

FOOD IN THE CITY

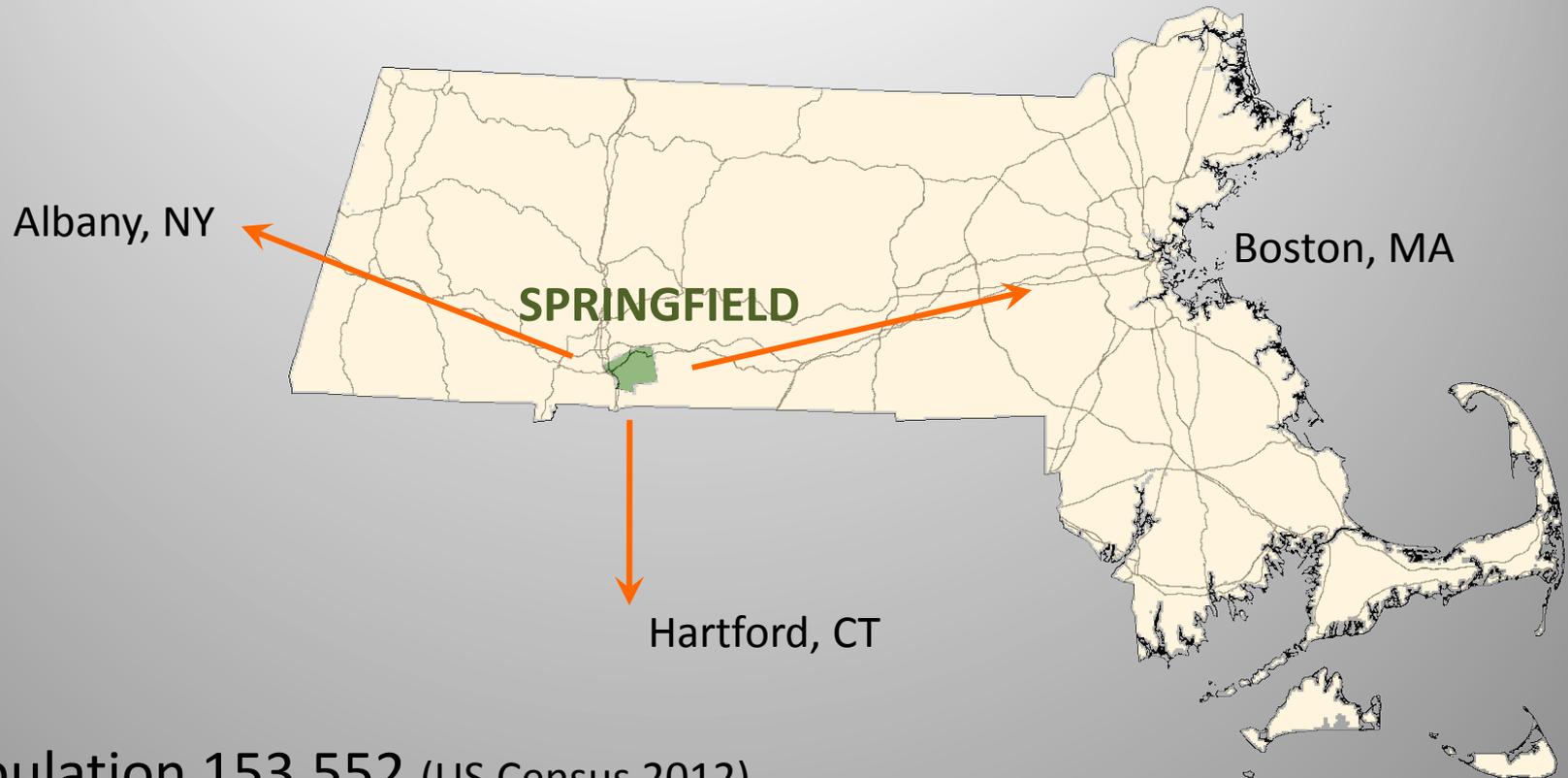
Where can we grow?



A process to assess land suitable for urban agriculture.

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The Conway School

Springfield, Massachusetts



- Population 153,552 (US Census 2012)
- 34.6% of residents below poverty level (ACS 2009)
- 44.5% percent of households are food-insecure (FRAC 2010)

Vacancy – not just an eyesore.





Springfield Food Policy Council (2010)

- Oversees public and private efforts to improve *food security*
- Has diverse representation in membership - farmers, distributors, health care, residents, non-profit organizations, municipal departments

Urban Agriculture Committee (2010 after SFPC)

- Advocate for policies that create opportunities and infrastructure for people to grow their own food
- Identified vacant lots as an opportunity for urban agriculture



How do we know where we can grow?

Where is urban agriculture permitted?

Is the soil contaminated? Is the site big enough?

Which neighborhoods need a community garden?

Who will benefit? Is it the “right” site?

How can I access vacant land?

Will the garden be accessible to the community?

Stakeholder Input



Community Meeting, February 2014

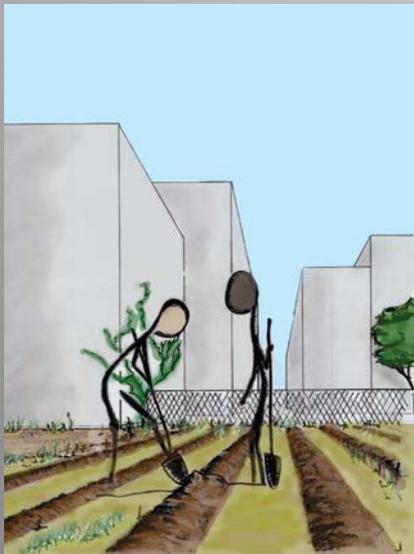
Scope of the Assessment



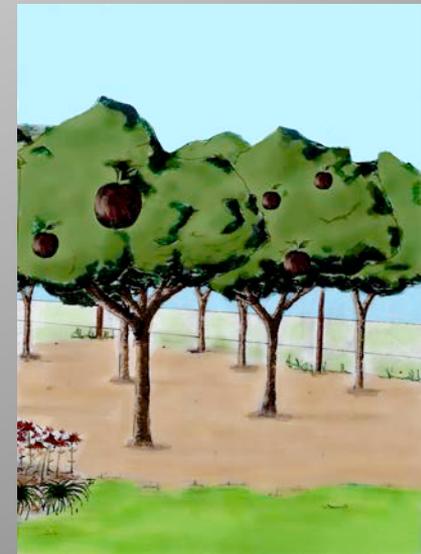
Community Gardens



Commercial Farms



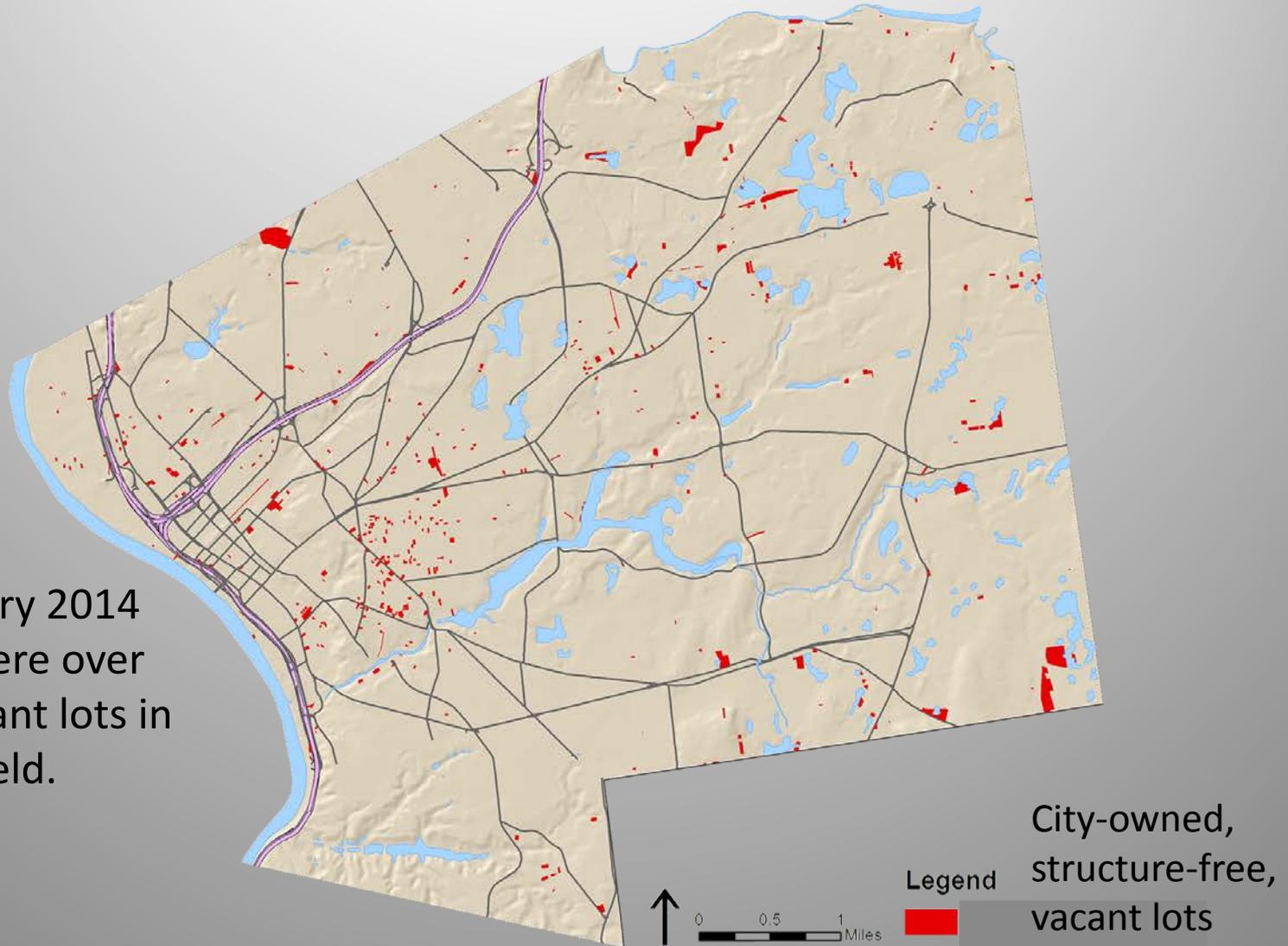
Community & Youth Farms



Urban Orchards

GIS Inventory & Assessment

In January 2014
there were over
500 vacant lots in
Springfield.





Tiered Results

GOOD

→ **Tier 1 criteria** focus on the immediate and neighborhood conditions of the site.

BETTER

→ **Tier 2 criteria** also relate to neighborhood conditions for which mappable data was not available.

BEST

→ **Tier 3 criteria** relate individual vacant lots to broad, city-wide considerations.



Assumptions

- ✓ All sites that met the Tier 1 criteria may be suitable for urban agriculture.
- ✓ If not identified as hazardous, soils are suitable for agriculture.
- ✓ City water can be accessed from every site and is suitable to use to grow food.
- ✓ Adequate sun is available.



Ground Truthing

- ✓ Street width
- ✓ Vehicular traffic
- ✓ Fencing
- ✓ Surrounding buildings and existing vegetation
- ✓ Soil should be tested or use raised beds



Raster Analysis

- ✓ Datalayers obtained
- ✓ Polygons created
- ✓ Merge to Springfield boundary
- ✓ Convert to Raster
- ✓ Reclassify

Criteria for Community Gardens

Tier 1a Criteria

- < 5000 SQ FT
- < 5 % Slope
- Not Zoned Commercial P
- Not Hazardous
- Not a Flood Zone
- Not a Wetland
- Not Priority Habitat
- Permeable Surface
- City-owned Vacant Lot

Tier 1b Criteria

- Adjacent Vacant Lot
- Corner Lot
- Near Gardens
- Near Centers of Community

Tier 2 Criteria

- High Renter Density
- Sidewalks along site

Tier 3 Criteria

- Environmental Justice
- Proximity to Parks
- Food Deserts

Ground-Truthing

Priority Sites Identified

Tiers of criteria used to evaluate community gardens.

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Tier 1 = 27 parcels



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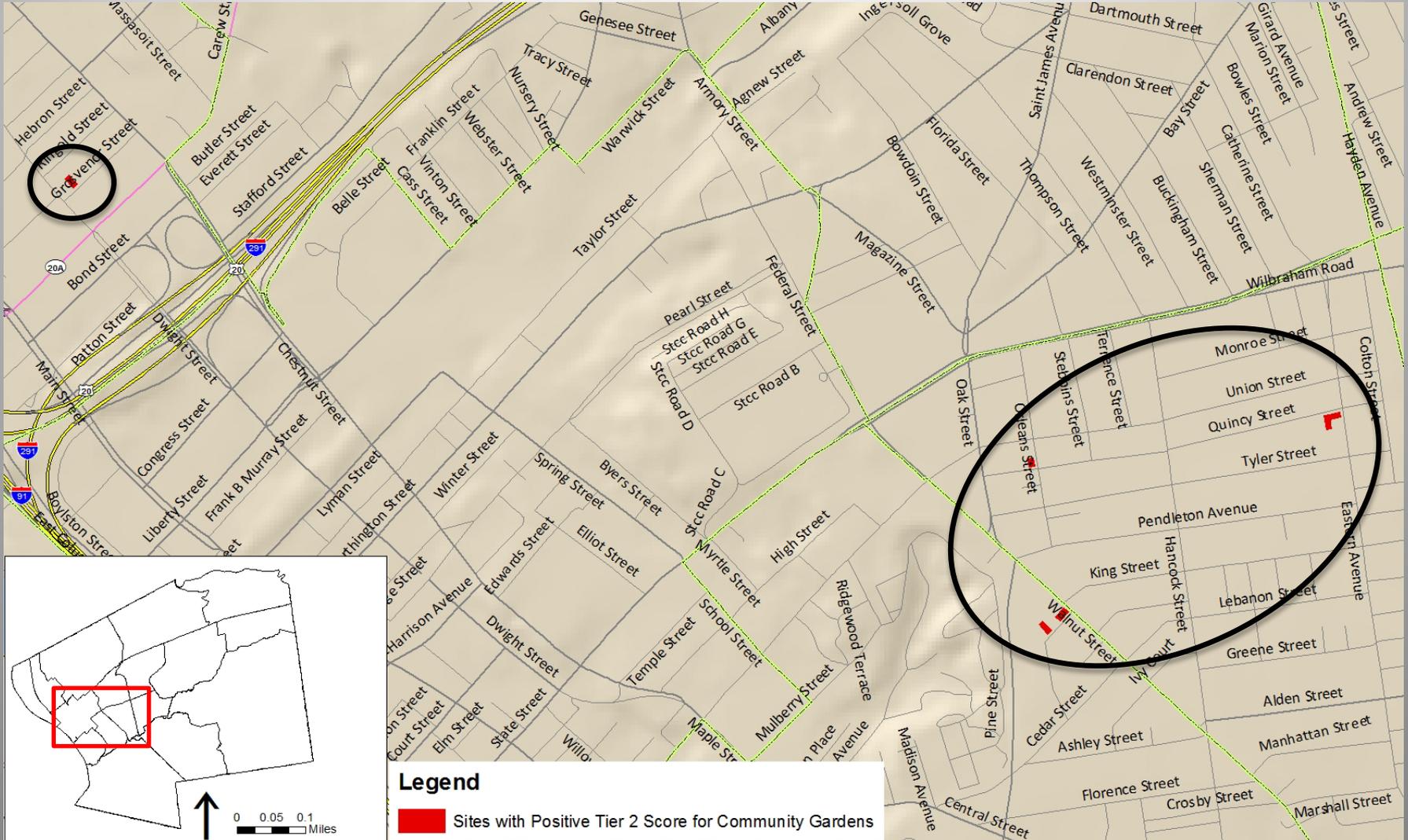
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Ground-Truthing

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Tier 2 = 6 parcels



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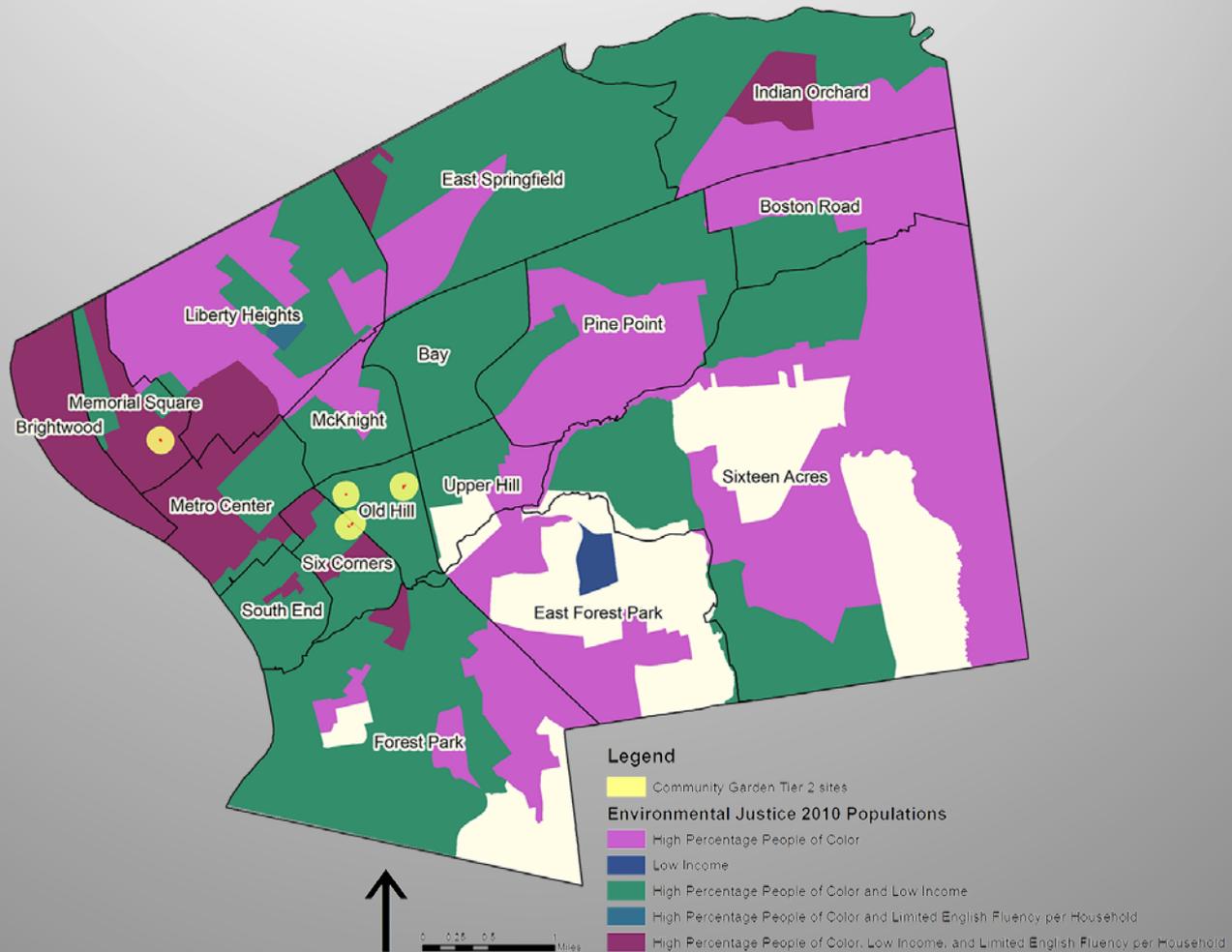
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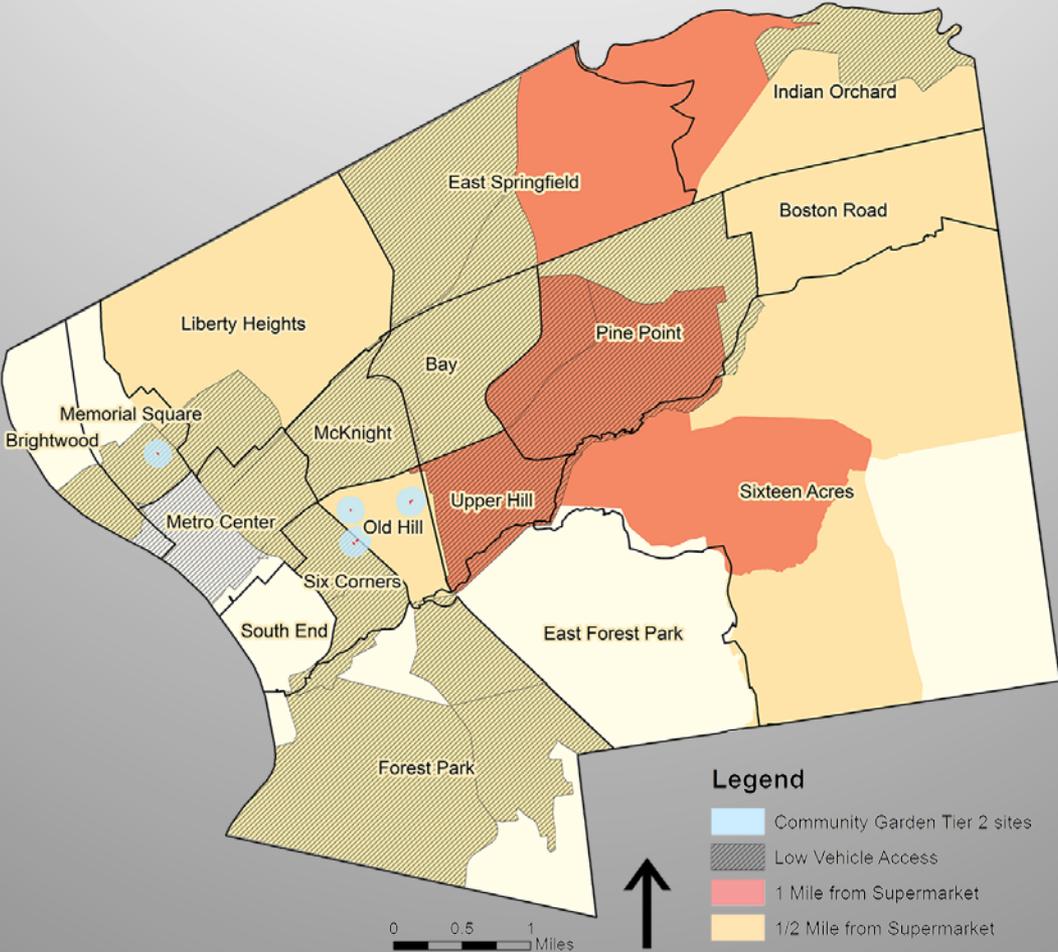
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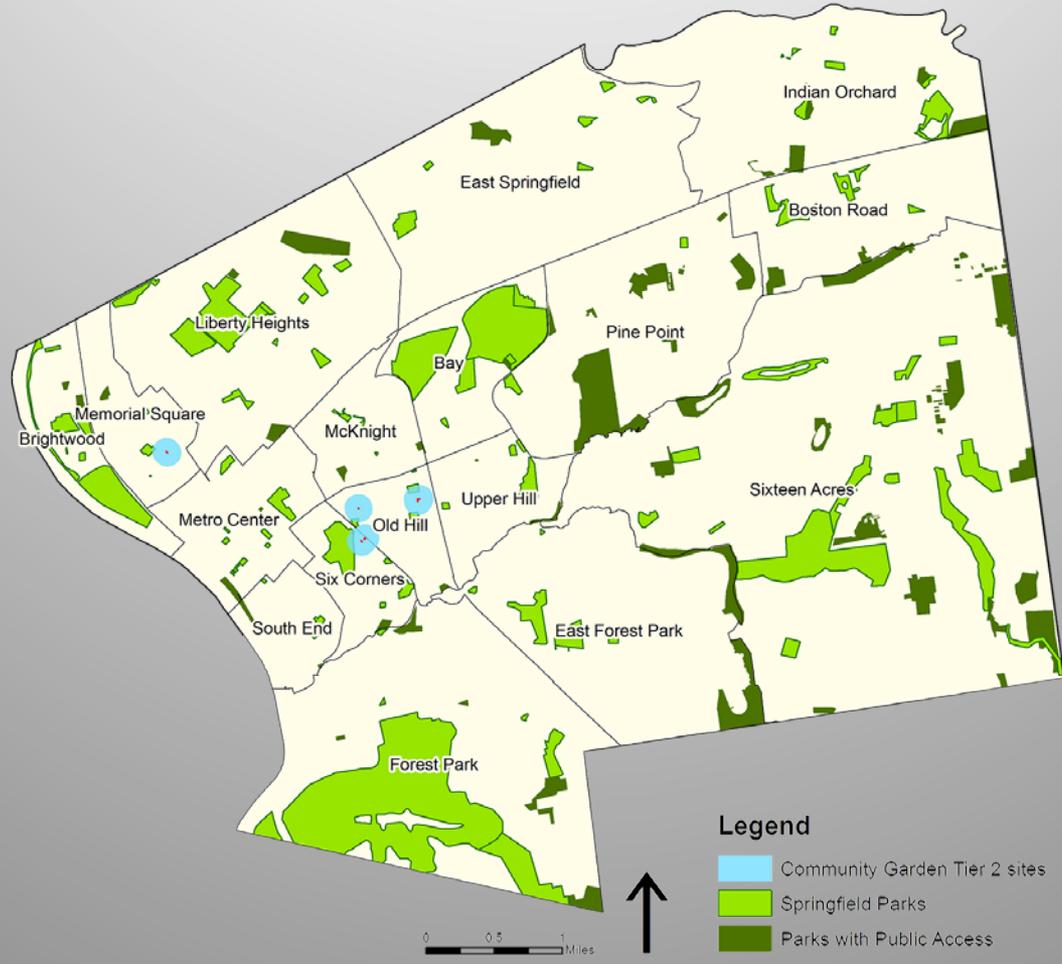
Tier 3 – Environmental Justice



Tier 3 – Food Deserts



Tier 3 – Parks and Open Space



Community Garden Results

Tiers	Parcels
Tier 1a	39
Tier 1b	27
Tier 2	6
Tier 3	3

GROUND TRUTHING OBSERVATIONS

- ✓ sits on a narrow two-way road
- ✓ existing split-rail fence surrounds the property
- ✓ lot “cleaned and greened”
- ✓ some tree debris on the property will need to be cleared
- ✓ good solar access
- ✓ trees and scrub to the east of the property





Urban Agriculture Committee: Strategic Planning

Short Term Goals:

- Prioritize a robust community garden network
- Expand the capacity of Gardening the Community

Long Term Goals:

- Land Tenure



Currently in Springfield

Community Gardening Ordinance (2012)

- Encourages citizen engagement in urban agriculture,
- Acknowledges the benefits of urban agriculture, and
- Permits people to petition to temporarily use vacant lots for urban agriculture.

Hen Ordinance

- Will be introduced into the discussion this year



Defining Success

Municipal Support

-  Passing additional ordinances to ease implementation
-  Water access

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

-  Awarded grant dollars for infrastructure

Private sector support

-  Currently a missing component



FOOD IN THE CITY

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Find the full report on ISSUU
<http://issuu.com/conwaydesign>