

Comments Received During the Action Plan Comment Period

#1. Comment Received:

Sixteen Acres resident submitted:

I recently was informed about the two upcoming online Facebook meetings that will be held in January on getting residents ideas on how to make Springfield a better place. I do wish these meetings would be more publicized for the residents of Springfield as I feel they are not. I also feel that they should be at times when more people could actually make the meetings. Yes, I realize many work from home but yet many do not.

One of my suggestions on bettering Springfield would be to build up Boston Rd Eastfield Mall area all the way down to State St. Bring in coffee shops, places to dine, places to shop etc. We have the casino which was to help attract more people to the city but besides what has been done in the downtown area not much else has been seen in other parts of the city. Why can't it be a hustle and bustle area like you see on Memorial Drive in Chicopee or the Enfield area? The mall area at one time was so vibrant and full of shopping and now it's just a depressed area. There's both sides of the road and lots of space to change it and make it a place people want to come to and then just keep taking it all the way down to road. It could such a great area again. I hope this gets considered in making Springfield better.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Sixteen Acres Resident

Answer:

We will take your request into consideration. Prior to COVID-19, the public hearings were always held in the evening at schools, community centers or other community organizations. The Facebook live hearings are held during work hours so the staff can assist with the hearing.

We will include your suggestions to better Springfield in the Action Plan.

#2. Comment Received:

I saw that the city is seeking feedback from residents and to email before January 25? If that's not true, disregard this message.

I moved here five years ago because I got a job with the library and had residency requirements. I no longer work in Springfield because they're an awful employer. My partner is currently a Springfield police officer.

My first feedback is that residency requirement. I know no one will do anything about it. Everyone's fought it for years. Sarno knows it's an issue and doesn't care. So, I'll just leave it at that.

The second feedback is that the city is dirty. More so than an average city this size. I did a project with teenagers where they identified their biggest concern and the litter was it. There's just garbage everywhere you look. Our neighbor literally throws trash out their car window on their own road.

Safety is another thing. I live with a cop and the city still doesn't feel safe. We were driving in broad daylight in an ok neighborhood this past summer and a shooting happened right in front of us in the middle of the road. This isn't the first time I experienced this. There were shootings outside my library on multiple occasions while I worked there. Again, not normal especially for a city of this size.

My other feedback is affordable housing. And I'm not talking about building more housing for low-income people. We know a lot of landlords (who my boyfriend works with) scamming the system by jacking their rent as far as they can to collect the highest amount of Section 8. They then only rent to section 8.

There's a lot of low-income people in this city, but there's also a lot of low-income housing. Which, don't get me wrong, there needs to be with a 28% poverty rate. I'm referring to people who are too poor to buy a house, but make too much to get vouchers or assistance. We fall under that category. There's not enough affordable rentals in this city. And building more Silverbrick closets doesn't solve the issue because those are just single rooms that cost \$1,500 a month. Not being to afford a house shouldn't mean getting forced into overpriced studios in, again, unsafe neighborhoods.

Anyways, there's a ton of more issues with this city and more bad than good. We only stay because of the residency requirement forced on my boyfriend. One positive feedback is there's lots of great restaurants. So maybe the city can relish in that.

Best,
Someone who can't wait to move back to Connecticut

Answer:

We will take your comments and suggestions into consideration. Your comments will be included in this years Action Plan, 2023-2024.

#3. Comment Received:

Hello,

I am responding to the recent post. I have lived in the city of Springfield my whole life. When I walk or drive through the city, I see so much blight. Many homes use their residence for car repairs and commercial businesses. Cars parked on front lawns, trash

all over and I think that city employees, and inspectors must see the same when driving throughout or on their way to work? Why do residents have to call to report this constantly? I think there should be assigned code enforcement to check neighborhoods for violations. This should be done on a schedule. I feel that residents do call in but it is constant. In my neighborhood we have some rented homes and the people don't care they throw trash all over, unregistered vehicles on lawns, have furniture and litter everywhere. My taxes just increased by 300 per quarter, we take care of our property and I pick up trash daily on my walks but people and homeowners need to be responsible and held accountable.

I have attended the community meetings and I do call our community officer for West Forest Park if needed, is this the protocol for reporting?

This is a huge issue as many of my longtime neighbors have the same concern.

Thanks for the opportunity to suggest a solution.

Answer:

Yes, attending community meetings is the right thing to do. You can also call 311 and report the littering and blighted properties. We will advise Code Enforcement of the issues in West Forest Park.

#4. Comments Received:

Support local businesses

- create a pool for insurance, medical, benefits, retirement plan, to make operating costs attainable, etc
- stop ticketing cars that are downtown to support local business
- I have seen good advertising/highlighting on social media for small businesses, keep it up.
- light up the city, lights on Worthington and Fort are great. I have friends say all the time they are not excited about going downtown at night.

Capitalize on "city of homes"

- give out grants to upgrade homes/neighborhoods
- give out awards/prizes for best gardens, landscape, remodels, etc - make people proud to upkeep their homes/be recognized for their work

Capitalize on Dr. Suess

- in forest park (such as an under 12 amusement park), playgrounds throughout the city, in areas that people will come to visit other than the museum quad

Continue to highlight city residents that are making a difference.

- there are a lot of organizations that recognize volunteers but there are so many volunteers out there. I work with many volunteer organizations and people that will never be recognized. Need more awards for regular people, not students looking to highlight their high school resume or residents that sit on boards; recognize the workers!

Run skill clinics in forest park that will help youths get a job/start a small business/give them some pride in learning new skills, such as

- teach them how to run and maintain a lawn mower
- how to change oil of a car
- general landscape maintenance

Speed bumps in busy neighborhoods. We live on the corner of Shefford and Springfield St, there are people involved in car accidents, including fatal, all the time at our corner. Cars fly by and don't realize how sharp the corner is. I never let my kids cross Springfield St. while growing up.

Stay on top of crime, people will go downtown if they think it is safe, drug free, clean. The DA and police force are doing a great job! Keep it up! We prefer to go out in Springfield over Northampton these days.

Thank you for letting us voice our opinions.

Answer:

We will take your comments and suggestions into consideration. Your comments will be included in this year's Action Plan, 2023-2024.