  
Aldenville!**

**Take the Online Survey**

**[CreateOurChicopee.com](https://CreateOurChicopee.com)**

**Less than ten minutes on your phone**

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Take the Online Survey

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For a paper survey, contact the Chicopee Planning  
Department  
413-594-1485

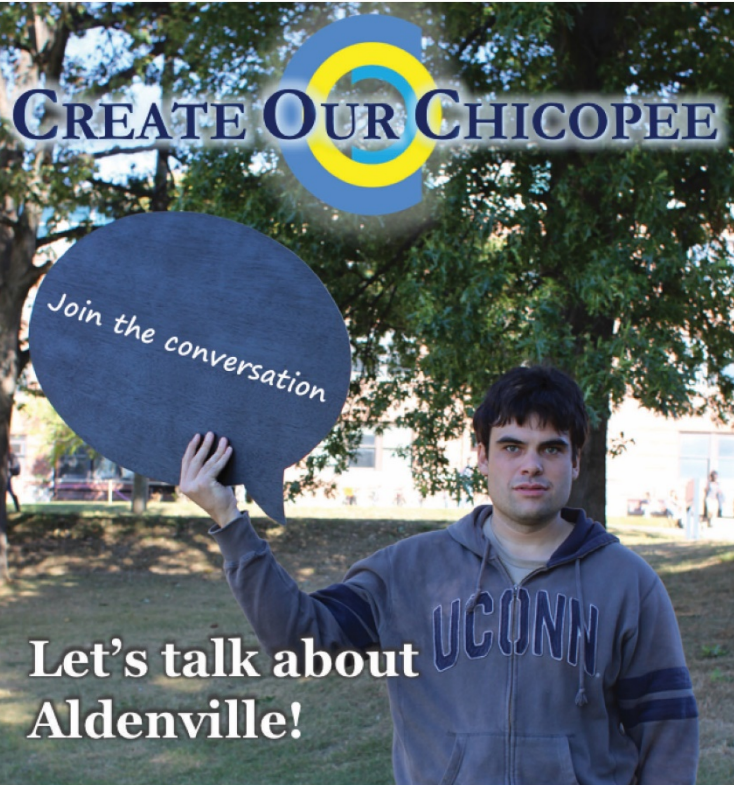


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Let's talk about  
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Take the Online Survey

[CreateOurChicopee.com](http://CreateOurChicopee.com)

Less than ten minutes on your phone

For a paper survey, contact the Chicopee Planning  
Department  
413-594-1485



*Figure 80: Flyer at Al's Diner*

An example of how the flyers 7 Peaks created were displayed in local businesses in Aldenville. 7 Peaks sought to have a prominent position for their banners in each store front so that patrons would notice and be intrigued by the presence of the flyer.



Figure 81: Flyer at Angela's Family Restaurant

7 Peaks flyer hanging in the window of Angela's family restaurant. Six different flyers were created and displayed across the neighborhood of Aldenville to advertise the engagement process.

### *Business Cards*

7 Peaks chose business cards as a small, less expensive version of the promotional card. Since the business cards are a small size, the cards were easy to carry and distribute to businesses and events. Furthermore, 7 Peaks believed that people may be more apt to take a business card because of the smaller size. While no business card specific precedent exists, the idea for a handout can be attributed to the handouts in the Nashville Next campaign mentioned previously. The layout of the business card is shown in Figure 82.

7 Peaks designed the business cards to simply portray the logo and the survey link. The business cards follow a similar graphic hierarchy as the promotional cards. One side is the “Create Our Chicopee” logo, covering the entire front of the card. The back of the card contains information about the paper survey, the contact information for the Chicopee Planning Department, and states that the survey is focused on Aldenville. The survey link is the largest text on that side of the card, and the font is a different color, ensuring that the link further stood out to those reading the card. 7 Peaks only created one design for the cards, which was approved by the Client. 1,000 business cards for the public engagement campaign.





Let's talk about Aldenville!  
Take the survey!

[CreateOurChicopee.com](http://CreateOurChicopee.com)

For a paper survey, contact the  
Chicopee Planning Department  
413-594-1485

*Figure 82: Printed format of the business card*

The layout of the business card created by 7 Peaks to advertise the survey. The business card contained the same information as the promotional card, but was smaller and therefore easier for residents to take with them and store in a pocket.



*Figure 83: Business card, finished product*

The business card displayed in a hand for size comparison. As evidenced by the image, the small size of the business cards makes the information easier to distribute to people in an attention-grabbing manner.

### *4x10 Banners*

7 Peaks wanted to create a large banner that would be visible to those traveling in automobiles. The idea was to create a banner that would hang over a roadway. Since the Client was concerned with cost and the process of physically hanging the banners over the roadways, the Client advised 7 Peaks to alter the plan. Instead, the Client instructed 7 Peaks to create 4 feet by 10 feet signs to hang on preexisting wooden frames provided by the Client. The idea for large signs visible to automobile passengers came from the Toronto Talks Transportation campaign. Toronto placed large signs on roadways that oftentimes experienced traffic and congestion, which yielded more responses to the survey.

7 Peaks designed three large signs measuring 4 feet by 10 feet. Like the flyers, 7 Peaks decided to use an image of the entire group, once again holding the speech bubble and digitally inserting "Join the conversation" onto it. The signs only included the logo, the "let's talk about Aldenville" catchphrase, and the link to the online survey. 7 Peaks left out the other information because the signs were meant to advertise the survey to people driving automobiles, and additional information would be ignored by the passing motorists. The banner is displayed in Figure 89.

7 Peaks planned to hang the large signs on frames provided by the Client in strategic locations with high automotive traffic. These locations included the Aldenville Commons, the Heart of Chicopee Parklet at the intersection of Granby Road and Grattan Street, and Bellamy Middle School overlooking Pendleton Avenue.

Unforeseen circumstances did not allow for the three 4 foot by 10 foot banners to be erected as originally planned. The wooden stands provided by the Department of Parks and Recreation

measured 4 by 8 feet instead of the previously stated 4 by 10 feet. 7 Peaks, working with the Parks and Recreation Department, attempted to alter the sign on site to still use the stands, however, the text of the banner made this difficult. If 7 Peaks folded over the edges, the website would not be visible. Furthermore, 7 Peaks discovered that 4 by 10 foot signs would violate the City's zoning ordinances and result in a daily fine.

Instead, modifications were made to reduce the dimensions to 4 feet by 8 feet. The edges of the sign were folded over so that the length equaled 8 feet, and a new text box was created to superimpose onto the sign so that the information presented was legible. A blue text box with text was created to scale in Illustrator and then printed on adhesive vinyl to be adhered to the signs.

Due to time constraints, Parks and Recreation no longer had the ability to help install the wooden frames, so 7 Peaks found new locations a week from the close of the survey for the signs to hang from. 7 Peaks hung one banner on the Aldenville Commons gazebo, and hung another at Angela's Family Restaurant on Grattan Street. The third sign was meant to be hung over Bellamy Middle School's sign, but did not occur due to time limitations. The two banners were up for less than a week before the survey closed.

7 Peaks designed a fourth banner to be used during community engagement events. The banner was less complicated and only contained a larger version of the "Create Our Chicopee" logo. 7 Peaks used the banner as advertisement at events and as a background for photos at these events. The banner was hung up on a tent at Lorraine's Soup Kitchen Harvest Run 5k Road Race as well as on the side of a vacant building during the downtown Spooktacular event as shown in Figures 88, 91, and 92..

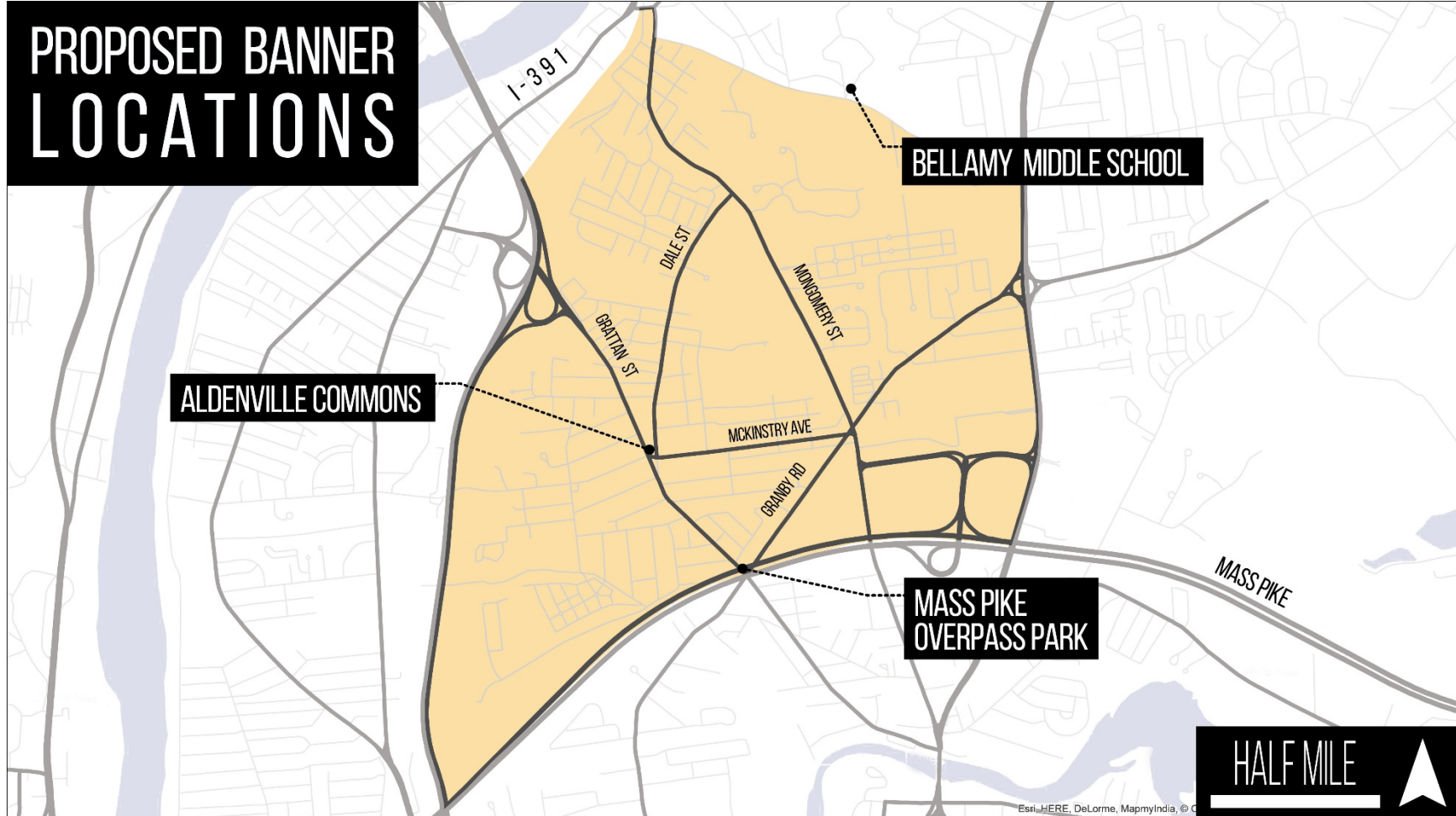


Figure 84: The proposed 4x10 banner locations

This map, created by 7 Peaks, identifies the three different locations the 4' by 10' banners would be displayed. The Aldenville Commons, Bellamy Middle School, and the Mass Pike Overpass were chosen based on the high volume of traffic and availability of space for such a large banner.

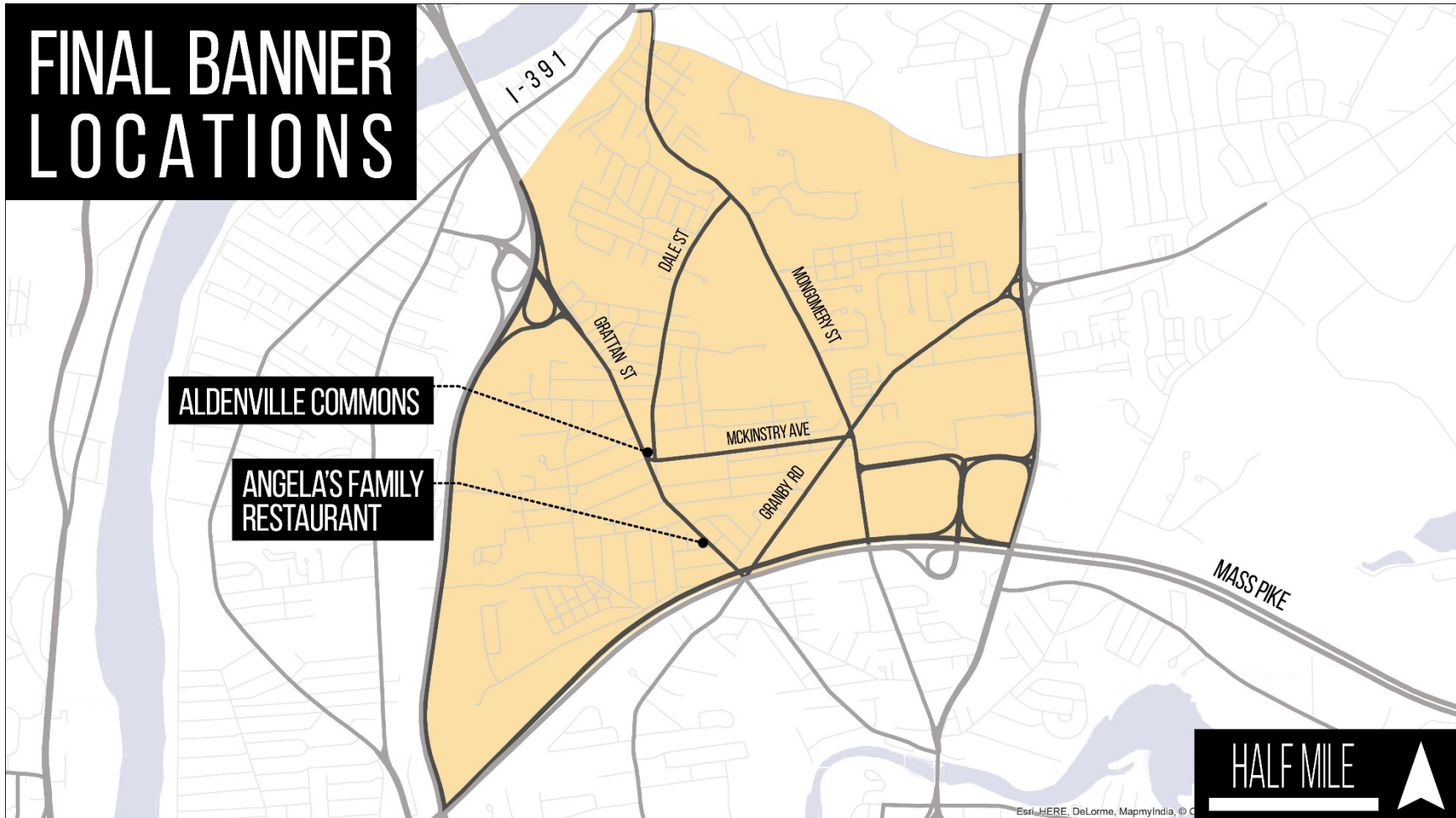


Figure 85: The final locations of the banners

Due to difficulties and alterations to the banners for them to be displayed, 7 Peaks was only able to hang up two of the three banners created for the engagement process. One banner was hung on the gazebo at the Aldenville Commons, while the other was prominently displayed on the side of Angela's Family Restaurant with help from the owner of the property.



*Figure 86: The banner hanging in the gazebo*

7 Peaks was able to hang one of the banners in the gazebo on the Aldenville Commons. The banner faced the intersection of McKinstry Avenue and Grattan Street, encouraging drivers and pedestrians to visit the Create Our Chicopee website to take the online survey.



*Figure 87: The 7 Peaks banner hanging on Angela's Family Restaurant*

The second banner 7 Peaks was able to hang up was at Angela's Family Restaurant along Grattan Street. The banner was placed on the side of the building, facing traffic, so that passing motorists could read the sign.

T



*Figure 88: 7 Peaks at Spooktacular, with banner used for events*

7 Peaks created a fourth banner for display at community events. This banner displayed the CreateOurChicopee logo on a white background, and measured 4 by 10 feet. This banner was brought to Spooktacular, Lorraine's Harvest 5k Run, and the various presentations 7 Peaks gave throughout the project.



Let's Talk about Aldenville!  
Take the Online Survey at [CreateOurChicopee.com](http://CreateOurChicopee.com)



*Figure 89: The Banner displayed at public locations*

The original poster design for the large banners. This image was stretched to fit the dimensions provided to the team by the Client, and was printed on three separate banners.

### *Fortune cookies*

Engaging the residents of Aldenville through innovative approaches was a key objective of the Client's directive. The fortune cookie was one of the implementation strategies devised to meet this goal. These cookies would be distributed through local restaurants and at community events to excite residents about the survey.

7 Peaks researched engagement strategies utilizing different methods of engagement, and one of the most novel approaches discovered was Imagine 2040, a long-range transportation plan created by Hillsborough County Florida's Metropolitan Planning Organization. Imagine2040 advertised the public engagement portion of their plan through the distribution of fortune cookies with a link to the website on the enclosed fortune.

Once the fortune cookie idea was approved by the Client, 7 Peaks wrote a custom message to be attached, "Let's talk about Aldenville! Take the short online survey at CreateOurChicopee.com". The fortune cookies were then ordered online from, fortuneCookiePlanet, a distributor in Utah. The fortune cookies cost a total of \$162.00 for 1,000 cookies and took one week to arrive. An example of the fortune cookie can be seen in Figure 90. The cookies were distributed at three local restaurants along the Grattan Street Corridor:

- Angela's (100 cookies)
- Lucky Strike (100 cookies)
- Great China (200 cookies)

The proprietors distributed the cookies by placing them in take-out bags, including cookies with receipts, and by displaying cookies in baskets near the front register. An employee of Angela's, would specifically target residents that lived in Aldenville and give them a cookie upon leaving the store. Several

hundred fortune cookies were also given out at events within Aldenville attended by 7 Peaks; Spooktacular, Lorraine's Harvest Run, and the RiverMills Senior Center.

### **Stakeholder Outreach**

Local leaders, organizations, and community groups that were involved and engaged with Aldenville were instrumental in advertising the survey for 7 Peaks. 7 Peaks compiled a list of 111 potential stakeholders in Aldenville and Chicopee to push the survey through. This list is in Appendix IV. Ultimately, 7 Peaks contacted 50 of the 111 identified different businesses, non-profits, community groups, and media outlets. Engagement activities from these stakeholders ranged from multiple posts on their social media pages, Chicopee Mayor's Office, Police Department, and Parks & Recreation Department, to advertising the survey through the displaying of posters and promotional cards in business windows, at locations such as Angela's Family Restaurant, Aldenville Credit Union, and many others.

7 Peaks kept a running tally of the businesses that were contacted and agreed to distribute or advertise various promotional materials. Table 6 shows the number of stakeholders of each type that were contacted, as well as a count of the number of times the survey was advertised on Facebook pages.



*Figure 90: The fortune cookie and message created by 7 Peaks*

The text of the fortune cookies that were purchased by 7 Peaks. These cookies were distributed to various restaurants in Aldenville to advertise the survey.

<b>Table 6:</b> Stakeholder contact breakdown			
<b>Type of Contact</b>	<b>Number Contacted</b>	<b>Took Promotional Materials</b>	<b>Posted on Facebook</b>
<b>Business (Restaurant, shop, etc. )</b>	26	24	4
<b>Government Agencies/Non-profits</b>	12	4	4
<b>Community Groups</b>	7	0	4
<b>Media Outlets</b>	5	0	1
<b>Total</b>	50	28	13

## Key Stakeholders for Survey Distribution

### *Superintendent*

To effectively engage the families who live in Aldenville, 7 Peaks reached out to the Superintendent Richard Rege of Chicopee Public Schools and scheduled a meeting with the superintendent to see if 7 Peaks could advertise the public engagement project through a school mailing or promotional card distribution.

The Superintendent suggested that 7 Peaks consider including a short description of the project in the monthly newsletter that is sent home with every child in Chicopee Public Schools located within the Aldenville neighborhood boundaries. A description was provided to the Superintendent's office, but there was no confirmation of whether or not the project description was submitted in time for the November newsletter.

### *Chamber of Commerce*

The Chicopee Chamber of Commerce coordinates with businesses across the City on issues related to economic development. 7 Peaks provided the Chamber with promotional materials to distribute at their office. The Chamber also agreed to post survey information on their social media accounts and distributed survey information through their email newsletter.

### *Library*

The City of Chicopee has a very active library, so 7 Peaks decided to target the location for paper surveys. 7 Peaks left a stack of paper surveys and a collection bin at the site. Furthermore, the promotional flyers were hung near the computers to market the online survey to those using the computers for other means.

In addition to distributing materials at the library, 7 Peaks also had a presence on the Chicopee Bookmobile. The Bookmobile is

a travelling extension of the library that visits different parts of the City on a set schedule. The Bookmobile travels with books and movies for check-out, and acts as a mobile hotspot with tablets for people to use. The Bookmobile travelled around the City with 7 Peaks' promotional materials.

Two surveys were collected from the survey bin after the survey closed. Stamped envelopes were left in case people wanted to take the survey from home and mail the completed survey to the Chicopee Planning Department.

### *Chicopee Cultural Council*

The Chicopee Cultural Council is a community non-profit that funds local art and City beautification projects. 7 Peaks attended a Council meeting and distributed promotional materials to engage this civically-active group in the hopes that the Council members would share the 'Create Our Chicopee' survey. Although not all Council members live in Aldenville, most had some connection to the neighborhood.

### *Sainte Rose de Lima*

In many neighborhoods, the church is the heart of the community. If Aldenville is the heart of Chicopee, Sainte Rose de Lima (Ste. Rose) and her accompanying school, Sainte Joan de Arc, are the heart of Aldenville with over 6,000 parishioners. In order to get a better understanding of the residents of Aldenville, two members from 7 Peaks met with a Pastor at the church for an hour and a half discussion. The discussion between 7 Peaks and the Pastor was originally scheduled so that 7 Peaks could promote the survey to the congregation, however the discussion evolved into a free-form conversation regarding all things Aldenville, with a focus on community policing.

The chat covered various topics, including assets and priorities in the neighborhood. First, the Pastor identified an opportunity for

improved social services and community policing in Aldenville. Currently, if the Pastor or parishioners have a problem or are concerned about criminal activity near the church, they call 911. They would prefer someone they know within the police force whom they can contact. This improvement in policing can complement what Jane Jacobs termed “eyes on the streets,” which has the idea that if the community is cohesive and connected, they will watch out for each other collectively.

There was also an acknowledgement of lack of health and social services within the City. The Pastor could only think of Lorraine's Soup Kitchen as a real resource in the City for low-income and marginalized residents. Major medical services are not available in the City, and residents must travel to Holyoke or Springfield for treatment. Better healthcare access would benefit the entire community, while simultaneously attracting medical professionals to the area.

Finally, there was a desire for a safe community and the Pastor believed for the most part that is what Aldenville is. The ultimate goal of Ste. Rose is not to get people to go to church, but to encourage a sense of belonging to the Church. The City of Chicopee can take the same approach for their residents; Chicopee should not just be a place to live, but a place to belong.

## Community Interactions

### *Lorraine's Soup Kitchen*

Lorraine's Soup Kitchen is a popular social service asset in Chicopee. Located in neighboring Willimansett, Lorraine's provides vital services to the entire City, including a pantry service and the provision of hot meals. The “Harvest 5k Run and Walk,” a charity race that benefits Lorraine's, was held on October 22nd, 2017 at Chicopee Memorial State Park. 7 Peaks attended the event to raise awareness of the survey and create connections in the community.

The event served as a trial run for the upcoming Spooktacular event, which would be much more well-attended. 7 Peaks created two engagement tools to help promote the survey while attending community events: a speech bubble and a participatory mapping exercise. The speech bubble could travel with 7 Peaks to various events, allowing for residents and event participants to write, share, and capture their ideas in a fun and engaging manner. The speech bubble had limited success, being mostly used as a visual prop for photographs. An additional goal was to capture photos of residents holding the speech bubble in front of the “Create Our Chicopee” 4-foot by 10-foot banner.

The second engagement tool was a participatory mapping exercise that was devised to propose participants draw in neighborhood boundaries on a map of Chicopee. Mapping neighborhood boundaries was one of the goals the Client asked 7 Peaks to meet. The outdoor setting with ample games, music, and food made for tough competition for attention. Overall, the event can be viewed as a success. Lorraine's Harvest 5k Run served as pilot run for Spooktacular.



*Figure 91: The Speech Bubble getting use at Lorraine's Soup Kitchen Harvest 5k Run*

At the Lorraine's Harvest 5k Run, 7 Peaks set up a table and a tent and asked attendees to stop and offer their insights on Aldenville. 7 Peaks brought a speech bubble along to encourage engagement and used the event to take photos of residents engaging with the materials.



*Figure 92: Booth setup at Lorraine's Soup Kitchen Harvest 5k Run*

The booth 7 Peaks created at the 5k run. A table was placed in front of the tent from which the 4' by 10' banner was hung. Promotional materials were displayed in an appealing manner on the table, as team members talked with passing attendees.



### *RiverMills Senior Center*

RiverMills Senior Center is a municipal department that provides services to Chicopee's senior citizen population as well as their family members and care-givers. The senior center's mission is to improve the quality of life for senior citizens, and the center focuses on community service, good health maintenance, lifelong learning, mobility, recreation, and informational services.

To interact with senior citizens, 7 Peaks identified the RiverMills Center as a good place to converse directly with this potentially underrepresented demographic. To interact with the most people possible, 7 Peaks identified the lunch period at RiverMills as an appropriate time to visit the center. Monday through Friday, the WestMass ElderCare provides hot lunches and attracts between 60 and 80 people a day. 7 Peaks believed that the people sitting down and enjoying their food would be likely to want to interact with us and take the survey.

7 Peaks set up a long table with multiple chairs in the main dining room during the lunch period. Dozens of people arrived for lunch, but for the most part they retrieved their food and proceeded to find their friends and sit down to chat. Very few people came over to the table, and many of those people showed disinterest because they did not live in Aldenville.

To get more people involved, 7 Peaks distributed fortune cookies to everyone sitting in the dining room. Unfortunately, many people were upset that the fortune cookies did not actually contain real fortunes or even lucky numbers. Then 7 Peaks made an announcement over the intercom system asking people with thoughts and opinions on Aldenville to come to the table. While some people came forward to speak about Aldenville's assets, no one was interested in taking the time to take the survey. Only one person took the paper survey, and she did not complete it.

While 7 Peaks did not collect any valuable information via the survey, conversations with the senior citizens provided some quality open-ended responses. Almost every person who came to the table mentioned the Lucky Strike restaurant and the summer concert series that is held on the Commons.

### *Spooktacular*

The Chicopee Halloween Spooktacular is the City's annual Halloween block party. Beginning in 2015, the event attracts over 2,000 people to the Downtown area each fall. Spooktacular takes place on Exchange Street, Center Street, and an area in front of City Hall and the former library. This event offered an excellent opportunity for 7 Peaks to interact with a large amount of people, particularly young families who participated in the event. The City closes parts of those streets to automobile traffic for the party can take place. Spooktacular 2017 took place the evening before Halloween.

To interact with more Chicopee residents, 7 Peaks secured a table for the event. Multiple tables were lined down the street, each with representatives from a local business or organization. Tables were decorated with Halloween decorations and advertisement materials depending on the table's occupant. To further participate in the event, 7 Peaks dressed in festive costumes and gave out candy (and fortune cookies) as noted in.

The event was much more regimented than expected, and families lined up in a queue that went for blocks to go to each table and collect candy. Because of the structure of Spooktacular, including these queues, 7 Peaks was able to interact with more people than if the event were more engaging. Simultaneously, the quick movement of the line was not conducive to people taking the survey at the table.

7 Peaks' table held promotional materials and candy, which were passed out to children and their accompanying adults. One group member stood on one end of the table and handed out candy, while another stood at the other corner and engaged adults directly about the survey. To further reach the residents, 7 Peaks taped business cards onto the candy so that parents would see the promotional materials when going through their children's candy bags. 7 Peaks did not expect such a large turnout, and the supply of candy and fortune cookies were consistently low, necessitating the emergency purchase of candy at local convenience stores. In addition, the Client and other nearby tables provided 7 Peaks with supplemental candy so that 7 Peaks could continue to partake in Spooktacular.

Overall, people were happy to take the promotional materials. Some residents of Aldenville actually approached the table and asked for more information and offered to share the survey with their friends and family living in Chicopee. Similar to other events, some people were dissuaded from taking the survey because of its Aldenville-specific context.



*Figure 93: 7 Peaks Planning distributes promotional materials and candy during Spooktacular*

7 Peaks used the Spooktacular event as part of the final engagement push to reach the participation goal. Promotional materials were attached to the candy that 7 Peaks handed out to the kids, with the hope that their parents would read the material and be interested in taking the survey.



*Figure 94: 7 Peaks Planning prepares inventory to be distributed during the Spooktacular rush*

Peaks members, in costume, distributing candy and promotional materials at Spooktacular in downtown Chicopee. The event was a great success as the booth was well received by the public and 7 Peaks distributed the majority of their remaining promotional materials.

### *Bellamy Middle School Craft Fair*

The Craft Fair at Bellamy Middle School in Aldenville is held annually to raise money for the annual Florida Science trip. Over 50 crafters and vendors registered to display their products at the fair, and 7 Peaks was able to reserve a table to advertise the engagement process during the fair. The Bellamy Middle School Craft Fair's location on the Aldenville border and the attending demographic made the event worthwhile to attend. The logic was that the craft fair is geographically located near the neighborhood, and that attendees would be willing to take the survey or promotional materials. Attending the fair proved to be beneficial for responses and engaging with community members, as there was a high level of interest in the project.

Many of the vendors in attendance were not from Chicopee, but the ones who were stopped by before the fair opened and were interested in taking the survey. Fair goers were also curious about the table and were provided with the opportunity to complete a paper survey or take the survey online through one of the team member's laptops. Those who did not have the time to take the survey at the table were encouraged to take a flyer or bring a survey home and mail the completed survey to the Client.

Numerous residents of Aldenville stopped by and mentioned that they had either seen the survey on one of the Facebook pages that posted for us, in the Chicopee Register, or one of 7 Peaks' flyers in the storefronts in Aldenville. 7 Peaks used these anecdotes to gauge the success of the engagement strategies, and because multiple people knew about and had taken the survey through multiple mediums, 7 Peaks believe that the engagement methods were ultimately successful within Aldenville.

### *Chicopee Willimansett Indoor Flea Market*

In the final engagement push, 7 Peaks attended the Chicopee Willimansett Indoor Flea Market on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 to get more responses from the residents of and adjacent to Aldenville. Compared to the Bellamy Middle School Craft Fair the day before, the visit to the flea market was disappointing. As opposed to the craft fair where 7 Peaks had a booth, at the flea market 7 Peaks solicited responses by engaging in conversation with vendors and shoppers. Most vendors and shoppers did not have a strong Aldenville connection and were hesitant in accepting the promotional material. A fair portion of the vendors were part of a larger, regional flea market circuit and had no distinct ties to Aldenville or the City of Chicopee.



*Figure 95: The 7 Peaks table at the Bellamy Middle School craft fair*

As part of the final engagement push, 7 Peaks attended the Bellamy Middle School craft fair, hoping to interact with residents and have them take the survey. This event was a success, as double-digit survey responses were recorded, and attendees mentioned that they had previously seen 7 Peaks materials or taken the survey if they did not stop at the booth.



*Figure 96: The Chicopee Willimansett Flea Market*

7 Peaks attended the Chicopee Willimansett Flea Market as part of their final engagement push in the last weekend before final data collection. Unfortunately, most of the booths were staffed by non-Chicopee residents who had little interest in taking the survey.



# Chapter 5: Survey Analysis



## Introduction

7 Peaks received 375 completed responses to the Aldenville Community Survey. 182 of these respondents are residents of the neighborhood. This response rate exceeded the original goal of 175 or 2.5% of all Aldenville residents. There were an additional 376 partially completed surveys that were not considered in the analysis of the data.

In the following sections, 7 Peaks presents the findings and analysis from the survey. All survey sections included in the survey were analyzed based on the total number of responses.

## Outreach Methods

7 Peaks included a question asking respondents how they found out about the survey to rate the effectiveness of the promotional materials and methods. Respondents were able to check more than one option indicating how they heard about the survey. For example, people might have heard about the survey through both word of mouth and social media. Therefore, the following percentages are reflective of the aggregate number of responses to this question as opposed to the number of people who took the survey. The analysis of these methods allows 7 Peaks to inform the Client's future public engagement endeavors. This section discusses the effectiveness of the outreach materials based on survey responses and how respondents reacted to materials.

## Survey Question

"How did you hear about the survey?"

## Findings

1. 308 respondents (77%) found out about the survey through Facebook or other social media.
2. Only 4 respondents (1%) found out about the survey through fortune cookies.
3. Only 17 respondents (4.25%) heard about the survey at community events such as Spooktacular and the Bellamy Craft Fair.

**Table 7:** Responses to the question, "How did you hear about the survey?"

**Respondents were asked to select all that apply. (n=400)**

<b>Answer</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>Facebook or other social media</b>	77.00%	308
<b>City of Chicopee facility (Library/Town Hall/etc.)</b>	5.25%	21
<b>A postcard or flyer</b>	4.50%	18
<b>Someone recommended I take the survey</b>	4.50%	18
<b>Community event</b>	4.25%	17
<b>Word of mouth</b>	2.00%	8
<b>A street sign</b>	1.50%	6
<b>Fortune cookie</b>	1.00%	4
<b>Total</b>	100%	400

## Discussion

The total number of answers to “How did you hear about the survey?” is 400, which is higher than the number of people who completed the survey (n=375). This discrepancy can be attributed to the fact that some respondents might have indicated that they heard about the survey from more than one source. 308 respondents (77%) found out about the survey through Facebook and other social media. Seven different pages posted a link to the survey: Chicopee Community Garden, Chicopee Open Forum, the Chicopee Mayor's Office, the Chicopee Police Department, Chicopee Parks and Recreation, the Chicopee Register, and the Chamber of Commerce.

21 respondents (5.25%) found out about the survey from a City of Chicopee facility, such as the library or City Hall. It is difficult to analyze the effectiveness of this strategy because the survey question does not delineate whether responses came from City websites or from materials left at City offices.

The postcards and flyers amounted to 18 survey responses (4.5%). As materials were distributed throughout the City, very few people commented on the materials. Businesses that received items did not comment on the appearance of the promotional items. A few locations, such as Angela's and the library ran out of promotional cards and business cards and needed replenishment. Three people told 7 Peaks that they saw the images on materials on Facebook. Employees in City Hall commented that the materials looked clean and professionally done. At Spooktacular, a handful of people recognized the 7 Peaks members as the people from the flyers. At the events, a few people refused to take the cards because the cards explicitly mentioned Aldenville and the people did not live there.

Eighteen people (4.5%) heard about the survey through recommendations from others and eight respondents (2%)

learned about the survey from word of mouth. Once again, it is difficult to determine whether the recommendations came from 7 Peaks members, the Client, key stakeholders, or people unaffiliated with the Create Our Chicopee campaigns. It can also be difficult to differentiate recommendation from word of mouth. When 7 Peaks members recommended the survey to people at events, the members handed promotional cards or business cards to the attendees. Most people expressed interest in the survey or reacted neutrally, but some people were not interested because they did not live in Aldenville.

17 people (4.25%) heard about the survey at a community event. Certain events, such as Lorraine's Harvest Run and the visit to RiverMills Senior Center did not yield any survey responses. However, the seniors did provide verbal information, such as anecdotes about the neighborhood and recommendations. Simultaneously, 7 Peaks handed out over 500 promotional cards and business cards at Spooktacular, and interacted with even more people. Based on the number of responses from the passed-out materials, only 3.6% of those interactions yielded a response. Also, not all of the responses were necessarily derived from this event.

Only six respondents (1.5%) found out about the survey through street banners. While this is a low percentage, it is difficult to judge the effectiveness of the banners because they were not displayed in the way they were originally intended. Since the frames could not be used, the banners were placed in less strategic places that were not as visible from the roadway. Also, only two of the three signs were used, and these signs were only displayed for a week.

Only four (1%) respondents marked “fortune cookie” as the means through which they heard about the survey. The fortune cookies were well-received at the events, although seniors at the

RiverMills Senior Center were disappointed that the fortune cookies did not contain “lucky numbers.” 7 Peaks was surprised to learn that the “lucky numbers” were used for gambling reasons amongst the seniors. Otherwise, comments regarding the fortune cookies were positive. An employee of Angela's would specifically target residents whom he knew lived in Aldenville and give them a cookie upon leaving the restaurant. Angela's restaurant reported positive responses to the fortunes. Furthermore, 7 Peaks received written feedback from one respondent on the fortune cookies:

“...I also have to commend the person in charge of this survey for one of the GREATEST acts of Planning I have ever seen. I got Chinese food in Aldenville the other day and inside the fortune cookie was an invitation to take the survey! Props to the brilliant mind that thought of this 😊”.

Overall, social media was the most effective outreach method for an online survey. One thing to consider while looking at how people heard about the survey is how distinct each option is from the others. Social media and the fortune cookies stand out from the other options, but City of Chicopee facilities, postcards, flyers, recommendations, community events, word of mouth, and street signs could all be interpreted differently. A respondent may not differentiate between some of the various methods. Furthermore, many of these methods are interconnected. For instance, someone could have received a promotional card after being asked to take the survey at an event. While respondents had the option to choose multiple methods, the lack of clarity between the options could affect responses.

## Neighborhood Appearance

### Introduction

The appearance of a neighborhood can have a considerable impact on people's perceptions of their quality of life. How someone views the aesthetics of a neighborhood is a good indicator of whether that person would like to invest or spend time there.

### Survey Questions

1. In Aldenville, the houses and apartments look attractive.
2. In Aldenville, the businesses look attractive.
3. (Optional) Do you have other comments on the appearance of buildings in Aldenville?

In addition, residents were asked whether they had any additional comments about neighborhood appearance in Aldenville. This was an open-ended question and was optional, while their level of agreement with the two statements above was required to continue to the next section of the survey.

### Findings

1. 51% of respondents agreed that Aldenville has attractive houses and apartments while 28% disagreed.
2. 41% of respondents agreed that businesses in Aldenville are attractive while 36% disagreed.
3. Of the total 107 comments written about building appearance, 16 were positive, 75 were negative, and 15 were mixed in the respondents' descriptions of Aldenville.
4. Grattan Street was discussed most frequently in a negative light in the open-ended comment section (n=20).

## Discussion

The most common response on the Likert Scale to both statements about building appearance were positive. In other words, more people agreed with the statements that the buildings in Aldenville are attractive than disagreed. However, only 16 of the 107 open-ended responses were positive, indicating that those who wrote comments felt more strongly that the buildings in Aldenville are unattractive or need improvement. Thirteen of the 16 positive comments were general, meaning they referred to all of Aldenville. One respondent said that:

“Aldenville is one of the best kept up areas in Chicopee, including islands where the grass grows.”

Another stated that:

“[the buildings] are exactly what you would expect from a middle class neighborhood [sic] dated but cared for mostly [sic].”

A few who left positive comments referenced the age of the buildings but were positive about upkeep. For example:

“Aldenville is an old community and most of the homes are older but they are, for the most part, well-kept and attractive.”

The sites that were specifically mentioned in the positive comments were Ray Ash Park which “is definitely improving,” the Aldenville Commons which is “attractive,” and the improvements made to Ste Rose de Lima parish and LeClerc Bros on Grattan Street.

Negative comments were far more prevalent. Seventy-five comments (70%) were negative. Thirty-seven comments were about Aldenville in general, and the most common trend among them was the theme of buildings appearing old and “worn down.” For example:

“Houses look old. No new businesses and old ones need fresh eyes to give them needed aesthetic updates.”

“A lot are horribly run down or sections of buildings abandoned for years!”

“A lot of them look run down/need updating”

“Aldenville claims to be the Heart of Chicopee, yet the Heart of Aldenville is so run down it's embarrassing.”

While this sentiment was not necessarily captured in the multiple-choice options, most open-ended comments are reflected in the selected quotes above. Grattan Street was represented the most by a wide margin (n=20) compared to any other specific site or area. One person's statement encapsulates this frustration:

“We have vacant, unsightly commercial space across from the Common and on Grattan St. In the past, this was truly the hub of Aldenville.”

To increase attractiveness, 20 respondents made suggestions ranging from minor improvements to larger undertakings:

“A lot of places need a facelift. Repainting, power washing, new signage, landscaping etc.”

“Needs more vegetation. Plant life, trees”

“Upgrading the sidewalks would encourage more walking and also make the area more attractive.”

Overall, the open-ended comments contrasted significantly with the Likert question responses. When people expressed their opinions in their own words, the majority stated that buildings have aged and could benefit from improvements. Most of these vacancies are the result of commerce shifting to Memorial Drive. For a specific area of focus, the greatest need for improvements appears to be along Grattan Street, particularly the vacant buildings directly across from the Aldenville Commons.

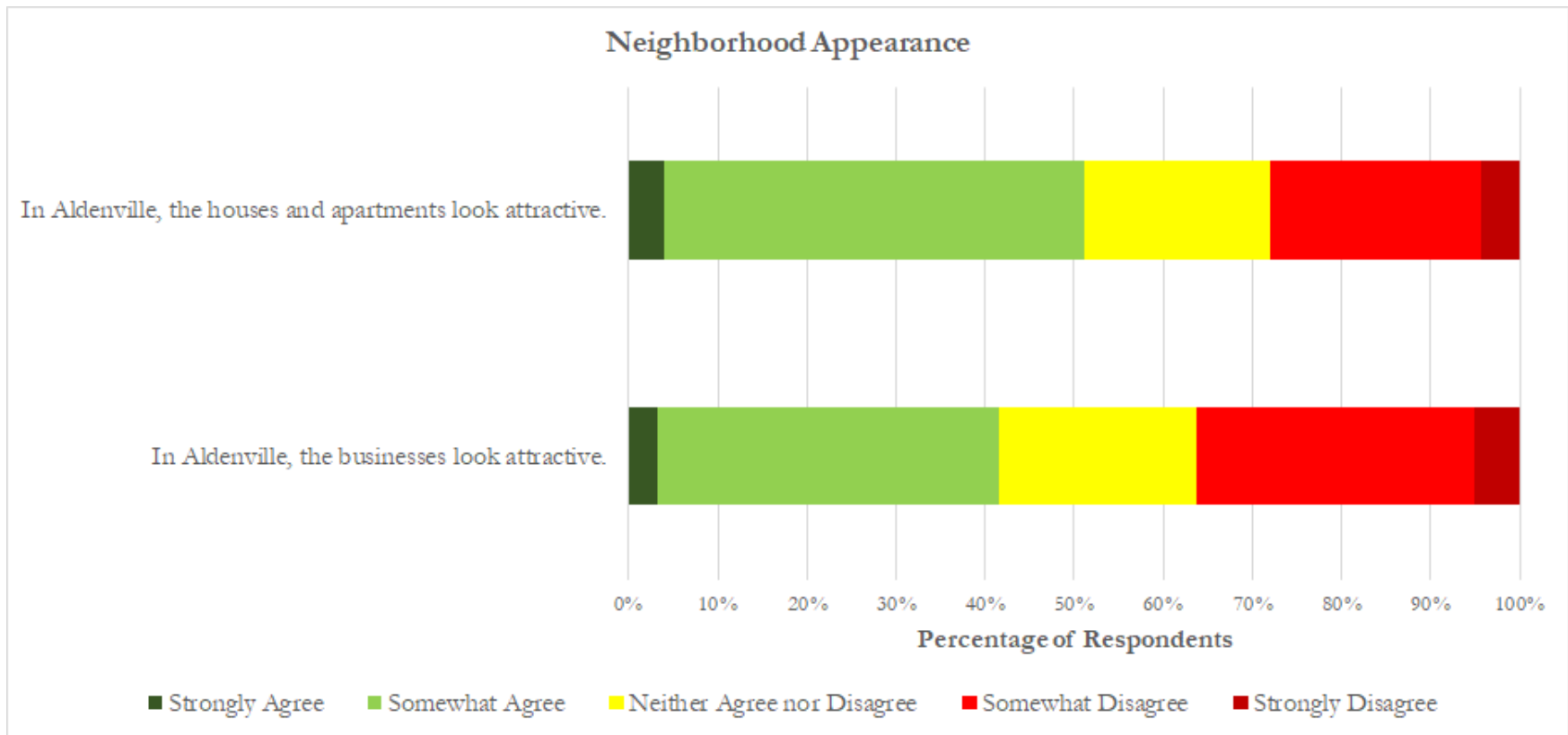


Figure 97. Stacked bar chart for Neighborhood Appearance in Aldenville (n = 375)

# Housing Affordability

## Introduction

7 Peaks included questions regarding housing affordability to better understand the housing market and whether land-use interventions need to be made to broaden housing options. This section aims to find out if respondents feel that houses and apartment rentals are priced at an affordable rate. Respondents could give further details in the open-ended response portion of the section, which asks if people have anything more to add about housing affordability.

## Survey Questions

1. In Aldenville, it's affordable to own a home.
2. In Aldenville, it's affordable to rent an apartment.
3. (Optional) Do you have other comments about housing affordability in Aldenville?

## Findings

1. Most respondents (67%) believe that it is affordable to own a home, while a few (8%) disagree.
2. More people (41%) believe that rent is affordable than unaffordable (17%).
3. Roughly 25% of respondents are neutral on whether it is affordable to own a home, while 42% of respondents were neutral towards affordability of rent.
4. Out of 41 total open-ended comments, 39% were negative and mentioned that the neighborhood was unaffordable, while 15% said that it was affordable.
5. Eight comments revealed that rent is unaffordable, while only one comment described home ownership as unaffordable.

## Discussion

While most people agreed that housing is affordable in Aldenville, a large quantity of respondents answered both questions neutrally. Neutral responses could mean that housing prices are at acceptable rates for respondents, or that people who do not live in the neighborhood chose the neutral options. Alternatively, neutral responses could indicate that people who do own a home do not know rental prices because they are not in the rental market, and vice versa for those renting who do not know home prices. While the Likert scale reveals that housing may be affordable, the open-ended responses were relatively negative. Open-ended responses were coded as being positive or negative and whether they were general comments or specific about home ownership or rent.

Out of the 41 total open-ended responses, 19 (46%) did not refer at all to housing affordability. This might indicate that respondents were unsure of whether this section of the survey referred specifically to affordability or to quality of life within their homes and neighborhoods. For example:

“Absentee owners/landlords/property managers should maintain the rental property and not just collect rent.”

“Apts [sic] available in a couple of complexes and older homes”

“Increased police patrols would help”

Some of these responses revealed that people did not have any opinion on affordability, while other comments regarded affordability on a statewide or national scale rather than a neighborhood one. For example:

“The housing market overall is overpriced”



“this state has the highest rent costs in the COUNTRY!!  
YOU GET AN APARTMENT THE SIZE OF 2  
CLOSESTS AND PARKING SUCKS this state needs  
an entire makeover”

Sixteen comments (39%) reflected negative opinions on housing affordability. Seven (17%) of these responses were general in that they revealed that overall, housing is not affordable. A few quotes exemplify this trend:

“Housing in Chicopee is getting out of control can not  
[sic] find a decent two bedroom [sic]”

“Afordable [sic] housing is a thing of the past due to  
incomes not keeping up with inflation.”

Eight comments (20%) claimed that renting is unaffordable within the neighborhood. For example:

“It is very expensive to rent today.”

“I would like to see more rent control.”

Only six responses (15%) showed that housing is affordable in the neighborhood. The positive responses were evenly distributed, with two people commenting on home ownership, two on rent, and two being general. For example:

“There are still affordable properties in Aldenville and many new people with no prior connection to our little ‘oasis’ are beginning to come primarily as renters or first time buyers.

The only other trend present in this section of open-ended questions is concern over the high cost of rent versus the cost of a home mortgage. Three separate comments were made on this issue. One respondent mentioned that:

“There is too great a difference between the cost of a mortgage compared to the cost of renting apartment. I guess it's good for people who CAN own a home, but not so great for people who want to live in Aldenville with the same income as the home owners, but want to rent.”

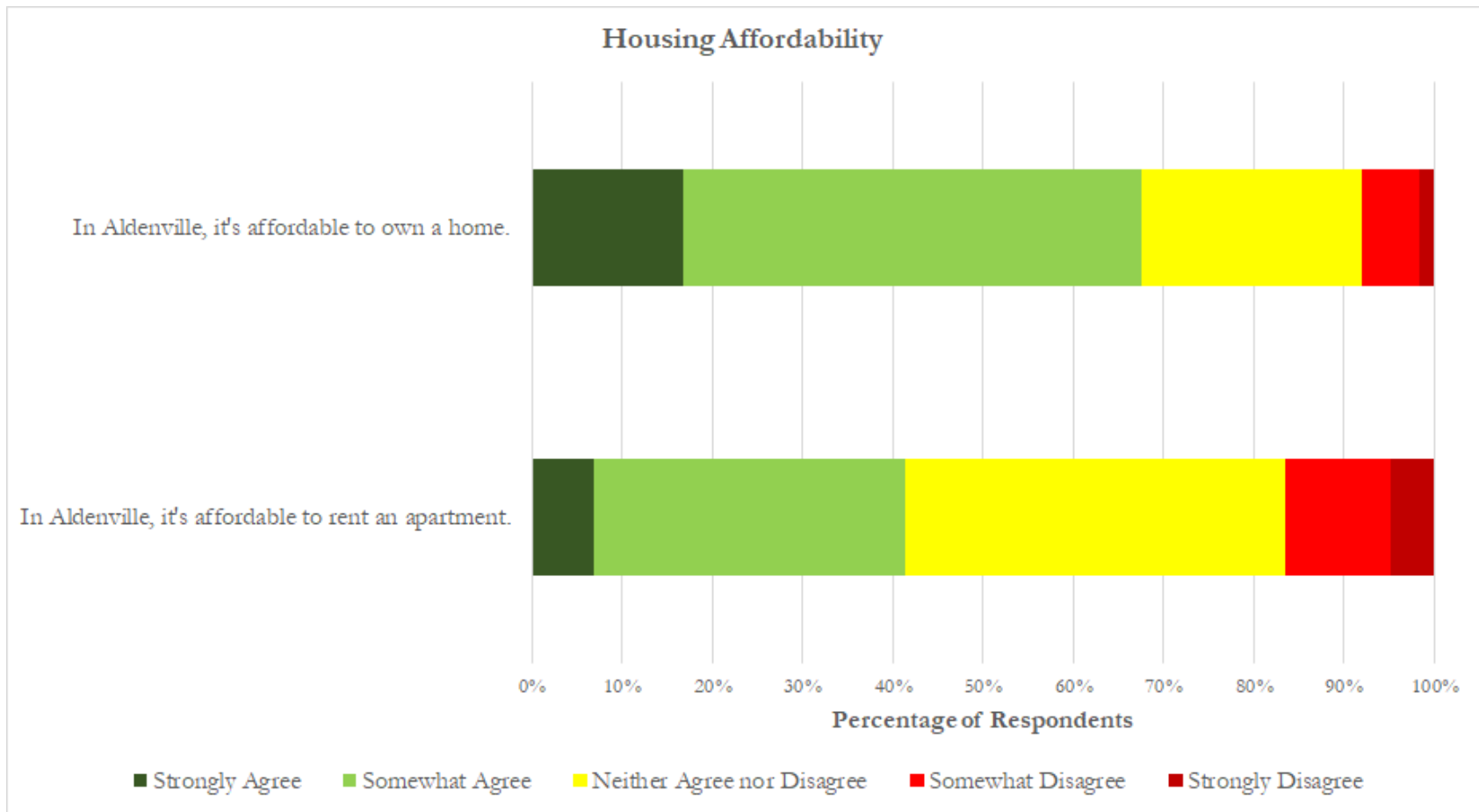


Figure 98: Stacked bar chart for Housing Affordability (n = 375)

# Transportation

## Introduction

Transportation is large part of everyday life in Aldenville. The streets and businesses are designed around the automobile, with lots of parking and large intersections and streets to accommodate the high volume of traffic. Infrastructure is also a significant concern for the Client. As Aldenville and Chicopee are older areas, some areas of the neighborhood may be behind on maintenance tasks. 7 Peaks' questions related to transportation captured these categories and more from the 375 total responses that were collected.

## Survey Questions

1. In Aldenville, traffic is a problem.
2. In Aldenville, the streets are in good condition.
3. In Aldenville, the sidewalks are in good condition.
4. There are enough crosswalks and walk signals in Aldenville.
5. Aldenville has good access to public transit.
6. (Optional) Do you have other comments about transportation in Aldenville?

## Findings

1. Most respondents (more than 75%), believe that traffic is a problem within Aldenville.
2. Roughly 55% of the respondents agreed that the streets were in good condition, while 31% disagreed.
3. About 39% of respondents agreed that there is good access to public transit in Aldenville.
4. Out of all 56 responses to the open-ended question, 36 (64%) mentioned problems with Grattan Street

5. 13 open-ended comments (23%) expressed negative feelings towards sidewalks.

## Discussion

The results of the Likert scale show that overall, transportation-related issues are major concerns of the residents of Aldenville and that safety concerns drive many of the open-ended responses. The high percentage of respondents who feel as though traffic is a problem (75%) especially underscores the severity of traffic congestion.

Of the 375 responses collected by 7 Peaks, 56 respondents completed the open-ended question for the transportation section of the survey. Many open-ended comments mention issues with different intersections along the Grattan Street corridor. The intersections of Grattan Street, Granby Road, and Montgomery Street are highlighted by respondents as being congested and dangerous. For example:

“The traffic light at the intersections of Grattan and McKinstry, as you are coming up McKinstry is awful, dos [sic] not coincide with the next intersection which is Dale St and McKinstry as you can possibly fit 3 cars there, but the 1st light stays green. This is causing blocking of the intersections. (people should know better but...)”

“...Traffic is terrible at each major intersection at any time if [sic] day, I appreciate the light at Comp on Montgomery, that helps with traffic. But the 5 points should be made into a rotary. Northampton's traffic has improved when they added a rotary to the intersection near the bowling alley. Vehicles still block the white lined areas in front of Golden nozzle. Get rid of the other gas station and expand the intersection into a rotary.”

In addition to responses being negative, the last quote mentioned above suggests replacing the light at the intersection of Montgomery Street, Granby Road, and McKinstry Avenue with a roundabout like the one in Northampton at the intersection of Conz and Pleasant Streets.

Speed is highlighted as a major issue along the corridor as well as inadequately timed signals for vehicular traffic. These quotes highlight the many grievances people have with the configuration and timing of the intersections as well as speeding:

“...the lights at McKinstry and Grattan and McKinstry and Dale leave something to the imagination...”

“Traffic has begun to ignore people already in crosswalks and continue speeding. Prime example is Lucky Strike Restaurant on Gratten [sic] Street. The warning sign is no longer put in the crosswalk.”

The lack of public transportation and sidewalks is mentioned occasionally throughout the open-ended responses (n = 13) with complaints focused on inadequate sidewalks for kids walking to school.

“The intersection of Dale and McKinstry is a nightmare. Why there are not sidewalks on both sides of Dale is beyond me. Very dangerous for kids walking Lambert Lavoie and Grattan. They either have to walk in the

street, or cross the street to get to the side with a sidewalk.”

Sidewalks were also highlighted as a danger to the public, as shown by the testimony below:

“The broken sidewalks throughout Aldenville need more attention given and fixed in a timely manner. I tripped on a broken section of the sidewalk on Trilby Avenue on April 23, 2017, as there was a lip about a quarter of an inch higher than the sidewalk and I ended up breaking my left pinky. I had surgery to repair my broken pinky [sic], went through therapy to get my pinky move again and now not able to bend my pinky downward to make a complete fist.”

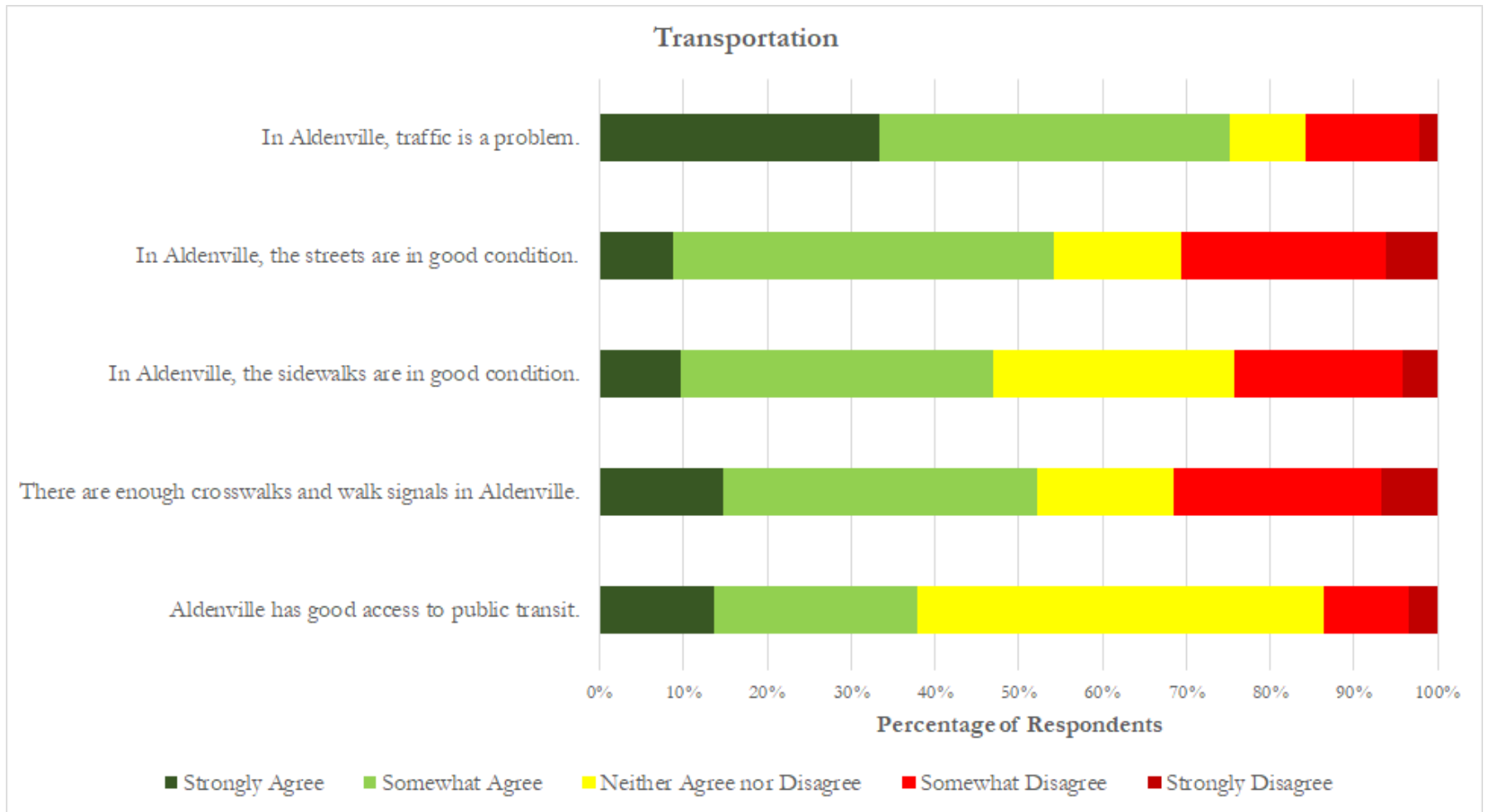


Figure 99: Stacked bar chart for Transportation (n=375)

## Schools

### Introduction

There are several public and private schools within Aldenville. The public schools are Lambert-Lavoie, Chicopee Comprehensive High School, Bellamy Middle School, and Barry Elementary School. St Joan of Arc is private. The survey asked respondents to rank their satisfaction with neighborhood schools and identify if someone in their household attends school in the City. The respondents were also given the opportunity to make an open-ended comment.

### Survey Questions

1. There are good schools in Aldenville.
2. Does anyone in your household currently attend school in Chicopee? (Select all that apply)
3. (Optional) Please share any opinions you have about Aldenville schools.

### Findings

1. Most respondents (56%) believe there are good schools in Aldenville, while 8% of respondents disagree.
2. Most respondents do not have someone in their home who attends school in the City (61%).
3. Out of 36 open-ended comments, 17 (47%) of the open-ended responses were complimentary of schools.
4. 11 open-ended comments (31%) contained complaints or something that needed improvement.

## Discussion

Most respondents agreed that there are good schools in Aldenville, while a few disagreed. When asked if they had someone in their household who attended Chicopee schools, 3% said someone is in private school, 31% said public school, and 1.5% said both public and private. In addition, 61% of respondents had no one in their household that attends school in the City, and 3% chose “other.” Those who chose “other” remarked that they had no school-aged children, their children recently graduated, or that their children went to school in another town.

Thirty-six of the total respondents ( $n = 375$ ) chose to answer the open-ended question, “Please share any opinions you have about Aldenville schools.” Ten respondents stated that they or someone in their home attended schools there in the past, and one respondent identified him/herself as a retired teacher. 17 responses were positive. For example:

“I think there are great schools in Aldenville”

“Both Chicopee High and Chicopee Comp were good schools when our children were of school age.”

“Lambert-Lavoie is a wonderful neighborhood elementary school.”

On the other hand, 11 of the comments contained a complaint or statement of something that needs improvement. For example:

“I think Aldenville public schools are struggling to provide a quality education to students from low to middle class families.”

“Too old, not [sic] outside play space and traffic is a nightmare.”

There is a discrepancy between the percentage of respondents who disagreed that there are good schools (8%) on the Likert scale question and the percentage of negative comments on the open-ended question (31%). This demonstrates how sometimes people are more likely to respond when they have a complaint than when they feel that there is no significant issue.

St. Joan of Arc, Lambert-Lavoie, Barry, St. George, Pope Francis High School, Chicopee High School, and Chicopee Comprehensive High School were specifically praised in the comments. One person stated that all his/her family members had attended both private and public schools and had “no complaints whatsoever!” St. Joan of Arc received high praise in the open-ended comment section. For example:

“an outstanding school and the students there get an [sic] remarkable education.”

“St. Joan of Arc is an outstanding school and the students there get an [sic] remarkable education. They are well prepared for high school. Pope Francis also offers students an outstanding education...”

Words used to describe schools were great, good, fine, exceptional, amazing, and outstanding. One person stated that:

“[t]he schools are brand-new [sic] the equipment is relatively new and that's wonderful.”

There were several themes that were observed in the negative comments. Two respondents stated that there are issues with

limited resources, and another stated that the budget and “lack of student and teacher support” were issues. One person said that:

“[w]ith the changing climate the elementary schools need air conditioning”

Classrooms were described as “ovens” four months out of the school year. Another respondent commented that:

“...some teachers should not be teachers anymore and the way discipline is handled in the school's [sic] it seems like the disruptive students are allowed to be disruptive and cause issues more than the good students are allowed to say hey what about our education...”

This sample size is small but provides valuable insight into people's opinions on Aldenville schools. Some respondents mentioned schools outside of the neighborhood, but their responses will still be relevant for the Client as Chicopee moves forward with its visioning and information-gathering process.

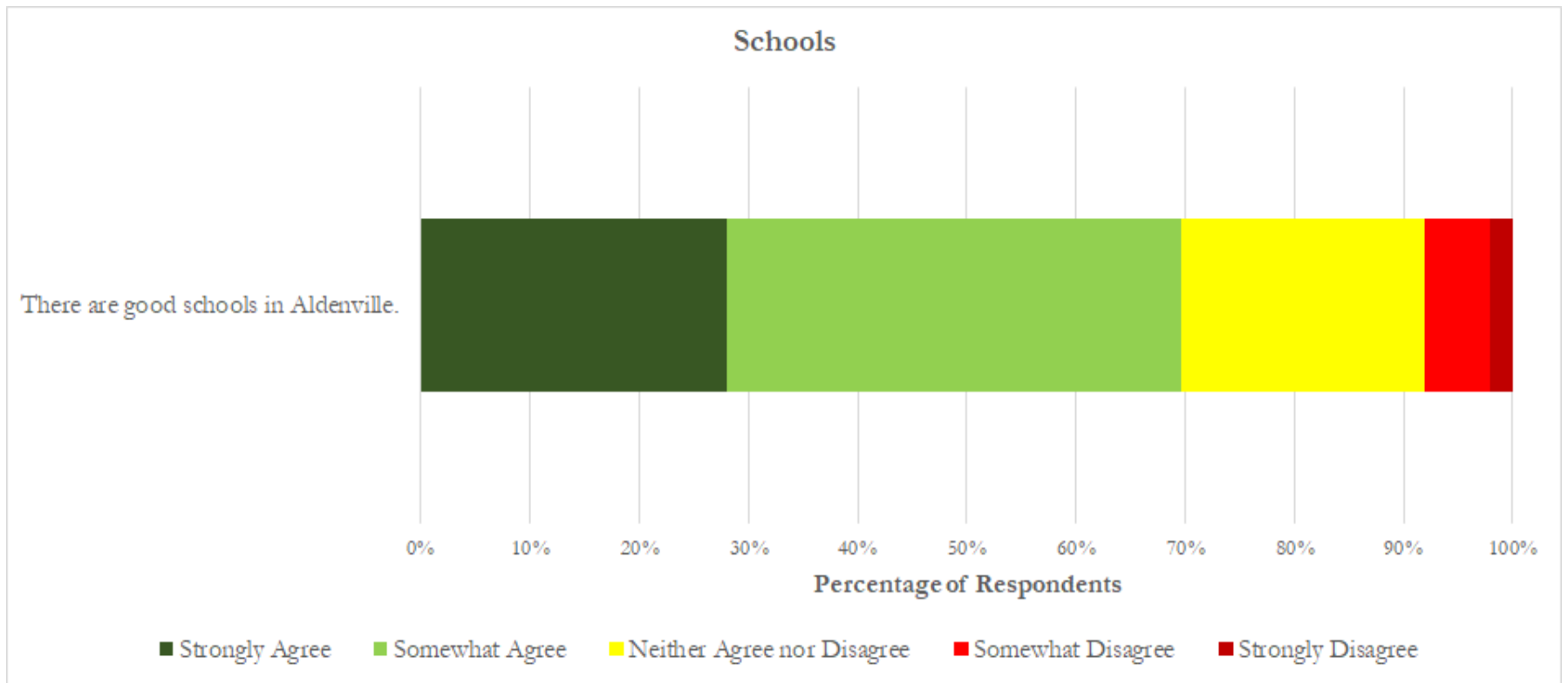


Figure 100. Stacked bar chart for Schools (n = 375)



## Restaurants and Retail

### Introduction

Questions regarding restaurants and retail were included to gauge opinions on existing businesses, including quality and quantity, as well as access to healthy food. The City has many larger commercial establishments along Memorial Drive, which may be the primary destinations instead of local businesses. An open-ended option gives respondents the ability to be more specific regarding their opinions, give detail on specific locations, and address what types of establishments they like and dislike. Gathering data on restaurants and retail is part of 7 Peaks' greater understanding of various aspects of the neighborhood to determine strengths and priorities for improvement.

### Survey Questions

1. In Aldenville, there are plenty of great restaurants.
2. In Aldenville, there are stores where I like to shop.
3. I can purchase healthy food in Aldenville.
4. (Optional) Do you have any other comments on restaurants or stores in Aldenville?

### Findings

1. Nearly half of respondents (about 49%) disagreed that there are plenty of great restaurants in Aldenville.
2. About two-thirds of respondents (65.6%) disagreed that there are stores in Aldenville where they like to shop.
3. Only 22.4% of respondents agreed that they can buy healthy food in Aldenville.
4. Lucky Strike was identified in the open-ended comments as an anchor establishment.

5. Respondents identified an overabundance of take-out establishments and a lack of “sit-down” style restaurants and cafes.

### Discussion

Generally, respondents did not feel that Aldenville offers a sufficient diversity or number of food, dining, or retail options. Questions in this section registered more negative responses than questions in any other section. About half of respondents did not feel that there were many great restaurants in Aldenville. Two-thirds did not believe there were places in the neighborhood where they like to shop. A majority also disagreed that they could purchase healthy food.

Although a commercial corridor exists along Grattan Street, many of the neighborhood's small businesses have been replaced by corporate chains on Memorial Drive. Responses reflect the departure of neighborhood small businesses by noting a lack of diversity of quality establishments. Some explicitly lamented the lack of “mom and pop” stores in the neighborhood:

“Most mom and pop stores have left which is a shame.”

“Would love to see more ‘mom & pop’ spaces for both retail and eateries. Currently, only Lucky Strike does a decent business and I don't think the economics in Aldenville are conducive to “niche” businesses like health food stores. If property values and rental rates were to increase, Aldenville could be a thriving, walkable community with the Common as its crown jewel.”

Regarding restaurants, two themes appeared. First, Lucky Strike is an important neighborhood asset. Secondly, other dining options are predominately unhealthy take-out establishments. The following quotes show this:

“Lucky Strike Restaurant should be dedicated as a ‘Chicopee Treasure’ for it’s [sic] many years in existence and keeping the old style quality and service.”

“With the exception of Lucky’s and Angelas [sic], both on Grattan, there are no sit down restaurants in Aldenville. How about filling that gap I referred to earlier with an outdoor cafe that offers sandwiches, salads, etc with in [sic] or outdoor dining (similar to offerings at the South Hadley commons. [sic] Get Hip [sic] for a change Aldenville. Attract young people to our town.”

“Too many restaurants are quick in and out places (pizza shops, Chinese food etc). Not enough places for a restaurant sit down (that isn’t lucky strike [sic]).”

A few respondents offered long-form responses about Aldenville retail establishments. While some called for more business development, others simply recognized the neighborhood as a residential area devoid of commercial presence:

“I didn’t realize there really were store’s [sic] in aldenville [sic].”

“Aldenville is primarily a suburb and is mostly made up of residences.”

Respondents who identified a need for more healthy eating options suggested a range of solutions, ranging from a Trader Joe’s to a local produce store. McKinstry Farm was identified as an asset, even though the farm is open only on a seasonal basis:

“Need more healthy food options, such as farmers markets, especially during non-summer months when McKinstry’s is closed.”

“Great restaurants? Not really, there are restaurants though. If McKinstry’s expanded to a year round [sic] store.... that would be ideal.”

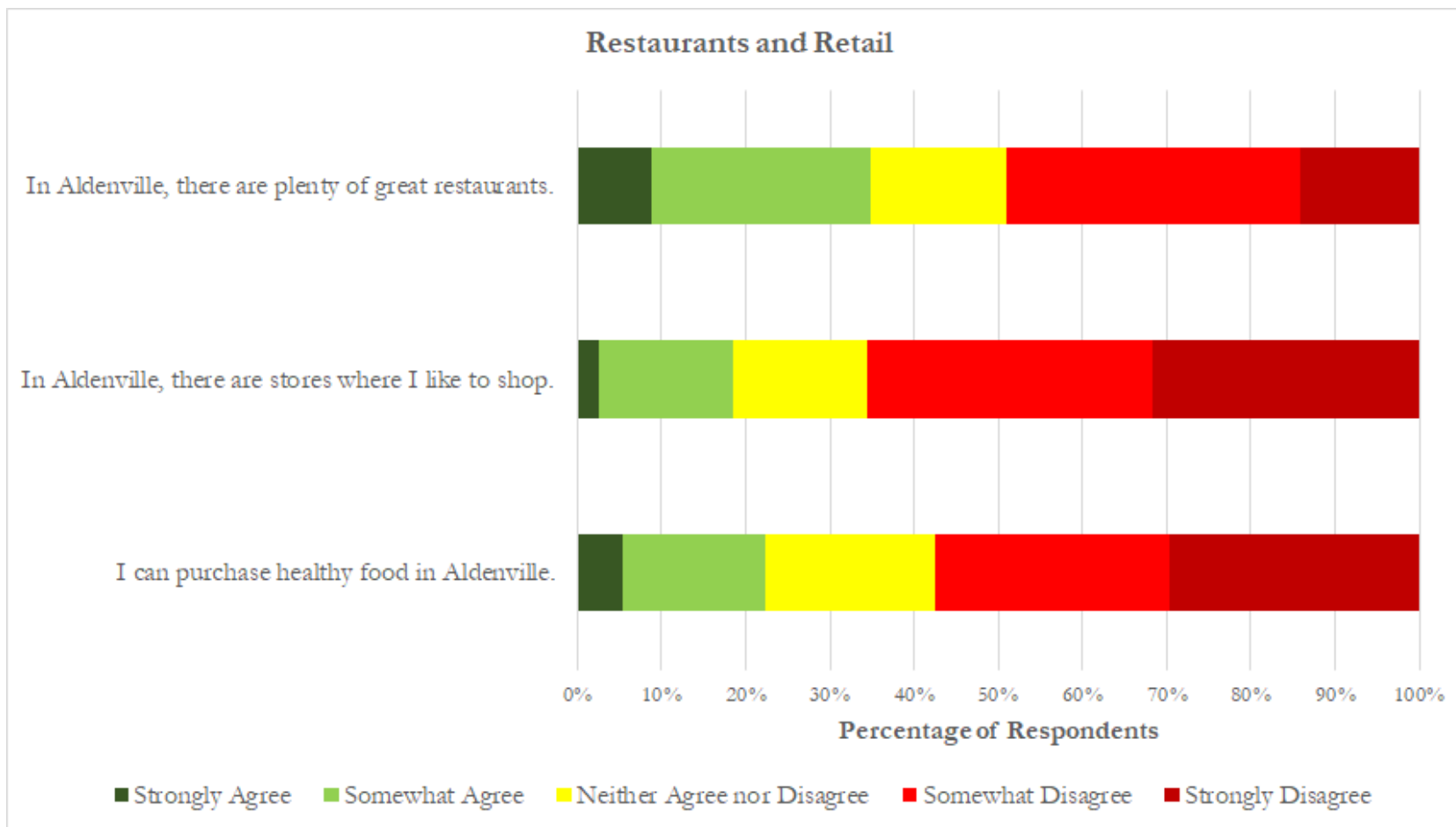


Figure 101: Stacked bar chart for Restaurants and Retail (n = 375)

## Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

### Introduction

7 Peaks included four questions regarding Parks, Recreation, and Open Space to better understand the conditions of Aldenville's park inventory and the improvements that could be made to enhance these facilities. The results from these questions will guide the land-use interventions performed on the parks and open space within Aldenville.

### Survey Questions

1. "There are enough parks and playgrounds in Aldenville."
2. "The parks in Aldenville are well-maintained."
3. "There is enough open space in Aldenville."
4. (Optional) "Open space are areas in the neighborhood without buildings (including parks, playgrounds, sports fields, etc.). Do you have any comments about open space in Aldenville?"

### Findings

1. The majority (75%) of respondents agree that there are enough parks and playgrounds in Aldenville.
2. Over two-thirds of respondents (67.4%) believed that the parks were well maintained.
3. Nearly half of respondents (48.5%) believed that there was enough open space in Aldenville.
4. Open-ended responses contradict Likert findings, with 16 of 40 (40%) of the comments being critical of park facility maintenance and upkeep.
5. Ray Ash Memorial Park was frequently mentioned as an asset.

### Discussion

Generally, respondents had positive perceptions of parks and open space in Aldenville. Out of the 375 completed survey responses, 42 respondents chose to reply to the optional open-ended question. Two of the recorded responses were discarded because they only said things like "no comment" and "no." The valid comments were then coded into three categories: positive, negative, and opportunities, before being broken down further by subject. Many of the recorded responses had multiple thoughts, varying in categories. The breakdown of the open-ended responses revealed the frequencies of the three categories: Positive (9), Negative (25), and Opportunities (15).

Most of the open-ended responses contradicted the findings within the Likert and ranking scale, as respondents' answers were largely negative. Most of the negative comments regarding the parks involved the lack of trash clean-up and removal, inaccessible facilities, overcrowding, and general lack of maintenance and upkeep. For example:

"Ray Ashe [sic] Park needs cleaning, especially behind AJAC Clubhouse. Basketball court area is constantly an issue with drug activity..."

This example highlights the importance of looking at the data as a collective whole, as negative comments can distort the overall positive effect parks and open space have on Aldenville.

Many of the comments expressing negative sentiments were directed at Ray Ash Park, which was specifically mentioned 15 times and referenced generally a further 6 times. Positive

comments on Ray Ash Memorial Park were less frequent (n = 6) than the negative comments (n = 13). These responses go against the trends shown in the Likert-scale and other survey questions. The other two parks, Aldenville Common and Mass Pike Overpass Park, received far less attention.

Respondents did, however, see the chance for opportunities at the Aldenville Commons:

“... The Common is definitely underused and is such a great space! The only time it's used is for the summer concerts and even then, they are not well attended. Would love to see food vendors and and [sic] many more quality events.”

“... It's great to use Aldenville Commons for concerts ...”

The first goal of the City's Open Space and Recreation Plan is to meet all the recreational needs of all residents regardless of age, race, sex, or ability (p. 88). The open-ended comments indicate the City might not be doing enough to provide alternative recreation options for residents as respondents believe that the existing programming is focused around organized sports. Respondents stated the desire for trails:

“Chicopee in general blew a wonderful opportunity when railroad tracks were recently lifted. Could have taken a bike ride on a rail trail from Dale Street all the way to Westover/Doverbrook.... Chicopee is so paranoid about crime on rail trails.... I've lived in Chicopee my entire

50+ years. When I move, it will be to a community that offers outdoor living experiences like rail trails.”

“... How about trying to utilize the land between 391 and Aldenville for an outdoor recreation trail space.”

In general, these comments and answers helped guide 7 Peaks Planning's land-use design suggestions for the neighborhood. Specifically, the survey comments regarding the potential of the Commons as a space for diverse events has guided 7 Peaks to focus on the area around the Commons as a location for improvements.

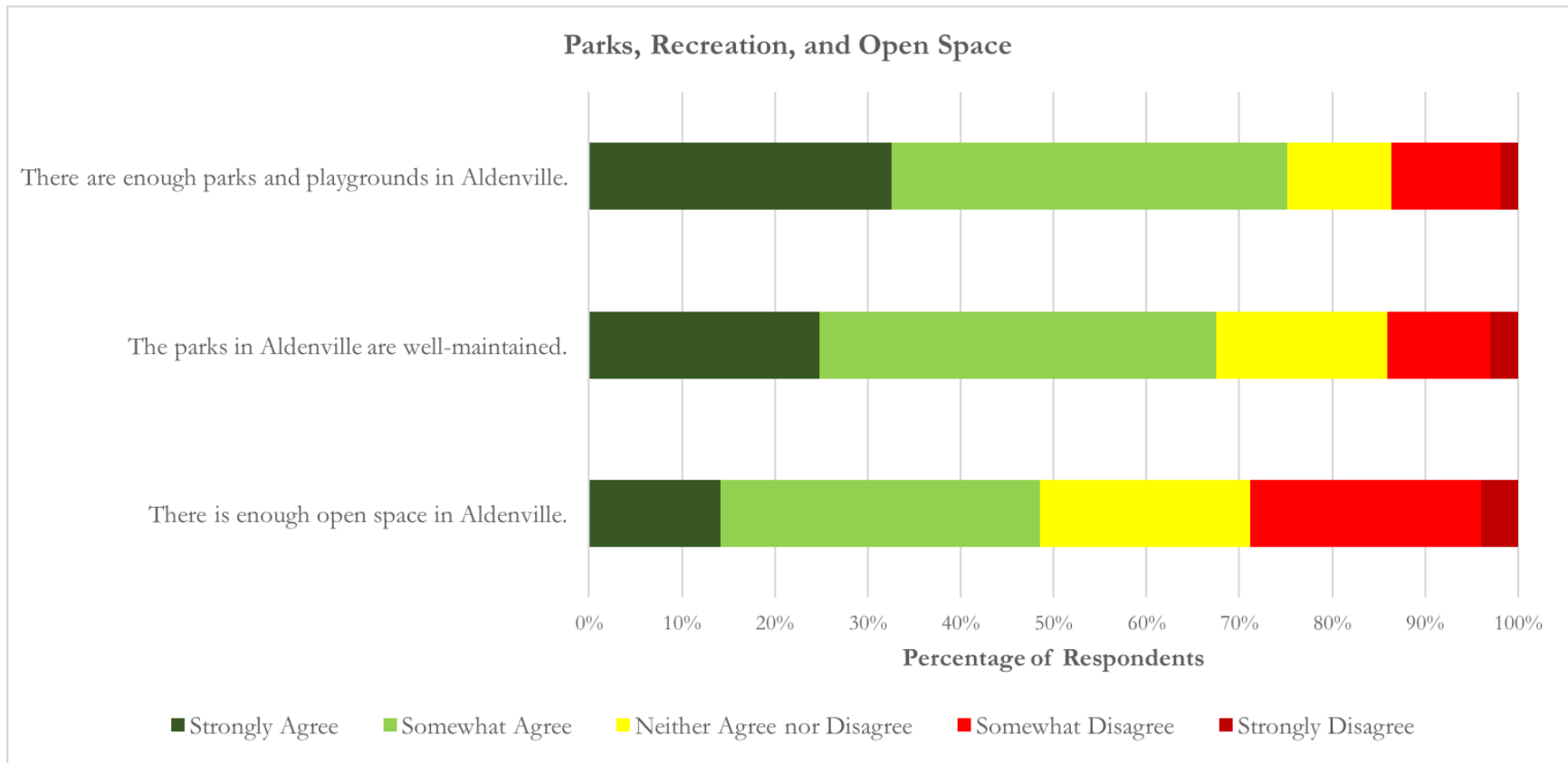


Figure 102: Stacked Bar Chart for the Open Space section (n=375)

# Aldenville Public Life

## Introduction

One of the goals of 7 Peaks is to gather information on the thoughts and perceptions residents and others have towards the community of Aldenville. Insights gained from these questions will be used to suggest improvements to the community. Crime and safety are important factors that determine how people feel about their surroundings. 7 Peaks also was interested in gauging whether people felt that there were adequate gathering spaces for community events.

## Survey Questions

1. In Aldenville, there are places for public events and community gatherings
2. There is low crime in Aldenville
3. I feel safe in Aldenville.
4. (Optional) Do you have any other comments on the community in Aldenville?

## Findings

1. Roughly 55% of respondents agree that there are places for public events and community gatherings.
2. 37% of respondents agree that there is low crime in Aldenville, while roughly 29% neither agreed nor disagreed, and roughly 34% disagreed.
3. Some people stated that they would like to see more events scheduled at Aldenville Commons.
4. Out of all the 39 open-ended comments, only 5 were positive (~13%), while roughly 72% were negative. The remaining 15% were suggestions.

5. A recurring theme amongst the open-ended comments was increased crime and drug activity.

## Discussion

More than half of the survey respondents (55%) agreed that there are enough places for public events and community gatherings, while roughly 24% disagreed. Twenty-one percent of the respondents had a neutral opinion (neither agree nor disagree) on the question regarding community gathering spaces. Thirty-seven percent of respondents agreed that there is low crime in Aldenville, while roughly 29% were neutral, and 34% disagreed.

In total, 39 respondents answered the open-ended question, “Do you have any other comments about the community in Aldenville?” Seventy-two percent of these comments were negative. Many lamented the perceived increase in crime that has occurred recently. Some of them opined that crime has infiltrated into Aldenville from surrounding communities such as Holyoke and Springfield. Moreover, people are concerned about general safety issues such as traffic. A few selected comments pertain to increased crime:

“As a long-time resident, crime has been steadily increasing - robberies, B&E, etc. Likely related to Opioid [sic] crisis.”

“Not as safe as it use [sic] to be. The crud has moved up from Willimansett threw [sic] the years. That's why I moved out.”

Some respondents identified specific places where safety is a concern:

“Big drug bust recently on Mary Street. We have a group home on Olea. Another house on Olea is run as a rooming house and I do not think it is zoned as such. There is a high level sex offender living there...families with children don’t want that stuff. The speeding on Grattan Street scares me especially with all the kids in the area.”

The above comment points to a perceived lack of policing in the community. In addition, some residents' opinions might be based on their perceptions of how Aldenville has changed over the years.

Another recurring theme was a lack of spaces for community gathering. The following quotes exemplify this perceived problem:

“Very little [sic] events happen and or [sic] planned in the Aldenville area, or they are not advertised well enough to know.”

“Other than the Aldenville Commons, what is there? Certainly nothing indoors with the exception of Comp for certain events. Why close the Aldenville Senior Center altogether? Why not still have community events in that hall??”

Very few comments were positive. Even some of the positive comments were mixed. However, several comments identified Aldenville Commons and Ray Ash Park as assets. Other people state that they feel a strong sense of kinship with their neighbors. The following quotes are examples:

"for [sic] the most part Aldenville is a pretty safe area in the city. Some shady business is occurring at a haircut business next to St. Joan of Arc School but the local police have been notified and

have been watching from time to time. Aldenville Common [sic] is home to public concerts and other events. Ray Ashe [sic] and Garrity Grive [sic] are open for local sports."

"It was nice to see the summer music series in the park with the gazebo."

"We keep an eye out for each other. We live on a great street where neighbors watch out for their neighbors."

The negative comments regarding crime correlate somewhat with the low percentage of respondents on the Likert scale (37%) who agreed that “There is low crime in Aldenville.” However, only 34% of respondents disagreed with crime being low. This mismatch can be attributed to the overwhelmingly negative tone of the open-ended responses. People who feel positive or indifferent about the level of crime that occurs are less likely to add more comments if they feel like there is nothing else to say. There is also a discrepancy between the percentage of Likert scale respondents who stated that there are enough gathering spaces (56%) and the negative comments in the open-ended questions. Furthermore, according to the Likert Scale, only 24% of the respondents felt that there were not enough gathering spaces. This indicates that respondents sometimes view open-ended questions as a way to either complain about the state of their community or to suggest improvements. Another explanation for this discrepancy is that it might not matter to some people whether there are gathering spaces in Aldenville.



In summary, while the tone of the open-ended comments is overwhelmingly negative, it does not paint a complete picture of how people feel about Aldenville. For example, some residents might not place much emphasis on interacting with their neighbors or on gathering places. Therefore, the responses from the Public Life section should be examined in conjunction with responses from other parts of the survey to determine how land-use should be addressed. Based on the positive comments regarding the Aldenville Commons and Ray Ash Park, 7 Peaks recommends that these facilities be better linked to the community through increased programming and pedestrian access, and more events be scheduled in these places to enhance community life. Social media can be a valuable tool for promoting events. For the Commons, it is advisable to make changes to traffic circulation to enhance pedestrian access and to possibly enlarge this space.

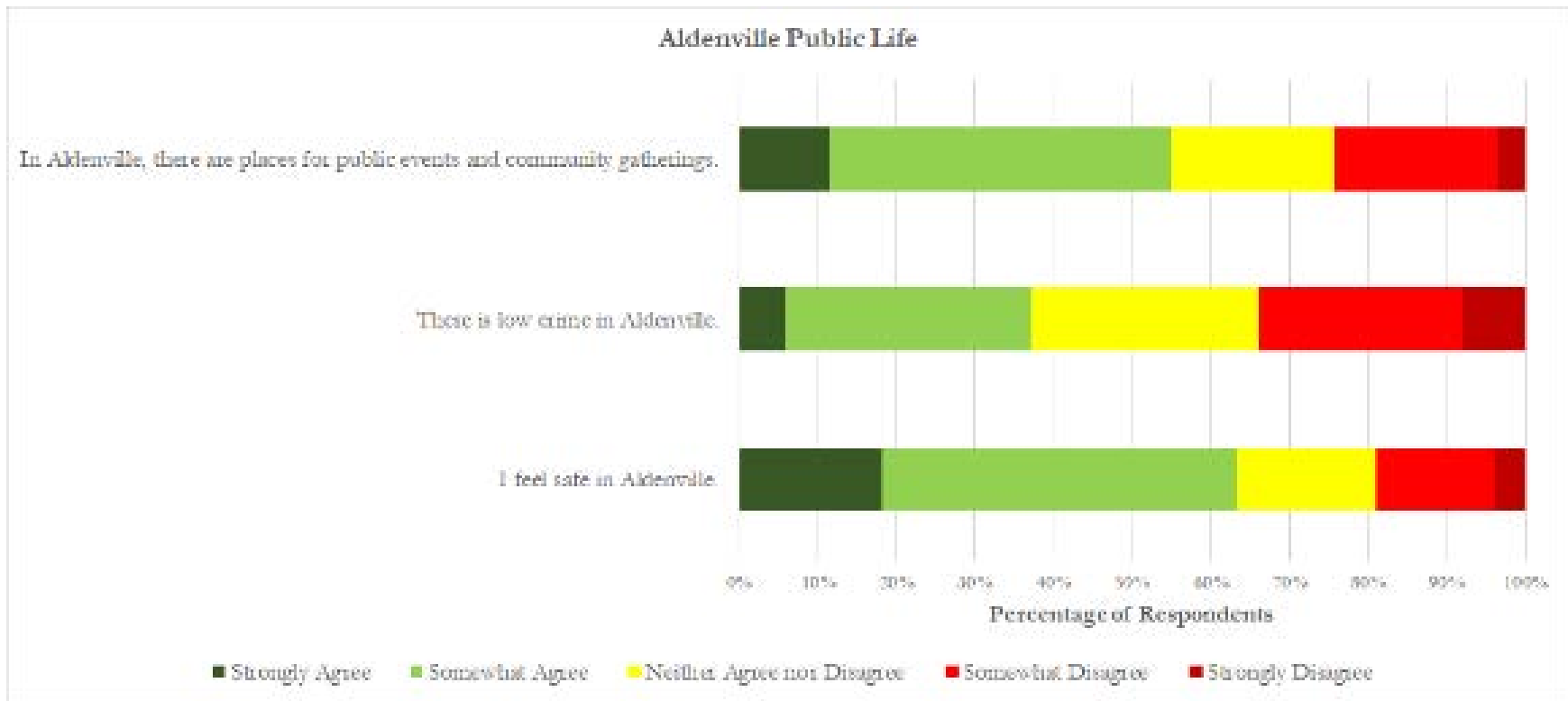


Figure 103: Stacked bar chart for Aldenville Public Life (n=375)

## Neighborhood Identity

### Introduction

Part of the client directive was to help elucidate neighborhood boundaries, which are not always hard, distinct edges, but porous in nature with no real definition. To help the Client better define the City of Chicopee's neighborhoods, respondents viewed an image of a location and had to decide whether they thought the place was in Aldenville. Respondents were also asked to identify restaurants or stores that they use in the neighborhood.

### Survey Questions

1. Which of the following locations do you consider to be in Aldenville? (Select all that apply)
2. Do you go to any of the following businesses? (Select all that apply)
3. Do you eat at any of the following restaurants? (Select all that apply)

### Findings

1. 96% of respondents agreed that The Aldenville Commons was in Aldenville.
2. 81% of respondents believed that Arnold's Meats was in Aldenville.
3. Only 14% of respondents believe that the Al's Diner fell within the defined Aldenville boundaries.
4. Arnold's Meats and McKinstry Farm were the two most popular businesses, with 86% and 70% of respondents respectively reporting patronizing them.
5. Lucky Strike and Mr. Cone were the two most popular restaurants with 75% and 67% of respondents respectively reporting patronizing.

### Discussion

The currently defined shape of Aldenville may not be accurate. Respondents believe that the Mass Pike bisects, rather than bounds, Aldenville based on Arnold's Meats, which does not fall within the typically defined Aldenville boundaries. Unsurprisingly, most of respondents (96%) agreed that the gazebo at Aldenville Commons was in Aldenville. The two next most agreed upon locations are less than a half mile from the Commons. These are Ste. Rose de Lima Church (90%) and Ray Ash Memorial Park (80%). Both St. Stanislaus and Chicopee Comprehensive High School are located on Montgomery Street, yet a greater number of respondents believe that Chicopee Comprehensive High School (62%) is in the neighborhood, compared to St. Stanislaus (41%), which is less than a quarter-mile to the north.

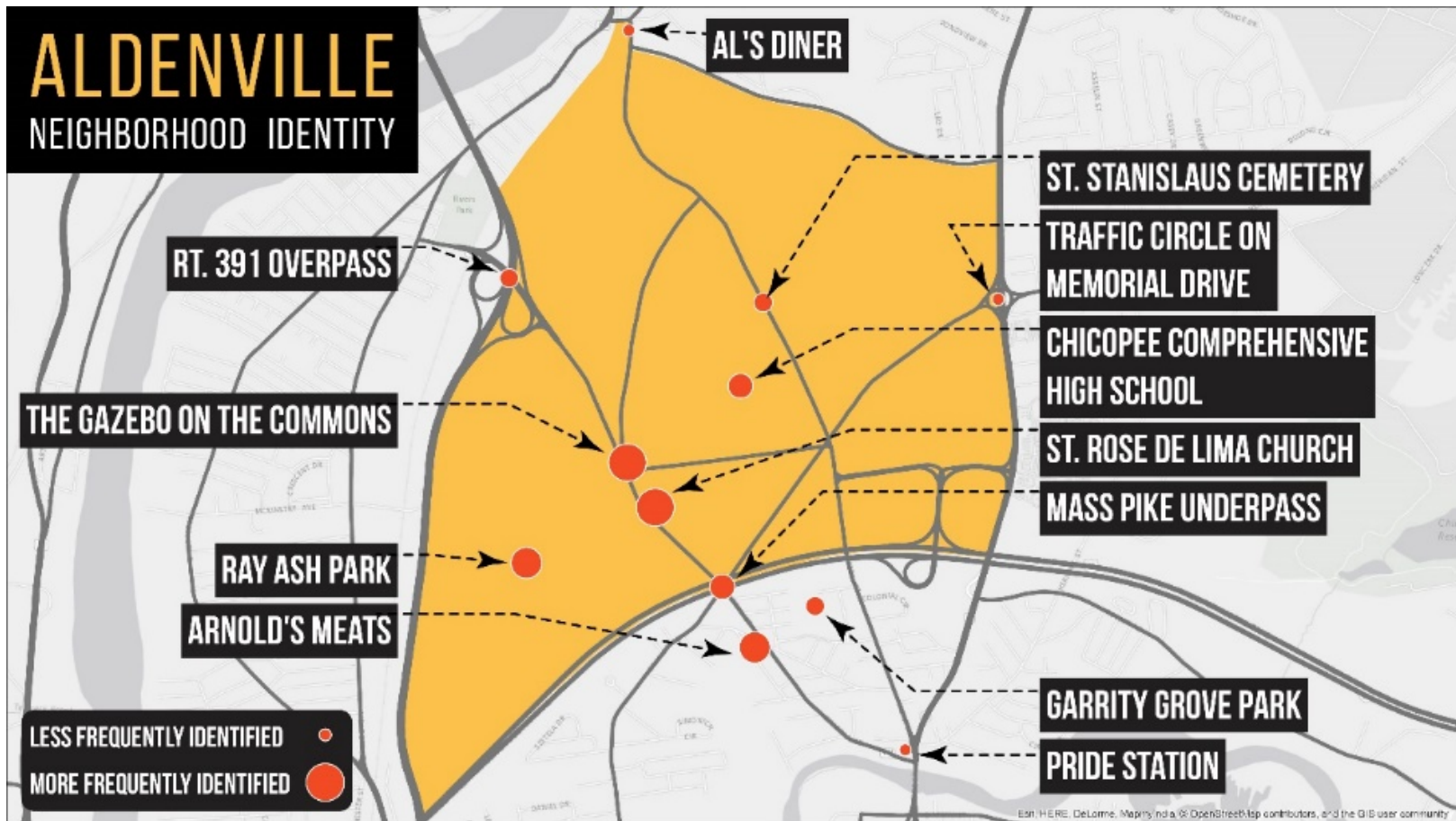


Figure 104: Dot density map of identified locations

Both Arnold's Meats and McKinstry Farm Stand saw the most patronage from respondents according to the survey. These two locations sell healthier food than the average convenience or general store. As noted earlier, only 22.4% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they can buy healthy food options in Aldenville. This can be attributed to Arnold's Meats and McKinstry Farm (albeit only seasonally) being the only places that are identified as selling healthy, fresh food. Alden Credit Union and Aldenville Liquors saw over 40% of respondents frequenting them.

Lucky Strike is the most popular restaurant in Aldenville, with 75% of respondents eating at the restaurant. The restaurant has been an institution since 1955, and they bill themselves as serving "Healthy Hearty Helpings in the Heart of Chicopee" (Lucky Strike Restaurant, 2017). The second most popular restaurant is Mr. Cone with 67% of survey respondents visiting the seasonal ice cream stand.

Both Aldenville's second most popular business (McKinstry Farm Stand) and second most popular restaurant (Mr. Cone) are seasonal. When these institutions close for the season, two assets essentially disappear. These thoughts were voiced in open-ended comments in the Restaurants and Retail section:

"Need more healthy food options, such as farmers markets, especially during non-summer months when McKinstry's is closed."

These trends indicate that Aldenville could support another grocer, preferably one that would sell healthy options. If that cannot be accomplished, a farmers' market on the Aldenville Commons is a viable solution to temporarily bring healthy food options to residents, while achieving various other community

related goals. In terms of businesses, there was a steep drop off in patronage among survey respondents from Arnold's Meats (86%) and McKinstry Farm Stand (71%) to the next most visited business, Aldenville Liquor Store (44%) and Alden Credit Union (42%). In summary, the City of Chicopee should look to bring in more restaurants and businesses to Aldenville, so residents do not have to travel to Memorial Drive, the City's commercial strip, for groceries and goods.

**Table 8: Responses to the question: *Do you go to any of the following businesses?***  
 Respondents were asked to select all that apply (n=375)

Businesses ranked by frequency		Percentage	Count
1	Arnold's Meats	86%	324
2	McKinstry Farm Stand	71%	266
3	Aldenville Liquor Store	44%	166
4	Alden Credit Union	42%	156
5	Shop Smart Convenience	28%	106
6	Mike's Variety	23%	86
7	Labrie and Pouliot, P.C.	22%	81
8	LeBel, Lavgine, & Deady Insurance	14%	52
9	Chicopee Convenience	13%	47
10	Doyle Travel Center	12%	45
11	Puss and Pups Boutique	12%	44
12	Other businesses (please specify)	11%	40
13	Gary's Barber Shop	10%	38
14	Bloo Solutions	6%	21

**Table 9. Responses to the question: *Do you eat at any of the following?***

Respondents were asked to select all that apply (n=375)

<b>Restaurants ranked by Frequency?</b>		<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>1</b>	Lucky Strike	75%	281
<b>2</b>	Mr. Cone	67%	252
<b>3</b>	Brother's Pizza	41%	153
<b>4</b>	Boston Bay Pizza	37%	137
<b>5</b>	Great China Restaurant	35%	131
<b>6</b>	Angela's Family Restaurant and Pizzeria	24%	90
<b>7</b>	Al's Diner	20%	75
<b>8</b>	TD's Sports Pub	18%	66
<b>9</b>	Doc's Place	11%	41
<b>10</b>	Other restaurants (please specify)	3%	12





## Is there anything else you would like to say about Aldenville?

### Introduction

At the end of the survey, 7 Peaks provided a final open-ended question for people to mention their overall feelings of Aldenville, or to reiterate importance of specific sections. Sixty-one people responded to this final question. Many responses were multifaceted and, therefore, some individual responses had multiple attributes. Ninety-six different items were coded within the section. Items were separated as being negative or positive. Negative comments mentioned areas of concern and where improvements were necessary. Also, comments were coded for whether they indicated potential within the neighborhood for improvement and if they mentioned the downtown corridor.

### Survey Question

Is there anything else you would like to say about Aldenville?

### Findings

A majority of responses were negative (53%). Appearance, crime, retail, and transportation were the most commonly mentioned ideas. Some comments described the neighborhood as having potential to be better.

### Discussion

The open-ended responses were overwhelmingly negative (53%), and mostly mentioned things that were lacking or needed improvement. The most mentioned things were appearance; crime and safety; retail, business, and restaurants; and transportation:

“Drugs & crime increasing dramatically”

“I have nothing against Aldenville's [sic] people or businesses. It is simply that it is not a very business friendly area with parking/traffic. I'm mostly talking about Grattan Street. There really isn't anything in that section of town, that I can't find somewhere else, aside from maybe Arnold's (which they even have another location in East Longmeadow)...”

Out of the negative comments, 13 (25%) identified appearance and aesthetics as major issues in Aldenville. Many of these comments identified trash and blighted houses and businesses as detracting from the overall appearance of the neighborhood. For example;

“Aldenville use [sic] to be a beautiful part of Chicopee. It has steadily declined...It always looks dirty.”

“There is a [sic] increasing amount of blight with houses either being repossessed or neglected.”

Twelve comments (24%) identified crime and safety as major concerns for the neighborhood. People commented that drug use and crime is increasing and that there is a lack of police presence. For example:

“...Concerned about drugs, crime, and gangs increasing in the neighborhood.”

“I feel we need more police presence. Lots of car break-ins Home [sic] break-ins.

Out of the 51 negative comments, eight (16%) identified transportation as a problem area. Traffic congestion and road conditions were the major complaints. One person suggested that the City do the following:

“Fix the intersection of Granby Road [and] Montgomery st [sic] etc. for good.”

The last section with a large amount of negative comments is retail, businesses, and restaurants (15%). One response mentioned that:

“...there is no ‘wow factor’ in Aldenville for shopping...no big box or specialty stores, no arts and entertainment (like NoHo), no theaters, no museums or galleries, etc. it's [sic] rather bland, with no spice, no draw.”

While most comments identified the negative issues and qualities of Aldenville, multiple comments revealed that there is potential for revitalization. Many of these comments identified the area around the Commons and the Grattan Street corridor as prime places for improvement and reinvestment. For example:

“With more use of the Common and re-use of the blighted commercial space, Aldenville could be a real gem.”

“Its [sic] a diamond in the rough. It has potential to be loved and brought back to its former glory.”

These comments show that Aldenville has the potential to become a popular, attractive place, especially if the neighborhood addresses the perceived issues of crime, appearance, and transportation while expanding businesses and things to do along the downtown corridor. If the people believe that the area has

potential, then the environment may encourage the desired changes.

## Priorities

### Introduction

To help understand the greatest assets and priorities for action within the neighborhood of Aldenville, 7 Peaks created two ranking questions. In both questions, the same seven options are presented. The respondent could either rearrange the options (in the desktop or mobile versions) or number them (in paper format) to rank these options. Respondents were also given the option to include any priorities 7 Peaks may have missed in a comment box.

### Survey Questions

1. What are Aldenville's most valuable strengths?
2. What in Aldenville needs most improvement?
3. (Optional) Is there something about priorities that we missed?

### Findings

1. Parks, recreation, and open space were identified as the most valuable strength in Aldenville by 38.9% of all respondents.
2. School options (17.6%) and housing options (17.1%) were the second- and third-most commonly selected top-ranked strengths, respectively (Figure 106).
3. According to 31.7% of respondents, the number one priority for Aldenville should be retail businesses and restaurants.
4. Streets and sidewalks (17.1%) and community centers for seniors, children, and families (14.9%) were the second- and third-most commonly selected top-ranked priorities, respectively (Figure 107).

5. 33 respondents included additional comments about neighborhood priorities. Concerns about transportation were mentioned most frequently (n=13), followed by an overall lack of policing (n=8), and the need for an improvement in neighborhood appearance (n=7).

### Discussion

The most consistently top-ranked neighborhood strength - parks, recreation, and open space (n=146) - indicates a few of Aldenville's key assets: Ray Ashe Park, the Aldenville Commons, and the playground and sports fields surrounding Lambert-Lavoie Elementary School and Chicopee Comprehensive High School. These spaces were reflected on positively throughout the survey and should play an important role in the revitalization of Aldenville. Transportation networks can also be prioritized to better connect Aldenville's parks and open spaces with Grattan Street's underperforming commercial corridor. These identified transportation networks – Grattan Street, McKinstry Avenue – should be prioritized given the frequency of mentions throughout the open-ended comment boxes. Additionally, new or underutilized pathways can be proposed to reduce traffic and dependence on McKinstry, particularly for pedestrians and alternative modes of transportation.

The open-ended comments also gave key insights into neighborhood features 7 Peaks overlooked in its design of the survey. A stronger police presence – particularly community policing – was mentioned eight times in the "Priorities" open-ended section. While the focus was largely on greater enforcement of speed limits, there was also an expressed desire for more "community policing". The following represent comments around improved policing in Aldenville:

"A better police presence, such as a Beat Cop, not cameras or cruisers. Get people to respect our men and women in uniform again that protect and serve us. The human element is sorely lacking in today's society."

"needs more of a police presence in the evening and at night. Speed limit enforcement on side streets has been a joke"

"More police presence. Last week a police officer road [sic] by my house on a bike, I rather liked that idea."

Additional comments about neighborhood priorities identified a strong concern about transportation issues, particularly speeding and safety for pedestrians and cyclists. For example, respondents wrote the following comments:

"Safe places to ride a bike. The bike trail by the library is not sufficient. Really need to address traffic concerns - speeding and parking on Grattan Street forcing cars to pull out of side streets with limited view."

"Traffic issues needs to be addressed."

"Needs the most improvement - More police presence on Grattan Street to stop speeding"

"Heavier enforcement of Speed Zones is a must especially near St. Joan of Arc School."

Finally, seven of the open-ended comments re-introduced priorities that were touched on in the first section of our survey, "Neighborhood Appearance". Respondents stated the following:

"It would be nice to see some more plantings/beautification in Aldenville"

"The buildings to the left by lucky strike are an eye sore"

"Visual appeal is probably the top choice in the area."

Altogether, these identified strengths and priorities for the neighborhood of Aldenville can help guide future planning in a way that incorporates and reflects residents' perceptions. By requesting that Chicopee residents rank the provided options, the analysis of the "Priorities" section of the survey helped 7 Peaks identify key areas to focus on in the land-use portion of this project.

# What are Aldenville's most valuable strengths?

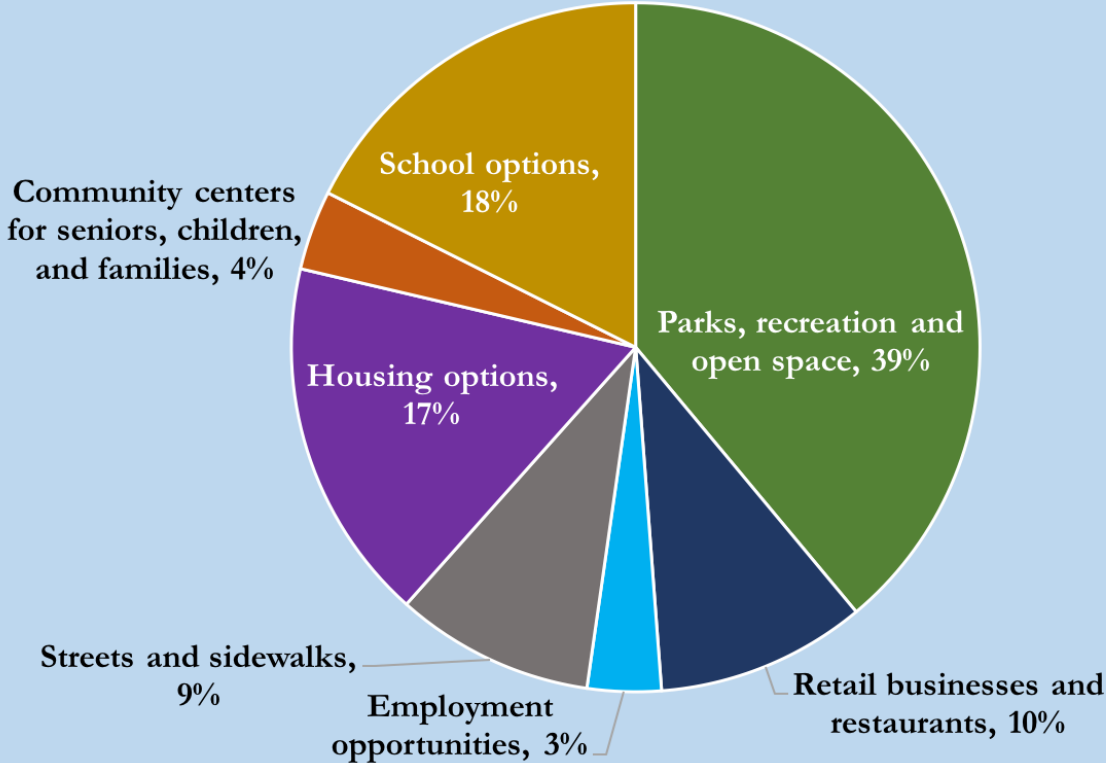


Figure 105: Top ranked responses to the question: "What are Aldenville's most valuable strengths?" (n=375)

# What in Aldenville needs the most improvement?

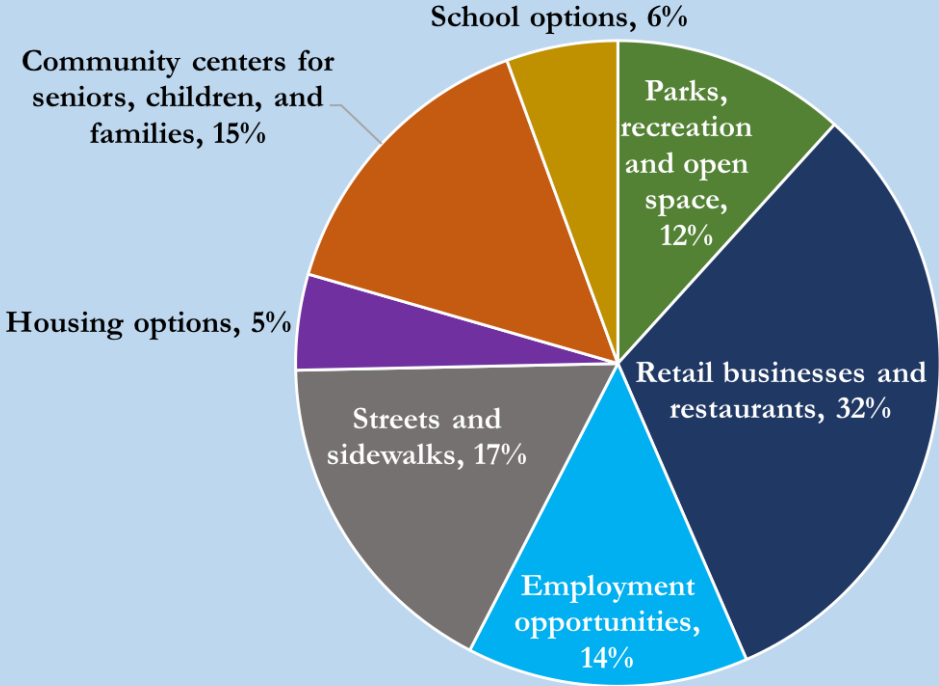


Figure 106: Top ranked responses to the question: "What in Aldenville needs the most improvement?" (n=375)

## Public Engagement Recommendations

### Survey Recommendations

The Aldenville Community Survey represents a model for future neighborhood surveys in the City of Chicopee. It can also help inform other cities and towns interested in a public engagement campaign focused on the neighborhood-scale. The following recommendations are intended to revise and advance the Aldenville survey for future use. Together, these recommendations improve the survey's ability to capture public perception, define neighborhood identity, and allow for more straightforward analysis of survey results.

#### *Adapt Aldenville survey for each of Chicopee's other neighborhoods*

7 Peaks designed the Aldenville community survey to be adaptable for each of Chicopee's other neighborhoods, requiring only minor revisions. In addition to the neighborhood name, the City needs to select new locations to identify neighborhood boundaries and identity. Once these locations have been identified, an adapted community survey for each neighborhood could be completed in a single work day. Using a consistent community survey would allow for easier comparison and analysis across the City's different neighborhoods.

#### *Expand on "Neighborhood Identity" section*

The redefinition of neighborhood boundaries is a valuable outcome of the community survey data, and was based on respondents classifying places as being a part or outside of the neighborhood boundaries. 7 Peaks recommends the City expand on this question by including more locations. When selecting locations, consider both central "control" locations and "variable" locations that are nearer to the currently identified boundary. Also 7 Peaks encourages the same locations be used in

the surveys for adjacent neighborhoods to see if there are instances where two neighborhoods claim a landmark or business. This kind of result may identify more blurred or porous neighborhood boundaries.

To avoid adding to the length of the survey, the City should omit those questions in "Neighborhood Identity" asking which businesses or restaurants people visit. 7 Peaks found this information was made redundant by the open-ended comment section for "Restaurants and Retail" where people freely expressed which places were their favorite in Aldenville.

#### *Revise demographic questions to conform with Census data categories*

To better demonstrate representativeness, ensure the provided categories for the "Tell Us about Yourself" questions are consistent with Census data categories. For example, the categories 7 Peaks provided for annual household income were inconsistent with the Census data, and in turn made it more difficult to assess which income groups may have been over- or under-represented.

#### *Secure a professional survey license*

For the Aldenville survey, 7 Peaks used Qualtrics as a survey platform due to the professional license made available through UMass Amherst. If available, 7 Peaks recommends the City secure a Qualtrics professional license due to the survey design and analysis capabilities, and easier duplication and revision of the Aldenville survey. A professional SurveyMonkey license is another potential option, and may be accessible through the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission which uses the platform for many of their public engagement projects.

### *Develop a visual preference survey to better understand residents' perceptions of neighborhood appearance*

This recommendation was informed by the results of the “Neighborhood Appearance” section of the survey. In the open-ended comments, 15 respondents were mixed in their description of building appearance, and others identified that these questions were broad given the significant variety of buildings and the level of upkeep across the neighborhood. A visual preference survey would allow the City to better understand the differences in opinion about housing and building appearance, as well as which building styles are consistent with neighborhood character. This may be done as an added optional portion of the developed community survey (within Neighborhood Appearance), so as not to add any mandatory time to complete the survey.

## **Branding and Promotional Recommendations**

To reach a larger and more diverse audience, 7 Peaks tested a wide range of branding and promotional strategies. The following recommendations are based on survey feedback as well as 7 Peaks own analysis of the relative costs and benefits of each promotional strategy. Together, these recommendations will allow the City to build on the work of 7 Peaks, and save valuable time and resources in future community engagement efforts.

### *Use the materials and branding that 7 Peaks developed*

The Create Our Chicopee branding was successful in its aim of drawing people toward the community survey. 7 Peaks promoted the Create Our Chicopee brand at community events throughout the City, within Aldenville businesses, on building exteriors and neighborhood landmarks (e.g., the Commons gazebo), as well as on City websites and Facebook pages. Although it is based largely on anecdotal evidence and experience, 7 Peaks confidently believes the campaign images and branding became more recognizable and valuable over the course of the public engagement phase of the project. To maintain consistency with future engagement efforts, and re-enforce this project as a “pilot” for the City as a whole, the “Create Our Chicopee” brand and logo-banner can be relied upon for continued use.

### *Involve people from the community for images and future designs*

Currently, the members of 7 Peaks are included in the promotional materials. For future participation efforts, 7 Peaks argues there would be greater benefit in including local residents in promotional photos to increase community involvement in the



data gathering process, and to have a campaign that more accurately reflects the neighborhood.

### *Create Planning Department Facebook page*

Seventy-seven percent of all survey respondents discovered the survey through Facebook, which demonstrates the website's importance for future public engagement strategies. The City's Planning Department would benefit by having a stronger presence in social media to reach a greater number of people. Future surveys can be hosted on the Department's Facebook page and local stakeholders and community groups can use this link to share with their friends and followers.

### *Include mail-based distribution for future surveys*

When asked, "If the City conducts another survey, how would you like to be reached?" 103 of the 375 respondents selected a mail-based survey as a preferred option, which was the second most selected option only behind an "Online survey by computer." Mail-based distribution of the survey would be complementary to other methods of promotion, and can be distributed with municipal energy bills as was done in the City's 2015 Open Space & Recreation Plan.

### *Identify community events to expand outreach*

Community events can be a great way to meet potential key stakeholders, as well as speak to residents in an informal way about their community. However, community events were not particularly successful in directing people to the survey, often due to the narrow neighborhood focus of the campaign. Therefore, the City should identify key community events to promote the "Create Our Chicopee" brand while recognizing the relative strengths and limitations of event-based promotion.

## **Key Stakeholder Outreach**

Key stakeholders represent influencers – including local business owners, social service providers, and community advocates – within the neighborhood of Aldenville. The total compiled list of Aldenville stakeholders is available in Appendix IV. The identified people and organizations are valuable links between the City and neighborhood residents. The following recommendations are intended to further develop these links, as well as benefit from local knowledge in future planning efforts.

### *Gauge interest in organizing a formal neighborhood group*

The creation of a formal neighborhood group can act as an intermediary body between Aldenville residents and the City's Planning Department. A successful neighborhood group would act as an intermediary body between the City and neighborhood residents and stakeholders. Having a reliable group of key influential individuals can help the City in many of its goals. With strong local knowledge, planning ideas can be grounded in the realities of the neighborhood. Communication can be improved considerably as the City relies on local representatives to disseminate information and to provide feedback to the City.

### *Involve key stakeholders in survey development*

Key stakeholders play three important roles in the development of a neighborhood survey. First, stakeholders can give importance insights while developing a preliminary list of neighborhood assets and priorities. Secondly, key stakeholders can be valuable to pre-test a draft survey and provide feedback on local relevance, propose themes that should be prioritized, and give feedback on overall legibility. Finally, these key stakeholders can help promote the survey through their local networks.

# If the City conducts another survey, what is the best method to contact you?

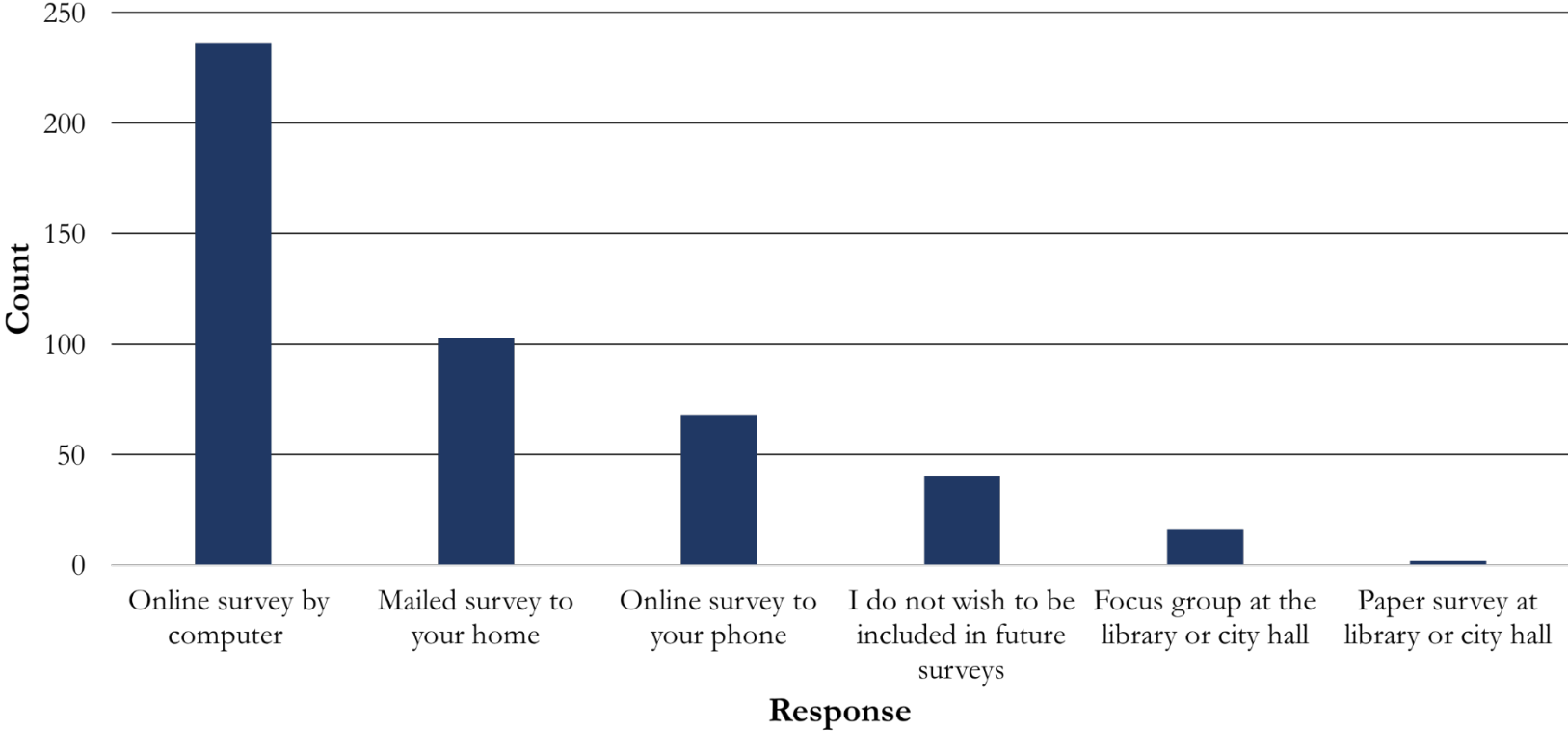


Figure 107 How respondents would like to be contacted in the future

This bar chart shows the response frequency for the question, "If the City conducts another survey, what is the best method to contact you?" Respondents were asked to select up to the three of the provided options; results are not mutually exclusive.

*Continue working with identified stakeholders while developing land-use proposals*

With the help of committed key stakeholders, some planning responsibilities can be downloaded to the local level including: identifying priority site areas or new proposed uses for underutilized properties, identifying local workers or aspiring entrepreneurs, improving community buy-in to a proposed initiative, etc. By having a close relationship with these key stakeholders, the City is more likely to maintain community buy-in as they propose new zoning or modify existing land-use.

*Work with Elms College and local schools to continue outreach (with Planning Department staff coordinating)*

Beyond the list stakeholders provided by 7 Peaks, the City should aim to strengthen links with local schools including Elms College as key influencers in the area and as gateways to the broader Chicopee community. Consider coordinating a volunteer program with City high school students to help with outreach (as well as help students meet their required number of volunteer hours). This can help the City and the “Create Our Chicopee” brand maintain a presence at community events. It also has the benefit of recruiting youth into the public engagement culture the City is aiming to foster. Finally, this effort can provide valuable experience for the City’s youth to lead them to become active and informed citizens in their community.



# Chapter 6: Land Use

## Land-Use

### Introduction

Land-use involves the ways in which the natural environment becomes the built environment or is left as wilderness or green space. The more built-out land-uses include residential (e.g., single-family, multi-family), business/commercial (e.g., limited business, industrial), and transportation (e.g., roads, airports). The more natural land-uses include recreational (e.g., parks), agricultural, and open space. Zoning permits different land-use types and may restrict areas or parcels to one specific use or allow a combination of uses.

Land-use has significant influence on people. The types available and where they are available can determine access to resources, quality of life, and where people want to live. Land-use practices are also indicative of the priorities a community or government have. For example, a large commercial district versus a small business district indicates whether a community prefers one type of retail over the other, whether for shopping itself, for revenue, or to attract people from other towns. A large amount of agriculture and recreation may indicate that a community values rural character and green space. Access to different land-uses can have profound impacts on residents' lives.

This literature review explores different types of land-uses and their benefits and drawbacks. If land-uses do not match what would benefit residents, then a city must adjust its zoning and/or implement redevelopment strategies. Using research from various journals, magazines, and newspapers, the following literature examines land-use types and strategies. The themes are short-term interventions, downtown revitalization, mixed-use and walkable communities, transportation, and recreation. By

understanding these themes and how they relate to the public's experience, planning practices can increase benefits to residents of an area.

Following this brief introduction, the first section explores short-term interventions. The next section looks at downtown revitalization strategies. The next section examines mixed-use and walkable communities. The next section details transportation. The final section explores recreation including parks, trails, and farmers' markets. Lastly, this literature review will conclude with land-use recommendations to the Client.

### Short-term Interventions

In this section on short-term interventions, several examples of planning for the near future will be discussed. In the first report, Ben-Amos and Simpson (2017) examine parklets. Hurley (2016) discusses tactical urbanism used by local residents. Arieff (2011) evaluates temporary architectural and planning interventions. Berton (2013) discusses Better Block events. Collectively, these reports will show some short-term ideas that can engage the public and potential lead to long-term changes.

Ben-Amos and Simpson discuss the modern intervention of parklets, which are small parks created within one to two street parking spaces where people may gather to sit and relax, talk, read, use internet, or visit adjacent businesses. Many neighborhoods lack a sense of community and walkability and have underutilized businesses, and these new forms of public space have become nodes that tend to increase pedestrian activity, patrons to nearby businesses, and sense of place. Since 2007, the U.S. has gone from virtually no parklets to nearly 200. Parklets in cities as small as Montpelier, Vermont (with only 8,000 residents) as well as larger ones like Los Angeles and New York (with several million residents) tend to be in denser areas

with more mixed-use development and multimodal transit. Some stipulations on design include leaving the area clear along the sidewalk and screening from traffic while still allowing a view to the opposite side of the street. In order to fund everything from a pilot to maintenance, the authors recommend exploring multiple partnerships with local businesses, municipal governments, and nonprofit organizations, in addition to seeking grant funding.

Parklets are an innovative new concept that promotes placemaking, and they have the potential to create a small area for locals to socialize, relax, and have a common space without needing an entire lot or parcel. Many pilot programs have been successful, although others have not. Ben-Amos and Simpson did not discuss the actual cost of parklets, but if funding and approval from the Department of Transportation can be secured for a pilot, it seems worth trying especially in dense, mixed-use neighborhoods. A sense of place and community as well as strong social ties can improve residents' satisfaction with their neighborhood, so given that these parklets have done that in some locations, they seem to be an idea worth trying.

Tactical urbanism involves temporary changes to the built environment to demonstrate short-term interventions that may lead to long-term ones. Tactical urbanism has become a frequent treatment by planning departments and citizens across various communities in America. From placing unregulated signs to encourage walking to neighborhood destinations, to converting metered parking spaces into parklets for a day, tactical urbanism has become a key tool for planning agencies across the country. Hurley discusses that while the temporary signs were illegal because of their lack of permits, city officials and planners began to see the benefits of these tactical urbanism facilities created by citizens and quickly embraced them. Tactical urbanism is the preferred method of improving neighborhoods and communities,

because their temporary nature allows the planning departments to implement additional changes or convert the installations into permanent assets of the community.

Tactical urbanism projects encourage greater engagement with their community and can drastically improve the character of a space. However, their drawbacks are numerous and varied, as their target audience tends to be more middle-class and heavily White, and the projects are not necessarily designed for the general public. While these small-scale projects may not adequately address the needs of all residents, they are undoubtedly important tools in providing low-cost improvements to city infrastructure. Their temporary status enables their removal or replacement and allows for planners to conduct live experiments to see how people react to a new or different experience than what they were previously accustomed to.

While master plans and other planning documents are important for long-term visioning and goal-setting, they cannot anticipate the constantly changing economic, demographic, and environmental conditions that communities must confront. Arieff argues that both architects and planners should reappraise the value that temporary, ad hoc experiments hold for improving community resilience and responsiveness. Results from temporary interventions can inform better long-term policy-making. Interventions initially considered temporary can also prove so successful that they become established as permanent neighborhood change.

Arieff discusses temporary architectural and planning interventions in several U.S. cities. In Brooklyn, the De Kalb Market, an open-air market with food vendors and craftspeople, was slated to remain for only three years, but it attracted so much interest that it became a bustling hub in an area that previously

exhibited little neighborhood activity. A traditional market study would not have predicted the level of economic traction that the Market was able to achieve. The PROXY project in San Francisco involved the housing of retail, restaurants, and cultural spaces within shipping containers on government-owned vacant lots. The lots were slotted for affordable housing, but the 2008 recession prevented developers from developing the land. Five years of temporary retail, restaurant, and cultural spaces increased the vibrancy of the area, making it more attractive for developers and future residents. Low-risk experiments can provide the investor confidence needed to support permanent neighborhood revitalization.

Neighborhoods with long-term patterns of disinvestment and high levels of vacancy can benefit from (and sometimes require) outside-the-box revitalization strategies. Better Block events are essentially block parties that residents, community organizations, and/or local government organize in order to demonstrate how creative planning interventions could improve neighborhood life. Better Block events can also show, on the ground, how modifications in zoning and land-use policy could encourage positive neighborhood change. Berton discusses Better Block events in several U.S. cities, including Dallas, San Antonio, and Norfolk, Virginia.

Better Block events have both advantages and limitations. On the positive side, they can be organized at little expense and can quickly change how a neighborhood is perceived, both by residents and elected officials. For example, in Norfolk, Virginia, a two-day Better Block event turned the center of a struggling neighborhood into a “living charrette.” The event showed how new permitted uses and transportation techniques could transform the area into a vibrant Arts & Design District. The event was so successful that the District went from concept to

formal City Council approval in a matter of months, a process that would normally take years. On the negative side, many Better Block events fail to produce long-term policy change or revitalization, which can contribute to resident disillusionment.

These reports discuss short-term interventions, which can include tactical urbanism, parklets, Better Block events, retail and cultural spaces in shipping containers, temporary signage, and others. They can have great benefits. Temporary interventions are relatively cheap and provide a way for the public to experience an idea and provide feedback, and their results can better inform long-term policy making. However, they may only be geared toward certain groups of people such as Whites and the middle-class, may not address the needs of all residents, and may fail and not lead to long-term plans.

## Downtown Revitalization

In this section on downtown revitalization, the restoration of downtown neighborhoods will be discussed. In the first report, Malizia and Stebbins (2015) examine downtown vibrancy and eight rules to guide it. Robertson (1999) studies assets, problems, and development strategies in small-city downtowns. Stebbins (2014) examines the resurgence in economic development of a city that was previously in decline. Marszalek (2008) discusses one city’s downtown revival via business stimulation. Mammoser (2016) examines form-based codes that can be used in downtown/historic areas.

Suburban and urban neighborhood downtowns struggle to reinvent and reinvigorate themselves as attractive places for people to live, work, and play. Malizia and Stebbins identify the importance of vibrancy in reimagining declining suburban and urban neighborhoods, especially those in smaller city or town centers. Vibrant centers are described as neighborhoods with

places to “...live, shop, dine, play, convene, rest, and learn” (p. 4). These vibrant centers include an abundance of social interaction, economic activity, communication, and innovation, and often include parks and other places to play, such as cultural and arts districts and sports and entertainment venues. Malizia and Stebbins propose eight guiding rules to creating vibrant places: encouraging high density housing of all types; creating policies and regulations specific towards these downtown places such as mixed-use zoning and high floor to area ratios; prohibiting suburban development prototypes near these areas; using public space and infrastructure from multiple types of transportation to support redevelopment; requiring housing for downtown workers; holding smaller focus groups with smart, interested locals; and requalifying real estate developers interested in redevelopment to create a good precedent for future development.

Vibrancy is important because it is a defining characteristic of many of the places people want to work, play, and live. While it is helpful that the authors created a comprehensive list of guiding principles, they do not divulge whether they are mandatory or if they should only be used as appropriate. Furthermore, they do not discuss the difficulties of following the recommended guidelines. Instead they focus on the characteristics that define vibrant places and create a guideline based from that, but do not show if these guidelines are achievable nor if they will help redefine a place.

Downtowns are important to the health of most small cities, yet many have suffered through decades of decline. Robertson sought to identify the assets, problems, and development strategies in small-city downtowns. The data was obtained from surveying 57 small-city planning departments (with populations between 25,000 to 50,000, such as Pittsfield, Massachusetts and

Kingsport, Tennessee) and in-depth site visits to Auburn, New York; Bangor, Maine; Carson City, Nevada; Texarkana, Texas/Arkansas; and Wausau, Wisconsin. The surveys identified downtowns' greatest strengths and problems, the strengths of strategies used, and the overall state of the downtowns compared to 1985. Site visits included the interviews of public officials and downtown leaders, first-hand observance of performance, and land-use inventories. The data concluded that small-city downtowns suffer from a plethora of issues: attracting new development, attracting people to downtown on evenings and weekends, competition from discount stores and suburban malls, vacant and underused retail space, and parking. Regardless, small cities do maintain assets that prime them for redevelopment: a sense of place from architectural and historic heritage, waterfront and riverfront access, a daytime workforce, and a mix of retail and service businesses.

Robertson successfully frames the common issues that smaller cities are battling to redevelop and regain relevance while also pointing out the assets that could help strengthen these areas. Oftentimes, research focuses on decline and redevelopment in larger cities, but many small-town downtowns have suffered from similar processes of decline. Smaller cities may not have the same access to resources as larger cities, so redevelopment in smaller places may have to rely on more innovative tactics. One example in which a survey proved to be successful is the Main Street Approach, a redevelopment strategy focusing on downtowns in smaller cities. The four principles of the Main Street Approach include the organization of downtown interests, design that enhances the visual qualities of the built environment, promotion and marketing, and economic restructuring and variation. Other successful improvement strategies include pedestrian improvements and historic preservation. It is important to understand small-city specific issues and assets as well as



strategies for revitalization to create successful redevelopment plans.

Over the last half century, Buffalo, New York has suffered from economic decline. This can be attributed to loss of jobs due to relocation of industry. In the last few years, however, Buffalo has experienced a resurgence in economic development and real estate. The main drivers behind this renaissance are the reinvestment in historic structures, community and grassroots engagement, and an influx of immigrants with strong work ethics. Many historic structures are ideal for entrepreneurial investment due to their modest size. These structures are also close enough together to create walkable neighborhoods. Many of these structures have been converted into loft apartments, attracting millennials and empty nesters.

Grassroots organizations such as PUSH Buffalo (People United for Sustainable Housing) and the Valley Community Association have focused on revitalizing neighborhoods such as the Lower West Side. The International Institute has been instrumental in providing jobs, housing, and English as a Second Language (ESL) services for immigrants. The School of Architecture and Planning at the State University of New York (SUNY) Buffalo has several key comprehensive plans. These include a downtown plan (Queen City Hub, 2003), a waterfront plan (Queen City Waterfront, 2007), and a comprehensive plan (Queen City in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century). Buffalo also engaged Urban Land Institute Advisory Panels for a few key initiatives for the reuse of several underutilized properties such as the former One NSBC Center and the former Millard Fillmore Gates Circle Hospital complex.

New Roc City, a shopping and entertainment complex located in downtown New Rochelle, New York, was built in 1999 on the site of a former enclosed shopping mall. This project, complete

with a bowling alley, movie theater, and miniature golf course, was envisioned as a catalyst that would revive a downtown area that was previously on the decline. As of 2007, New Roc City has been successful in bringing millions of people to Downtown. Now, officials are devising strategies to stimulate business even more. One idea is to have a department store such as Target or Kohl's. While some small business owners are concerned about their rents increasing because of Target or Kohl's in the area, the mayor asserts that these stores would generate foot traffic that would create a spillover into smaller stores. As a result, the increased revenue would offset the higher overhead expenses.

There are several related projects in New Rochelle such as the Trump Plaza, LeCount Square, and redevelopment along Echo Bay that will add new waterfront residences, retail, and a waterfront promenade. These projects are slated to generate over 2,000 new jobs. Meanwhile, city grants and low-interest loans are funding the refurbishment of many Art-Deco storefronts. An eclectic mix of new restaurants is adding to the vibrancy of Downtown. Ralph DiBart, the director of the New Rochelle Business Improvement District, emphasized that the coordination of these moving parts was necessary for the downtown to meet its potential.

Form-based codes is a form of zoning regulation that focuses on the physical form of a structure rather than a separation of uses. These codes are used to guide the principal development of an area to preserve or encourage a consistent physical appearance. Typically used in historic districts or destination blocks, form-based codes are not widely used due to the larger economy required to support them. However, when form-based codes are implemented, the results tend to be very good for residents and the community that wish to preserve the historic character of an area. Form-based codes lend many benefits to planners due to

the easier administrative approval of development applications and the extensive community involvement that goes into their creation. These codes are designed to ensure uniformity amongst different parcels so that a cohesive character is created, such as in a downtown or central core setting.

In addition to uniform constraints imposed on an area, form-based codes are designed to create a distinct urban form to counter sprawling development. Form-based code development patterns create a more compact zone for development to spread into with a consistent style. A uniform development style enables the creation of multiple blocks of a downtown or historic areas with a unique character. However, this type of development code may be more expensive than others, based upon the stipulations and restrictions imposed to meet the code, as well as developers' unwillingness to alter designs. While form-based codes may be effective, the name does not always appropriately convey the meaning and decisions behind the codes themselves.

These reports demonstrate that some tactics can be employed to mitigate the need for many downtowns to reinvigorate themselves and recover from economic decline. Vibrancy is important because it helps define an area, attract people, provide cultural and recreational opportunities, and increase economic benefit. Downtowns should have character and be pleasant places to visit, as well as have sufficient retail establishments and provide jobs. Downtowns also may preserve their appearance through reinvestment in historic structures and the use of form-based codes. Community and grassroots organizations as well as general public participation can help define and promote downtown improvements.

## **Mixed-use and Walkable Communities**

In this section on mixed-use and walkable communities, reports will detail development that includes a range of uses in one area

and encourages walkability. In the first report, Herstik (2016) discusses a mixed-use development plan that also incorporated the aforementioned concept of tactical urbanism. Wasik (2016) examines walkability and access to nearby services, with a focus on seniors. Chaudhury et al. (2016) examine walkable neighborhoods' benefits to older populations. Buffel et al. (2012) talks about mixed-use development, access to public transit, and the availability of affordable housing, especially as they relate to aging populations. Sheriden (2017) examines master planned communities and millennials' desires for sustainable, mixed-use, walkable communities. These papers will show the benefits of mixed-use, walkable development, including to multiple age groups.

Herstik discusses Makers Quarter, a project in the East Village neighborhood of San Diego that aims to convert six blocks of mixed-use development into office space, retail space, residential units, and public open space within the next decade. The Makers Quarter Project team, residents, and City Hall want this redevelopment to provide high-quality employment opportunities, make the neighborhood a technology center, and create attractive residential opportunities and open space. The team employed community outreach and events which determined that residents were seeking a stronger identity and more variety in retail and other non-residential spaces than the current boutiques and restaurants. The team then used tactical urbanism, or relatively cheap temporary changes and/or installations, in order to allow the community to try out projects – a method that will be used for several years in order to test ideas and provide an accurate ongoing vision for the neighborhood while learning from the less successful attempts. The Quartyard is a temporary beer garden made from a shipping container, event space, and dog park that was designed and built by the student organization Rad Lab and which replaced a vacant

lot within the property set for the Makers Quarter project. Although intended to be temporary, some locals are petitioning to save the beer garden and/or relocate it, rather than have it transformed as part of this project.

Seeking public participation is crucial for redevelopment. Outreach and events provide initial insight, while tactical urbanism is a more concrete way to test out ideas in real-world conditions. The project's goals appear to be in line with what residents and City Hall want, and the Makers Quarter Project team's use of continued tactical urbanism and public engagement will keep them updated on any changing opinions or redevelopment ideas that simply do not work. It would have been helpful if the article reported more on residents' specific opinions or any negative feedback or disagreement with the project for more perspective.

With an aging population, the United States must rethink its senior mobility. Many seniors struggle with "aging in place," or the "ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level" (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013), and a new trend wants to stop this often lonely process. "Aging in community" is a more encompassing idea, one where people make more than just their house age-friendly. New developments are starting to focus on walkability and access to services for residents. Walkability is a metric that ranks how easy it is for pedestrians to travel within the city. A walkable city allows for seniors to stay in their community longer, where seniors often have social and family support systems established. In walkable neighborhoods, there is less reliance on the automobile, which can allow seniors who have lost the ability to drive to continue to function. It is also important to keep that

population healthy so they can continue to function without the need for cost prohibitive, intensive social services.

Walkability has become a trendy selling point, appealing to many across varying demographics. A walkable city can reduce some of the problems that aging populations face, including promoting a healthier lifestyle and warding off dementia and other diseases. Chicopee has an aging population, with 23% of the City's population over age 60 (US Census, 2010) and will continue to rise to 28% of the City's population by 2022 according Massachusetts Councils on Aging and the Donahue Institute at UMass-Boston (Healthy Places Terminology, 2013).

Neighborhoods with residential developments that allow for utilitarian exercise (exercise received from errands or commuting) are more successful in getting older populations physically active. A neighborhood where older residents can walk and have access to mobility services encourages physical activity. Chaudhury, Campo, Michael, and Mahmood (2016) conducted interviews on 434 adults over age 60 across eight neighborhoods, four in Oregon and four in British Columbia, "...to examine the relation between neighborhood physical and social environmental factors, older adults' perceptions of these factors, and physical activity levels among older adults." Most of these respondents reported engaging in "...physical activity at home (87.1%) or in very close proximity to home (e.g., within one to three blocks) (76.5%)" (p. 109). An interesting finding from the research was that the respondents who were motivated by features of the physical environmental were less likely to meet the weekly exercise goals compared to other respondents. In essence, the research finds that access to parks does not make older populations more active, rather the walkability of a neighborhood is more of an incentive to getting a more active elder-population.

Ray Ash Park is one of Aldenville's assets. However, the mere presence of the park does not guarantee use by all residents. Diversifying programming at the park may help attract a larger diversity in users, but the creation of parks and programming will not guarantee an active population. Chaudhury et al. found that walkability was the largest motivator of physical activity in populations over 60, and as residents ages 55+ make up 28.9% of Chicopee's population, their needs should be considered. Keeping residents healthy should be of concern to the City. Chicopee does not have a hospital or the medical infrastructure of Holyoke or Springfield. Keeping older residents healthy and allowing them to age in place can put less strain on emergency services, as they will be in better general health.

Aging populations face many challenges resulting from urbanization and often do not have the opportunity to express their views relating to government, management, and redevelopment of the cities in which they live. Buffel, Phillipson, and Scharf 2012 are critical of the World Health Organization checklist approach of age-friendly features, which consisted of 88 "core age-friendly features" that ranged from public transit to affordable housing, which has been devised to provide a universal standard. Instead Buffel et al. believe that question should be rephrased from a "what" question to a "how" question in terms of age-friendly cities. Buffel et al. found that mixed-use development was beneficial for aging populations, helping with dementia, and providing outlets for social and cultural participation among older populations. However, urban hazards affect the senior population more acutely, whether that be traffic congestion making for difficult pedestrian travel or lack of public toilets. Buffel et al. state that in order to create an age-friendly city there must be a switch from developing for the elderly to developing with or by the elderly.

Chicopee has an aging demographic; 28.9% of the population is over 55 (US Census, 2010) and it is important that they are included in the planning process. Creating a strong bond with older populations may help planners identifying strengths in the neighborhood as older populations are more likely to see assets in their neighborhood. An interesting takeaway from 7 Peaks' visit to RiverMills Senior Center is that the summer concerts on the Aldenville Commons were very well received by the elderly population. There was a desire for the concert series to start earlier in the summer and go later into the fall. The creation of programming at the Aldenville Commons, whether it be more concerts or a farmers' market, will allow nearby residents to get out, walk, and recreate.

Millennials are changing residential and mixed-use development. This generation that is in their early twenties to mid-thirties are soon entering or have recently entered the housing and land-use market, and they are more interested in "affordability, accessibility, green space, recreation, access to healthy food, and entertainment," as stated by Lisa Bate of B+H Architects in Toronto. U.S. society (not only millennials) is moving away from homeowners wanting large lots and urban sprawl and moving instead toward a city feel within a suburban setting that is sustainable, walkable, and mixed-use. However, current land-use practice more commonly zones separate uses and there are many areas that lack green space and transit options. This trend is important because when considering a master planned community (MPC), planners should think and plan a decade or more into the future to ensure success. Efforts toward an MPC must also be inclusive, engage the public, and build a sense of community.

Community master plans should always be written with the future in mind. If trends are moving toward mixed-use development

and multimodal transit, those concepts should be included. These millennial preferences have the added benefit of positive outcomes for all age groups including seniors who may have mobility issues and need alternate forms of transit and retail as well as other services within walking distance. However, master plans should not be limited to overall trends. They should also incorporate a public engagement process to determine what residents think about the current state of their city and its neighborhoods, and identify goals and how to achieve them, which may or may not include some of these ideas.

In summary, this research demonstrates the benefits of mixed-use and walkable communities. Having office space, retail establishments, social services, residences, and public open space can provide neighborhoods with everything they need in a small area. Because of this, these areas can also be accessed by walking and biking, which encourage physical activity and reduces traffic from personal automobiles. These types of communities are what millennials are looking for, and are also extremely beneficial for seniors and enable them to age in place. Chicopee has a sizable population over age 55, so planning for the aging is key. Mixed-use development also reduces sprawl.

## Transportation

In this section on automobile transportation, issues and improvements regarding personal vehicle travel will be discussed. In the first report, Kiger (2017) examines ways to mitigate traffic congestion. Ewing et al. (2017) examines traffic calming initiatives and including pedestrian and bicycle interests in planning. Braunstein (2017) discusses planning for the future of driverless cars. Handy and Clifton (2001) examine the accessibility of multimodal transit. Collectively, these reports will show how considerations for multiple forms of transportation can benefit a community.

Vehicle congestion has become increasingly worse due to increased development and population creating more density, and Kiger investigates ways to combat this. In many places, especially large cities, traffic is now affecting destination accessibility due to increasing length of time spent in a vehicle to travel. Mixed-use development, in which businesses and other services are close to residential areas, encourages other modes of transit and reduces the length people have to travel, which can help alleviate traffic problems. Increasing public transit availability is another solution to reducing the number of vehicles on the road. Technology can also be used to ease traffic issues, such as smart traffic signals equipped with artificial intelligence to avoid heavier traffic through magnetic sensors at intersections and analyzing how many vehicles are approaching and from what direction to alter the light patterns and accommodate real-time traffic flow.

Modern planning practices are moving toward mixed-use development, multimodal transit, and using new technology to improve travel. People in general, especially the generation that is now entering the housing market, are beginning to prefer multimodal transit availability and mixed-use development over separated land-use zones when it comes to business, government, and retail options (Sheriden, 2017). Planners must always plan for the future, so taking these trends into account can help cities prepare for those who will be in the market for decades to come as well as increase alternative modes of transit to discourage personal vehicle traffic. The smart traffic lights have also been shown to be effective, but it is still relatively early in their development and they may not be readily available or affordable to all towns.

Since the 1990s, traffic calming has expanded beyond a few scattered programs with limited scope to a mainstream activity of

transportation engineers and planners. However, there is a limited understanding of what – in terms of a planning process – is most successful when traffic calming is a goal. In 1997, Ewing, Hofstram, and Lane generated a baseline traffic study of 20 cities across the United States adopting traffic calming measures. Ten years later, the authors revisited these cities to see what insights about traffic calming may be gained, and whether there were replicable lessons for other cities and regions who are attempting to calm traffic on busy roads and corridors.

As a result of Ewing, Hofstram, and Lane's analysis, six lessons are provided for planners. First, broaden goals to include walkability as well as reducing speeding and cut-through traffic. Second, broaden representation in plan development to include bike and pedestrian interests. Third, calm higher order streets, in addition to minor collectors and residential streets. Fourth, use devices like raised crosswalks and curb extensions to support pedestrian and cyclist use. Fifth, count the numbers of pedestrians and bicyclists in order to have a baseline and track progress. Lastly, connect street designs with programming and initiatives.

To apply these lessons, Ewing, Hofstram, and Lane recommend a three-pronged approach. The first is to have a few key people on city staff who can be trained in traffic calming programs and become experts in this area. The staff members should be prepared with data to present to local decision-makers (before-and-after studies) and promote the benefits of traffic calming (including pedestrian safety and neighborhood preservation). Finally, cut-through traffic seems to be a much bigger motivator for traffic calming initiatives compared to a reduction in autos speeding.

Braunstein examines how autonomous vehicles might necessitate substantial changes in cities and neighborhoods to alter their traffic patterns. In order to benefit from the introduction of autonomous vehicles, planning departments and cities should begin considering the introduction of these vehicles. These vehicles will benefit the boomer and millennial generation the most, as these two generations share similar characteristics when it comes to automobile usage, such as low car ownership and shared ride services. One of the many benefits of autonomous vehicles will be reductions in traffic congestion, as well as the freeing up of millions of parking spaces currently used by everyday drivers. These changes and others will drastically alter how cities and retail spaces function, as they will become more accessible and free flowing than in their present condition.

One of the factors dictating the implementation of autonomous vehicles will be the regulatory rules constructed on a national and local level. Braunstein briefly reviews a potential timeframe where these vehicles become ubiquitous by 2029. To achieve that timescale, car manufacturers are already investing and changing their focuses to capitalize on that future economy. The timeframe discussed by Braunstein and the potential benefits autonomous vehicles will bring cities should be included any future study that results from 7 Peaks' project, as the inclusion of these factors will make the plan more robust and resilient.

Planners strive to evaluate neighborhood accessibility using multiple modes of transportation. However, there is a lack of practical planning tools available to improve transportation accessibility. Accessibility is defined herein as “the ease of reaching needed or desired activities and thus reflects characteristics of both the land-use system (where activities are located) and the transportation system (how the locations of activities are linked)” (p. 68). Handy and Clifton identify a gap

between the data needed to identify features that make a neighborhood accessible and the availability of such data. They use two research strategies to assess features related to accessibility: a city-wide collection of GIS data as well as a detailed database that focuses on the neighborhood scale. The GIS data can be enhanced by coupling quantitative data (such as distribution of public facilities such as parks) with the qualitative data on these facilities. The neighborhood-scale mapping exercise involves collaboration between residents and local stakeholders.

Handy and Clifton highlight some of the factors that influence neighborhood residents' choice of transit mode such as distance, in-vehicle time, out-of-vehicle time, weather, and topography. For example, residents may not want to take the bus if they must wait for a long period of time. Furthermore, they might choose not to walk or ride their bike if their destination is too far away or if there are too many hills. Adverse weather such as rain or snow is likely to deter walking and bicycling. The authors created a table that displays whether each factor applies to each mode of transportation (walking, bicycling, driving, public transit). For example, distance is a determinant that indicates whether a person is willing to walk to his destination. Handy and Clifton suggest that residents participate in mapping out and creating neighborhood-specific plans.

In summary, these reports demonstrate several aspects of transportation. Traffic can be mitigated in several ways, including smart traffic lights, having mixed-use development, and the availability of other forms of transit (bicycling, walking, and public transit). Cities should plan for multimodal transit in order to provide options for residents and traffic calming for safety. The public's decision to use one type of transit over another can be influenced by distance, in-vehicle time, weather, traffic, and the availability of infrastructure for each type of transit.

Driverless vehicles are a reality of the future, and cities should keep this in mind during their planning efforts.

## Recreation

In this section, recreation, parks, trails, and farmers' markets will be discussed. In the first report, Farmer et al. (2011) examine farmers' markets as sustainable recreation. Loukaitou-Sideris et al. (2016) study making parks more inclusive for seniors yet also accessible to all generations. Pyati (2017) discuss trail-oriented development. Collectively, these reports will reveal that recreation is an important part of a community.

Farmers' markets provide a recreational experience as well as the other associated benefits: access to fresh and healthy food, positive economic benefits, and a community gathering space. In this sense, farmers' markets are sustainable, adhering to the three pillars of sustainability – economic, environmental, and social – and should be pursued in urban development. Farmer, Chancellor, Gooding, Shubowitz, and Bryant (2011) examine “what factors influence consumer participation [and] what are the benefits to [consumer] participation in farmers' markets” (p. 14) through a qualitative approach that interviewed 25 consumers, 17 farmers' market users, and 8 non-farmers' market users in Indiana. Informal phone interviews were conducted, recorded, and coded. The coding process revealed five themes, each mentioned at varying frequencies (*f*): Recreation (*f*=44), Food (*f*=38), Supporting Local Farmers and Economies (*f*=17), Constraints (*f*=12), and Consumer-Farmer Relationships (*f*=7). Farmers' markets were viewed as a recreational event, both social (talking to friends) and general (children playing, dancing) recreation were highlighted. Interviewees mentioned the recreational aspects of the farmers' market at a higher frequency than food, which is a surprising result, but shows that farmers'

markets can be an important tool in helping build community relations.

The Aldenville Commons would be the perfect setting for a farmers' market. A farmers' market could provide programming on the Commons as well as more healthy food options for the neighborhood. McKinstry Farm, located in Aldenville, could become an anchor vendor for any farmers' market that would take place in neighborhood. Residents and visitors could benefit from the fostering of community, as shoppers at farmers' markets often directly interact with the farmer who grew the product. If held regularly, a farmers' market could attract consistent and dedicated customers, who in turn may patronize other businesses around the Aldenville Commons, such as Lucky Strike or Shop Smart Convenience.

Cities are becoming more populated. In the case of the United States, these increases in population usually come with an increase in senior populations. This senior population is less likely to visit urban parks and, in turn, are the most inactive population group in the country. Loukaitou-Sideris, Levy-Storms, Chen, and Brozen identified preferences on urban parks among low-income, urban senior populations in Los Angeles. The research also identified challenges and potential problems of access and use of neighborhood parks. It was found that low-income seniors have less access overall in the City. Safety and security were among the most important aspects in determining whether this population would visit a park.

Loukaitou-Sideris et al. gave four recommendations for planners. First, develop park programming that is responsive to seniors' needs. This involves contextualizing the needs and desires of the neighborhood, as each senior population is diverse. Concerts and farmers' markets may work for some, but not others. Second, there should be opportunities for intergenerational use, meaning

that seniors should be able to use a portion of the park. Planners should consider designating certain areas within the park that seniors can call their own, areas away from noise and commotion associated with organized sports and children. Third, issues of safety must be addressed through careful design policy, policing, and wayfinding strategies. Seniors need to not only feel safe from human interactions, but also safe from environmental factors such as uneven or poorly maintained sidewalks. Lastly, planners should create atypical activities and facilities for seniors, such as garden plots or low-impact exercise machines.

Parks have numerous reported benefits for aging populations. Parks offer physical and mental benefits while adding to the overall quality of life independent of other variables such as age, sex, and marital status. Despite benefits, seniors might be not attracted to parks for lack of amenities and cleanliness or distance from home. Aldenville has three parks, Ray Ash Memorial Park (11.4 acres), Aldenville Commons (1 acre), and Mass Pike Overpass Park (0.30 acres). Only Ray Ash Park sees heavy use, as it is the most recently updated and largest of the three parks, offering a pool, skate park, basketball court, playground, bathhouse, and playing fields. These amenities are geared to younger, more physically active demographics.

Trail-oriented development is becoming increasingly popular, and real estate developers are looking to cater to this new demographic that prefers pedestrian/cyclist friendly cities that are not reliant on the automobile. Trail-oriented development leverages investment in pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to offer alternative lifestyle and transit options, while promoting human and ecological health. Cycling commuting rates have jumped 62% from 2000 to 2014, according the U.S. Census Bureau, with much of the infrastructure funding coming from the federal, state, and local level. Private development is starting to



fill in gaps and further improve pedestrian infrastructure as it has become a smart investment.

Several common themes have developed through examining trail-orientated development projects. First, trails add value to development. Second, there is a market for bicycle inclusion facilities for both commercial and residential building. Third, small investments in bicycle infrastructure can lead to high returns. Fourth, mutually beneficial relationship exists between the public and private sectors. Lastly, active transit infrastructure can catalyze real estate development. The rise in property values has caught the attention of developers. Properties located within a block of a recent trail project in Indianapolis have seen values rise 148% since the trails' opening in 2008. In Portland, Oregon, the trail development has continued to attract a talented and highly-educated workforce.

The developers of Hassalo on Eighth, a mixed development in the Lloyd Eco-District (an environmentally conscious neighborhood that has made pledges to reduce waste, water, and energy consumptions) have found that transportation is the single most important reason people give for renting units. Although Chicopee is much smaller than Indianapolis and Portland, it can still benefit from the increased property value associated with trails. Beyond property values, trails promote alternative forms of pedestrian-based transit which help reduce congestion and traffic, while increasing physical exercise and health through recreational benefits. Trail-oriented development can also attract a young and talented workforce that provides a strong tax base.

In summary, the above reports show that there are different types of recreation and they all can have several positive benefits for a community. Farmers' markets are sustainable and provide access to healthy food, economic benefits, and a social gathering. Parks offer great recreation opportunities, but are often not catered

toward including seniors. Addressing the common concerns of safety, security, and lack of age-appropriate programming can encourage older populations to utilize parks and increase physical and mental health, while still having them benefit all generations. Trail-oriented development encourages walking and biking; has notable economic benefits; and can attract new, younger, working populations.

## Overall Conclusions & Recommendations

Short-term interventions could be used in Chicopee to provide a relatively inexpensive way for the Client to test out ideas for the public and inform long-term plans. The Client should consider parklets within Aldenville along Grattan Street where there are relatively popular businesses and plenty of on-street parking space, and in other parts of the City as they move forward with public engagement in other neighborhoods. The Client should also consider temporary bike lanes so that residents can experience them and provide feedback before the City decides to make them permanent. The City already has considerable experience organizing public events, such as the Downtown GetDown organized by the Planning Department, and these events could be leverages to raise public awareness about planning-specific issues. Other recommendations include events such as farmers' markets, temporary art installations, and using a vacant building for a winter market space for food and goods, which could all occur on or near the Commons in Aldenville.

With regard to downtown revitalization, there are several recommendations for the Client. The Commons area in Aldenville would benefit from more businesses and amenities such as farmers' markets and more sit-down restaurants and cafes, especially along Grattan Street and particularly within the currently vacant storefronts that detract from the neighborhood's appearance. Social interaction, innovation, and things to do could

be increased through programming events and activities to attract people to the area. The Client should also consider zoning the area as mixed-use given its spotty mix of residential and business, and/or employing form-based codes during redevelopment to maintain character such as the Lucky Strike building appearance. Using a bottom-up approach by involving grassroots organizations and the public could also assist with these efforts.

With regard to mixed-use and walkable spaces, the Client should consider rezoning the area around the Aldenville Commons to mixed-use, as previously mentioned. Vacant spaces should be filled with other types of businesses such as sit-down restaurants and farmers' markets. The Client should also consider increasing social services in the area, as it currently lacks a medical facility or food pantry. In order to increase walkability, the Client should install sidewalks along McKinstry Avenue, a flashing yellow light at an intersection on McKinstry, as well as crosswalks on Grattan Street and McKinstry. These changes can not only benefit those already living there (including the aging population), but also attract new residents and visitors which could benefit the local economy.

7 Peaks offers the Client several recommendations regarding transportation. Aldenville has notable traffic issues. As previously mentioned, the addition of better pedestrian infrastructure will encourage that type of transit, but the Client should also put in bike lanes along McKinstry Avenue and Grattan Street. They should work with the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority to increase bus service in the neighborhood. Additionally, the Client should consider including language and guidelines to accommodate, design, and establish a precedent for autonomous vehicles in its plans to prepare Chicopee and Aldenville for the future.

The Client should increase the availability of recreation for Aldenville locals, and to other neighborhoods as it moves forward in its planning process. The neighborhood of Aldenville is a food desert, and providing a farmers' market brings in healthy food options, provides a social and recreational experience, and could also be a teaching experience by highlighting Aldenville's agricultural past and making residents more aware of local history. The Client should reevaluate Ray Ash Memorial Park and Commons to be more inclusive of older populations by increasing safety through policing, holding concerts and/or farmers' markets, and having a community garden. 7 Peaks also recommends two trail networks, one from the destinations of Ray Ash Park to McKinstry Farm, and the other connecting the neighborhoods of Westover and Willimansett.

# Land-Use Sketch Overview

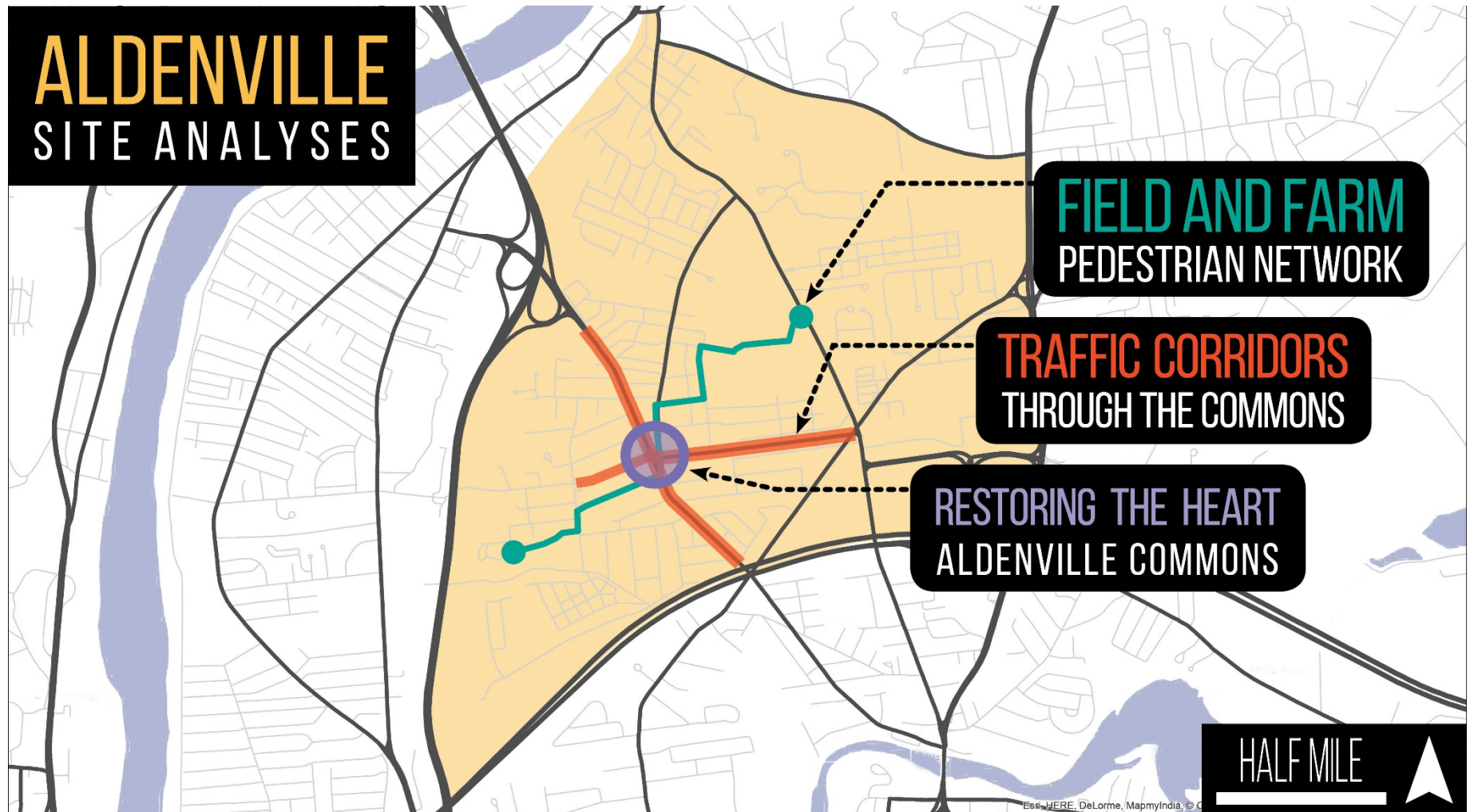


Figure 108: The locations of the 3 land-use sketches 7 Peaks developed

This map shows the locations that 7 Peaks chose to conduct their land-use sketches. Highlighted within the purple circle is the Aldenville Commons. The corridors intersecting the Aldenville Commons, Grattan Street and McKinstry Avenue, are bolded in orange. Finally, the pedestrian network that 7 Peaks proposes is represented by the teal line on the map.

## Introduction

The Aldenville Commons was identified by residents as being key to the once and future vibrancy of Aldenville, and is central to these land-use recommendations. First, to restore the “Heart” of Aldenville, 7 Peaks Planning recommends zoning and programmatic changes to the Commons and surrounding area. Second, street improvements are required to increase neighborhood safety and accessibility, with a focus on McKinstry Ave. Finally, a proposed Field and Farm pedestrian path connects several of Aldenville’s greatest assets to allow safe, walkable, paths for Aldenville residents. Together, these three mitigations work together to help connect and promote Aldenville as a destination in the City, and revitalize “The Heart of Chicopee.”

## Restoring the Heart: Aldenville Commons

The Aldenville Commons and the immediate surroundings are critical to the well-being of the whole neighborhood, containing both important assets and challenges. This area developed as a distinct downtown and was once the focal point of community life and economic activity. 7 Peaks proposes both short-term programmatic interventions and long-term policies to help reestablish the Aldenville Commons as a destination for residents.

Aldenville Commons was identified by survey respondents as a valuable asset that can be used for a variety of events such as concerts and farmers' markets. In addition, the Commons (as it is colloquially known) is an informal gathering place. In addition to the Commons itself, it would be beneficial to bring more business to the Grattan Street Corridor.

## Existing Conditions

Aldenville Commons is the historic heart of the neighborhood, once acting as a village downtown with a school, movie theater, market, pharmacy, and other amenities. Today, it functions more as a hub for pass-through auto travel than a focal point for economic activity or social life. The park at Aldenville Commons provides an oasis of greenery between the Grattan Streets and Dale Streets, but the space is underused. This section introduces policy and programmatic interventions that will help restore the Commons as a place where residents can gather for public events, cultural activities, and commercial exchange.

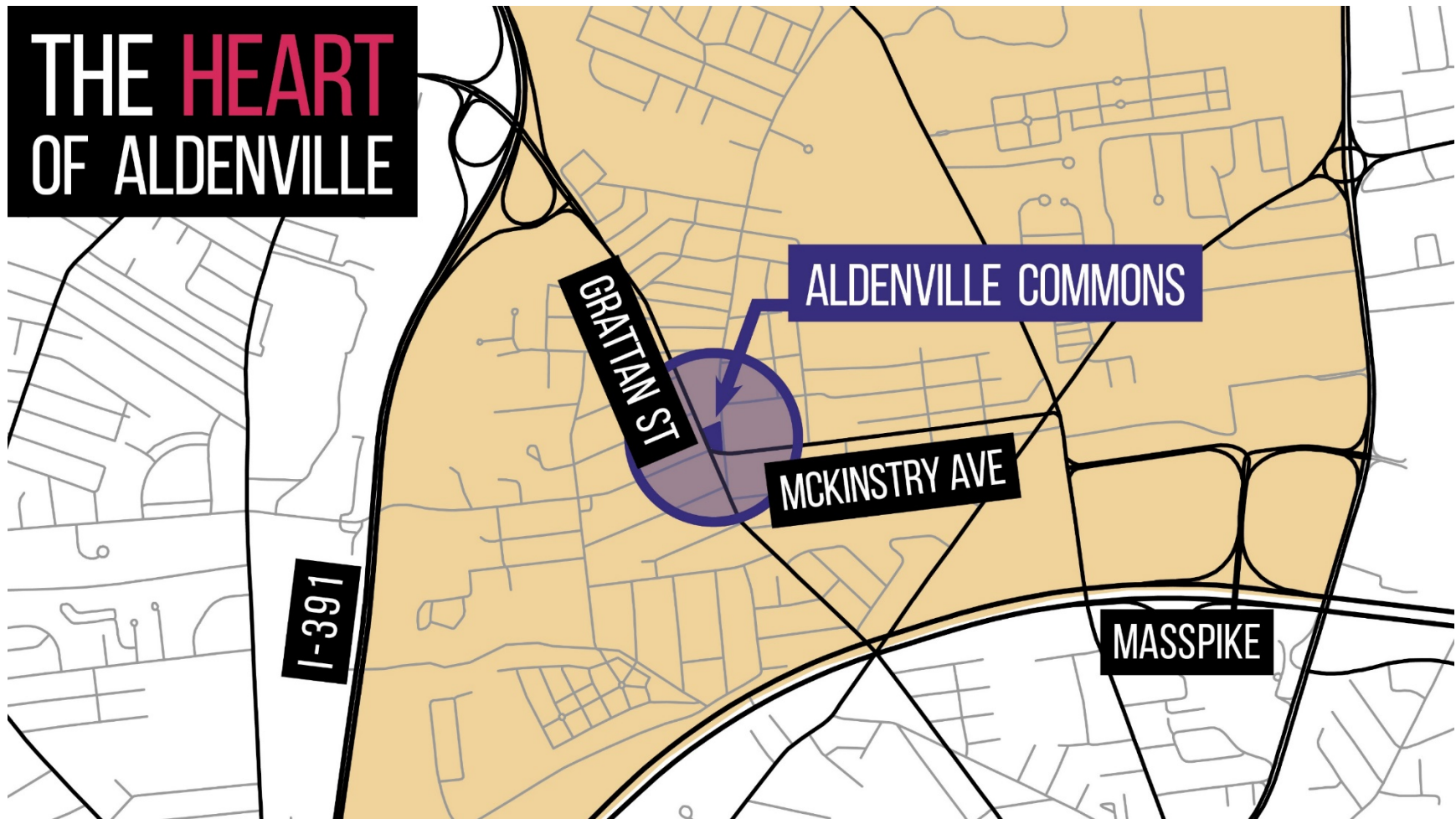


Figure 109: Location of Aldenville Commons - the Heart of Aldenville

The Aldenville Commons and surrounding area, circled in purple, are the primary focus of 7 Peaks' land-use interventions. All interventions suggested will connect back to the Aldenville Commons, enhancing the historic village center and restoring vitality to an area marked with vacant storefronts and non-conforming parcels that lack aesthetic continuity and quality.



Figure 110: Aldenville Commons and surrounding structures

The Aldenville Commons is a one-acre park located between Grattan, McKinstry, and Dale Streets in Aldenville center. The facilities were upgraded between the years of 2005-2007 and include a waterfall fountain and open-space pavilion, along with other facility and landscape improvements. The park currently hosts a summer concert series. 7 Peaks is proposing increased programming for the space, including a farmers' market and temporary art installations.



*Figure 111: The Aldenville Commons gazebo viewed from the north*

The Aldenville Commons Gazebo hosts the summer concert series and provides a communal space for gathering in Aldenville. The gazebo was renovated in 2007 and features lighting and electricity. The space can become very loud with noise-pollution related to traffic on adjacent streets.





*Figure 112: Waterfall fountain at Aldenville Commons*

A waterfall fountain is located in the north of the park. Benches surround the fountain and the water flows during late spring through early fall. The fountain was renovated in 2005.

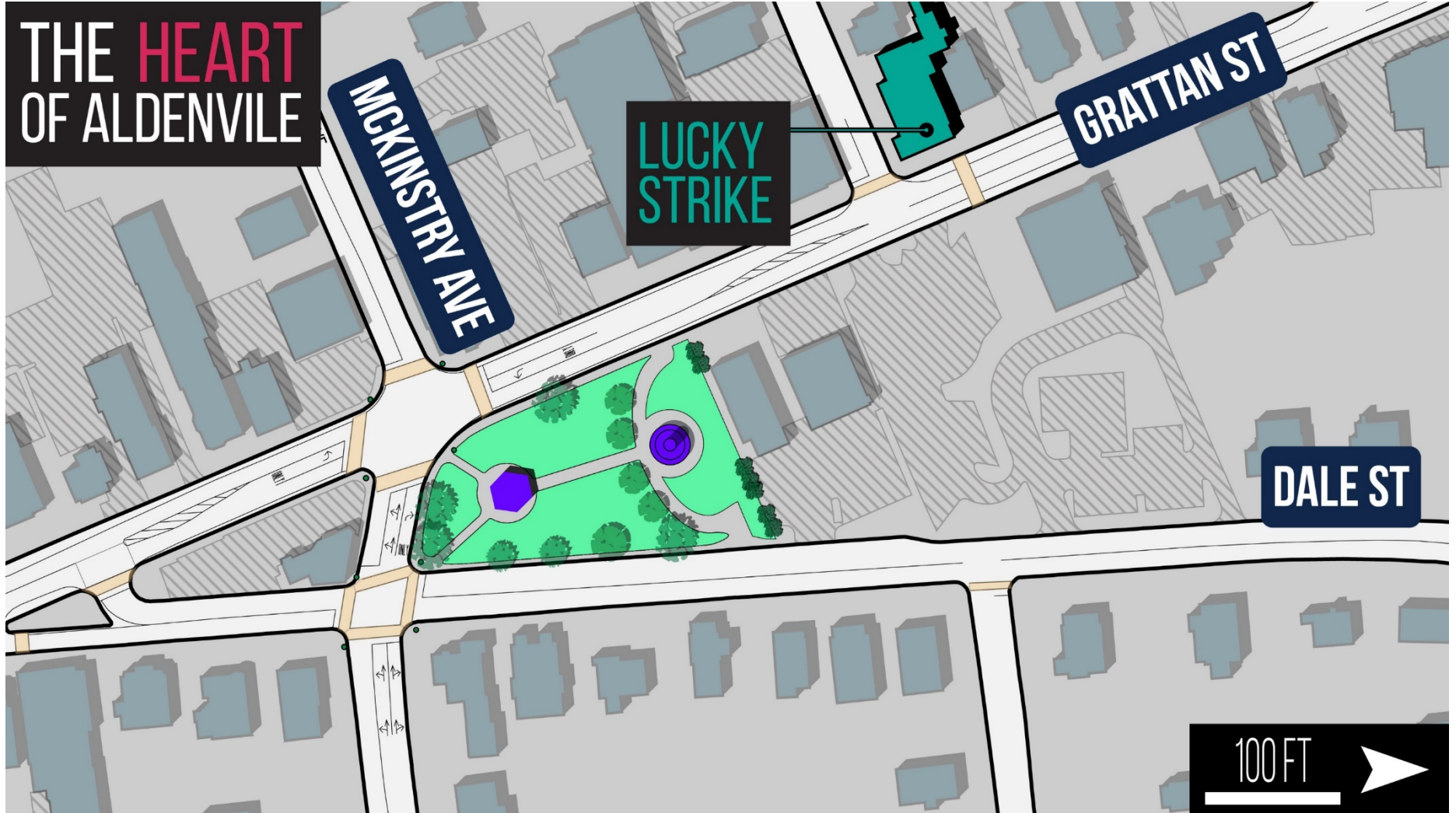


Figure 113: Aldenville Commons with Lucky Strike highlighted

Lucky Strike Restaurant is located at the corner of Grattan and Providence Street, diagonally across from the Aldenville Commons. A 50 car parking lot is located behind the restaurant on Providence Street.



*Figure 114: Lucky Strike Restaurant - a neighborhood institution*

Lucky Strike has been serving “Healthy Hearty Helpings in the Heart of Chicopee” since 1955. The restaurant is named for the former bowling alley located across Providence Street, where Lucky Strike was originally above. The restaurant is known for their ‘broasted’ chicken, a type of fried-chicken.

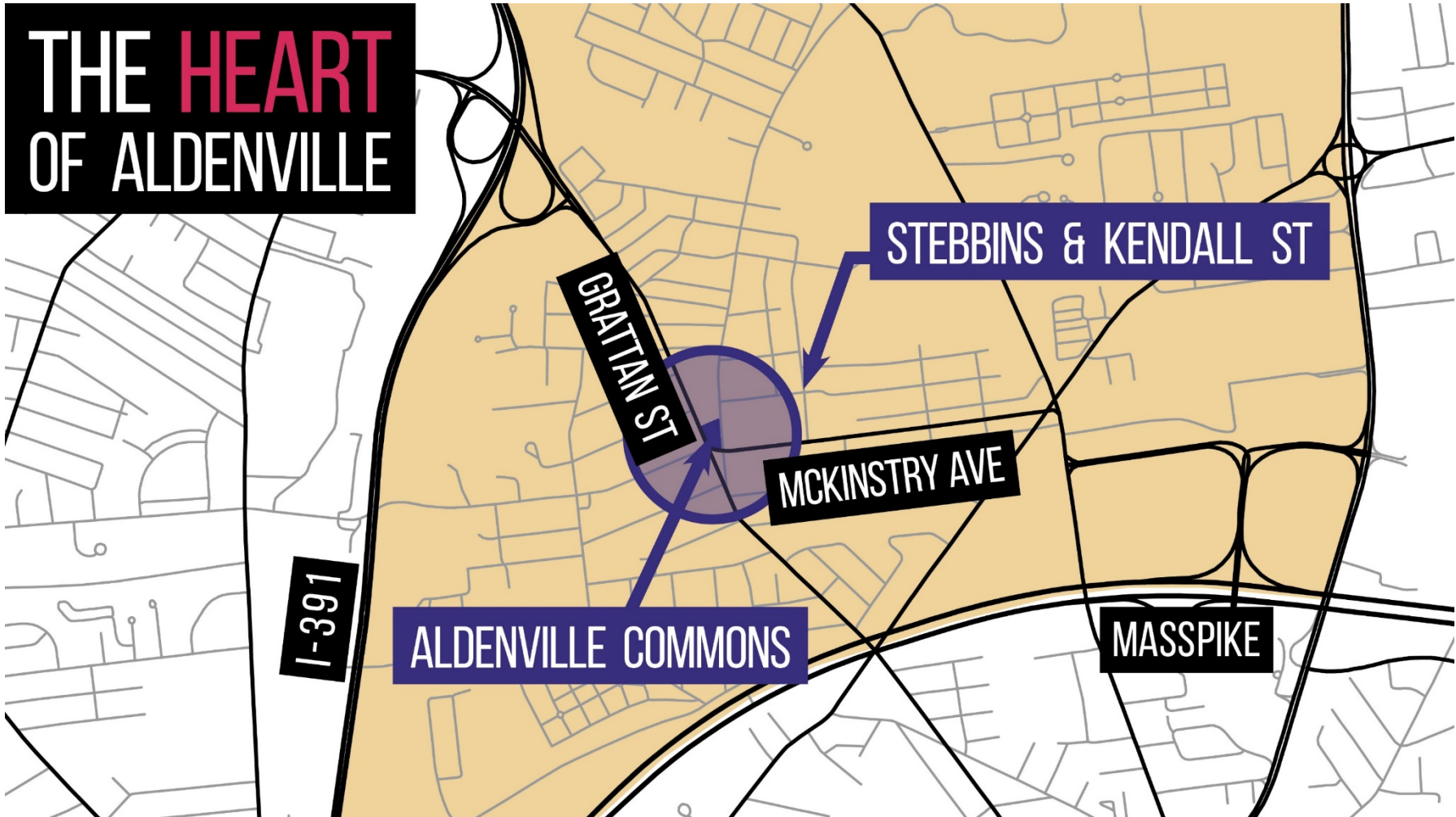


Figure 115: Residential streets like Stebbins and Kendal about the much busier McKinstry Avenue, Dale Street, and Grattan Street.

The major thoroughways in Aldenville are very busy and loud due to automotive traffic. Once off the major roadways like Grattan Street or McKinstry Ave, a much quieter residential feel is established. The downtown Aldenville area has a population of 4,000 people, with many living on the side streets that branch off larger roads.



*Figure 116: Stebbins Street - a quiet residential street with leafy tree canopy*

Stebbins Street is representative of many side streets in Aldenville. The road is a yield-road and has no sidewalks. The volume of traffic these streets experience allow for a quiet residential feel, all within one mile of the Aldenville Commons and surrounding area.

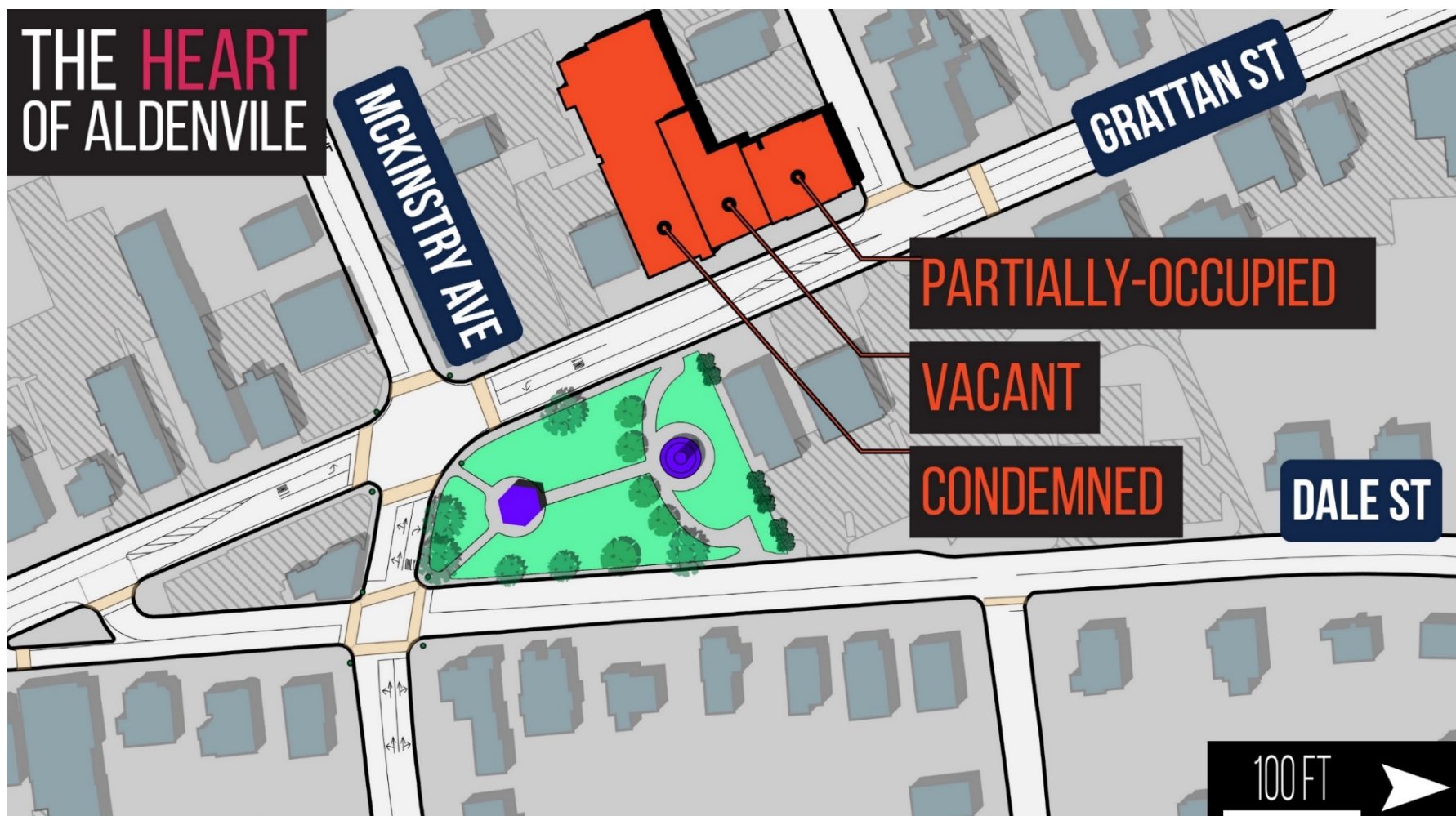


Figure 117: 685-699 Grattan Street - Buildings in disrepair

Across from the Aldenville Commons are three properties that are either vacant, condemned, or unattractive. 7 Peaks believes that the restoration and redevelopment of these parcels is imperative for Aldenville, because in their current state they are a detriment to the neighborhood. Opportunities exist for these locations to provide needed amenities for Aldenville. All three parcels are zoned commercial A.



*Figure 118: 685 Grattan Street - A former bowling alley*

The site of the former bowling alley that Lucky Strike takes its name from. Before the move to their current location in 1955, Lucky Strike was connected 685 Grattan. The building is condemned. The parcel is zoned Business A. The size of the building lends itself well the creation of a community or health center.



*Figure 119: 687 – 693 Grattan Street - Vacant building across from Aldenville Commons, next to TD's Pub and former bowling alley*

Three vacant store fronts with vacant residential units located above. The building needs serious improvements to make it aesthetically pleasing. The building, along with 685 Grattan Street and the Hammersly Building could provide the canvas that helps to restore Aldenville through redevelopment and repurposing to the neighborhoods former glory.





*Figure 120: The Hammersleys Building*

The Hammersly Building is a three story building located across from the Aldenville Commons. It features a modified first level, half of which is occupied by TD's Pub, a local sports bar. The first level beside TD's Pub is unoccupied. In the past, the building was home to Lathmore Druggist and the Aldenville Cash Market. The second and third floors each contain two residential units. It is zoned Business A.

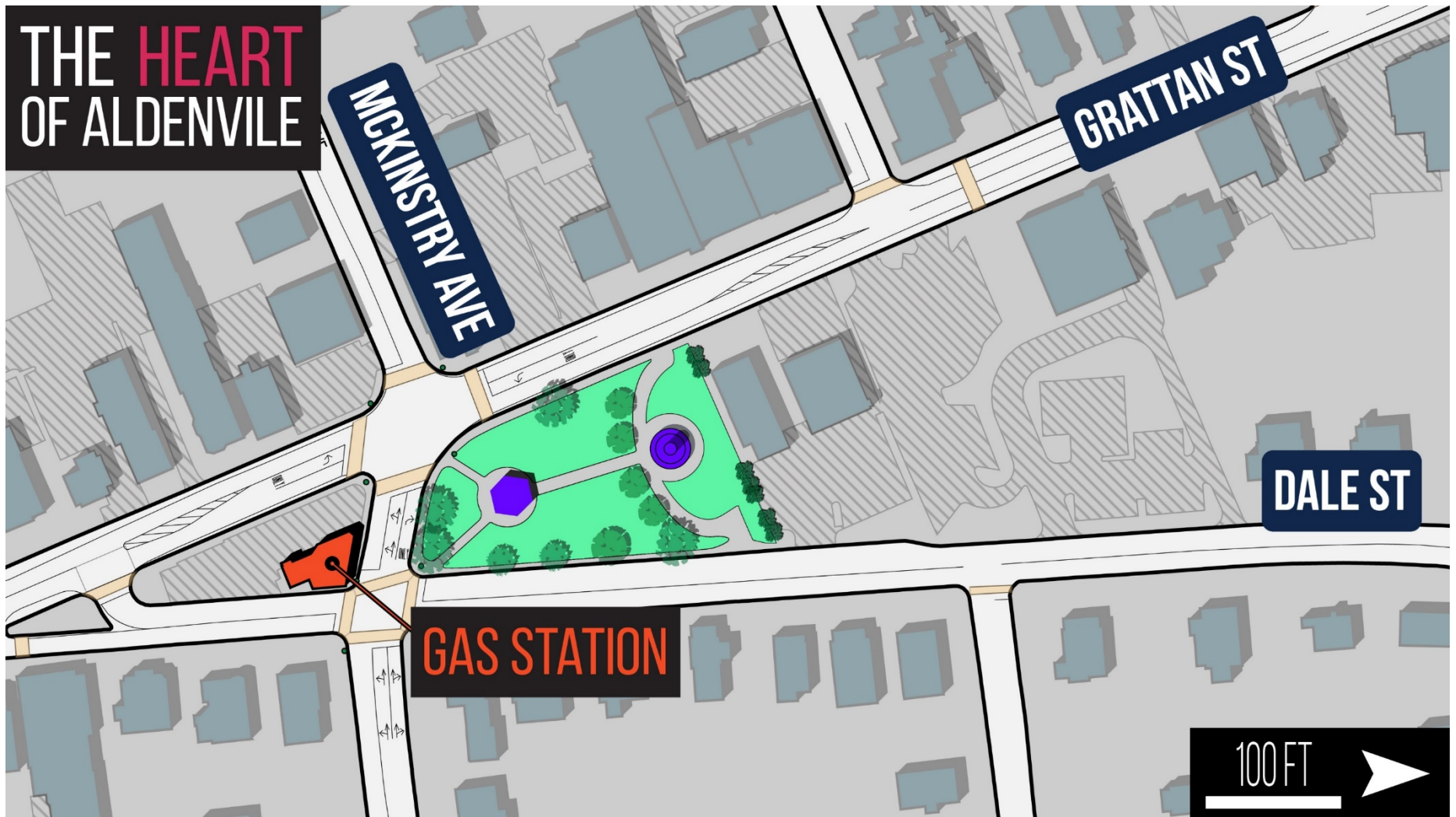


Figure 121: Gulf Station at 646 Grattan Street

A Gulf gas-station currently disrupts the line of sight to the Aldenville Commons to the north. The four pump gas-station contains a mini-mart and smoke shop. The location of the gas-station, between Grattan Street, Dale Street, and McKinstry Ave worsens already poor traffic conditions in the area.



*Figure 122: Looking north on Dale Street towards the Gulf gas station*

The tree canopy located behind the Gulf gas-station belongs to the Aldenville Commons. This oasis of green in downtown Aldenville is obstructed to drivers heading north on Grattan Street due to the Gulf gas station. The removal of this gas station would clear the line of sight to the Commons and increase the feeling of completeness between the two sections of the Aldenville Commons.



Figure 123: The Aldenville Commons with Alden Credit Union structures highlighted

The north side of the Commons is bounded by the Alden Credit Union. The credit union's two buildings are separated by a confusing parking lot with six curb cuts, making for a problematic traffic pattern. 7 Peaks is proposing the use of the Alden Credit Union parking lot to provide parking and vendor space for programmatic interventions such as a farmers' market.



*Figure 124: Alden Credit Union parking lot facing Grattan Street*

When the Alden Credit Union is closed, the parking lot becomes an underutilized asset for the neighborhood. As the credit union is not open on weekdays past five o'clock, Saturday after two o'clock, or at all Sunday, the parking lot could be utilized for community events occurring on the Aldenville Commons. The space could be used for additional parking or vendor space if the City were to hold a farmers' market on the Aldenville Commons.

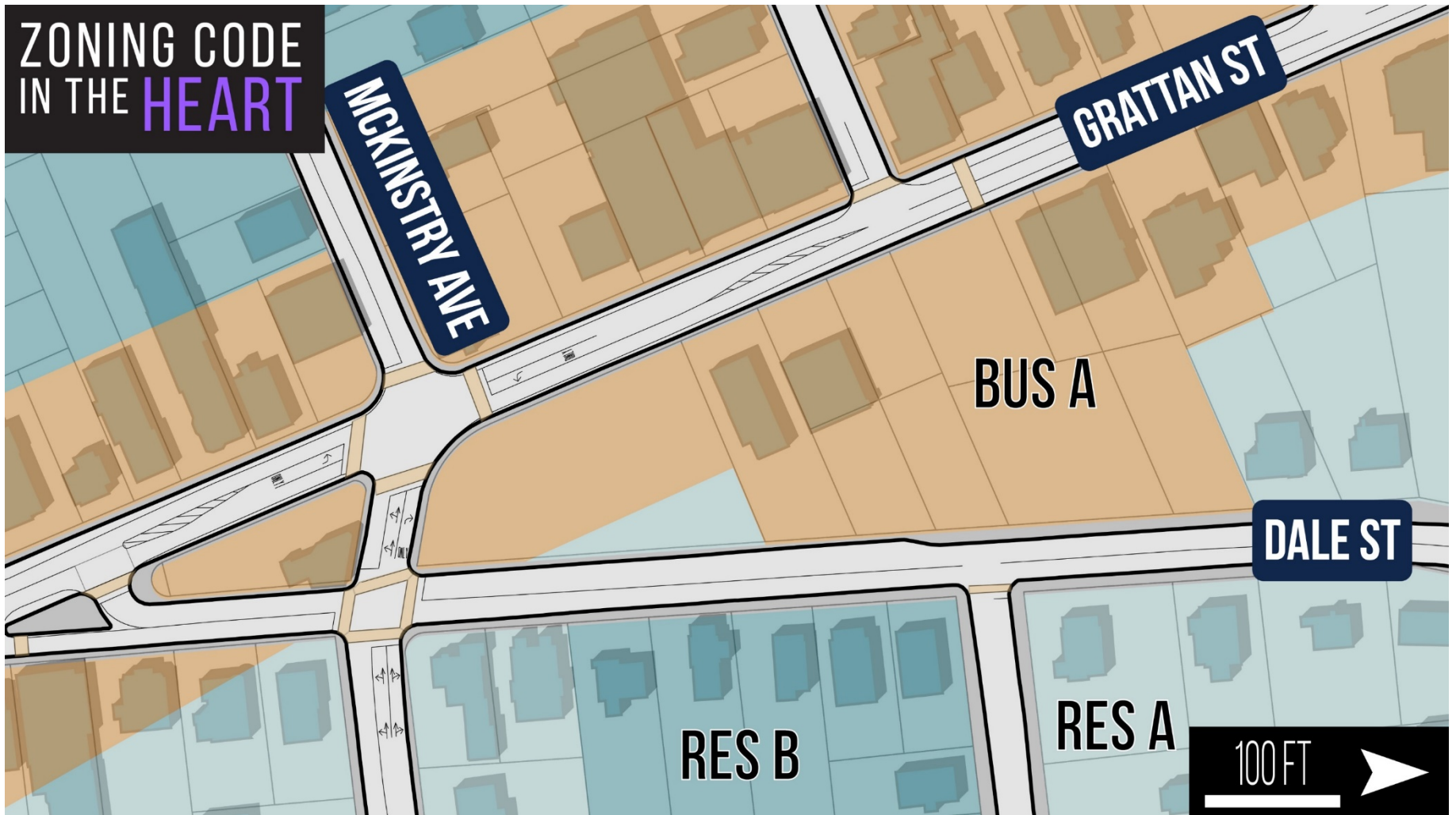


Figure 125: Current zoning around the Aldenville Commons

Zoning along Grattan Street is Business A. Some of the parcels on Grattan and Dale Streets are split between Business A and Residential B or A. The division of single parcels into multiple zoning districts is generally not recommended in land-use planning. This division of parcels can create problems for property owners and the City.

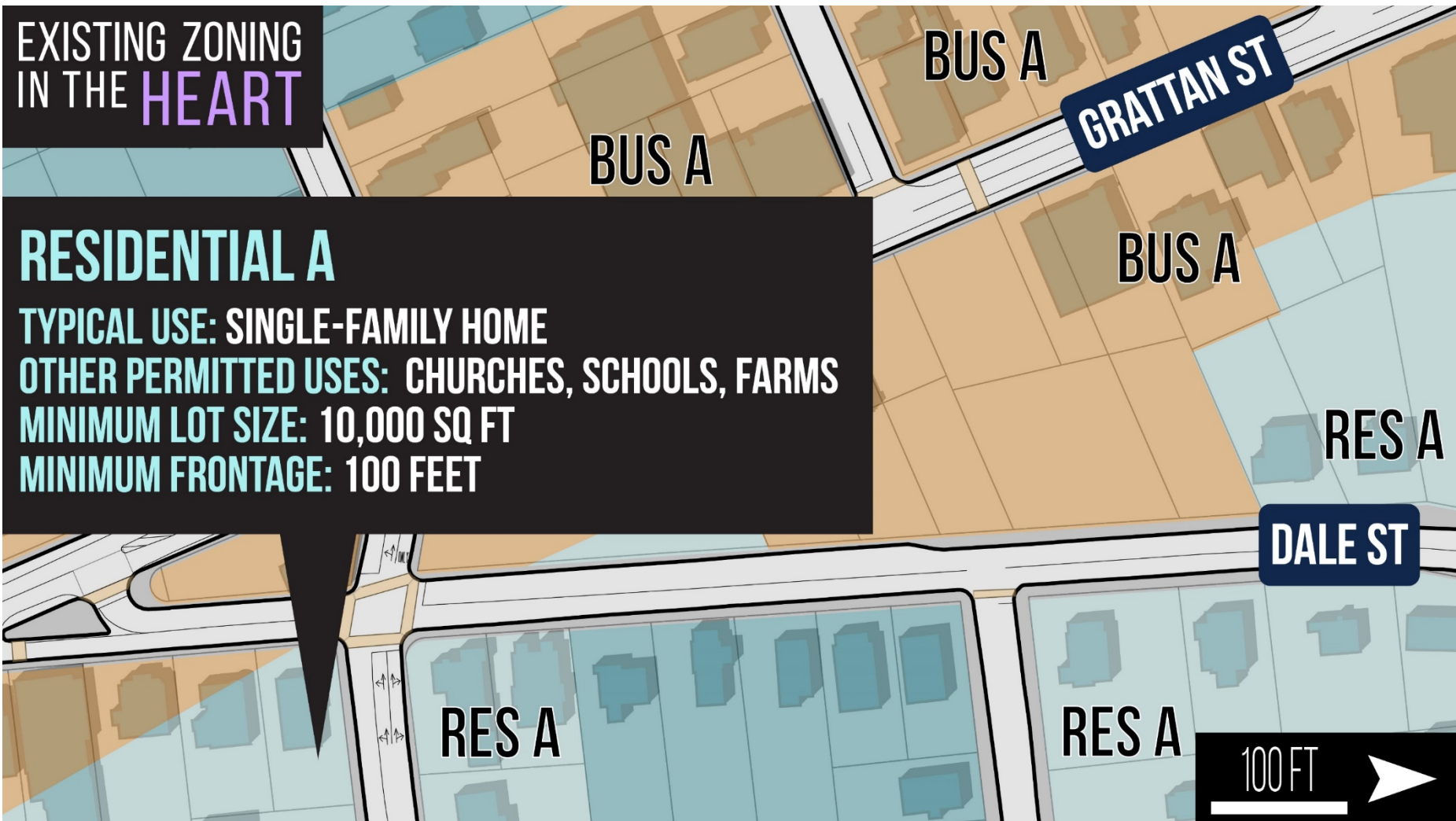


Figure 126: Residential A zoning in Chicopee

Residential A zoning can be found on split parcels on Grattan and Dale Streets, with the other portions of the parcels zoned Business A. Residential A zoning allows for single-family dwellings, churches, schools, farms, governmental services, and other accessory uses. Lot sizes must be larger than 10,000 square feet with a minimum street frontage of 100 feet and minimum setback of ten feet.

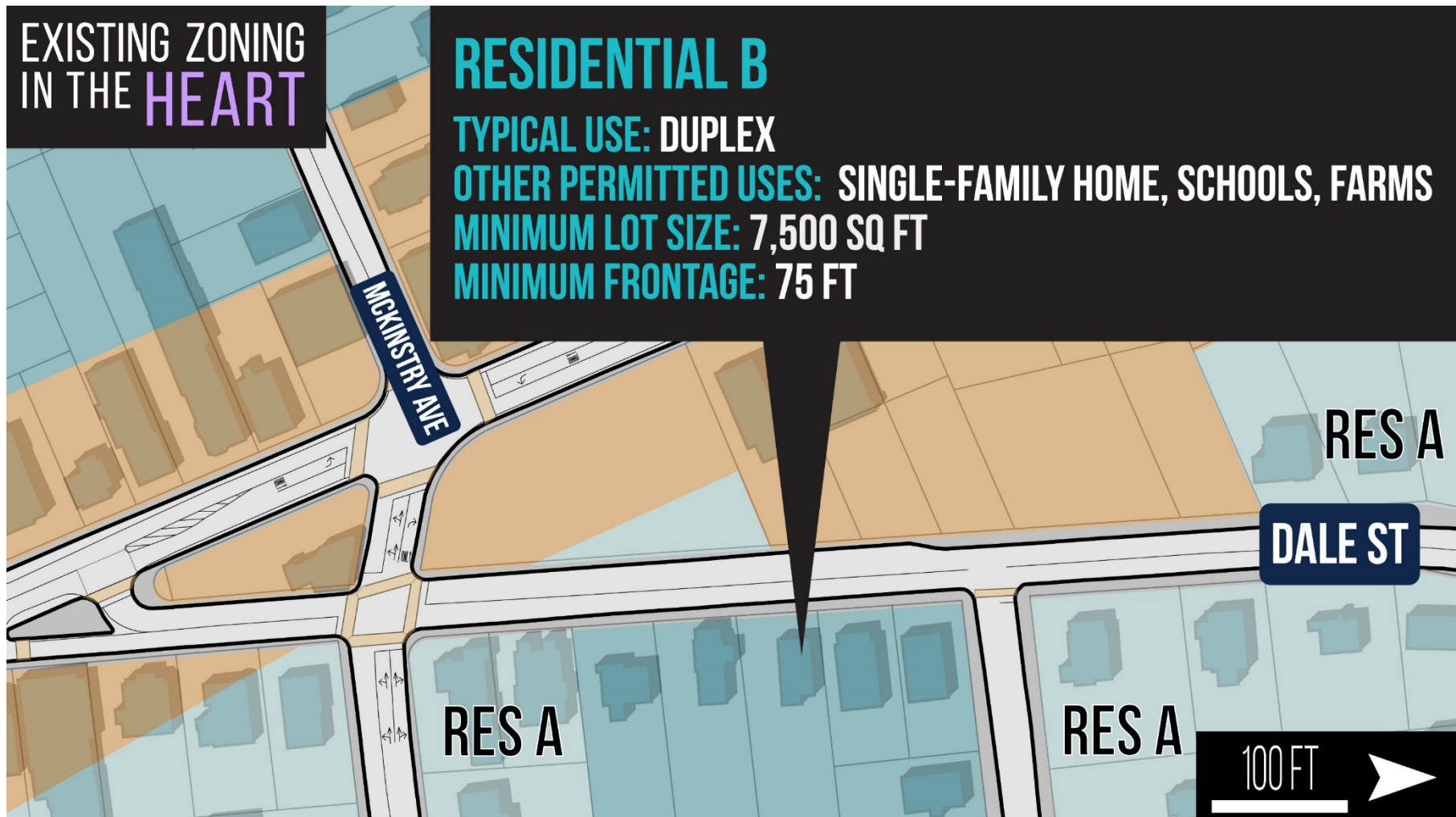


Figure 127: Residential B zoning in Chicopee

Residential B zoning can be found on parcels along Grattan and Dale Streets. The main difference between Residential A and B is the allowance of two-family residences. Lot sizes and frontage requirements are less intensive than Residential A. The density of residences provided by Residential B zoning is ideal for the areas around the Aldenville Commons.



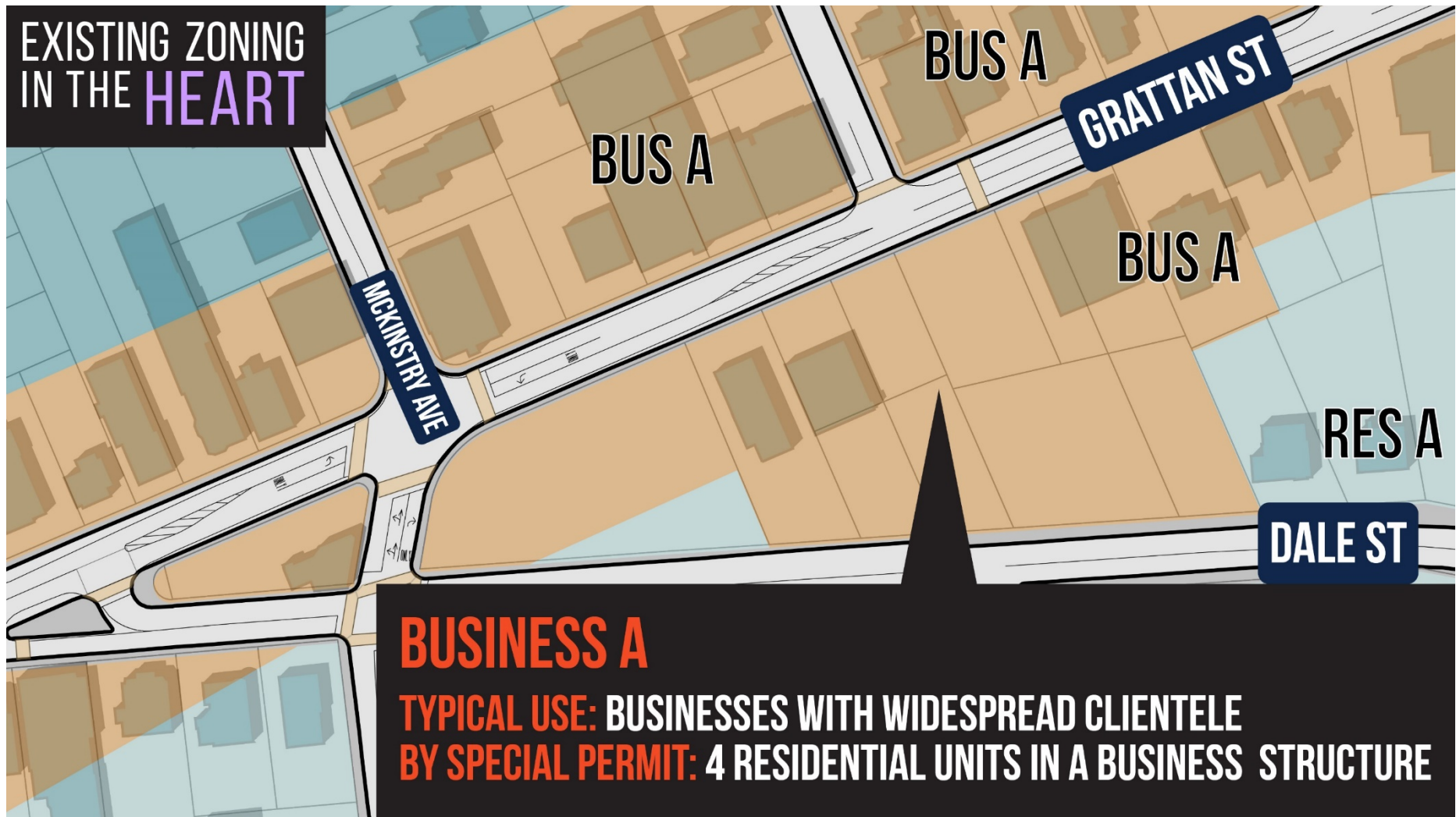


Figure 128: Business A zoning in Chicopee

Business A zoning is primary land-use allowed on the Grattan Street corridor around the Aldenville Commons. The district is designed for general businesses located in areas of high traffic volume that are intended to serve an area-wide population. There is no minimum lot size required. A setback of 25 feet is required, unless the adjacent buildings are located within 300 feet proposed development, when the setback can conform to existing block conditions.

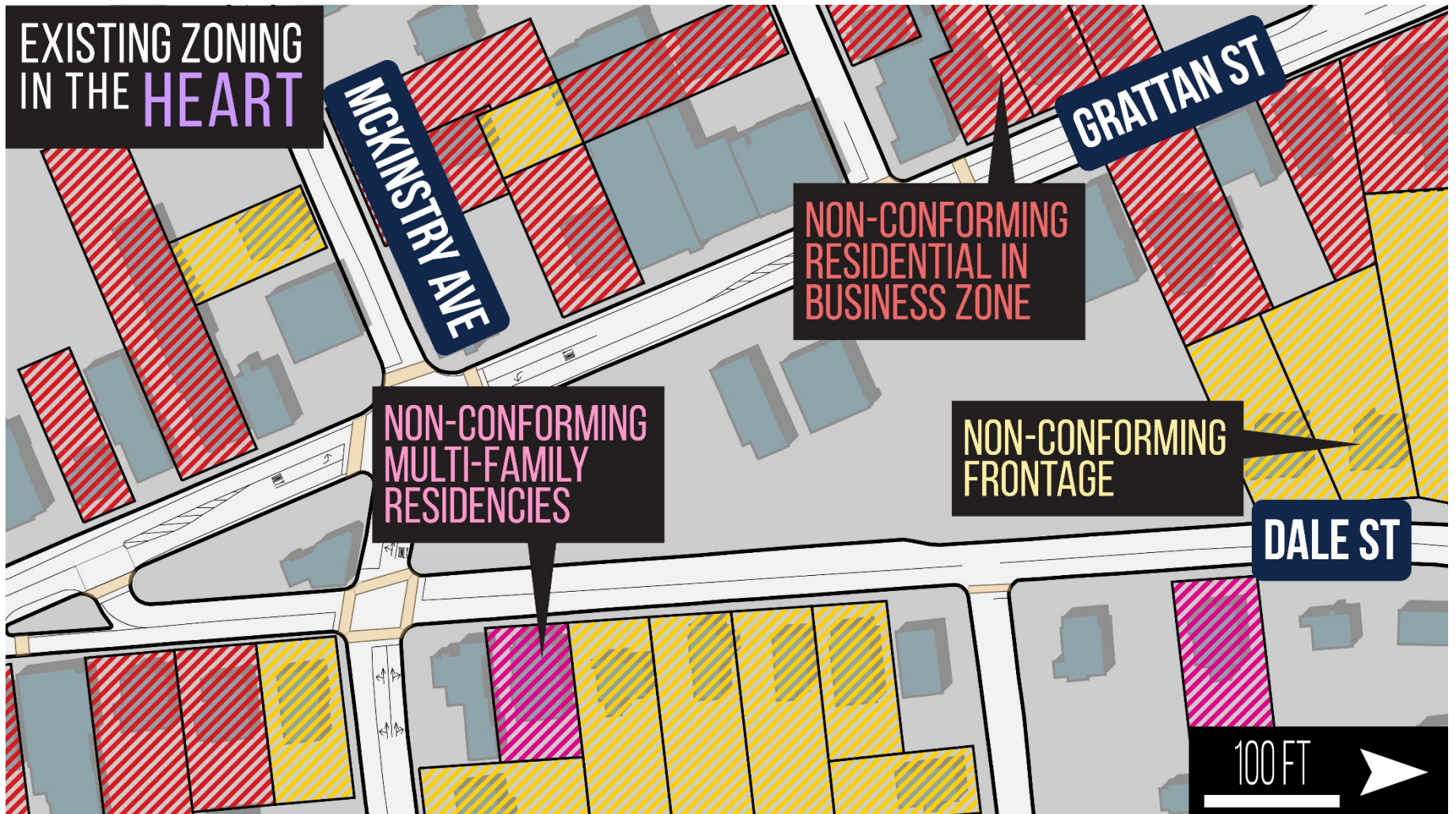


Figure 129: Non-conforming parcels around the Aldenville Commons

Non-conforming parcels can be found all around the Aldenville Commons. The existence of these non-conforming parcels makes the current zoning in Aldenville weak.

## Intent

These proposed zoning and programmatic interventions will help restore the Aldenville Commons as the focal point of neighborhood community life and economic activity, and remedy some of the past mistake made with regards to zoning. Pedestrian improvements along this corridor are likely to boost businesses in Aldenville. Survey respondents stated that there was little diversity in Aldenville in terms of dining options. Improving the Commons has the potential to bring more patrons to nearby restaurants. 7 Peaks has identified several strategies that will enhance the vibrancy of this space. These involve improving the summer concert series, having farmers' markets and other events, and redeveloping vacant and underutilized buildings near the Commons.

## Recommendations

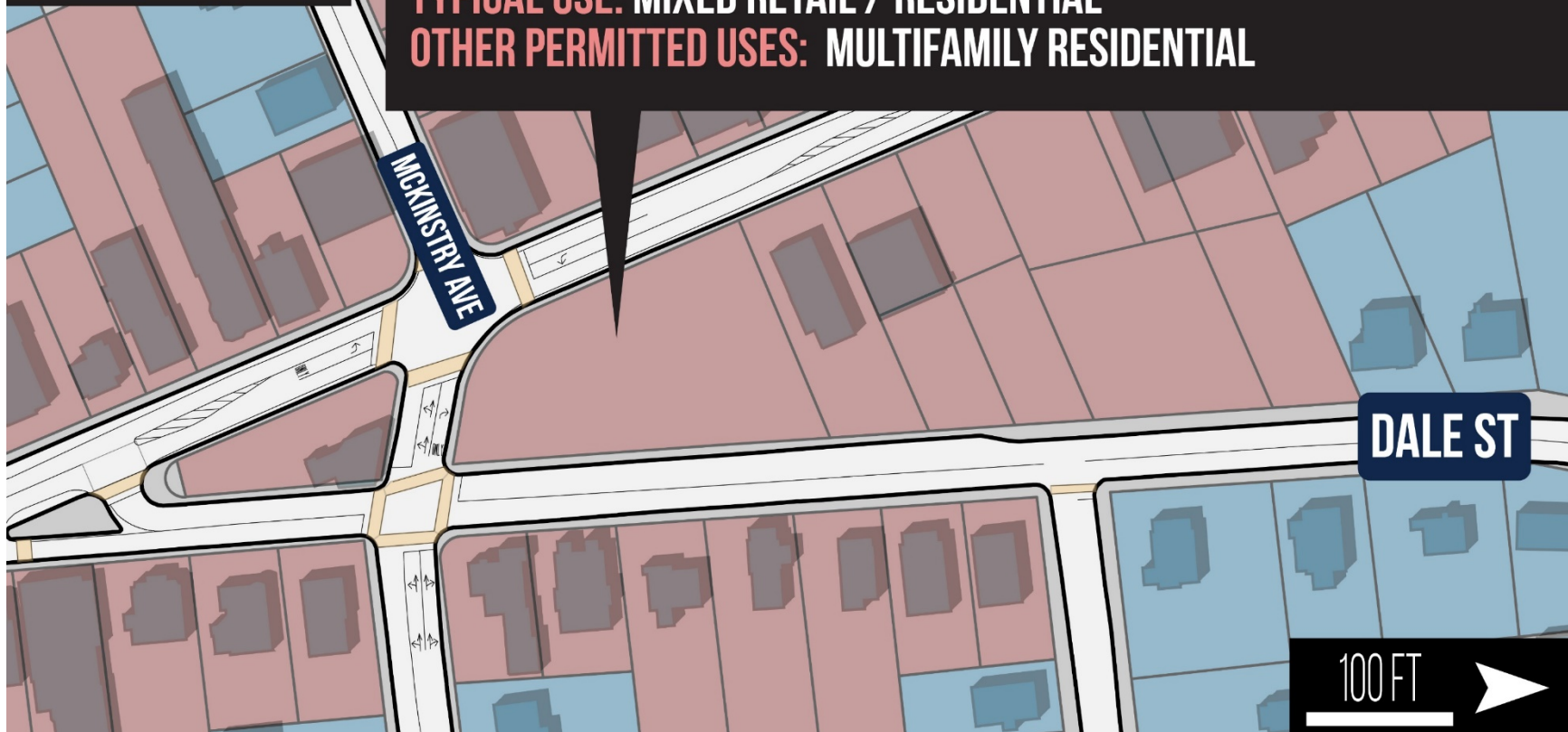
Recommendations include better advertising for the concert series and encouraging the series to run longer. More diverse musical acts should be scheduled to perform to attract a wider audience. Another idea is to regularly schedule farmers' markets and craft fairs on the Commons. 7 Peaks also recommends that wayfinding and historic signage be installed throughout Aldenville, especially near the Commons. The intersection of Grattan Street, Dale Street, and McKinstry Avenue has been identified by survey respondent as a major source of congestion. For drivers on McKinstry Avenue, the intersections of Dale and Grattan Streets are very close together, creating backups that block the streets. One possible solution is to permanently close the stretch of McKinstry Avenue between Grattan and Dale Streets and reroute traffic around the block with the Gulf gas station.

PROPOSED ZONING  
IN THE **HEART**

**MIXED-USE VILLAGE DISTRICT**

**TYPICAL USE: MIXED RETAIL / RESIDENTIAL**

**OTHER PERMITTED USES: MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL**



*Figure 130: Proposed Mixed-Use Village District*

7 Peaks proposes the development of a Mixed-Use Village District in order to revitalize the areas around the Aldenville. The creation of zoning that allows for residents to live, work, and play all in the same neighborhood is ideal for the area around the Aldenville Commons. The area already has Business A with special permits that allow for residential units. The Mixed-Use Village District would allow for more diverse uses.



Figure 131: Modifications to Residential B zoning to include non-conforming uses

Instead of downzoning and having non-conforming parcels, 7 Peaks recommends an amendment to Residential B zoning to allow for up to three families to occupy a structure. Frontage requirements are reduced to allow for more parcels to conform to existing conditions.

## Execution

### *6 months*

- Encourage the summer concert series to run longer.
- Plan more events to occur at Aldenville Commons.
- Implement temporary public art displays. With the art changing at regular intervals, people will be more curious as to what the next display will be, continuously bringing them to the Commons.

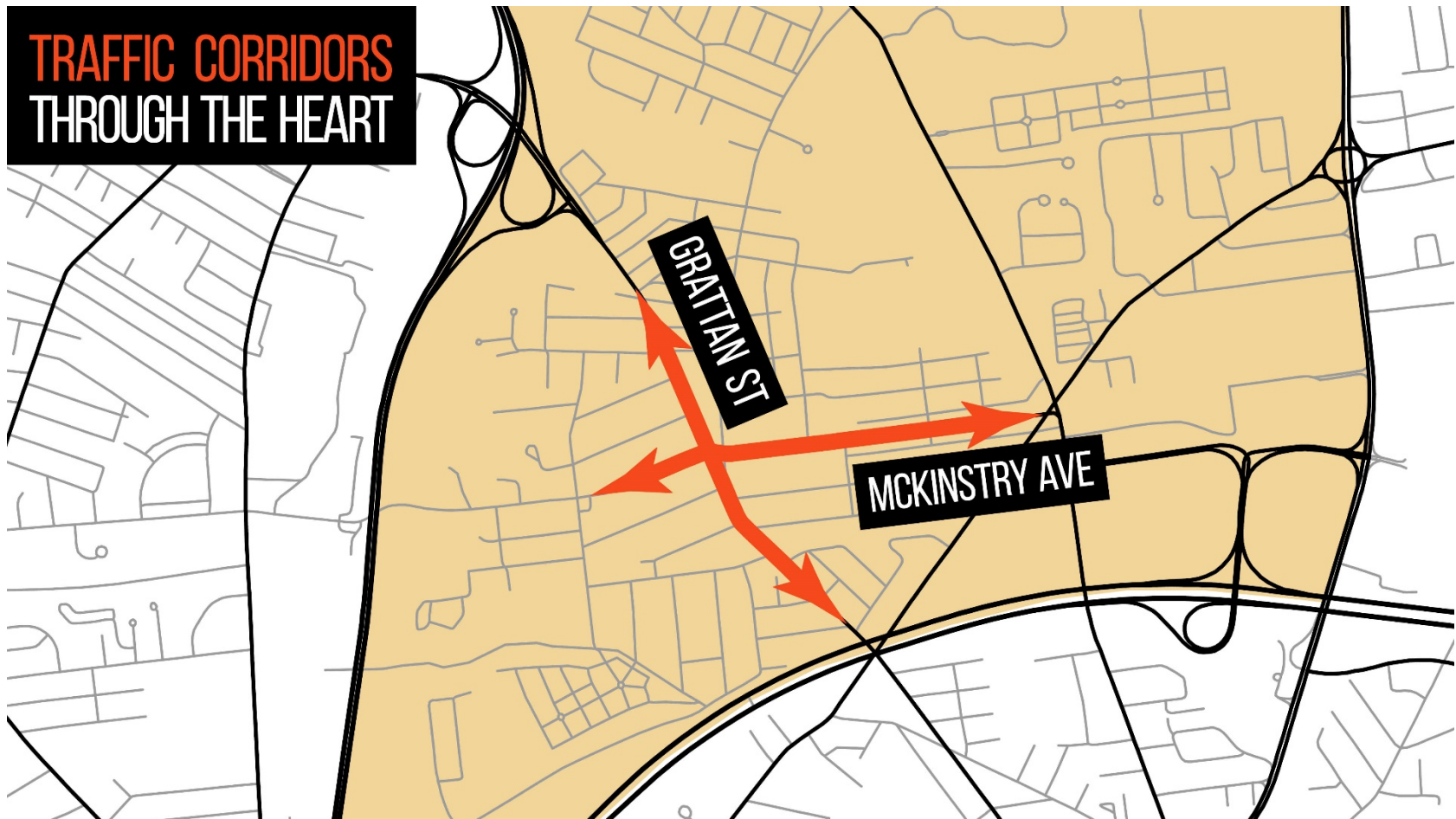
### *1-2 years*

- Establish mixed-use zoning that combines residential with commercial and office space.
- MassDOT should conduct a traffic study to determine the feasibility of permanently closing the section of McKinstry Avenue between the Commons and the Gulf gas station to facilitate Commons expansion.
- Install traffic calming measures along all of Grattan Street between I-391 and the Mass Pike overpass. These might include more crosswalks with traffic islands and flashing yellow lights, reduced travel lane widths, and street trees along both sides of the street, space permitting. Other ideas include temporary electronic signage that says "Your speed" on it. Periodically moving them to different locations will encourage motorists to drive slower since they never know where one will be.
- Increase police presence.
- Install a flashing light at the crosswalk on Grattan Street between Lucky Strike and Alden Credit Union.
- Use vacant buildings for a community center or winter farmers' markets.

### *3-5 years*

- Close and demolish the Gulf gas station to allow for the Commons to expand. Close the section of McKinstry Avenue between Dale and Grattan Streets. This will be turned into a grassy area that will bridge the two sections. Traffic from McKinstry Street will be rerouted around the block where the Gulf station currently stands onto Grattan Street. Install a traffic light at the tip of this block. Place a historic statue at the tip.
- Apply for Block Grants, Tax Increment Financing (TIF), and other tools.

# Safe Streets and the Aldenville Commons



*Figure 132: Grattan Street and McKinstry Ave - Two major traffic corridors in Aldenville*

Both Grattan Street and McKinstry Avenue are major travel corridors in Aldenville. Grattan Street is a north-south corridor that connects to Interstate – 391 to the north. McKinstry Avenue runs east-west and is a major connector to Memorial Drive. Speeding on McKinstry Avenue is a problem for the street, which is zoned residential. For this project, 7 Peaks focused on interventions on McKinstry Avenue.



## Introduction

A majority of survey respondents identified streets and traffic problems as a priority for future improvements in Aldenville. Streets in Aldenville are characterized by wide travel lanes that are used by speeding motorists with little regard for pedestrian or cyclist safety. The proposed mitigation strategies that 7 Peaks recommends are focused on reducing the speed of traffic in Aldenville. In addition to traffic calming measures, 7 Peaks suggests that the Client expand the existing sidewalk and bicycle networks. Overall, 7 Peaks hopes to create Safe Streets radiating out from the Aldenville Commons to strengthen and revitalize the Heart of Aldenville.

To rejuvenate the Heart of Aldenville, 7 Peaks suggests improvements be made to the collector streets that intersect the Aldenville Commons. Grattan Street and McKinstry Avenue, Figure 134, were both highlighted throughout the survey results analyzed by 7 Peaks. This section of the report will focus on the suggestions and recommendations 7 Peaks has developed specifically for McKinstry Avenue, however, these recommendations and mitigation strategies are capable of being implemented throughout the Aldenville and Chicopee road networks.

## Existing Conditions

McKinstry Avenue serves as a connector street between the main arterials in Chicopee: Chicopee Street, Meadow Street, Grattan Street, Dale Street, Montgomery Street, and Granby Road. Each of these streets services a large volume of traffic, and motorists

utilize the McKinstry corridor to travel between Memorial Drive and I-391. This results in a large volume of pass through vehicles on McKinstry Avenue, creating a high-speed corridor through a predominantly residential area.

According to MassDOT, McKinstry Avenue is classified as a Class 5 roadway. Class 5 roads are known as Major Collector roads in Massachusetts (MassDOT, 2017). These roads:

“Provide service to any areas of the state not serviced by arterials and service land use of a regional importance such as schools, parks, and smaller scale retail use...these roadways travel through many town centers.”

This definition of McKinstry Avenue accurately defines the current purpose of McKinstry, as the intersection of McKinstry Avenue and Grattan Street lies adjacent to the Aldenville Commons and accommodates a large volume of traffic.

The high speed of travel, enabled by the large, straight travel lanes in either direction on this Major Collector road, coupled with poor or nonexistent pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure, creates an unsafe environment for all modes of travel. Sidewalks and crosswalks are in either poor condition or inaccessible due to obstructions such as fire hydrants, utility poles, and trash cans



*Figure 133: Intersection of McKinstry Avenue and Arcade Street*

The McKinstry Ave and Arcade Street intersection is dangerous intersection west of Grattan Street. McKinstry Ave is busy connector to the neighborhood of Willimansett. The width and slope of the road make allow for drivers to reach high speeds that are undesirable for residential street. This intersection was highlighted by the Client on 7 Peaks' first tour of Aldenville.



*Figure 134: Existing conditions along McKinstry Avenue*

McKinstry Avenue is characterized by narrow, uneven sidewalks that bound the wide roadway. Obstructions, such as telephone poles, are present for long stretches of the sidewalk, creating a narrow, difficult path to traverse if walking with a group of pedestrians.



*Figure 135: A fire hydrant along McKinstry Avenue*

This image highlights the challenges of walking along McKinstry Avenue. The fire hydrant acts as an impediment, forcing pedestrians to make a decision to squeeze through on the left, or step out into McKinstry Avenue on the right. This is a recurring problem along the length of the McKinstry corridor.



*Figure 136: A cross-section view of McKinstry Avenue, facing the Aldenville Commons*

McKinstry Avenue, looking towards the intersection of Grattan Street, Dale Street, and McKinstry Avenue. As noted previously, McKinstry Avenue is wide and straight, with no traffic calming mitigations visible. In addition to the telephone poles and fire hydrants shown previously, trash delivery also causes significant obstacles to pedestrians trying to navigate the corridor.

## Intent of Mitigation

The purpose of 7 Peaks' recommendations for McKinstry Avenue improvements are to reduce the speed at which traffic travels by introducing traffic calming measures, while concurrently increasing the availability of parking for residents. In addition, 7 Peaks suggests that the recommendations from the 2016 Networks of Opportunity report from Pacer Planning be enhanced by the installation of crosswalks, bump outs, bicycle lanes, and High-Intensity Activated crossWalk beacon (HAWK) signals at key intersections and junctures along the McKinstry Avenue corridor.

7 Peaks chose these traffic calming measures and network improvements based off the survey data collected during the engagement process. Multiple respondents discussed and offered their opinions on McKinstry Avenue and traffic in Aldenville. These responses were not limited to the transportation section of the survey, as these issues became a trend throughout different survey sections. 7 Peaks used these viewpoints to craft and develop an understanding of the issues and concerns regarding traffic and safety in the neighborhood of Aldenville.

## Mitigation Strategies

Overall, these mitigation strategies seek to reduce the speed of traffic and improve pedestrian safety by:

- Narrowing the width of thru traffic lanes on McKinstry Avenue by painting or installing bump outs
- Creating parallel parking spaces along one side of McKinstry to provide residents more parking options
- Installing pedestrian walk signals, crosswalks, or HAWK signals at key locations along McKinstry
- Locating Variable Message Board Signs along McKinstry Avenue to remind and inform drivers of important information



*Figure 137: 7 Peaks rendering of McKinstry Avenue*

This rendering of McKinstry Avenue, created in the free program StreetMix, is 7 Peaks' estimate at the dimensions and right of way along the McKinstry corridor. McKinstry Avenue measures approximately 50 feet across, with 18-foot travel lanes in both directions.

# McKinstry Ave Proposed Uses

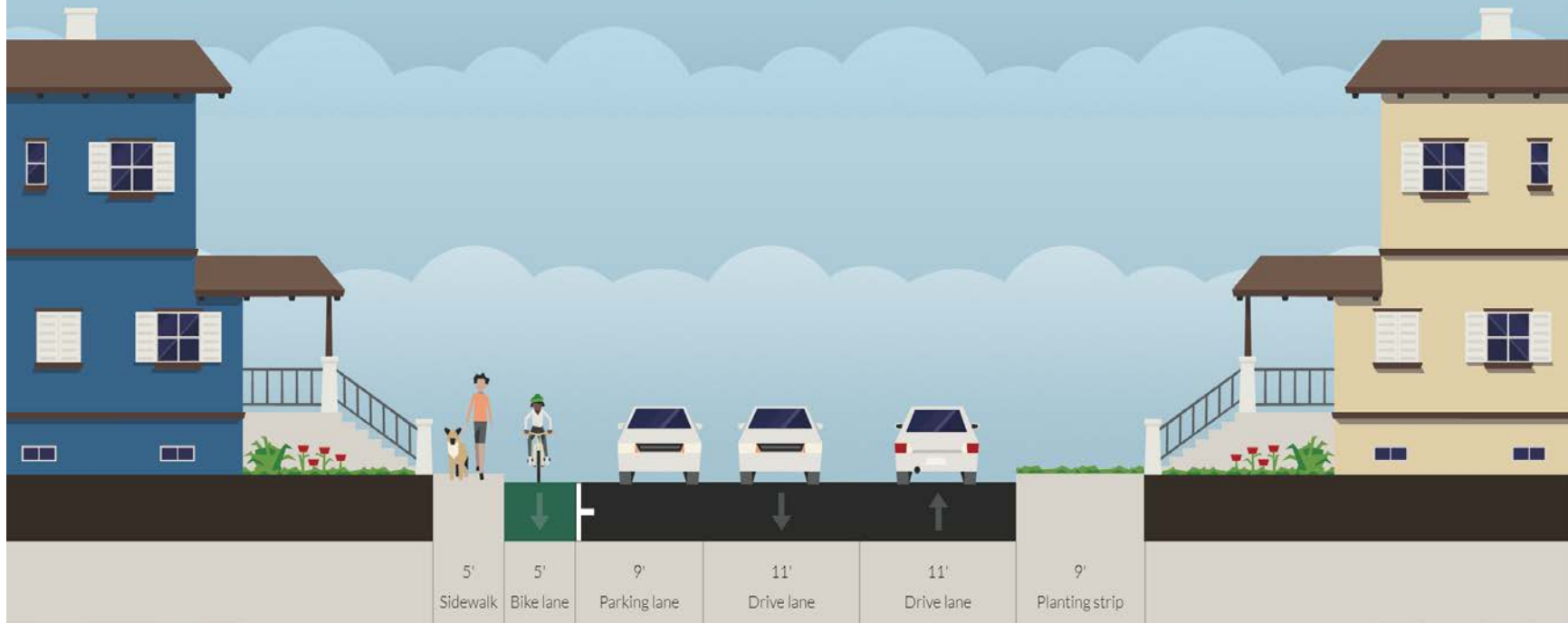
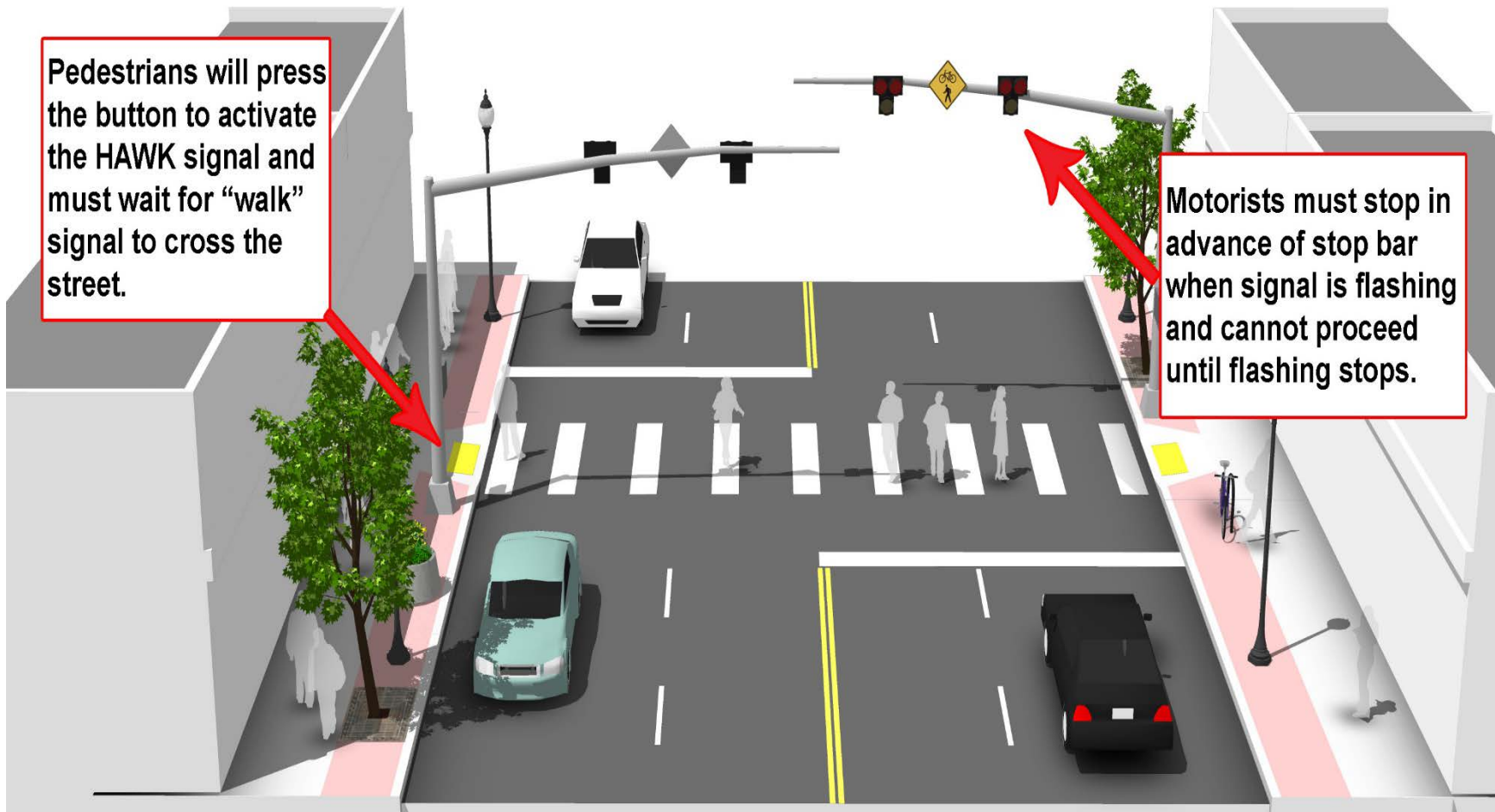


Figure 138: 7 Peaks' proposed design of McKinstry Avenue

This rendering of McKinstry Avenue takes the existing 50 foot right of way, and makes alterations to the existing pavement, without removing any space available on either side. In this design, a bike lane would be added on the right, with a parking lane adjacent to provide protection for cyclists. Allowing parking along McKinstry Avenue would also increase the accessibility of programming around the Aldenville Commons.





*Figure 139: An example of a HAWK system*

7 Peaks proposes that a HAWK system like this be installed at critical mid-block crossings along McKinstry Avenue. A HAWK would stop traffic in either direction through the use of flashing signals, allowing pedestrians to safely cross the street when necessary. The presence of a HAWK system would also serve to slow driver's along the corridor, as drivers would be forced to look at the signal heads.



*Figure 140: An example of a variable message board*

A message board like this could be placed along McKinstry Avenue at key locations to convey messages to passing motorists. As these boards are mobile and programmable, different message could be displayed at different locations throughout the day.



*Figure 141: An example of a painted bump out in Melrose, Seattle*

Temporary bump outs like this one in Melrose, Seattle, would reduce the speed of traffic along McKinstry Avenue and other streets within Aldenville. As these bump outs are painted directly on the pavement, they are easy to install and additionally provide an opportunity to add a bit of color to a neighborhood.



*Figure 142: An example of a permanent bump out design*

An example of a permanent bump out that could be installed to provide safety for pedestrians and reduce traffic speeds along a corridor. Bump outs do not have to be completely concrete, planting boxes could be installed to add vegetation to a corridor. Ideally, bump out locations would be tested first with paint and then converted to a more permanent installation.

## Recommendations

- Repaint crosswalks and paint temporary bump-outs to calm traffic along McKinstry Avenue
- Use a Variable Message Sign to inform drivers to reduce their speed
- Conduct a Traffic Study of McKinstry Avenue to inform future safety treatments
- Create a Transportation Improvement Plan for the City of Chicopee to prioritize street improvements
- Install HAWK systems at high usage crosswalks for safer pedestrian passage
- Repave and redesign McKinstry Avenue to improve safety and accessibility

## Execution

### *6 Months:*

- The Client should build off the data compiled and analyzed within this report, as well as the 2016 Networks of Opportunity report, to identify McKinstry Avenue as a priority area for Complete Streets funding from MassDOT
- Installation or repainting of crosswalks along McKinstry Avenue to identify locations where pedestrians may cross
- Use a Variable Message Sign (IMAGE), sign along McKinstry Avenue to inform drivers of the speed limit or to watch for pedestrians
- Use a temporary radar speed sign (IMAGE) to inform drivers of their actual speed compared to the posted speed limit, to deter motorists from speeding
- The City of Chicopee should become a certified Complete Streets community through the Massachusetts

Complete Streets Funding Program. This is a 3 Tier process that a city must achieve to be eligible for funding towards Complete Streets projects. The City has already registered for the program, but needs to complete the certification process to become eligible for funds. The first Tier includes:

- Signing the Complete Streets Letter of Intent, which is provided by MassDOT, to become eligible for up to \$50,000 towards Technical Assistance. While not required by the program, signing the Letter of Intent allows the participating city to apply for Technical Assistance funding while completing a written policy. The Technical Assistance funding goes towards the development of the Prioritization Plan. This includes capital investment plans, network gap analyses, pavement management systems, ADA transition plans, safety audits, and/or consulting fees.

### *1 to 2 Years*

- Draft a Complete Streets policy fulfilling MassDOT's requirements and getting it signed by the highest elected official. MassDOT provides a thorough criteria through the Complete Streets Portal as to what is necessary for the policy. Years:
- The City of Chicopee should complete the second and third tiers of the Complete Streets certification process.
- The City of Chicopee should complete and submit the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan to fulfill the Tier 2

Complete Streets requirements. The Prioritization Plan includes a master list of transportation projects involving Complete Streets concepts. MassDOT provides a template. Upon approval, the City is moved to Tier 3 and can apply for up to \$400,000 worth of Complete Streets funding. The City should apply for project funding by filling out and submitting the Project Application template. This funding, which can amount up to \$400,000, must go towards projects on the Prioritization Plan. Upon approval, the City must sign a Construction Funding Agreement to receive the funds.

- Install a permanent radar speed sign to deter motorists from speeding
- Installation of HAWK systems at high usage crosswalks to inform drivers of the presence of pedestrians

# Pedestrian Network

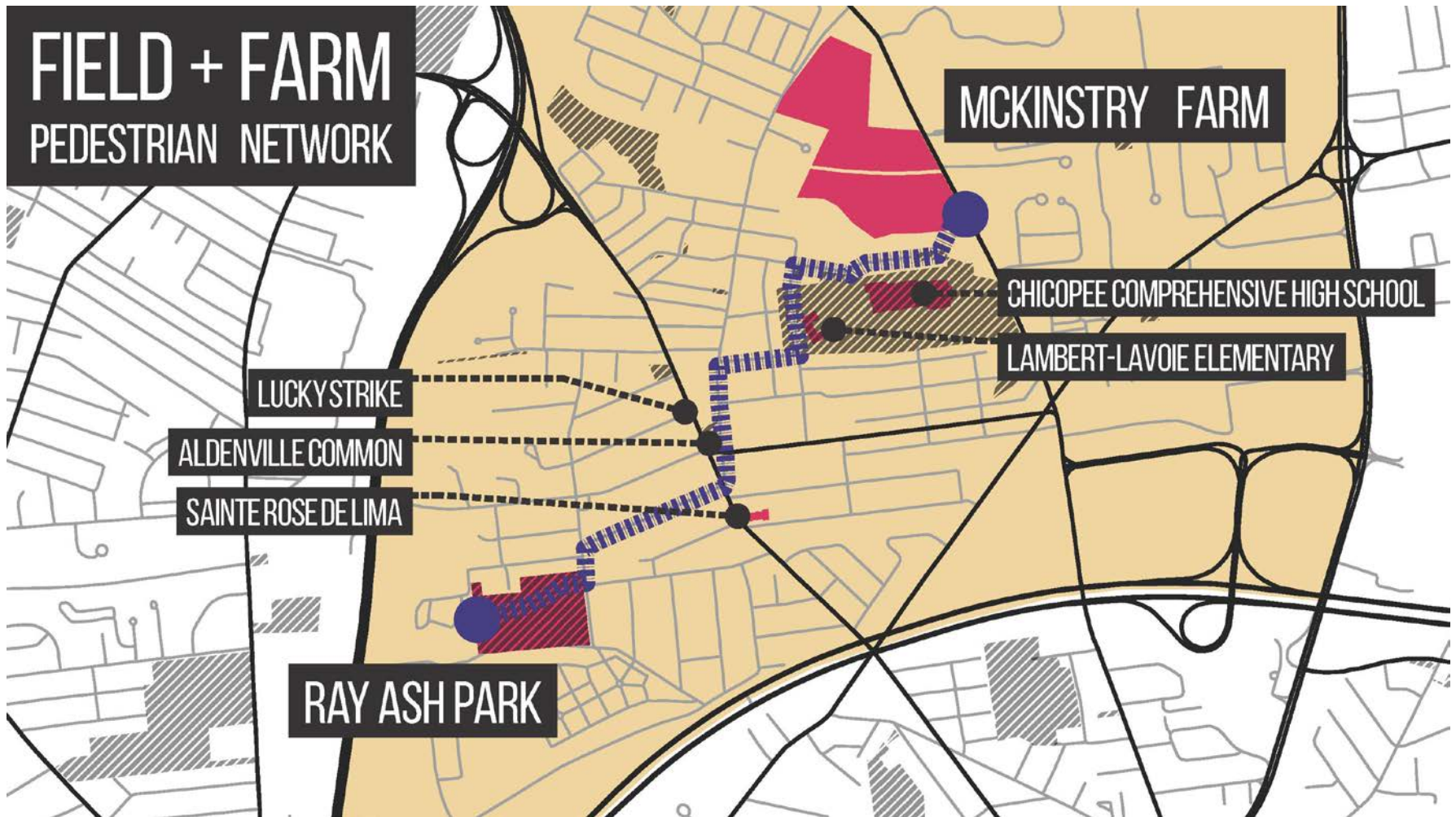


Figure 143: Field and Farm Pedestrian Network - Linking Ray Ash Park to McKinstry Farm

7 Peaks is proposing the creation of the Field and Farm Pedestrian Network, a 1.5-mile trail that will link two survey-identified assets in Aldenville, Ray Ash Park and McKinstry Farms. The proposed path will create a linkage through wayfinding signs and better connect these assets to schools and residents. Providing safe access and travel for pedestrians is a priority of 7 Peaks.



## Introduction

The Field and Farm path seeks to link identified assets in Aldenville - Ray Ash Park, the Aldenville Commons, and the McKinstry Farm, through wayfinding and interpretive signage. The primary function of the 1.5-mile path is to create a safer environment for pedestrians, specifically students, to travel in and around the neighborhood. Other ancillary benefits of the path include the spurring of economic development around the Aldenville Commons and increased food access opportunities.

From the survey results, both Ray Ash Park, McKinstry Farm, and the Aldenville Commons were three identified assets in the Aldenville neighborhood. Open-ended comments regarding parks and open space found that Ray Ash Park is a heavily used asset that is often crowded due to organized sport activities. Survey data reveals that McKinstry Farm is the second most popular business in the neighborhood with 71% of respondents reporting shopping there. Respondents also noted the opportunity for more programming and events on the Aldenville Commons. 7 Peaks acknowledges the importance of these locations and seeks to connect them in a meaningful manner.

## Existing Conditions

Ray Ash Park is one of three municipal parks in Aldenville. At 11 acres, it is the largest of the three Aldenville parks, which include the Aldenville Commons and Mass Pike Overpass Park. Ray Ash Park contains a soccer pitch, baseball diamond, basketball court, skate park, playground, bathhouse, bathrooms, a splash pad, and a newly renovated, \$1.8 million-dollar pool as of 2017. The park is located in the southwest of Aldenville, a half-mile away from the Aldenville Commons but is not advertised through any signage in the neighborhood.

McKinstry Farm is one of three farms in Chicopee and the last remaining working farmland in the City. McKinstry Farms is a century-farm, meaning that it has been worked for over 100 continuous years. A farm stand built in 1950 still stands on Montgomery Avenue. This farm stand is seasonal and not open during the winter months. The farm property is currently zoned Residential C, which would allow for the development of apartments or condominiums. Development of this property would represent a great loss in terms of open-space in Aldenville and Chicopee. Lambert-Lavoie Elementary School and Chicopee Comprehensive Memorial High School are located within a quarter-mile of McKinstry Farm; however, the two schools are currently separated from the farm by City-owned wooded parcels.

Currently in Chicopee students living within two miles of a high school or one mile of a middle school are not offered bus service and must find their own way to school. The Field and Farm Path will make it easier, safer, and more enjoyable for the students who have no other choice but to walk to school.

## Recommendations

- Implement wayfinding signage along the proposed route.
- Implement historic/interpretative signage at Aldenville Commons and McKinstry Farm to give residents and visitors a sense of what Aldenville used to be like, while providing vision for the future
- Increase programming at the Aldenville Commons, including farmers' markets, concerts, or temporary art installations
- Create educational agricultural programs for Chicopee Comprehensive High School and Lambert-Lavoie Elementary based around McKinstry Farm
- Explore agricultural preservation strategies for the McKinstry and LaFlamme properties
- Connect to other links in Chicopee's pedestrian network
- Explore the possibility of a rail-trail on the former Westover Railbed, which bisects the McKinstry property

## Execution

### 6 Months

- Conduct a feasibility study for the development of the Field and Farm pedestrian path.
- Gauge public support through public meetings and online engagement methods such as polling.
- Explore funding mechanisms at the state and federal levels.

### 1-2 Years

- Design and implement a wayfinding system.

- Hold a citywide contest for school students to design a common logo for Chicopee and individual logos for each one of Chicopee's neighborhoods.
- Start to make minor improvements to infrastructure such as sidewalk repaving and the remarking road ways.
- Explore the transferring of development rights from McKinstry Farm to the City of Chicopee and other agricultural protection strategies to ensure that the identified asset remains.

### 3-5 Years

- Install permanent signage on the pedestrian path.
- Conduct public meetings to determine whether or not the path was successful and see what improvements can be made.
- Look for additional pedestrian connections.
- Explore the development of the former Westover Railbed Figure 148
- Provide more recreational opportunities and safer student travel in Aldenville. The Westover Rail Trail will connect Aldenville to the Willimansett and Westover neighborhoods. The area between Willimansett and Aldenville is of particular trouble, with 47 Bellamy Middle School and Chicopee Comprehensive High School students being warned as recently as November 1st, 2017 that crossing the railroad tracks as a short-cut was dangerous and illegal (Crumbleholme, 2017).



*Figure 144: Historical and wayfinding signage on Aldenville Commons*

7 Peaks is proposing the creation wayfinding signage to help guide users along the Field and Farm Path. The use of historical signage will be implemented at sites like the Aldenville Commons to provide residents and visitors with a perspective of the amenities Aldenville once had, while providing a vision to go forward.



*Figure 145: McKinstry Farm with proposed wayfinding signage*

One of the terminus for the Field and Farm Path is McKinstry Farm. The McKinstry Farm has been under operation by the same family for 132 years. The farm stand built located on Montgomery Avenue was built in 1955, when the road was much busier due to the lack of interstates. Currently, the farm stand is open seasonally, and when it shuts down for the season Aldenville loses an important asset for fresh food.



*Figure 146: Rendering of proposed rail trail on former Westover Railroad that bisects McKinstry Farm*

A rendering created by 7 Peaks highlighting the potential for a rail trail near McKinstry Farm. 7 Peaks proposes a network of trails around Aldenville to connect key destinations together in the community.

## How the sites relates to one another

When developing land-use interventions, 7 Peaks recognized the importance of linking all three sites in terms of building cohesion and connectivity within Aldenville. Each intervention builds off one another to provide a more comprehensive and engaging neighborhood. Starting with the Aldenville Commons, or the Heart, 7 Peaks proposed multiple interventions, including the creation of a Mixed-Use Village District to address zoning issues, farmers' markets, and other programming to draw people to the Heart, as well as a streamlined reservation process for programming to restore vitality and life to the downtown area.

To make the proposed Mixed-Use Village District successful, 7 Peaks believes that interventions are needed on McKinstry Avenue, an east-west throughway that bisects Aldenville. The calming of McKinstry Avenue will be done through bump outs, on street parking, and the implementation of activated crosswalks in order make the Aldenville more pedestrian friendly.

The last intervention, the Field and Farm Path, will link two assets, Ray Ash Park in the southwest to McKinstry Farm in the northeast, while taking users through the Heart of Aldenville. Wayfinding signs will provide users with directions, and historical signage at various asset locations such as the Aldenville Commons will provide residents and visitors with an image of Aldenville's past and a vision for the future.

It is hoped that these three land-use interventions will change Aldenville from an auto-centric pass-through to a walkable and livable neighborhood. All these interventions have multiple phases that can implemented on different timelines if needed. The land-use interventions proposed by 7 Peaks are not comprehensive, but rather a sketch to provide Chicopee with a plan to go forward.



# Chapter 7: Conclusion

The City of Chicopee tasked 7 Peaks with probing the neighborhood of Aldenville, both its residents and community, to help develop a better understanding of how they perceive and interpret the neighborhood. 7 Peaks launched a public engagement campaign, Create Our Chicopee, to collect residents' opinions of Aldenville and use the results of a community survey to inform planning recommendations for the neighborhood as well as guide future citywide engagement efforts.

Create Our Chicopee set out to accomplish three goals at the request of the Client:

1. Develop an outreach process that includes community survey materials that could be reused for future engagement projects.
2. Experiment with non-traditional modes of community engagement to maximize variety and volume of community response and data collection.
3. Analyze data collected from the outreach process to best inform the neighborhood visioning process and final Aldenville Vision Plan.

7 Peaks achieved all these goals through a successful survey that exceeded internal benchmarks and engaged 2.5% of Aldenville's population. Create Our Chicopee as a brand can continue to exist, as the brand was designed to be broad enough to apply to all of Chicopee. Using technology and social media, 7 Peaks was able to provide the City with a template of successful public engagement with the Qualtrics platform. The Client gave general guidelines for the land-use portion of Studio, allowing for 7 Peaks data analysis of the survey to inform the land-use interventions in the neighborhood of Aldenville. This bottom-up approach to planning makes the land-use interventions suggested by 7 Peaks

even more meaningful as they represent the will and desire of Aldenvillites.

When developing land-use interventions, 7 Peaks recognized the importance of linking all three sites in terms of building cohesion and connectivity with in Aldenville. Each intervention builds off one another to provide a more comprehensive and engaging neighborhood. Starting with the Aldenville Commons, or the Heart, 7 Peaks proposed multiple interventions, including the creation of a Mixed-Use Village District to address zoning issues, farmers' markets and other programming to draw people to the Heart, and a streamlined reservation process for programming to restore vitality and life to the downtown area.

In order to make the proposed Mixed-Use Village District successful, 7 Peaks believes that interventions are needed on McKinstry Avenue, an east-west thoroughway that bisects Aldenville. The calming of McKinstry Avenue will be done through bump outs, on street park, and the implementation of activated crosswalks all in order make the Aldenville more pedestrian friendly.

The last intervention, the Field and Farm Path, will link two assets, Ray Ash Park in the southwest to McKinstry Farms in the northeast, while taking users through the Heart of Aldenville. Wayfinding signs will provide users with directions, and historical signage at various asset locations such as the Aldenville Commons, will provide residents and visitors with an image of Aldenville's past and a vision for the future.

7 Peaks hopes that these three land-use interventions will change Aldenville, from an auto-centric pass-through zone, to a walkable and livable neighborhood. All these interventions have multiple phases that can implemented on different timelines if needed.



The land-use interventions proposed by 7 Peaks are not comprehensive, but rather a sketch to provide Chicopee with a plan to move forward with and spark discussion amongst elected officials and their residents.

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## Appendix I: Original Client Survey

### Public Engagement Community Survey Questions – *Aldenville*

#### **Assets in Aldenville**

- 1) Do you consider within in the Aldenville neighborhood (Y/N)?
  - a) Al's Diner (14 Yelle Street)
  - b) BJ's and Big Y Plaza (650 Memorial Drive)
  - c) Chicopee Comprehensive High School (617 Montgomery Street)
  - d) Commons & Gazebo (McKinstry Avenue, Grattan Street, and Dale Street)
  - e) Garity Grove Park (44 Peter Street)
  - f) Mass Pike Underpass (Granby Road, Grattan Street, and Mass Pike)
  - g) New TRU Hotel Project (450 Memorial Drive)
  - h) Overhead Power Lines (Granby Road and Columba Street)
  - i) Pride Station (27 Montgomery Street)
  - j) Ray Ash Park (687 Arcade Street)
  - k) Rt. 391 Overpass (Route 391 and McKinstry Avenue)
  - l) South Memorial Drive Traffic Circle (Memorial Drive, Granby Road, and Westover Road)
  - m) St. Rose de Lima Church (Grattan Street)
  - n) St. Stanislaus Cemetery (800 Montgomery Street)
  
- 2) Do you patronize any of the following businesses at least once every six months?
  - a) Aldenville Chiropractic
  - b) Aldenville Credit Union
  - c) Aldenville Liquor Store
  - d) Arnold's Meats
  - e) Baystate Rug
  - f) Bloo Solutions
  - g) Doyle Travel Center
  - h) Golden Blossom Flowers
  - i) Grattan Street Barber Shop
  - j) Labrie & Pouliot, P.C.
  - k) LeBel, Lavigne, & Deady Insurance
  - l) Puss and Pups Boutique
  - m) Shop Smart Convenience
  - n) Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 3) Do you patronize any of the following restaurants?
  - a) Angelo's Family Restaurant & Pizzeria (Grattan St)
  - b) Boston Bay Pizza (Montgomery St)
  - c) Brother's Pizza (Grattan St)
  - d) Doc's Place (Granby St)
  - e) Great China Restaurant (Grattan St)
  - f) Lucky Strike (Grattan St)
  - g) Mr. Cone (Chapel and Granby Streets)
  - h) TD's Sports Pub (Grattan St)



- i) Other:\_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Is there any other Aldenville location, business, or organization where you spend your time?
  - a) Other:\_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Are you familiar with the Aldenville Commons?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
- 6) Do you use the Aldenville Commons?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
- 7) If you use the Aldenville Commons, how do you get there?
  - a) Walk
  - b) Bike
  - c) Drive
  - d) Other:
- 8) If you visit the Aldenville Commons, how often do you walk or bike there?
  - a) Once or twice per month
  - b) Once a week
  - c) Twice a week
  - d) Three times a week
  - e) I only drive to the Aldenville Commons.
  - f) I never visit the Aldenville Commons
- 9) If you do not use the Aldenville Commons, please tell us why not:
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) What about schools? (for students to do)
- 11) What about parks? (for students to do)

**Areas of Caution**

- 12) Do any of the following items in the Aldenville neighborhood need improvement?
  - a) Residential Homes
    - i) Single Family
    - ii) Duplexes
    - iii) Apartments
  - b) Parks and Recreational Facilities/Open Space
  - c) Retail Businesses and Restaurants
  - d) Street Improvements (streets, sidewalks, gutters, stop lights/signs)
  - e) Manufacturing and Industrial Uses
  - f) Community Centers for Seniors, Children and Families
- 13) Do any of the following issues raise your concerns for the Aldenville neighborhood?
  - a) Crime
    - i) If yes, how so

- ii) In no, why not
  - iii) I have no opinion.
- b) Transportation Infrastructure (traffic capacity, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure)
- i) If yes, how so
  - ii) In no, why not
  - iii) I have no opinion.
- c) Vacancy and blight
- i) If yes, how so
  - ii) In no, why not
  - iii) I have no opinion.
- d) Garbage collection/cleaning streets
- i) If yes, how so
  - ii) In no, why not
  - iii) I have no opinion.
- e) Schools and education
- i) If yes, how so
  - ii) In no, why not
  - iii) I have no opinion.
- f) Activities for families and children
- i) If yes, how so
  - ii) In no, why not
  - iii) I have no opinion.
- g) Places to shop
- i) If yes, how so
  - ii) In no, why not
  - iii) I have no opinion.
- 14) Of the many streets in Aldenville, which streets need road improvements?
- a) Street: Improvement should be:
  - b) Street: Improvement should be:
  - c) Street: Improvement should be:
  - d) Street: Improvement should be:
  - e) Street: Improvement should be:
- 15) Would you be supportive of the neighborhood hosting more community activities?
- i) If yes, how so
  - ii) In no, why not
  - iii) I have no opinion.
- 16) What about schools? (for students to do)
- 17) What about parks? (for students to do)

**Deficient or Needs Improvement**

18) Which of the following amenities would the Aldenville neighborhood need more of?

- a) Restaurants
- b) Green Space or Preserved Land
- c) Community/Public Event Space
- d) Parks or Recreation Fields/Facilities
- e) Personal Service Businesses
- f) Educational Facilities
- g) Social Services
- h) New/Improved Housing
- i) Affordable Housing
- j) Healthy Grocery Options
- k) Other\_\_\_\_\_

**Priorities for Aldenville**

19) If you had ten minutes with the City Council, what would you say are the two priorities needed for the Aldenville neighborhood?

- a) Parks and Recreation
- b) Retail Businesses and Restaurants
- c) Employment Opportunities
- d) Street Improvements (streets, sidewalks, crosswalks, gutters, stop lights/signs)
- e) Manufacturing and Industrial Uses
- f) Community Centers for Seniors, Children and Families
- g) Other\_\_\_\_\_

i) If you prioritized Parks and Recreation, then what is the specific item or action that the city should do?

(1)

ii) If you prioritized Retail Business and Restaurants, then what specific business or type of business should be placed in Aldenville?

(1)

iii) If you prioritized Street Improvements, then what item or action that the city should do?

(1) Item/Action

(2) Location

iv) If you prioritized Employment Opportunities, then what type of positions should be placed in Aldenville?

(1) Entry-Level Job Options

(a) Waitstaff/Food Service

(b) Trades Laborer

(c) Clerk/Office Manager/Receptionist

(d) Customer Service/Retail

(e) Stocking/Shipping/Distribution

- (f) Data Entry/Technical Support
- (g) Home Aide
- (2) Manufacturing
  - (a) Automotive Laborer
  - (b) Other
- (3) Professional
  - (a) School Teacher
  - (b) Scientist/Researcher
  - (c) Engineer/Architect
  - (d) Accountant/Financial Manager
  - (e) Information Technology/Computer Technician
  - (f) Retail/Business Management
  - (g) Healthcare
  - (h) Sales
- (4) Other
  - (a) \_\_\_\_\_

**The City's Report Card for Aldenville**

- 20) Which of the following City projects are you familiar with?
- a) Aldenville Commons Redevelopment
  - b) First Time Home Buyers Program
  - c) Multifamily Housing Initiative
  - d) Sewer Separation Project
  - e) Trash Reduction Program
  - f) I am not familiar with any of these projects
- 21) Which of these projects has had the greatest positive impact on Aldenville neighborhood?
- a) Aldenville Commons Redevelopment
  - b) First Time Home Buyers Program
  - c) Multifamily Housing Initiative
  - d) Sewer Separation Project
  - e) Trash Reduction Program
  - f) I am not familiar with these projects
- 22) Aldenville Commons Redevelopment. In the early 2010s, the City redeveloped the Aldenville Commons with a gazebo, path network, and landscape. Do you feel that Aldenville has benefited from this project?
- a) If yes, how so
  - b) In no, why not
  - c) I have no opinion.
- 23) First Time Homebuyer Program. The City of Chicopee's Office of Community Development provides a down payment program for qualified first time home buyers. Do you feel that Aldenville has benefited from this project?
- a) If yes, how so
  - b) In no, why not
  - c) I have no opinion.

- 24) Multifamily Housing Initiative. The City of Chicopee's operates the Multifamily Housing Initiative help qualified owner-occupant landlords with down payment and/or closing cost assistance for purchasing three-family properties. Do you feel that Aldenville has benefited from this project?
- a) If yes, how so
  - b) In no, why not
  - c) I have no opinion.
- 25) Sewer Separation Project. Since 2004, the City of Chicopee with federal and state funding had pursued a project to separate sewer and rainwater runoff. This purpose of this project is prevent pollution discharge into rivers during heavy rainfall. Do you feel that Aldenville has benefited from this project?
- a) If yes, how so
  - b) In no, why not
  - c) I have no opinion.
- 26) Trash Reduction Program. In 2016, the City's landfill closed and the City refocused on recycling. Residents that participated in the City's curbside program were given a free 35-gallon trash barrel, yellow pay-to-throw bags for excess trash, and unlimited volume of recycling materials. Do you feel that Aldenville has benefited from this project?
- a) If yes, how so
  - b) In no, why not
  - c) I have no opinion.

**Who are you?**

- 27) What is your relationship with the Aldenville neighborhood? Check all that apply:
- a) Live in the neighborhood
  - b) Work in the neighborhood
  - c) Shop in the neighborhood
  - d) Dine in the neighborhood
  - e) Other\_\_\_\_\_
- 28) If you live in Aldenville, how long have you lived in the neighborhood?
- a) Less than 1 year
  - b) 1 - 2 years
  - c) 2 - 5 years
  - d) 5 -10 years
  - e) More than 10 years,
  - f) I do not live in Aldenville
- 29) If you've lived in Aldenville for less than 1 year, did you previously live in Chicopee?
- a) If yes, then what neighborhood\_\_\_\_\_
  - b) If no, then where did you move from \_\_\_\_\_
- 30) What is your highest level of education?
- a) High School graduate or GED

- b) Some college courses
- c) Associate's degree
- d) Bachelor's degree
- e) Master's degree
- f) Doctoral degree
- g) Other\_\_\_\_\_

31) Do you work in Chicopee?

- a) Yes.
- b) If no, what city or town?
- c) I am unemployed.
- d) I am a student.

32) What is the size of your household?

- a) 1 person,
- b) 2 persons,
- c) 3 persons,
- d) 4 or more persons

33) Is anyone in your household that is currently a student in the Chicopee Public Schools?

- a) If yes, then what school(s)\_\_\_\_\_
- b) No

34) If the City conducts another survey, what is the best method to contact you? Please rank in your preferred order.

- a) Mailed survey to your home?
- b) Paper survey at the library or city hall?
- c) Online survey by computer?
- d) Online survey by cell phone?
- e) In person interview at your home?
- f) In person interview at the library or city hall?
- g) Focus group at the library or city hall?

## Appendix II: Aldenville Community Survey



### **Let's Talk About Aldenville!**

This survey is for all residents of Chicopee: those who live in Aldenville and those who live in other parts of the city. The purpose of the survey is to gather thoughts about what Aldenville's strengths are and what its priorities should be. Complete the survey and join the conversation!

If you have questions about the survey, please contact the Chicopee Planning Department by emailing Jack Benjamin, Assistant Planner at [jbenjamin@chicopeema.gov](mailto:jbenjamin@chicopeema.gov) or calling (413) 594-1485.

### **Neighborhood Appearance**

**For the following questions, please check the bubble that best reflects your opinion.**

In Aldenville, the houses and apartments look attractive.

Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

In Aldenville, the businesses look attractive.

Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

(Optional) Do you have other comments on the appearance of buildings in Aldenville?

### Housing Affordability

In Aldenville, it's affordable to own a home.

Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

In Aldenville, it's affordable to rent an apartment.

Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree



(Optional) Do you have other comments about housing affordability in Aldenville?

## Transportation

In Aldenville, traffic is a problem.

Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

In Aldenville, the streets are in good condition.

Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

In Aldenville, the sidewalks are in good condition.

Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

There are enough crosswalks and walk signals in Aldenville.

Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

Aldenville has good access to public transit.

Strongly agree       Somewhat agree       Neither agree nor disagree       Somewhat disagree       Strongly disagree

(Optional) Do you have other comments about transportation in Aldenville?

### Restaurants and Retail

In Aldenville, there are plenty of great restaurants.

Strongly agree       Somewhat agree       Neither agree nor disagree       Somewhat disagree       Strongly disagree

In Aldenville, there are stores where I like to shop.

Strongly agree       Somewhat agree       Neither agree nor disagree       Somewhat disagree       Strongly disagree

I can purchase healthy food in Aldenville.

Strongly agree       Somewhat agree       Neither agree nor disagree       Somewhat disagree       Strongly disagree

(Optional) Do you have any other comments on restaurants or stores in Aldenville?

### Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

There are enough parks and playgrounds in Aldenville.

Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

The parks in Aldenville are well-maintained.

Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

There is enough open space in Aldenville.

Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

(Optional) Do you have any comments about parks, recreation, or open space in Aldenville?

## Schools

There are good schools in Aldenville.

Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

Does anyone in your household currently attend school in Chicopee? (Select all that apply)

- Chicopee Public Schools
- Chicopee Private Schools
- No one in my household attends school in Chicopee
- Other (please specify)

(Optional) Please share any opinions you have about Aldenville schools.

## Aldenville Public Life

In Aldenville, there are places for public events and community gatherings.

Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

There is low crime in Aldenville.

Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

I feel safe in Aldenville.

Strongly agree    Somewhat agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat disagree    Strongly disagree

(Optional) Do you have other comments about the community in Aldenville?

## Priorities

What are Aldenville's most valuable strengths?

**Prioritize the following list by putting a number next to each item, with 1 being the most valuable strength, and 7 being the least valuable.**

- Parks, recreation, and open space
- Retail businesses and restaurants
- Employment opportunities
- Streets and sidewalks
- Housing options
- Community centers for seniors, children, and families
- School options

What in Aldenville needs the most improvement?

**Prioritize the following list by putting a number next to each item, with 1 needing the most improvement, and 7 needing the least improvement.**

Parks, recreation, and open space

Retail businesses and restaurants

Employment opportunities

Streets and sidewalks

Housing options

Community centers for seniors, children, and families

School options

(Optional) Is there something about priorities that we missed?

### **Neighborhood Identity**

Which of the following locations do you consider to be in Aldenville? (Check all that apply)

Al's Diner



Arnold's Meats



Chicopee Comprehensive High School



The Gazebo on the Commons



Garrity Grove Park



Mass Pike Underpass



Pride Station





Ray Ash Park



Rt. 391 Overpass



Traffic Circle on Memorial Drive



- St. Rose de Lima Church



- St. Stanislaus Cemetery



Do you go to any of the following businesses? (Check all that apply)

- Alden Credit Union



Alderville Liquor Store



Arnold's Meats



Doyle Travel Center



- Gary's Barber Shop



- Labrie and Pouliot, P.C.



- LeBel, Lavigne, & Dedy Insurance



- Puss and Pups Boutique



- Shop Smart Convenience



- McKinstry Farm Stand



Mike's Variety



Chicopee Convenience



Bloo Solutions



Other businesses (please specify)

Do you eat at any of the following restaurants? (Check all that apply)

- Angela's Family Restaurant and Pizzeria



- Boston Bay Pizza



- Brother's Pizza



- Doc's Place



Great China Restaurant



Lucky Strike



Mr. Cone



TD's Sports Pub





Al's Diner



Other restaurants (please specify)

### Tell Us About Yourself

How long have you lived in Chicopee? (Select all that apply)

- I was born here
- I moved away and came back
- I am new here (less than 2 years)
- I have lived here a fair amount of time (2-10 years)
- I have lived here a while (at least 10 years)

(Optional) Tell us more... for example, number of years you've lived in Chicopee, where you came from, what brought you here.

What is your relationship to Aldenville? (Check all that apply)

- Live in the neighborhood
- Work in the neighborhood
- Shop in the neighborhood
- Dine in the neighborhood
- Other

How many years have you lived in Aldenville?

What is your highest level of education?

- Some high school
- High school degree or GED
- Some college or professional certification
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate degree

Do you work in Chicopee?

- Yes
- No

Where do you work?

- In another town/city (please specify)
- I am unemployed
- I am a student

What is your age?

(Optional) How would you describe your race/ethnicity?

What is the range of your annual household income?

- Less than \$20,000
- \$20,000 to \$35,000
- \$35,000 to \$50,000
- \$50,000 to \$65,000
- \$65,000 to \$80,000
- Greater than \$80,000

How many people are in your household, including yourself?

How would you describe your household? (Select all that apply)

- I live alone
- I live with my partner/spouse
- I live with my parents
- I live with my children
- I live with roommates
- I live in a multigenerational household
- Other (please specify)

(Optional) Is there anything else you would like to add about yourself or your household?

### Outreach methods

How did you hear about the survey? (Check all that apply)

- Facebook or other social media
- A postcard or flyer
- A street sign
- City of Chicopee facility (Library/Town Hall/etc.)
- Word of mouth
- Fortune cookie
- Community event
- Someone recommended I take the survey

If the City conducts another survey, what is the best method to contact you? (Please select only three options)

- Mailed survey to your home
- Paper survey at the library or city hall
- Online survey by computer
- Online survey by cell phone
- In person interview at your home
- In person interview at the library or city hall
- Focus group at the library or city hall
- I do not wish to be included in future surveys

### The Last Word

(Optional) Is there anything else you would like to say about Aldenville?

(Optional) If you would like to receive a copy of the finished project, please include your email address in the field below:

## Appendix III: Spanish-Translated Aldenville Community Survey



### **¡Hablemos de Aldenville!**

Esta encuesta es para todos que tienen interés en Aldenville. El propósito de esta encuesta es para obtener los pensamientos sobre las fortalezas y las prioridades de Aldenville. ¡Llene la encuesta y únase la conversación!

La encuesta se termina en 10 de noviembre.

Si tiene preguntas sobre la encuesta, favor de hablar con el Departamento de Planificación de Chicopee. Mande un mensaje por correo electrónico a Jack Benjamin a [jbenjamin@chicopeema.gov](mailto:jbenjamin@chicopeema.gov) o llame por teléfono (413)-594-1485.

### **Apariencia del Vecindario**

Para las siguientes preguntas, elige la opción que mejor refleja su opinión.

En Aldenville, las casas y apartamentos parecen atractivos..

Si, totalmente  Más bien sí  Sin opinión  Más bien no  No, en absoluto

En Aldenville, los comercios parecen atractivos.

Si, totalmente  Más bien sí  Sin opinión  Más bien no  No, en absoluto

(Opcional) ¿Tiene otros comentarios sobre la apariencia de los edificios en Aldenville?

### **Asequibilidad de las Viviendas**

En Aldenville, es asequible poseer un hogar.

Si, totalmente  Más bien sí  Sin opinión  Más bien no  No, en absoluto

En Aldenville, es asequible alquilar un apartamento.

Si, totalmente  Más bien sí  Sin opinión  Más bien no  No, en absoluto

(Opcional) ¿Tiene otros comentarios sobre la asequibilidad de las viviendas en Aldenville?

## Transportación

En Aldenville, el tráfico es un problema.

Si, totalmente	Más bien sí	Sin opinión	Más bien no	No, en absoluto
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

En Aldenville, las calles están en buena condición.

Si, totalmente	Más bien sí	Sin opinión	Más bien no	No, en absoluto
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

En Aldenville, las aceras están en buena condición.

Si, totalmente	Más bien sí	Sin opinión	Más bien no	No, en absoluto
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Hay suficientes pasos de peatones y señales para peatones en Aldenville.

Si, totalmente	Más bien sí	Sin opinión	Más bien no	No, en absoluto
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Aldenville tiene buen acceso al transporte público.

Si, totalmente

Más bien sí

Sin opinión

Más bien no

No, en absoluto

(Opcional) ¿Tiene otros comentarios sobre transportación en Aldenville?

### Restaurantes y Tiendas

En Aldenville, hay muchos restaurantes buenos.

Si, totalmente

Más bien sí

Sin opinión

Más bien no

No, en absoluto

En Aldenville, hay tiendas donde me gusta comprar.

Si, totalmente

Más bien sí

Sin opinión

Más bien no

No, en absoluto

Puedo comprar comida saludable en Aldenville.

Si, totalmente

Más bien sí

Sin opinión

Más bien no

No, en absoluto



(Opcional) ¿Tiene otros comentarios sobre los restaurantes o tiendas en Aldenville?

### **Parques, Recreación, y Espacio Abierto**

Hay suficientes parques y patios de recreo en Aldenville.

Si, totalmente	Más bien sí	Sin opinión	Más bien no	No, en absoluto
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Los parques en Aldenville están bien mantenidos.

Si, totalmente	Más bien sí	Sin opinión	Más bien no	No, en absoluto
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Hay suficiente espacio abierto en Aldenville.

Si, totalmente	Más bien sí	Sin opinión	Más bien no	No, en absoluto
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

(Opcional) ¿Tiene otros comentarios sobre los parques, recreación, o espacio abierto en Aldenville?

## Escuelas

Hay escuelas buenas en Aldenville

- Si, totalmente  Más bien sí  Sin opinión  Más bien no  No, en absoluto

¿Hay alguien en su casa que asista a la escuela en Chicopee? (Elige todos que apliquen)

- Escuelas Públicas  
 Escuelas Privadas  
 Nadie en mi casa asiste a la escuela en Chicopee  
  Otro (por favor especifica)

(Opcional) Por favor, comparta cualquier opinión que tenga sobre las escuelas de Aldenville.

## Vida Pública en Aldenville

En Aldenville, hay lugares para los eventos públicos y las reuniones de la comunidad.

- Si, totalmente  Más bien sí  Sin opinión  Más bien no  No, en absoluto

Hay poco crimen en Aldenville.

Si, totalmente      Más bien sí      Sin opinión      Más bien no      No, en absoluto

Me siento seguro en Aldenville.

Si, totalmente      Más bien sí      Sin opinión      Más bien no      No, en absoluto

(Opcional) ¿Tiene otros comentarios sobre la comunidad en Aldenville?

## Prioridades

¿Cuáles son las fortalezas más valiosas de Aldenville?

**Priorice la siguiente lista colocando un número al lado de cada elemento, siendo 1 al lado de la fuerza más valiosa y 7 al lado de la menos valiosa.**

Parques, recreación, y espacio abierto

Comercios y restaurantes

Oportunidades del trabajo

Calles y aceras

Opciones de alojamiento

Centros de la comunidad para los mayores, niños, y familias

Opciones de escuela

En Aldenville, ¿cuáles cosas necesitan la mayor mejora?

**Priorice la siguiente lista colocando un número al lado de cada elemento, siendo 1 al lado de la fuerza más valiosa y 7 al lado de la menos valiosa.**

Parques, recreación, y espacio abierto

Comercios y restaurantes

Oportunidades del trabajo

Calles y aceras

Opciones de alojamiento

Centros de la comunidad para los mayores, niños, y familias

Opciones de escuela

(Opcional) ¿Hay algo sobre las prioridades que perdiéramos?

### **Identidad del Vecindario**

¿Cuáles de los siguientes lugares considera estar en Aldenville? (Elige todos que apliquen)

Al's Diner



Arnold's Meats



Chicopee Comprehensive High School



El Gazebo sobre los Commons



Parque Garrity Grove



Puente del Mass Pike



Gasolinera Pride



Parque Ray Ash



Puente de Carretera 391



Rotonda en Memorial Drive



Iglesia St. Rose de Lima



Cementerio St. Stanislaus



¿Va a algunos de los siguientes lugares? (Elige todos que apliquen)

Alden Credit Union





Alderville Liquor Store



Arnold's Meats



Doyle Centro de Viajes



Gary's Barber Shop



Labrie and Pouliot, P.C.



LeBel, Lavigne, & Deady Insurance



Puss and Pups Boutique



Shop Smart Convenience



McKinstry Farm Stand



Mike's Variety



Chicopee Convenience



Bloo Solutions



Otros lugares (por favor especifica)

¿Come en algunos de las siguientes restaurantes? (Elige todos que apliquen)

- Angela's Family Restaurant and Pizzeria



- Boston Bay Pizza



- Brother's Pizza



- Doc's Place



Great China Restaurant



Lucky Strike



Mr. Cone



TD's Sports Pub



Al's Diner



Otras restaurantes (por favor especifica)

## Cuéntanos Sobre Usted

¿Cuántos años ha vivido en Chicopee? (Elige todos que apliquen)

- Nací aquí
- Me mudé y volví
- Estoy nuevo aquí (Menos de 2 años)
- He vivido aquí por una vez (entre 2 y 10 años)
- He vivido aquí por una vez larga (Mas de 10 años)

(Opcional) Cuéntanos más... Por ejemplo, cuantos años ha vivido en Chicopee, de donde se mudó, porque se mudó aquí.

¿Cuál es su relación con Chicopee? (Elige todos que apliquen)

- Vivo en el vecindario
- Trabajo en el vecindario
- Voy de compras en el vecindario
- Ceno en el vecindario
- Otro

How many years have you lived in Aldenville?

¿Cuál es su nivel máximo de educación?

- Un parte de escuela secundaria
- Diploma de escuela secundaria o GED
- Un parte de universidad o certificación profesional
- Grado de asociado
- Bachillerato/licenciatura
- Titulaciones de posgrado

¿Trabaja en Chicopee?

- Sí
- No

Si no trabaja en Chicopee, ¿dónde trabaja usted?

- Otro ciudad/pueblo (por favor especifica)
- Estoy desempleado
- Soy estudiante



¿Cuántos años tiene usted?

(Opcional) ¿Cómo describiría su raza/etnia?

¿Cuál es la gama de su ingreso?

- Menos que \$20,000
- \$20,000 a \$35,000
- \$35,000 a \$50,000
- \$50,000 a \$65,000
- \$65,000 a \$80,000
- Más que \$80,000

¿Cuántas personas viven en su casa (incluyendo su mismo)?

¿Cómo describe su casa? (Elige todos que apliquen)

- Vivo solo
- Vivo con mi novio/a o esposo/a
- Vivo con mis padres
- Vivo con mis hijos
- Vivo con compañeros de la casa
- Vivo en una casa multigeneracional
- Otro (por favor especifica)

((Opcional) ¿Hay algo más que quiera decir sobre su mismo o su casa?

### Métodos de Contacto

¿Cómo se enteró de la encuesta? (Elige todos que apliquen)

- Facebook u otros medios de comunicación social
- Tarjeta postal o folleto
- Señal en una calle
- Facilidad de la Ciudad de Chicopee (Biblioteca/Ayuntamiento/etc.)
- Boca a boca
- Galleta de la fortuna
- Evento de la comunidad
- Alguien me recomendó que yo haga la encuesta

Si la ciudad haga otra encuesta, ¿cuál es el método mejor para contactarse? (Por favor solamente elige tres opciones)

- Correo a su casa
- Encuesta de papel en la biblioteca o ayuntamiento
- Encuesta en el Internet sobre la computadora
- Encuesta en su teléfono móvil
- Entrevista cara a cara en su casa
- Entrevista cara a cara en la biblioteca o ayuntamiento
- Grupo de enfoque en la biblioteca o ayuntamiento

### La Última Palabra

(Opcional) ¿Hay algo más que quiera decir sobre Aldenville?

El informe final estará completo en febrero de 2018. Una copia estará disponible en el sitio web del Departamento de Planificación de la Ciudad de Chicopee o en el sitio web UMass Scholarworks.

(Opcional) Si quiere recibir una copia del proyecto completo, por favor incluya su correo electrónico aquí:

## Appendix IV: Stakeholder List

Org Type	Name	Number of Facebook Followers/Members (if applicable)	Phone Number	Email	Address	Did they participate?
Business	Alden Credit Union	766	(413) 536-0475		710 Grattan Street	Y
Business	Office		(413) 532-1040		755 Grattan Street	N
Business	Aldenville Liquor Store		413-536-4848		742 Grattan Street	Y
Business	Al's Diner	376	(413) 534-3607		14 Yelle Street	Y
business	Angela's Family Restaurant	1134	(413) 533-3700		483 Grattan Street	Y
Business	Arbors Assisted Living		(413) 593-0088		929 Memorial Drive	N
Business	Arnold's Meats		(413) 593-5505	<a href="mailto:info@arnoldsmcats.com">info@arnoldsmcats.com</a>	307 Grattan Street	Y
Business	Ayotte and King					Y
Business	BayState Rug and Flooring	502	(413) 533-3806		671 Grattan Street	Y
Business	Brother's Pizza		(413) 532-8452		653 Grattan Street	Y
Business	Cana Korean Restaurant	994	(413) 592-1362		159 Grove Street	N
Business	Chicopee Child Development Center	239	(413) 593-3942		989 James Street	N
Business	Corporation		(413) 533-6743		277 Grattan Street	N
Business	Chicopee Provision	2100	(800) 924-6328		19 Sitarz Ave	Y
Business	Store	995	(413) 532-1001		957 Chicopee Street	N
Business	Chicopee/Willimansett Indoor Flea Market	949	(413) 437-8788		929 Chicopee Street	Y
Business	ChicopeeBarber	392	(413) 273-0377		212 Exchange Street	N
Business	China Star	none	(413) 362-3443		80 Main Street	N
Business	Citgo Station					Y
Business	D&N Nail Salon		(413) 533-9999		505 Grattan St	Y
Business	Doc's Place	1053	(413) 593-1591		1264 Granby Road	N
Business	Doyle Travel Center		(413) 534-3386		521 Grattan Street	N
Business	Four Jet Discount Furniture					Y
Business	Frontera Grill	6353	(413) 612-2800		1625 Memorial Drive	N
Business	Gary's Barber Shop		(413) 532-1918		471 Grattan Street	Y
Business	Golden Blossoms Flowers and Gifts		413) 534-6500		705 Grattan Street	Y
Business	Great China Restaurant		(413) 534-5600		690 Grattan Street	Y
Business	His 'N Hers					Y
Business	Hu Ke Lau	16700	(413) 593-5222		705 Memorial Drive	N

Business	Jennifer's Kitchen	477	(413) 532-7758		574 Chicopee Street	N
Business	Kid's Connection	none	(413) 536-8393		525 Grattan Street	N
Business	Labrie and Pouliot, P.C	none	(413) 534-4214		641 Grattan Street	Y
Business	LeBel/Lavigne & Deady Insurance Agency, Inc.	100	(413) 532-3291		637 Grattan Street	N
Business	Liberty Tax Service	116	(413) 533-5900		1400 Memorial Drive	N
Business	Lucky Strike Restaurant	2665	(413) 536-7912		703 Grattan Street	Y
Business	Masse's American Bistro	1398	(413) 315-8501		1329 Memorial Drive	N
Business	McKinstry Farm, Inc.	1840	(413) 536-2043		753 Montgomery Street	Y
	McKenna Orthodontics					N
Business	Mike's Variety	127	(413) 534-3219		355 Dale Street	Y
Business	Mr. Cone	736	(413) 315-8585	<a href="mailto:ccoelho@servicenet.org">ccoelho@servicenet.org</a>	1048 Granby Road	N
Business	Ondrick Natural Earth	587	(413) 594-8803		729 Fuller Road	N
Business	Patrick's Pub	460	(413) 331-2666		154 School Street	N
Business	Polish National Credit Union	702	(413) 592-9495		46 Main Street (but various locations)	N
business	Pride Station		(413) 592-2737		27 Montgomery Street	N
Business	Puss and Pups Boutique	157	(413) 519-3127		525 Grattan Street	Y
Business	Red Fez Bar and Grill	400	(413) 331-3534		70 Exchange Street	N
Business	Reynold's Family Farm		(413) 536-8393		525 Grattan Street	N
Business	Sabor Latino Restaurant		(413) 331-2806		872 Meadow Street	N
Business	TD's Sports Pub	1800	(413) 437-8400		699 Grattan Street	Y
Business	The Munich Haus	3997	(413) 594-8788		13 Center Street	N
Business	Tiger Mart		1 413-437-8630		646 Grattan Street	Y
Business	Shop Smart					Y
Business	Exclusive Hair Design					Y
Community	Polish Center of Learning and Discovery	720	(413) 592-0001	<a href="mailto:polishcenter@elms.edu">polishcenter@elms.edu</a>	33 South Street	N
Community	DownTown Get Down	817	(413) 594-1500		17 Springfield Street	N
Community	Chicopee Kielbasa Festival	6478	(413) 205-7583			N
Community	Chicopee Elks Club	176	413-592-1849	<a href="mailto:bpoe1849@gmail.com">bpoe1849@gmail.com</a>	431 Granby Road	N
Community	Moose Family Center		(413) 592-6285		244 Fuller Road	N
Community	Portuguese American Club	741	(413) 592-9293		149 Exchange Street	N
Community	Chicopee Sportsman Club	390	(413) 594-9021		381 Batchelor Street	N
Community	Garden					Y

Facebook Group	Forum	902				Y
Facebook Group	{Open} United Chicopee Residents Group	937				N
Facebook Group	Chicopee	4400				N
Facebook Group	Growing Up Chicopee	3700				N
Government	Mayor's Office	3822	413) 594-1500		Chicopee, MA 01013	Y
Government	Department	16645	(413) 594-1700	<a href="mailto:mwilk@chicopeepolice.com">mwilk@chicopeepolice.com</a>	110 Church Street	Y
Government	Dept.	1,946	413) 594-3481		687 Front St	Y
Government	Chicopee Electric Light	1577	(413) 598-8311		725 Front Street, PO BOX 405	N
Government	Chicopee Fire Department		(413) 594-1600		80 Church Street (but various locations)	N
Media	MassLive	84,000	(413)-731-1036		1350 Main Street, Springfield, Massachusetts 01103	N
Media	Chicopee Live					N
Media	Chicopee Herald Weekly		(413) 525-3247		280 N Main Street East 01028	N
Media	WWLP-22News	96,434	(413) 377-2200		1 Broadcast Center	N
Newspaper	Chicopee Register	920	413-682-0007	<a href="mailto:chicopeeregister@turley.com">chicopeeregister@turley.com</a>		Y
Nonprofit	Chicopee Public Library	1,708	(413) 594-1800	<a href="mailto:cpl@chicopeepubliclibrary.org">cpl@chicopeepubliclibrary.org</a>	449 Front St, Chicopee, MA 01020	Y
Nonprofit	Valley Opportunity Council	1839	(413) 552-1554	<a href="mailto:mwhite@valleyopp.com">mwhite@valleyopp.com</a>	35 Mt Carmel Ave	Y
Nonprofit	Chicopee	876	(413) 592-6707	<a href="mailto:clarisam@bgcchicopee.org">clarisam@bgcchicopee.org</a>	580 Meadow Street	Y
Nonprofit	Lorraine's Soup Kitchen and Pantry	2113	(413) 592-9528	<a href="mailto:andrea@lorrainessoupkitchen.com">andrea@lorrainessoupkitchen.com</a>	170 Pendexter Avenue	Y
Nonprofit	Chicopee Fresh	400				Y
Nonprofit	Chamber of Commerce	804	413) 594-2101	<a href="mailto:jessica@chicopeechamber.org">jessica@chicopeechamber.org</a>	264 Exchange Street	Y
Nonprofit	RiverMills Senior Center	43	(413) 534-3698	<a href="mailto:smanyak@chicopeema.gov">smanyak@chicopeema.gov</a>	5 W Main Street	Y
Nonprofit	Club	644	(413) 636-5602	<a href="mailto:hdestapado@massmutual.com">hdestapado@massmutual.com</a>	687 Arcade Street	N
Nonprofit	First Central Bible Church	266	(413) 592-5353		50 Broadway Street	N
Nonprofit	Rectory		(413) 594-6669		40 Cyman Drive	N
Nonprofit	Pioneer Valley Baptist	1022	(413) 348-4148		85 Montcalm Street	N
Nonprofit	Church	118	(413) 594-8700		104 Springfield Street	N
Nonprofit	St. George Church		(413) 598-8622		33 South Street	N
Nonprofit	LifePoint Church	1420	(413) 536-2775		603 New Ludlow Road	N

Nonprofit	Grace Episcopal Church		(413) 594-4017		156 Springfield Street	N
Nonprofit	Saint Rose De Lima Parish	512	(413) 536-4558	<a href="mailto:info@speakoutforacause.com">info@speakoutforacause.com</a>	600 Grattan Street	Y
Nonprofit	Iglesia Pentecostal Del Dios Vivo Inc.		(413) 331-2651		930 Meadow Street	N
Nonprofit	Pastoral Center Chicopee		(413) 536-4558		15 Chapel Street	N
Nonprofit	Church	38	(413) 592-0396		306 Chicopee Street	N
Nonprofit	Greater Church of Christ	122	(413) 592-3050		284 Montgomery Street	N
Nonprofit	St. Stanislaus School	791	(413) 592-5135		534 Front Street	N
Nonprofit	Healing Hands First Spiritualist Church	303	(413) 592-0300	<a href="mailto:denise.m.sullivan7@gmail.com">denise.m.sullivan7@gmail.com</a>	465 Granby Road	N
Nonprofit	Crossroads Ministries	109	(413) 218-5161		40 Newbury Street	N
Nonprofit	Saints Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church		(413) 592-3401		30 Grattan Street	N
Nonprofit	Church		(413) 533-4035		11 Meadow Street	N
Nonprofit	International Church of New Covenant		(413) 536-3800		780 Chicopee Street	N
Nonprofit	New England Christian Center		(413) 598-0993		450 Memorial Drive, Suite 403	N
School	Chicopee Head Start	341	(413)-788-6522	<a href="mailto:info@headstart.org">info@headstart.org</a>	30 Madison Ave, Springfield, MA 01105	N
School	Bellamy Middle School	1031	(413) 594-3527	<a href="mailto:mfrancis@chicopeeps.org">mfrancis@chicopeeps.org</a>	314 Pendleton Avenue	Y
School	Chicopee Comprehensive High School	9154	(413) 594-3534	<a href="mailto:dmorrison@cpsge.org">dmorrison@cpsge.org</a>	617 Montgomery Street	N
School	Chicopee School Superintendent		(413) 594-3410	<a href="mailto:rrcge@chicopeeps.org">rrcge@chicopeeps.org</a>	180 Broadway St, Chicopee, MA 01020	N

## Appendix: Findings

Table 9. Responses to the question, "If the City conducts another survey, what is the best method to contact you?". Respondent were asked to select only three options

Answer	%	Count
Online survey by computer	48.66%	236
Mailed survey to your home	21.24%	103
Online survey by cell phone	14.02%	68
I do not wish to be included in future surveys	8.25%	40
Focus group at the library or city hall	3.30%	16
Paper survey at the library or city hall	3.09%	15
In person interview at your home	1.03%	5
In person interview at the library or city hall	0.41%	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>485</b>

Table 10. Responses to the question, "How long have you lived in Chicopee?". Respondents were asked to select all that apply (n=375)

#	Answer	%	Count
1	I was born here	46.26%	204
2	I moved away and came back	8.84%	39
3	I am new here (less than 2 years)	2.49%	11
5	I have a lived here a fair amount of time (2-10 years)	11.34%	50
4	I have lived here a while (at least 10 years)	31.07%	137
	Total	100%	441

Table 11. Responses to the question, "What is your relationship to Aldenville?". Respondents were asked to select all that apply (n=375)

#	Answer	Count
1	Live in the neighborhood	182
2	Work in the neighborhood	40
3	Shop in the neighborhood	105
4	Dine in the neighborhood	171
5	Other	95
	Total	593

Table 12. Responses to the question, "What is your highest level of education?" (n=375)

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Some high school	1.87%	7
2	High school degree or GED	13.87%	52
3	Some college or professional certification	28.80%	108
4	Associate's degree	19.20%	72
5	Bachelor's degree	22.13%	83
6	Graduate degree	14.13%	53
	Total	100%	375



Table 13. Responses to the question, "Do you work in Chicopee?" (n=375)

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	37.33%	140
2	No	62.67%	235
	Total	100%	375

Table 14. Responses to the question, "Where do you work?" (n=226)

#	Answer	%	Count
1	In another town/city (please specify)	76.99%	174
2	I am unemployed	19.47%	44
3	I am a student	3.54%	8
	Total	100%	226

Table 15. Responses to the question, "What is your age?" (n = 358)

Age	
<b>Under 20</b>	5
<b>20-29</b>	43
<b>30-39</b>	86
<b>40-49</b>	69
<b>50-59</b>	93
<b>60-69</b>	43
<b>70 and above</b>	19

Table 16. Responses to the question, "What the range of your annual household income?" (n=318)

#	Answer	%	Count
<b>1</b>	Less than \$20,000	4.09%	13
<b>2</b>	\$20,000-\$35,000	9.12%	29
<b>3</b>	\$35,000-50,000	16.98%	54
<b>4</b>	\$50,000-65,000	16.35%	52
<b>5</b>	\$65,000-80,000	16.67%	53
<b>6</b>	Greater than \$80,000	36.79%	117
	Total	100%	318

Table 17. Responses to the question, "How would you describe your household?". Respondents were asked to select all that apply

#	Answer	%	Count
1	I live alone	9.48%	46
2	I live with my partner/spouse	48.66%	236
3	I live with my parents	3.92%	19
4	I live with my children	27.63%	134
5	I live with roommates	0.62%	3
9	I live in a multigenerational household	6.80%	33
7	Other (please specify)	2.89%	14
	Total	100%	485

Table 18. Responses to the question, "How did you hear about the survey?". Respondents were asked to select all that apply

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Facebook or other social media	77.00%	308
3	A postcard or flyer	4.50%	18
4	A street sign	1.50%	6
2	City of Chicopee facility (Library/Town Hall/etc.)	5.25%	21
5	Word of mouth	2.00%	8
7	Fortune cookie	1.00%	4
6	Community event	4.25%	17
8	Someone recommended I take the survey	4.50%	18
	Total	100%	400

Table 19. Responses to the question, "If the City conducts another survey, what is the best method to contact you?". Respondents were asked to select only three options

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Mailed survey to your home	21.24%	103
2	Paper survey at the library or city hall	3.09%	15
3	Online survey by computer	48.66%	236
4	Online survey by cell phone	14.02%	68
5	In person interview at your home	1.03%	5
6	In person interview at the library or city hall	0.41%	2
7	Focus group at the library or city hall	3.30%	16
8	I do not wish to be included in future surveys	8.25%	40
	Total	100%	485