

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

GARDNER BREAKS GROUND ON REAR MAIN STREET REVITALIZATION PROJECT



October 17, 2024 – Gardner, MA – On Thursday, October 17, 2024, Gardner Mayor Michael Nicholson, State Representative Jon Zlotnik, City Council President Elizabeth Kazinskas, the Gardner Redevelopment Authority, and officials from the City officially broke ground on the Rear Main Street Revitalization Project in Downtown Gardner.

“This project will be huge for downtown Gardner,” said Gardner **Mayor Michael Nicholson**.

“This almost doubles our parking capacity in the area and creates new amenities for our residents and visitors to the Downtown. With the anticipated housing production we anticipate in the area, and the large number of new businesses opening up in Gardner, this furthers the goals we have of creating a strong and vibrant community.”

The funding for this project comes from the Commonwealth’s MassWorks Grant program that was awarded in 2021 and will be used to construct a new event plaza, food truck parking area, 100 + space unmet parking lot, and improvements and lighting to the alleyways in the area. This will also allow for rear access to several of the buildings on Main Street and add new entry ways connecting Main Street to the Rear Main Street – Derby Drive area.

"This project has been many years in the making and still requires more work to bring over the finish line, but today represents another major step in what is a long-term plan to improve downtown Gardner," said **State Representative Jon Zlotnik**, who played an integral role in obtaining this funding for the City. “This is a milestone that could not have been reached without City-State cooperation, obviously substantial funding from the State along with interest from private developers. We're very excited, with this groundbreaking today, to be able to see the fruition of so much work by so many people to redevelop this section of downtown."

Over the last five years, the City has invested millions of dollars into revitalizing the downtown to breathe new life into the area. From improvements to roadways, sidewalk and lighting replacements, recreational facilities, building renovations, and other projects.

"Phase 2 of the Rear Main St. project opens our community to more vibrance and connection through infrastructure," said **City Council President Elizabeth Kazinskas**. "I am proud that Gardner has grown immensely in the last few years in this exact way. City Councillors are charged with considering a significant investment for a project like this, typically through matching city funds that are related to state and other grants. Representative Zlotnik, Mayor Nicholson, and Director Beauregard have helped meet our taxpayers' investment through their work on this, and multiple projects like it that benefit our citizens. I am excited for the completion of Phase 2 and couldn't be happier that it has begun."

"As the City Councilor for Ward 4 for 7 terms, I am thrilled to be able to witness the revitalization of Rear Main Street come to light," said **City Councilor Karen Harden**. "This initiative shows significant growth and new opportunities for the City of Gardner, and I am really looking forward to the positive impact that it will have on our community."

This project comes as the second phase of the Rear Main Street Revitalization Project. Beginning in 2015, the City of Gardner worked to obtain the properties along Rear Main Street, leading to the construction of the new street on Derby Drive in 2018. Phase 3 of the project is expected to include additional infrastructure upgrades and an apartment complex housing development.

Commenting on the project reaching this milestone, **Trevor Beauregard, Director of Community Development and Planning and Executive Director of the Gardner Redevelopment Authority** stated, "This project represents the continued partnership between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, City of Gardner, and the Gardner Redevelopment Authority, with the creation of much needed parking and outdoor amenities in the downtown area to support the public and private investment taking place in our City." Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony, Director Beauregard also credited his predecessor, the late Mr. Robert Hubbard, and the late City Councilor Ronald Cormier, who served as Chair of the Gardner Redevelopment Authority for their visions for this project since the concept began in 2006.

"This is a real turning point for Downtown Gardner and the benefits this project will bring to the community are tremendous," said **City Councilor Paul Tassone**, who also serves as the **Chair of the Gardner Redevelopment Authority**. "The Rear Main Street Revitalization Project has been a long time coming and is one of the largest investments the City has made in the downtown area. I would like to thank all of our community partners who made this project possible. Together we're working to build a stronger community for everyone who lives here"

Construction on Phase 2 of the project is anticipated to last until summer of 2025.

"I'm very proud of the work that we have been able to accomplish in Gardner to revitalize our downtown, invest in our infrastructure, and grow our business community across the City," concluded **Mayor Mike Nicholson**. "I'd like to thank our state officials for their continued

partnership with Gardner and I look forward to seeing how this project improves the City for years to come.”

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