

Urban Extension in Massachusetts

Status: NIFA REVIEW

Project Director

MICHAEL DIPASQUALE

Organization Project Number

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Accession Number

7002046

Start & End Date

10/01/2020

Organization

University of Massachusetts

To Project / Program

"Revitalizing Massachusetts Cities and Towns"

Primary Critical Issue

Environmental Stewardship

Fiscal Year

2022

In 2-3 sentences, briefly describe the issue or problem that your project addresses.

In recent years, many urban areas in Massachusetts have shown signs of revitalization. Yet, small to midsized cities, especially in the western part of the state (Springfield, Holyoke, and others) lag behind. There are many reasons for this disparity. Many areas of the state west of Rt 495 have been impacted by relatively weak post-industrial economies. This is especially true along the I-91 corridor, where many former mill towns suffer from a loss of investment and outdated infrastructure. This has resulted in a general loss of vitality, which in turn has brought about a range of civic challenges. Unfortunately, many of these cities do not have the ability to address these challenges adequately.

Briefly describe in non-technical terms how your major activities helped you achieve, or make significant progress toward, the goals and objectives described in your non-technical summary.

Major activities, including planning and design work in Springfield and Holyoke, address the needs of neighborhoods. The activities, done in collaboration with the City of Springfield, have had positive impacts in many areas of the city, and have benefited hundreds of residents and stakeholders. The larger impact is a healthier, more vital city.

Briefly describe how your target audience benefited from your project's activities.

Residents have safer streets.

Heat island impact and impact from storms has been mitigated for residents and businesses.

Residents are empowered and better informed to address climate change and sustainable design and development in their city.

Briefly describe how the broader public benefited from your project's activities.

Climate impacts have been mitigated for larger region.

The local economy is improved, with broad impacts for the region (tourists, businesses, etc).

Water is cleaner (for the entire state) due to the reduction in Combined Sewer Outflows.

Comments (optional)

- Citizen Planner Training Collaborative Board Member of Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC) the only statewide organization in Massachusetts that provides training programs for members of municipal Planning Boards and Zoning Boards of Appeals. (Committee or Board Service) (30) - 400 Participants
- Direct "Make-It Springfield" community makerspace, and afterschool program. Audience includes UMass Extension 4H programs, youth afterschool and maker events, many events for youth and adults representing low-income household and people of color. (Community Service Project) (500) - 250 Adult Participants, 250 Youth Participants
- Direct UMass Amherst Design Center in Springfield. Serve as director of major outreach center for UMass Amherst in Springfield. Work

includes outreach and presentations to local organizations, community groups, businesses, non-profits, etc. Work also includes outreach to Springfield youth, in collaboration with other Springfield organizations. (Research Project (Applied Research) (50) - 900 Adult Participants, 50 Youth Participants

- Outreach to local community agriculture/urban farms/nutrition programs. (Research Project (Basic Research) (6) - 200 Adult Participants, 60 Youth Participants
- Publicize UMass Extension work through social media; UMass Design Center website Make-it Springfield Facebook page Update and maintain UMass Amherst Design Center website. Website presents learning tools and highlights "success stories" related to UMass Extension's work in Springfield and western Massachusetts related to the sustainable revitalization of cities and towns. Range of projects and research initiatives conducted at the UMass Amherst Design Center in Springfield/UMass Extension. (Direct - Other) (3) - 650 Participants
- Teaching: Research Methods in Sustainable Community Development (Teaching - Undergraduate Course) (1) - 55 Participants