



### ***What is Urban Renewal?***

Urban renewal is a strategy for redeveloping and revitalizing substandard, decadent and blighted open areas for residential, commercial, industrial, business, governmental, recreational, educational, hospital or other uses. Under M.G.L. Chapter 121B municipalities, through their urban renewal agencies, are authorized to undertake a wide range of public actions to address these conditions and to create the environment needed to attract and support private development and promote sound growth in designated neighborhoods. The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development's Division of Community Services administers the urban renewal program, including assisting municipalities to establish and strengthen urban renewal agencies, and providing assistance and resources to prepare and implement urban renewal plans.

### ***What is the Lawrence Urban Renewal Plan?***

The Lawrence Redevelopment Authority (LRA) is undertaking the creation of an urban renewal plan under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 121B and the regulatory requirements of 760 CMR 12.00, promulgated by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The Plan will identify action steps that the LRA and other public and private partners can take to advance four key goals:

- ✓ Economic development
- ✓ Job creation
- ✓ Improved quality of life
- ✓ Fiscal stability

### ***What areas of the city are included in the Urban Renewal Plan?***

The LRA has identified a Study Area (available for viewing on the project website at [www.lawrencetbd.com](http://www.lawrencetbd.com)) but has not yet determined the final boundaries of the Urban Renewal Plan. This decision will be made as part of the community planning process.

### ***Who is involved?***

The LRA will develop this plan with significant community input as well as technical information prepared by a team of consultants led by The Cecil Group, Inc., planning and urban design firm based in Boston. Community input will be an integral part of the planning process, and there will be numerous opportunities for comments and feedback. The LRA will also create a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) to help guide the planning process. Input from stakeholders who participate in the public process will define a vision for the area that is incorporated into the final Urban Renewal Plan.

### ***Who has to approve the Urban Renewal Plan?***

The final Urban Renewal Plan must be approved by the Mayor, City Council, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. In addition, the Lawrence Planning Board must agree that the Urban Renewal Plan is consistent with existing comprehensive plans for the city.

### ***What is the timeline for completing the Lawrence Urban Renewal Plan?***

The project is expected to be complete in 2016, with the following schedule:

- Summer 2015 - Fall 2015 – Community Outreach and Existing Conditions Analysis

- Winter 2016 - Spring 2016 – Definition of Urban Renewal Plan boundaries and Refinement of Plan Elements
- Summer 2016 - Fall 2016 – Draft Report and Approval Process

***What kinds of activities can a Redevelopment Authority undertake through an Urban Renewal Plan?***

M.G.L. Chapter 121B allows municipalities, through their Redevelopment Authorities acting as urban renewal agencies, to eliminate and redevelop substandard, decadent or blighted open areas for industrial, commercial, business, residential, recreational, educational, hospital or other purposes. With the goals of revitalizing such land uses and encouraging new growth, Redevelopment Authorities have the power to:

- Establish rehabilitation and design standards;
- Assemble and dispose of land, including the taking of real estate through eminent domain;
- Relocate businesses and residents occupying urban renewal sites;
- Demolish and/or rehabilitate substandard structures;
- Participate in real estate development and commercial revitalization;
- Issue bonds, borrow money and invest funds;
- Receive grants and loans;
- Accept gifts or requests.

***How does the Urban Renewal Plan relate to other plans and projects in the city?***

There are several recently completed and ongoing planning projects underway within the City of Lawrence. The Lawrence Urban Renewal Plan will build on these efforts and provide additional tools and resources for implementation.

***How long will it take to see the results of the improvements made by the LRA?***

The length of time necessary to make improvements in the area will depend on the severity of conditions contributing to “blight” and the urban renewal plan vision. The LRA will continually balance decisions related to the cost and benefit of improvements as well as the potential revenue these improvements may generate. Once approved, the Urban Renewal Plan is in effect for 20 years. The Plan can also be amended from time to time as conditions change or projects are completed.

***As a property or business owner what benefits can an Urban Renewal Plan provide for me?***

By initiating the process of designating an area for urban renewal, a community is sending the message that they are interested in assisting with its revitalization. Through the planning process, market opportunities are identified and the private sector is engaged in understanding these opportunities as well as the tools that are available to assist with project implementation. Property owners and businesses benefit from both the public and private commitments and investments that are made in the Urban Renewal area.

***Will my property taxes go up if my property is included in an Urban Renewal area?***

There is no additional assessment to properties within an urban renewal area.

***Who is paying for the Plan?***

The Lawrence Redevelopment Authority is paying for the Urban Renewal Plan with funding provided in part by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

