

OFFICE OF
STRATEGIC PLANNING
& **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
ANNUAL REPORT **2023**



The Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD) focuses on land use and transportation planning, community and business development, climate resiliency, affordable housing, and grants management.

On behalf of the City, the OSPCD administers a number of grant programs including the Community Development Block Grant, HOME and Lead Paint Abatement programs; administers low-interest loan programs and manages a variety of public works and physical improvement projects.



ITS MISSION:

To build strong and vibrant neighborhoods, create housing and employment opportunities for all Malden residents and improve the quality of life for those who live here.

(Cover photos clockwise from left to right: Ribbon-cutting ceremonies celebrating the newly-improved Devir Park; rendering of approved affordable housing at 213 Main St.; promotional effort for Malden River Works project; and Life Science companies discovering Malden at 200 Exchange St.)

A MESSAGE FROM THE OSPCD DIRECTOR

Deborah A. Burke
Director

**OFFICE OF
STRATEGIC PLANNING
AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT**

Dear City of Malden Officials and Residents:

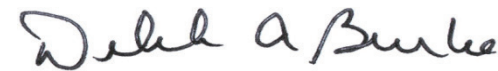
The Malden Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development continued its work on improving the quality of life for all Malden residents in Calendar Year 2023. Its efforts were far reaching as accomplishments were realized across all facets of the community including recreation, climate resilience, traffic calming, business support and housing.

At the direction of the City, OSPCD managed multiple programs that brought improvements to several parks, to the existing housing stock, and to the sidewalk and roadway network by advancing accessibility for all. Whether it was a Transit Action Plan, a Climate Action Plan, a strategic plan for housing, or the ambitious Malden River Works project that will create a new flood resilient public open space at Malden's DPW Yard, the OSPCD staff had a seat at the table and helped to drive progress in all these areas.

Recognizing that the City has limited financial resources to support many of these improvement projects, the office has worked aggressively to apply for and receive numerous state and federal grants to help subsidize these initiatives. The record is impressive as the office secured over \$18 million dollars in grants in Calendar Year 2023 and had \$19 million dollars in outstanding grant applications pending as it enters Calendar Year 2024.

Take a moment to browse through this Annual Report which provides a comprehensive overview of the many activities and programs that this office worked on during Calendar Year 2023.

Sincerely,



Deborah A. Burke
Director

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT **BLOCK GRANT** (CDBG) PROGRAM

The federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program provides funding for cities to address the causes and consequences of poverty, principally through activities that benefit low- and moderate-income persons. The program has been administered by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) since 1974. The Malden Redevelopment Authority (MRA) administered the City of Malden's CDBG program from its inception through June 2021, when the MRA's program and staff were merged into the new City of Malden Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD). OSPCD continues to operate Malden's CDBG program to further the City of Malden's community development goals.

The CDBG program budget this year included \$1,357,551 from the federal CDBG entitlement, and \$544,451 in prior uncommitted balances and program income. With the approval of the Mayor, City Council and the concurrence of HUD, CDBG funds were committed to the following activities in Program Year 2023:

- \$350,000 in no interest housing rehabilitation loans, including private lead line replacement, accessibility modifications, and other improvements necessary to maintain safe, healthy, and affordable housing;
- \$203,000 in 13 public service programs, including programs addressing the housing crisis, senior transportation, meals programs, public health, education, and youth services, and more; \$500,000 in improvements to Kierstead Park and FitzGerald Park; \$152,126 in ADA and pedestrian improvements, including to sidewalks, signals, signage, crosswalks and more;
- \$500,000 in improvements to Kierstead Park and FitzGerald Park;
- \$152,126 in ADA and pedestrian improvements, including to sidewalks, signals, signage, crosswalks and more;
- \$425,366 in payments on Section 108 loans for previously completed projects including road improvements and the Senior Center Rehabilitation and Housing Task Force. These payments represent approximately 31% of Malden's annual CDBG entitlement amount. Section 108 loans are used to fund large projects that CDBG might not otherwise be able to tackle. A CDBG entitlement community like Malden can borrow up to five times its entitlement amount through Section 108, and repay those loans using annual CDBG funds.

Forty-nine years after its inception, the CDBG program continues to provide cities like Malden with meaningful resources and opportunities to address the causes and consequences of poverty. As the needs of the low- and moderate-income population change, the City is committed to continuing to adapt the CDBG program to rise to new and ongoing challenges.

CDBG PUBLIC SERVICES

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program allows for up to 15% of program funds to be spent on public services to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income (LMI) people. In Malden, the CDBG Public Services budget has strengthened the community's vibrant social service and non-profit organizations. The City made \$203,000 available for Public Services in Program Year 2023, which represents 15% of the annual entitlement amount. The following organizations were awarded CDBG public services funding for Program Year 2023, which began July 1, 2023:

Action for Boston Community Development

Action for Boston Community Development was awarded \$15,000 for direct housing assistance to households experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless. These funds provide critically needed resources to stabilize Malden households in the throes of the housing crisis.

Asian Community Development Corporation

The Asian Community Development Corporation was awarded \$11,000 for its A-VOYCE youth services program, which engages and trains young people in the work of building community.

First Church of the Nazarene

First Church of the Nazarene was awarded \$15,000 for the Malden Warming Center, which provides a place to stay for homeless individuals during the coldest months of the year. CDBG funds cover utility costs and volunteer stipends directly associated with the Warming Center.

Housing Families

Housing Families was awarded \$20,000 for the Homelessness Prevention program, which provides rental assistance and other direct financial aid to Malden residents at risk of homelessness.

Immigrant Learning Center

The Immigrant Learning Center was awarded \$12,000 for the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program, which provides free, intensive English language classes to more than 900 low-income immigrant and refugee adults in Malden and surrounding communities. The program supports immigrants adapt to life in the United States by providing key language skills as well as citizenship classes and family literacy workshops.

Just-A-Start

Just-A-Start was awarded \$20,000 for the Housing Stabilization program that prevents homelessness and stabilizes affordable housing for very low- to moderate-income tenants facing eviction. The program provides services like dispute resolution, mediation, legal education and advice, financial assistance, and follow-up support to Malden residents.

Justice Resource Institute

Justice Resource Institute was awarded \$20,000 for the YouthHarbors program at Malden High School. This program provides a continuum of services to unaccompanied homeless Malden High School students. Services include educational support, housing counseling and placement, and direct assistance. More than 90% of students engaged in the program are able to secure stable housing and get on track to graduate.

Malden Elderly Transportation

The Malden Senior Center was awarded \$40,000 for the Malden Senior Transportation Program. This program allows Malden seniors to live independently and stay in their homes longer by offering a means of transportation for basic health services and food shopping. The program provides more than 60 rides per week in a handicap-accessible vehicle.

Malden Neighborhood Basketball League

Malden Neighborhood Basketball League was awarded \$8,500 for its winter and summer basketball leagues for high school students. Because of CDBG funding, MNBL is able to keep registration costs low so kids of all income levels are able to play.

Malden Teen Enrichment Center

The Malden Teen Enrichment Center was awarded \$5,000 for a wellness program, which engages approximately 35 Malden teenagers in community building and healthy living. The program promotes community collaboration, physical and mental health, creativity, academic achievement, volunteerism, and social and emotional development.

Mystic Valley Elder Services

Mystic Valley Elder Services was awarded \$10,000 for its Asian Meals program, which provides Malden seniors with approximately 65 authentic Asian meals at lunch time twice a week at the Malden Senior Center. Since COVID, these same meals have been delivered to residents, rather than held in person, though the program anticipates returning to the Senior Center in the near future.

CDBG Public Services *(continued)*

YMCA Malden

YMCA Malden was awarded \$12,000 for its Youth Services program, which brings YMCA staff and services to children living in public housing developments that might otherwise not be able to access healthy afterschool programs.

YWCA Malden

YWCA Malden was awarded \$12,000 for its Youth Services Program, which fosters creativity and love of learning by providing Makerspaces, a STEM-focused educational approach for students of all ages.

HOME PROGRAM

The HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) provides formula grants to states and communities to fund construction, acquisition, and rehabilitation of affordable housing for rental or homeownership. The HOME Program is the largest federal block grant to state and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households.

Malden is the lead or “representative” city of an eight-community jurisdiction known as the North Suburban Consortium (NSC). The NSC is comprised of the contiguous communities of Arlington, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Revere and Winthrop which have signed a cooperative agreement to access more U. S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) HOME Program Funds than any one individual community could access. In 2021, NSC member communities renewed the agreement for another three years. These annual Federal block grants are dedicated to rehabilitation, creation, and preservation of affordable housing.

In 1991 the City of Malden designated the Malden Redevelopment Authority (MRA) as lead agency for the NSC. Since 1991, the NSC has received a cumulative \$68,493,202 in HOME funds. In 2023, the grant amount was \$2,141,864. MRA/Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD) staff manages the extensive compliance requirements for reviewing new applications for down payment assistance, affordable resales, and new multifamily developments, as well as the monitoring of completed projects during the affordability period, which may last 20 years or longer. The MRA/OSPCD actively seeks

affordable housing opportunities in the City that can be facilitated and supported with NSC HOME funds. The NSC continues to support residential development in Malden, as well as investment in upgrading and maintaining Malden’s existing affordable housing developments.

In 2021, the NSC was awarded \$7,275,299 in HOME American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) funds. In its 2022 Allocation Plan, \$4,000,000 is designated for Rental Development and \$1,885,000 for Supportive Services. These funds must be used for the “Qualifying Populations”: those who are homeless, at-risk of homelessness, fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, or those at the greatest risk of housing instability. In June 2023, staff published the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for HOME-ARP Rental Development. This is a rolling NOFA that will accept and evaluate applicants until the full \$4,000,000 is committed. In December 2023, we advertised a Request for Proposals (RFP) for HOME-ARP Supportive Services and Outreach and held our first information session for interested contractors. We expect a contractor to be selected early 2024.

Below is an update of previously funded activities and new affordable housing projects in the City of Malden and in the other NSC communities:

First Time Home Buyer Program

NSC offers First Time Home Buyer Down Payment Assistance Loans to income-eligible applicants purchasing a townhome, condominium or single-family property in one of the NSC communities. Loans up to \$7,500 are available to eligible households to be used as down payment assistance,

making entry into the real estate market possible for low-and moderate-income households ready to make the transition into homeownership.

Interested households seeking to purchase their first home must attend a first-time homebuyer counseling course, which are offered by local non-profits, to learn about mortgage financing options available through local banks and banks that utilize state subsidized mortgage products.

This program, with the financing tools and counseling it provides, is one of the most secure ways of buying a home, helping to ensure that housing-related expenses remain stable and affordable, and assisting households at or below 80% of area median income to invest in homeownership and build valuable assets in our community.

Demand for HOME-funded down payment assistance has decreased because the increased cost of condominiums and single-family homes in NSC communities has put most properties out of reach for low and moderate-income households. In 2023, the NSC provided down payment assistance to one first time homebuyer in the form of 0% interest, 5-year forgivable loan.

Preservation of Affordable Housing

The NSC continues to support long term affordability of housing that has been created since the program began. Many homeowner units have long term affordability resale requirements, and NSC staff assists sellers, buyers, and real estate brokers to navigate the rules to support sale of those properties to new income-eligible owners.

The MRA/OSPCD also manages an inspection and rent/income monitoring program for HOME-funded multifamily properties and works with owners needing support for refinancing or regulation interpretation. Each year, MRA/OSPCD monitors the rent, income of households in 700 units across the North Suburban Consortium to ensure that affordability is maintained, and that tenants are afforded the proper protections. In addition, staff inspects a representative sample of a third of this portfolio each year to ensure that these units remain safe and healthy.

Housing Rehabilitation

HOME funds are expected to cover a portion of low- to moderate- income homeowner, owner-occupied rehabilitation costs. Demand for HOME homeowner rehabilitation assistance has decreased because housing values in some communities have increased above the statutory maximum for HOME assistance, and some communities have alternative funding sources for rehabilitation work, such as the State Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). No homeowner rehabilitation projects were completed through the HOME program in 2023.

Rental and Homeownership Developments

HOME funds are mainly used for the development costs associated with rental and homeownership developments. Other sources include bank debt, Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) allocated by Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities and bond financed state agency funding. In 2023, the NSC saw several rental and homeownership developments make progress toward construction or completion:

- Metro North Housing and Bread of Life co-sponsored a 14-unit development at 54 Eastern Avenue, Malden for individuals who were previously homeless. Bread of Life intends to build a food pantry and food preparation facility on the first floor of the newly constructed building. This project is particularly challenging because the housing and the non-housing components have different funding sources and compliance requirements in the same building thus requiring detailed coordination in the planning, document preparation, and construction. This project was mid-construction throughout 2023 and is expected to be complete in Spring 2024.
- The private for-profit developer, Traggorth Companies, in partnership with non-profit The Neighborhood Developers (TND), has completed construction on a 38-unit development at a vacant parcel at the intersection of Broadway, Eastern Avenue, and Clinton Street in Chelsea. This project includes remediation of a brownfield and the creation of a community walkway along Mill Creek. More than 1,200 applicants applied for this project's housing lottery.
- In Everett, TND completed construction of a five-story building including 77 units for seniors and the first location for East Boston Neighborhood Health Center in Everett at the former St. Therese parish. Currently 15% of Everett residents utilize East Boston Neighborhood Health Center resources and the new location will give residents better access to these services. In honor of St. Therese parish, the project will retain the St. Therese name, feature images of the original parish within the rental-building lobby and preserve the community pocket park.
- Non-profit developer Medford Community Housing (MCH) has started construction in September 2023 on a triple-decker adjacent to the 2015 duplex rehabilitation project supported by the NSC.
- TND has continued construction on the rental and homeownership project at 25 Sixth Street, Chelsea. The project consists of 56 mixed-income rental units with 6 affordable homeownership units on the first floor and under HOME rules is being funded and tracked as two separate projects. It is adjacent to a Silver Line stop and just steps away from the Newbury/Rockport commuter rail line. There were delays in the construction due to a crane accident and the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank in March 2023. However, construction resumed in June 2023 and is expected to reach substantial completion by June 2024.
- In summer of 2023, TND began closing calls for the project at 170 Cottage Street, Chelsea, which consists of 66 new affordable rental housing units with a mix of one, two, and three-bedrooms. Located along the Silver Line right-of-way, this project will house 12 homeless households when completed. The NSC committed another \$700,000 to the project for HOME-ARP Rental Development funding. This is the first project in Massachusetts to start closing calls with HOME-ARP funding, which will provide 4 units open to one of the four Qualifying Populations with a preference for homeless with children. To start groundwork

before the cold weather, the lenders permitted TND to start construction in late November 2023.

- The NSC committed an additional \$800,000 of HOME-ARP funds to TND's project at 25 Garvey Street, Everett for new construction of 125 units. The project was invited to apply for the State's mini-round for Low Income Housing Tax Credit.
- In 2023, Melrose Affordable Housing Corporation completed the rehabilitation for an occupied three-family building at 87 West Wyoming Avenue, Melrose. This project was acquired with HOME dollars in 2022.
- Traggorth Companies received an \$800,000 commitment for the development of 28 affordable homeownership units at 440 Broadway Avenue in Chelsea. The project is estimated to start construction closing in early 2024.
- The NSC committed \$1,100,000 to TND in partnership with North Suffolk Community Services (NSCS) to redevelop the site at 110 Ocean Ave in Revere. This is a mixed-use project with office space for NSCS's Adult Community Clinical Services and 56 rental units. TND has submitted an application for the Supportive Housing round and plans to submit a state administered Community OneStop application by the end of the year.

- The NSC committed \$1,100,000 to the Asian Community Development Corporation (ACDC) to assist in the construction of 20 units at the former Salvation Army site at 213 Main Street, Malden.

The MRA also finalized the 2023 Annual Action Plan after community engagement in early 2023. The Annual Action Plan is the application document required by HUD to receive CDBG and HOME funds, and every year the OSPCD/MRA prepares this document that ties back to the five-year Consolidated Plan goals established in 2020. Despite sharp increases in the cost of construction during the pandemic, the NSC's partners have continued to finance new development deals that have kept the NSC's development pipeline healthy and its consolidated planning goals on track.

HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

OSPCD offers several programs designed to assist homeowners in efforts to repair residential properties and improve housing quality throughout the City. These programs are funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and administered by OSPCD.

Collectively, OSPCD manages approximately \$4,978,177 in funds across its Housing Rehabilitation Program which includes funding from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Housing Rehab Grant, Lead Hazard Control/Healthy Homes Grant, and Healthy Homes Production Grant. In 2023, approximately \$857,810 was invested back into the community, supporting the rehabilitation of 73 residential units.

CDBG Housing Rehab

The CDBG Housing Rehab Program provides funds to repair code violations for low to moderate income homeowners. These funds have helped property owners upgrade substandard housing throughout the city. These funds are designated specifically for addressing sanitary and building code violations, enabling repairs such as electrical, plumbing, and masonry work, along with the replacement of roofs, windows, doors, heating systems, decks, and water/sewer pipes.

Recent revisions to the CDBG Housing Rehab Program aim to broaden its appeal to a wider range of homeowners. While eligibility still hinges on household income, consideration is now given to monthly housing expenses. Some loans offered through the program are deferred and forgiven over a 15-year period, while others are repaid interest-free over the same

timeframe. Property owners are guided through the eligibility criteria for these loan options during the intake process by program staff.

Projects benefiting from this program encompass various improvements, including but not limited to enhancing handicapped accessibility, improving egress, eliminating hazardous materials, and replacing windows and roofs. Notably, OSPCD successfully secured a \$100,000 grant from MassHousing's Gateway Housing Rehabilitation Program to support a mobility enhancement project. This initiative aims to make a single-family property handicapped accessible, significantly enhancing the homeowner's quality of life. The project is slated for completion in 2024.

Lead Hazard Control/Healthy Homes

In 2021, the City of Malden was granted \$3.1 million from HUD through the Lead Hazard Control/Healthy Homes (LHCHH) Grant. This 42-month grant, currently in month 26 of its duration, will undertake lead hazard control measures in 142 dwelling units and implement healthy homes initiatives in 107 units by May 2025. During 2023, lead and healthy homes work was successfully carried out in 28 dwelling units, all of which were occupied by residents with low to moderate incomes.

Additionally, this program allocated supplemental funds for healthy homes, which were utilized to address housing-related health and safety concerns. These efforts included the replacement of lead water service pipes, electrical repairs, installation of smoke detectors, staircase repairs, and remediation of slip and fall hazards.

Healthy Homes Production

In 2022, HUD awarded the City of Malden a \$1,678,177 Healthy Homes Production grant. This grant differs from the previously mentioned lead hazard control/healthy homes grant. Unlike the LHCHH program, recipients of Healthy Homes Production funds are not obligated to take part in the lead abatement program. This flexibility allows OSPCD to extend assistance to various property types. For instance, these funds can be particularly beneficial to owner-occupied seniors, while Lead Hazard Control/Healthy Homes funds are advantageous for residential properties housing young children.

This 42-month grant, currently in month 22 of its lifespan, is scheduled to conclude in October 2025. It garners significant interest from our community, offering grant funds to owner-occupants and investor-owners for addressing code violations, replacing lead water pipes, conducting radon testing and mitigation, and rectifying other numerous health and safety issues. Additionally, the funds can be utilized to upgrade outdated and inefficient heating systems and domestic water heaters. Notably, these funds are provided to property owners as grants, with no requirement for repayment.

In 2023, Healthy Homes Production work was successfully completed in 36 dwelling units, all of which were inhabited by low to moderate income residents, with approximately 47% owned and occupied by senior citizens.

Outreach and Local Community Partnership

The primary goal of the Housing Rehabilitation Program is to aid property owners in improving substandard housing throughout the city. Our focus is on continually establishing new and meaningful partnerships to ensure that eligible individuals have fair access to rehabilitation opportunities. Through our current partnerships, we are able to expand our presence within the community.

Collaborating with the Mystic Valley YMCA and the Asian Community Development Corporation, we engaged with the community through various channels, including online and in-person interactions. Together, our outreach initiatives reached approximately 17,300 individuals.

Mayor's Problem Properties Unit (PPU)

The Problem Properties Unit ("PPU") was established by Mayor Gary Christenson to address significantly distressed properties. These properties may include vacant and abandoned buildings, illegal rooming houses, and properties with a history of public safety complaints and code violations. The PPU receives referrals from neighbors, police or fire officials, and City Councillors who suspect abandonment, considerable neglect, or in some cases, illegal activity.

The PPU consists of Mayor Christenson, the City Controller, Compliance Officers, City Councillors, Fire Department, Police Department, Legal Department, Board of Health, Inspectional Services Department, and OSPCD. The PPU meets monthly in an effort to identify available resources to remediate potential problems. The goal is to secure the

owner's cooperation in taking the necessary steps to bring the property in compliance with the Massachusetts Sanitary Code.

Typically, properties on the Mayor's PPU list are referred to OSPCD for financial assistance. The OSPCD offers loans and grants to rehabilitate these properties. OSPCD is currently working with two PPU properties and expects to provide financial assistance to these properties in 2024.

Reducing Home Energy Costs

In 2022, the City of Malden, through OSPCD, joined the Mass Save Community First Partnership, which provides cities with resources to conduct outreach to increase participation in the Mass Save program. We are working with Mass Save sponsor, National Grid, to provide cost-saving energy efficiency solutions to residents and small businesses of all income levels in our community. OSPCD plays a crucial role in spreading awareness about the program's benefits and encouraging constituents to take advantage of its offerings.

In 2023, OSPCD along with the Mass Save Partners collaborated to enhance outreach efforts by putting a bigger focus on hard to reach or at risk community groups. This outreach may involve distributing informational materials, hosting workshops or events, leveraging social media channels, and collaborating with local organizations and stakeholders to reach a wider audience.

By actively engaging with residents, OSPCD plans to continue implementing effective outreach campaigns with an emphasis reaching Malden's diverse members.

What does the program offer?

One of the key features of the Mass Save program is its energy assessments, which are conducted at no-cost to participants. During these assessments, trained professionals visit homes or businesses to identify areas where energy efficiency improvements can be made. This could include upgrading to more efficient appliances, installing insulation, sealing air leaks, or upgrading heating and cooling systems.

Furthermore, Mass Save provides rebates, incentives, and zero-interest loans among other financing programs to help offset the cost of energy-saving upgrades. These incentives can vary depending on the type of improvement being made, but commonly include discounts on energy-efficient appliances, insulation, heating and cooling equipment, and lighting fixtures.

Overall, the Mass Save Program aims to make it easier and more affordable for residents and businesses to reduce their energy usage, lower their utility bills, and decrease their environmental impact.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING & HOUSING INITIATIVES

The OSPCD's business support maintained its commitment to equipping local businesses with essential resources and knowledge for success in a challenging economic climate. Key accomplishments include:

Chamber of Commerce Membership Program

In its second year, this program expanded to support almost 70 businesses. With an emphasis on women- and minority-owned enterprises, the initiative connected underserved businesses with vital resources while diversifying the Chamber's membership to better reflect Malden's business landscape.

Now in its third year, the program has paid for more than \$13,000 worth of business membership dues for new Chamber members. It focuses on supporting women- and minority-owned businesses, connecting them with resources and diversifying the Chamber's membership to better reflect Malden's business landscape. The program has been a great initiative that helps to support and connect underserved businesses, while also helping to diversify the Chamber's membership, which is beneficial for all involved.

Chamber Speakers Series

This new program brought world-class insights directly to our business community. The series launched with renowned motivational speaker David McGillivray and will continue to address relevant topics for members.

This program continues to connect our business community with top-tier expertise who share success stories, industry insights, and their experiences overcoming challenges. From renowned motivational speaker David McGillivray to pitch expert Precious Williams, this series provides the knowledge and strategies Malden businesses need to thrive.

Festival Sponsorship

Malden's thriving artist community was showcased through multiple successful festivals, attracting thousands of potential customers for local businesses. These vibrant events promoted vendor sales, live music, and patronage of area restaurants. In its final year of OSPCD-led organization, these festivals have reached a level of maturity and popularity to be sustainably managed by the local artist community.

After three successful years under the leadership of the OSPCD, the annual artist festivals transitioned to local artist community management. In its first year with new management, Malden's annual artist community showcase continued to thrive as these vibrant events promoted vendor sales, live music, and patronage of area restaurants by attracting thousands of potential customers for our local businesses.

Malden Gaming District

The initiative to rebrand Malden Center as a unique gaming destination continued to yield results. Approximately 250,000 visitors annually are drawn to the district, supporting existing establishments and attracting new ones, such as Rock Spot Climbing. The Malden Gaming District's regional reputation as an entertainment hub remains a key driver of customer traffic to the area.

Climate Resiliency

OSPCD continues to lead the City's climate resiliency efforts. In 2023 we helped to host the first ever Green Malden Fair, which offered opportunities for residents to learn about cost savings for energy, as well as eco-friendly initiatives going on in the City, special recycling events, and ways to volunteer.

The OSPCD is leading a community-based effort to write Malden's first Climate Action Plan (CAP), in partnership with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). We spent the year conducting community meetings and collecting feedback, and we are now in the drafting phase, which includes discussing implementation next steps with various City department heads. Once the plan is drafted, there will be a public meeting to launch the public comment phase. We expect the CAP to be finalized and presented at the 2024 Green Malden Fair.

With the collaboration of Wicked Cool Mystic, we will be piloting a new cooling solution in Malden, including a covered bus shelter and a misting station. Solutions like these are intended to curb the Urban Heat Island effect, and the City will continue to look into more opportunities for cooling in Malden.

Malden River Works Project

OSPCD, in partnership with the Malden River Works Steering Committee, won eight grant awards for the Malden River Works project in 2023, securing a total of \$7.9M. We have over \$3.1M in pending grant applications for the park, and we are close to 100% design. We hope to bid this project in summer/fall 2024. Malden River Works is a climate resilient waterfront park for all on the Malden River. This project will be located at Malden's Department of Public Works (DPW) site.

It will reduce climate vulnerability by introducing nature-based solutions at the DPW that also benefit the park, including green stormwater infrastructure to reduce surface flood risk, increased tree canopy to mitigate the urban heat island effect, restored riparian landscape, and an elevated greenway path to serve as a flood barrier from sea level rise.

Affordable Housing Trust Fund

At the direction of Mayor Christenson, OSPCD worked to establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF), which he chairs, to steer the City's affordable housing goals and invest in projects and programs that create, support, and preserve affordable housing. The Trust is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees and began meeting in April 2020.

In 2023, the Trust followed up on its goals to explore policy programs, potential revenue streams, and begin funding activities in accordance with its 2021 Action Plan. The Housing Program Coordinator, who serves as staff of the Trust, is managing a consultant for a study to explore the feasibility of a linkage fee on large-scale commercial development to be paid to the Trust. The AHTF also received \$300,000 from the Malden Community Preservation Committee (CPC).

In October 2023, the Trust voted to use its existing revenue from the general fund and the allocation from the CPC to award its first two affordable housing projects: \$373,625.11 for 213 Main Street and \$450,000 for 272-274 Cross Street. Three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) of the 213 Main Street project's total Trust award were CPC-allocated funds. 213 Main Street will redevelop an abandoned Salvation Army to create 20 new affordable rental units for residents at

up to 30-60% AMI. The 272-274 Cross Street project will redevelop a dilapidated three-family building into five new affordable condominium units for residents at 80-100% AMI. Both properties were identified by the Neighborhood Hub program, which seeks to acquire vacant and blighted properties in Malden to rehabilitate and sell as affordable housing. This program was led by OSPCD and the City's Inspectional Services Department (ISD) in conjunction with MassHousing.

The trustees continue to meet and structure their agenda in accordance with the Action Plan. Once their fund accrues more revenue, the Trust will begin to vote on new development funding applications as they arise. In the next year, the Affordable Housing Trust Fund hopes to successfully run a housing policy platform which includes policies that will increase accessibility, preservation, and development of affordable housing.

Neighborhood Hub Program

Malden has participated in the Neighborhood Hub program since 2020. The program is led by MassHousing in collaboration with MassDevelopment, Massachusetts Housing Partnership, EOHL, MACDC, MassINC, and the Attorney General's Office. The goal of the program is to support cities with high rates of vacant, abandoned, and deteriorating homes through technical assistance grants for the identification of equitable medium- and long-term strategies to address the challenges presented by abandoned properties.

With technical assistance provided by the Neighborhood Hub, OSPCD staff and the City's Inspectional Services Department (ISD)

identified various vacant, foreclosed, and blighted properties and formed the Vacant Properties Program. The City's goal is to acquire and convert these properties into deed-restricted affordable homeownership units to repurpose abandoned houses and promote more affordable homeownership opportunities in the City. The Neighborhood Hub created detailed profiles on the identified properties and worked on a budget plan to analyze the costs and funds recaptured upon resale.

In 2023, OSPCD staff met biweekly with the American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA") Housing Subcommittee, which the OSPCD Director co-chairs with Ward 3 Councillor Amanda Linehan. The five-member subcommittee also includes Councillor-at-large Karen Colón Hayes and two residents, Katzia Small and Andrew Spofford. In late 2022, the Housing ARPA Subcommittee allocated \$2 million dollars in acquisition and rehab seed funding to the Neighborhood Hub. In 2023, OSPCD staff put out a new Notice of Funding Availability to developers, which led to the acquisition of 272-274 Cross Street for \$1.15 million dollars.

This is the second project to be acquired using ARPA funds under the Vacant Properties Program. In 2022, the ARPA Housing Subcommittee first funded the Asian Community Development Corporation's acquisition of the previous Salvation Army building at 213 Main Street for \$949,000.

Inclusionary Zoning

Inclusionary zoning (IZ) is a requirement on new housing developments to provide a percentage of units as below-market affordable housing. Malden's inclusionary zoning ordinance requires new development with 8 or more units to set aside

15% of units for permanently affordable housing that will serve households earning 50% of the area median income or less.

In 2022, OSPCD along with ISD staff developed an application for developers, which will evaluate their Inclusionary Zoning compliance. Per the ordinance, developers may opt to pay the in-lieu fee, which will be paid to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund for affordable housing development. The current in-lieu fee per unit is \$336,444 which is adjusted annually using the Consumer Price Index. The fee will be updated in July 2024.

This year, Inclusionary Zoning produced 35 new affordable units in Malden. Twenty of those units are in 100% affordable projects, while 15 of the units were generated from market-rate development projects. According to the inclusionary zoning ordinance, for every required Affordable Housing Unit (AHU), developers are allowed to build one additional density bonus unit. The IZ density bonus allowed for 13 additional housing units to be built in 2023. The in-lieu fee generated \$111,090 in revenue for the Trust in 2023.

MBTA Communities Zoning

In December 2023, the Malden City Council on a 10-1 vote approved a zoning amendment that allows the city to comply with Mass. General Laws Chapter 40A, Section 3A, the MBTA Communities Law. The work was the culmination of nearly two years of work by the City to develop the zoning required by law that best serves Malden and allows the city the opportunity to fully conduct a comprehensive master planning process. The City of Malden is one of the twelve rapid transit communities that had to demonstrate compliance

with the new law no later than December 31, 2023 or else risk legal action by the state and forfeiture of eligibility for various state grant funding programs in the Fiscal Year 2024 round. The law requires that a MBTA community shall have at least one zoning district of reasonable size of which multi-family housing is permitted as of right.

There was a comprehensive community engagement process that consisted of numerous public presentations to the City Council, a public hearing held by the City Council and attended by the Planning Board, newspaper articles in the Malden Advocate, a city webpage with information regarding the law and Malden's efforts to comply, a citywide survey that was available online and in hardcopy and translated into seven languages and promoted in a variety of ways to gather input from all community members. Additionally, a notice was posted on electronic signboards in the downtown, distributed electronically to all schools, public and private, and to various community and cultural groups and included with water bills.

The zoning amendment approved by the City Council focuses most potential growth opportunities in downtown Malden in immediate proximity to the Malden Center MBTA station; steers direct impacts out of the neighborhoods which will alleviate known issues of concern, such as overcrowding, overuse and parking; minimizes overall impacts to the city by limiting the size and locations of districts, which is likely to lessen traffic congestion, and parking issues; incentivizes redevelopment of select and under-utilized parcels in the downtown; includes a mandatory mixed district in downtown Malden, to help the city maintain and support the expansion of its

commercial tax base; and it seeks state approval to increase affordability requirements to mirror Malden's inclusionary zoning (15%).

The MBTA Communities Zoning will not be in effect until the state approves Malden's plan.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

OSPCD is creating a transportation system that is safe, comfortable, and convenient for all. Whether you are walking, biking, driving, or taking transit, our office's goal is to make moving throughout Malden accessible and equitable. We are working directly with a variety of stakeholders to develop an inclusive transportation vision for the City. This will be implemented through planning, infrastructure upgrades, elevated maintenance, and major construction projects.

Transit Action Plan

The Transit Action Plan (TAP) creates a community-based vision for Malden's multimodal transportation network and determines how the City should prioritize investments over the next 10-15 years. Malden has the third highest percentage of residents who take public transit to work in the state (28%), so the TAP strives to support those who rely on transit the most. The TAP was completed in Spring, 2023 and is guiding grant writing, investment, and coordination with the MBTA.

Reimagining Broadway – Transportation

The City is seeking millions in federal, state and regional funds to re-construct Broadway to help move people better throughout the corridor. The goals of the Reimagining Broadway - Transportation project are to understand the current state of the roadway, residents' concerns and ideas for improvements, and to develop a conceptual design for the corridor that is informed by community feedback. Throughout 2023 the City's consultant, BSC, worked to assess the physical roadway, its existing utility structures, and how traffic flows throughout the corridor and complete a final

conceptual design for the corridor. OSPCD staff secured a grant from the Massachusetts Gaming Commission for partial funding of 25% design of the project. The project has been included in the State Transportation Improvement Program universe of projects for construction funding. Additionally in 2023 OSPCD staff worked with the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Massachusetts Gaming Commission to pursue additional funds for design of this project.

MBTA Bus Network Redesign

After a decline in the region's transit service due to COVID-related staffing shortages, MBTA restarted a Bus Network Redesign in 2023, a proposal that reimagined the entire Greater Boston region's bus network. Phase 1 includes a more than doubling of service frequency in bus service and connections to new destinations for two major Malden bus routes. The new service will match the region's changing travel patterns and employment districts, connecting Malden directly with frequent, direct service to Logan Airport and Cambridge and improving service routing in downtown Malden. The service improvement will improve rides for many low and moderate income Maldonians who live and work in the City and region. OSPCD staff are working cooperatively with the MBTA to support infrastructure improvements at the Linden Square bus stop and at 10 other locations to initiate the improved service in 2024.

Citywide Traffic Calming Program

OSPCD is overseeing the preparation of analysis tools and procedures for assessing appropriate locations for the implementation of traffic calming. A Citywide Traffic Calming Program will consider designs and investments to discourage non-neighborhood and speeding traffic through the City's residential areas. Factors such as vehicle

speed profiles, traffic volumes, collision history, pedestrian activity, demographics and proximity to community centers will determine candidate streets for consideration. The Program will help guide the incorporation of calming features into City roadway maintenance projects and support applications for grant funding.

Bluebikes

The City is now part of the Bluebikes bikeshare system. Bluebikes is Metro Boston's public bike share program, with over 4,000+ bikes and 450 stations as of March, 2024 across 13 communities including Malden. The City installed its first three stations in Fall 2022 at the Malden Center MBTA Station, Malden High School, and the Northern Strand Community Trail at Main Street. In 2023 the City secured additional funding and identified locations for three additional stations to expand the system from the downtown core to the Canal Street Bike Kitchen, Kierstead Park, and Edgeworth area. Staff partnered with Cambridge Health Alliance for funding ongoing operation of the Canal Street station and is working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to lobby the state and federal governments for funding to support ongoing operations.

Traffic Signal Inventory

Traffic signals are vital towards supporting the efficient circulation of people throughout a City's roadway network. In 2023, OSPCD, in partnership with the Engineering Department, received a grant from the Massachusetts Gaming Commission and completed a Traffic Signal Inventory for the City. This involved inventorying existing signal equipment, evaluating how they operate, and developing a strategic action plan for capital improvements. This is an important first step in optimizing traffic operations, improving safety

for all modes, and determining appropriate near-term and long-range signal improvement strategies. The Inventory is facilitating funding opportunities, planning, and repairs to bring Malden's traffic signal system into the 21st century.

Flashing School Zone Signs

OSPCD received a grant to upgrade the flashing school zone signs at the Beebe and Ferryway Schools and assisted with the implementation of improvements. The infrastructure at these schools was in poor condition compared to other schools. Furthermore, MassDOT data on the state's top crash locations suggests potential risks to pedestrians around these two schools. The Ferryway School project was augmented with another grant from the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School Program to implement low-cost traffic calming improvements on Ferry Street. These include new signage, high visibility crosswalks, and delineator posts to help calm vehicle traffic along the corridor. Implemented in late Summer, 2023, this project will help make it safer for the Ferryway School's K-8 students to walk and bike to school.

Complete Streets Plan

OSPCD is completing an update to the Complete Streets plan. Prompted by a State initiative to encourage municipalities to plan, build and operate their transportation systems with the movement of all people in mind rather than just vehicles, the City adopted policy and participated in planning and funding that resulted in over \$1.4 million in bicycle and pedestrian improvements. The update will create more opportunities to fund and build a complete multimodal transportation system on all major streets. The plan is community-driven and identifies the infrastructure, cost estimates, and timeline for the desired Complete Street improvements. A citywide plan and specific project list will be completed in Spring, 2024.

Spot Pond Brook Greenway

OSPCD is overseeing the design of a separated shared-use bikeway connecting the Northern Strand Trail to the Oak Grove MBTA Station. This Greenway will bisect the downtown and be an important connection between downtown Malden and a larger regional bikeway network. In 2023 the project was brought to a 25% design level. Additional grant funding was also secured from the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Massachusetts Gaming Commission, and the Solomon Foundation to complete further design work. The project is listed for construction funding in the 2028 State Transportation Improvement Program. OSPCD will work with City officials on a comprehensive public engagement process to gather feedback and input on the design from residents and businesses.

Malden Center Transit Oriented Development Study

OSPCD has secured funding from the Massachusetts Gaming Commission to conduct a Malden Center Transit Oriented Development Study. The study will explore the reconfiguration of the Malden Center Station to upgrade the station facilities, promote Transit Oriented Development, and accommodate potential redevelopment opportunities. This study will build on the Malden Transit Action Plan and answer operational and market questions surrounding the feasibility of revitalizing the Malden Center station. The plan will be completed by Winter, 2025.

OSPCD GRANTS RECORD

Since 2016, OSPCD has secured over \$36M dollars of discretionary funding to support all kinds of city initiatives, from transportation projects to park improvements to lead line replacement work. In 2023, we secured over \$18M dollars, more than doubling our number from the previous year, with \$19M dollars in additional grant applications

pending at the close of the year. The Calendar Year 2023 grant awarders include the Massachusetts Gaming Commission, the Malden Community Preservation Committee, the State Legislature, and the National Park Service, among others.

Below is a look at OSPCD’s grants record:

Grant	Source	Project	Year	Fiscal Year	Requested	Awarded
Greening the Gateway Cities Partnership Program	DCR	Tree planting	2023	FY23		\$ 100,000.00
Open Space	Malden CPC	Kierstead Park Improvements	2023	FY23		\$ 400,000.00
Open Space	Malden CPC	ELC Playground Improvements	2023	FY23		\$ 550,000.00
Affordable Housing	Malden CPC	Affordable Housing Trust	2023	FY23		\$ 300,000.00
PARC	EEA	Malden River Works Phase 2 Construction (Park)	2023	FY25	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00
Community Planning Grant	Commonwealth/One Stop	MBTA Communities Economic Feasibility Analysis	2023	FY24		\$ 10,000.00
MassTrails	DCR	Spot Pond Brook Greenway	2023	FY24	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 300,560.00
Community Planning	Mass Gaming Commission	TOD Study Malden Center	2023	FY24		\$ 100,000.00
Transportation Construction	Mass Gaming Commission	MRW path construction	2023	FY24		\$ 542,442.13
Transportation Construction	Mass Gaming Commission	Blue Bikes Expansion	2023	FY24	\$ 225,900.00	\$ 113,000.00
Transportation Planning	Mass Gaming Commission	Broadway 25% Design	2023	FY24	\$ 481,500.00	\$ 250,000.00
Transportation Planning	Mass Gaming Commission	Spot Pond Brook Greenway Final Design	2023	FY24	\$ 375,700.00	\$ 250,000.00
CSFRF State Earmark (ARPA II)	State Legislature	Malden River Works 100% Design docs and contingency	2023	FY24	\$ 151,953.00	\$ 151,953.00
CSFRF State Earmark	State Legislature	Climate Action Plan	2023	FY24	\$ 48,047.00	\$ 48,047.00
Muni. Vulnerability Preparedness	EEA	Malden River Works Phase 1 Construction (DPW Yard)	2023	FY24-FY25	\$ 2,998,049.00	\$ 2,998,049.00
Private Donation	Anonymous Private Donor	Malden River Works Phase 1 Construction (DPW Yard)	2023	FY24-FY25		\$ 600,000.00
MassWorks Infrastructure Fund	Commonwealth/One Stop	Overlook Ridge	2023	FY24		\$ 4,000,000.00
Land/Water Conservation Fund	National Park Service (Administered by DCS)	Malden River Works Phase 2 Construction (Park)	2023	FY24-FY25	\$ 654,187.00	\$ 654,187.00
EOI (Housing Choice Grant)	Commonwealth/One Stop	Malden River Works Phase 1 Construction (DPW Yard)	2023	FY24	\$ 396,000.00	\$ 300,000.00
Public Safety	Mass Gaming Commission	New radar/speed alert message board	2023	FY24		\$ 17,900.00
Open Space	Malden CPC	MRW Construction	2023	FY24	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 983,000.00
Open Space	Malden CPC	Malden Hospital Open Space Acquisition	2023	FY24	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 730,000.00
Open Space	Malden CPC	FitzGerald Park improvement	2023	FY24	\$ 175,000.00	\$ 175,000.00
Open Space	Malden CPC	Linden Rink	2023	FY24	Net zero	\$ -
Partnership Grant: Education, Interpretation & Curation	Freedom’s Way	City 375th Anniversary - banners & logo projector	2023	FY24-FY25	\$ 3,490.88	\$ 3,490.88
State earmark	MA Legislature	Pedestrian Safety/Traffic Calming	2023	FY24	\$75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00
State earmark	MA Legislature	Forestdale Arboretum	2023	FY24	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00
One Stop: MassWorks	Commonwealth	Ramp on Rt 1 /Eco Dev - Overlook	2023	FY24	\$ 12,537,094.00	\$ 4,000,000.00

RIVER'S EDGE

OSPCD serves as the Project Manager for the Mystic Valley Development Commission (MVDC), a partnership among the Cities of Malden, Medford, and Everett to redevelop 215-acres of brownfields along the Malden River in a project known as River's Edge.

Phase 1, which is being developed by Preotle, Lane & Associates (PLA), is a 30 acre, mixed-use, transit-oriented development. To date approximately 80% of Phase 1, which includes 504 apartments, 230,000 square feet of office space, 18,000 square feet of retail/restaurant space, approximately 1,300 spaces of structured parking, an 11-acre, award-winning riverfront park and the Tufts University Boat House, has been completed. The project is located ½ mile north of the Wellington MBTA Orange Line Station, four miles north of Boston, with good access to Interstate 93 and Logan International Airport. River's Edge is being developed in the spirit of "Smart Growth" by PLA, guided by the MVDC. The Cities of Malden, Medford, and Everett share tax revenues (PILOT payments) based on a formula in the enabling legislation that created the MVDC.

During Calendar Year 2023, the MVDC received "Payment In Lieu Of Taxes" (PILOT) payments from 200 and 400 River's Edge Drive, 115,000 square foot office buildings; 100 and 150 River's Edge Drive, 222-unit and 282-unit luxury rental apartment complexes; 175 and 325 River's Edge Drive, retail condominiums aggregating 14,700 square feet, housing a restaurant and a specialty food market, and Action for Boston Community Development's (ABCD) Head Start Learning Center at 359 Commercial St. The PILOT payments fund the MVDC's expenses, including debt service and reserves, with excess payments distributed to

Malden, Medford, and Everett. MVDC's blended tax rates for FY2024 are \$10.87 for residential and \$20.20 for commercial.

Occupancy at 200 River's Edge, a Gold LEED Certified Office Building, remained at 60% as PLA accepted a lease buyout from Marriott International, which had its Group Sales operations for the Northeast at River's Edge. Because of the reduced demand for group meetings, Marriott closed all its Group Sales offices. Tenants at 200 include Management Sciences for Health, Physicians Professional Services, ROI Solutions, Labthink, MetaSystems, and PLA.

400 River's Edge Drive, a Gold LEED Certified 115,140 square foot office building is occupied in its entirety by Agero, a leader in roadside assistance and claims management, and affiliates, Financial Recovery Technologies, and The Cross Country Group. The physical occupancy of 400 remained low due to Agero's support of remote working.

Occupancies at the residential buildings 100 River's Edge, Arcadia at River's Edge, and 150 River's Edge, RE150, remained in the mid-90's during 2023.

During 2023, 14,700 square feet of the 18,000 square feet of retail space, which is part of the condominium that includes RE150 and 1025 spaces of structured parking, consisting of a specialty ethnic, primarily Turkish, market and café, Freerange Market of 7,000 square feet and a southern fare BBQ restaurant, The PORCH, of 7,700 square feet were occupied. Approximately 3,300 square feet remained to be leased.

The financial performances of both Freerange Market and The PORCH have been negatively affected by the low physical occupancies of the office buildings at River's Edge and nearby properties. During the fourth quarter of 2023 PLA

began discussions with a market which expressed an interest in purchasing certain assets of Freerange and leasing the remaining vacant retail space. The purchase and lease transactions should be completed in the first quarter of 2024.

River's Edge and PLA hosted many public and private events during 2023 including two Tufts-sponsored regattas, The Mayor's (Medford) Cup Regatta, The Children's Art Showcase (Medford), Movie Nights on The Great Lawn in partnership with the Malden Public Library, Mystic River Watershed Association events including its annual Breakfast of Champions, The Chinese Cultural Connection's Family Outing, Mystic Valley Elder Society events, the Malden Chamber of Commerce Networking Meeting, the Mystic Valley YMCA Inspirational Celebration, Friends of the Malden River Celebration of a Decade of Advocacy, Housing Families Annual 5K Run followed by a reception at The PORCH. Highlights of 2023 included a major Agero-sponsored event celebrating 50 years in business and a reception thanking and honoring the many volunteers who contributed to the relief efforts for the earthquake victims in Turkey.

In addition to the events mentioned above, the Park continued to be used intensively by tenants, residents, and visitors.

PLA is actively planning future buildings for the undeveloped land at River's Edge. The next building, which will be constructed in the northwest quadrant of Phase 1 and will replace a planned parking garage, will be a residential building with approximately 220 apartments. During the fourth quarter of 2023 PLA met with planners and City Officials of Everett, Malden, and Medford to review the planned development.

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**MALDEN REDEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY BOARD
OF DIRECTORS**

Malden Redevelopment Authority is governed by five board members; four are appointed by the Mayor, and one is appointed by the Governor. All members serve staggered five year terms. They are:

Michael Williams
Chair

Sharon B. Santillo
Vice Chair

Robert K. Foley
Treasurer

Robert D. Rotondi
Asst. Treasurer

Albert N. Spadafora
Asst. Secretary

(The Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development was created July 1, 2021 as part of the merger of the Malden Redevelopment Authority into the City of Malden departmental structure. The merger incorporated MRA staff, programs and functions into a new City department while maintaining the MRA as a separate legal entity governed by the Board of Directors. The OSPCD Director Deborah A. Burke also serves as the MRA Executive Director and Secretary to the MRA Board.)



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