

# News Release

*From the Office of Mayor Misty Buscher*



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **The City of Springfield Unveils Flagship Initiative - BUILD Springfield**

**Springfield, IL** – The City of Springfield announces its groundbreaking flagship initiative, Mayor Misty Buscher's BUILD Springfield (Beautification, Unity, Innovation, Leadership, and Development), aimed at fostering community growth, development, and focused improvement of blight and public safety in Springfield's neighborhoods in need. This transformative program will run for a year and is set to launch **on October 7, 2023**, marking a significant step towards creating a healthier, safer, and vibrant Springfield.

A holistic community-focused program, the BUILD Springfield program has been designed strategically to positively impact Springfield's neighborhoods and residents by leveraging non-traditional, innovative approaches to improve the quality of life in distressed areas. This program is Mayor Buscher's and the City of Springfield's proactive approach to focused delivery of resources for Springfield's neighborhoods in need, with the hope that by working with their local government, Springfield's citizens and organizations can collaboratively become an essential force in improving and maintaining the integrity of our city.

Conceived in collaboration with Bloomberg-Harvard Fellow Sai Joshi and the Springfield Police Department leadership, BUILD Springfield is bringing together City departments, Sangamon County resources, and potentially Illinois State partners in conjunction with health, human service providers, and community groups – to pool resources and offer services to focused geographical areas in the city. This program is the City of Springfield's effort to implement an innovative public sector service model.

BUILD Springfield's geographical areas of focus are informed by real-time data-driven insights. The program uses two main datasets: SoundThinking Inc.'s advanced crime analysis technology, which combines crime detection and forecasting with a human-centered approach to suggest resource allocation in areas requiring attention. The second data set is the Public Works' hotspot data that identifies problem properties, repetitive code violations, and increased fly dumping complaints. Based on the real-time data retrieved for 2023, the City has identified the first event's boundaries at the intersection of Wards 2, 3, 4, and 5, encompassing approximately 60 blocks.

The exact boundaries for the first event on October 7 are from N Grand Ave to E Carpenter St and N 9th St to N 19th St. This specific geographic area denotes some of Springfield's highest number of blighted homes, high accounts of crime and violence, more rental homes, low homeownership, and repetitive housing and environmental code violations.

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Mayor Buscher is committed to enhancing the beautification, public safety, livability, and well-being of all Springfield neighborhoods. She stated, "BUILD Springfield encapsulates our proactive approach to addressing the unique needs of our neighborhoods. We are dedicated to collaborating with our citizens, local agencies, and organizations to create a lasting impact toward community development and neighborhood improvement."

The BUILD Springfield initiative will focus on five key pillars:

- **Beautification:** Enhancing the look of communities by implementing measures such as trimming trees, sweeping streets, performing alley cutbacks, enhancing signage, and performing comprehensive engineering assessments.
- **Unity:** Cultivating a sense of togetherness among residents, strengthening community bonds through addressing resident inquiries and concerns in real-time, and reporting assistance requests to the appropriate departments.
- **Innovation:** Implementing novel solutions that address longstanding challenges, positioning Springfield as a hub of creativity and progress.
- **Leadership:** Empower local leaders to take ownership of their communities, fostering a proactive engagement and problem-solving culture.
- **Development:** Using an interdepartmental and inter-agency approach at the core of our approach to pool resources and offer focused services in specific city neighborhoods.

The launch event on October 7, 2023, will celebrate the collective commitment of the City of Springfield and its partners to the betterment of our community. More details on the Staging Area location, a complete list of participating City departments, agencies, and organizations, and Public Works crew work dates shall be shared via future press releases.

The City of Springfield is actively building partnerships with external organizations and agencies for this program to bring diverse expertise and representation. These collaborations will ensure that BUILD Springfield incorporates innovative strategies that extend beyond traditional boundaries to elevate the quality of life for residents and pivot the City toward proactive and data-informed delivery of services. The City requests that all citizens, local agencies, and organizations contact us to collaborate on this program. Contact details of the team are as below:

**SPD Chief**, Ken Scarlette ([Kenneth.Scarlette@springfield.il.us](mailto:Kenneth.Scarlette@springfield.il.us))

**SPD Deputy Chief**, Andrew Dodd ([Andrew.Dodd@springfield.il.us](mailto:Andrew.Dodd@springfield.il.us))

**SPD Commander**, Joe Behl ([Joseph.Behl@springfield.il.us](mailto:Joseph.Behl@springfield.il.us))

**Bloomberg-Harvard Fellow** Sai Joshi ([Sai.Joshi@springfield.il.us](mailto:Sai.Joshi@springfield.il.us))

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**Springfield Fire Department Chief**, Edward Canny ([Edward.Canny@springfield.il.us](mailto:Edward.Canny@springfield.il.us))

As BUILD Springfield sets the stage for a brighter future, the City of Springfield envisions a city that thrives on unity, innovation, and resilience. By investing in Springfield's neighborhoods in need, the City reaffirms its commitment to building sustainable, inclusive, and vibrant communities in Springfield.

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