

# Town of Amherst American Rescue Plan Act

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Presentation to Town Council  
Initial Spending Plan: Round 1  
October 4, 2021

# What is ARPA?

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- American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)
- Federal Grant
- \$11.9m allocated to Town of Amherst
- Major Eligible Uses
  - **Support public health expenditures**, by funding COVID-19 mitigation efforts, medical expenses, behavioral healthcare, and certain public health and safety staff;
  - **Address negative economic impacts** caused by the public health emergency, including economic harms to workers, households, small businesses, impacted industries, and the public sector;
  - **Replace lost public sector revenue**, using this funding to provide government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue experienced due to the pandemic;
  - **Provide premium pay for essential workers**, offering additional support to those who have borne and will bear the greatest health risks because of their service in critical infrastructure sectors; and,
  - **Invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure**, making necessary investments to improve access to clean drinking water, support vital wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and to expand access to broadband internet

# What is ARPA?

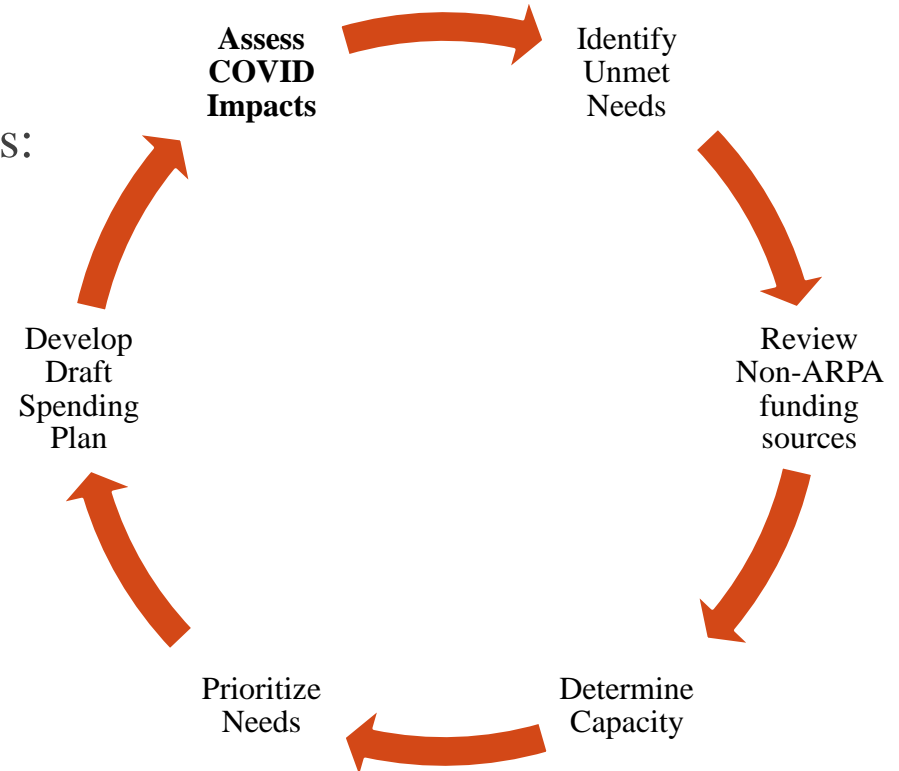
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- Ineligible Uses
  - Fund reductions in tax revenue
  - Deposit to a pension fund
  - Fund debt service
  - Deposit to reserves
- Funds cover multiple years
  - Funds must be obligated by 12/31/2024
  - Funds must be spent by 12/31/2026
- Successor to CARES grant
- Other sources considered
  - State ARPA funds
  - School ARPA funds
  - Other grants

# Process

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- Town staff have worked collaboratively with elected and appointed officials to identify a robust process for allocating American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.
- The process recommended by the Finance Committee includes:



# Stakeholders Consulted

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Department  
Heads

Cultural Council

Community  
Safety Working  
Group

School Officials  
and Staff

Craig's Doors

Homelessness  
and Rehousing  
Working Group

Amherst  
Survival Center

Elliot Services

Amherst  
Municipal  
Affordable  
Housing Trust

Energy and  
Climate Action  
Committee

Library Officials

Family Outreach  
of Amherst

UMass

Musante Health  
Center

Amherst Racial  
Equity Task  
Force

Business  
Improvement  
District

# Overarching Philosophy

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Aligned with Town Council priorities, viewed through lenses of equity and sustainability



Transition planning for all allocations intended to be ongoing costs



Centered in communities and areas of the economy hit hardest by COVID-19



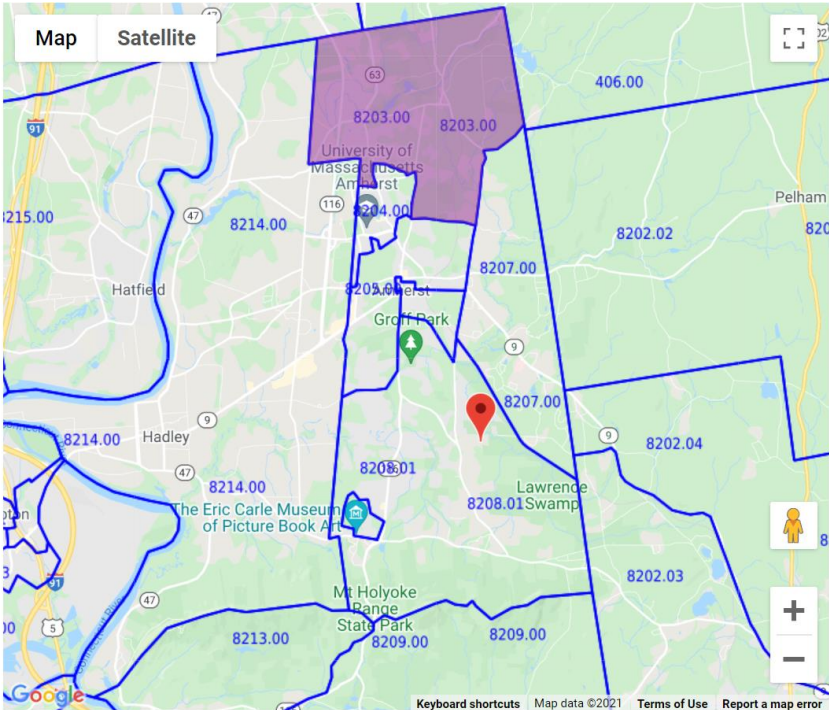
Address longstanding challenges exacerbated by COVID-19



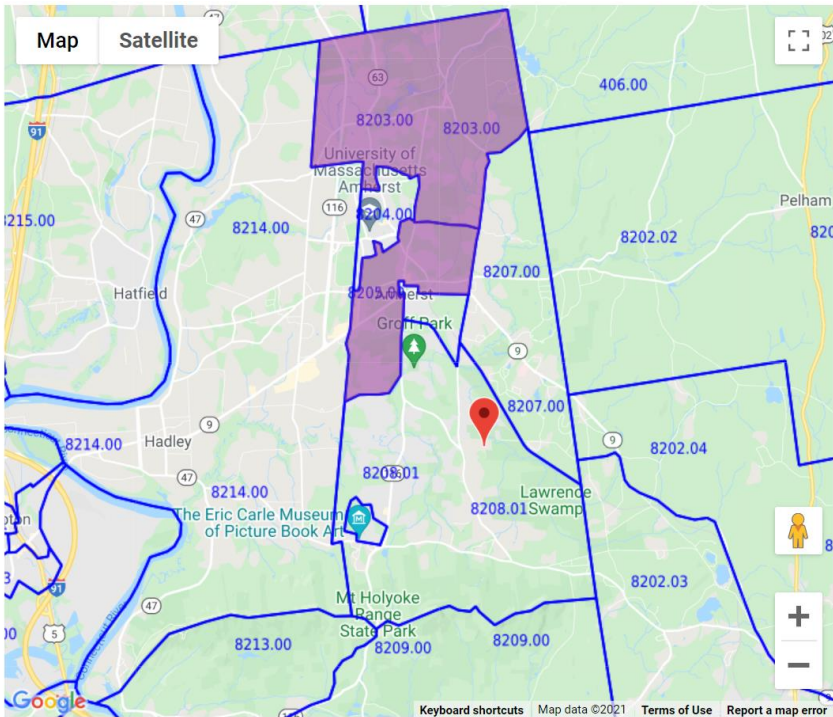
Monitor and evaluate programmatic allocations with regular reporting and data collection. Establish measures of success from the beginning.

# Investing in Hardest Hit Areas: Qualified Census Tracts

2022



2021



# Engagement

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Town Council  
Initial Presentation  
October 4, 2021

Public  
Engagement

Town Council  
Final Presentation  
November 2021

Listening Sessions via  
Zoom:

10/13 @ 8:00 AM

10/13 @ 1:00 PM

10/21 @ 4:00 PM

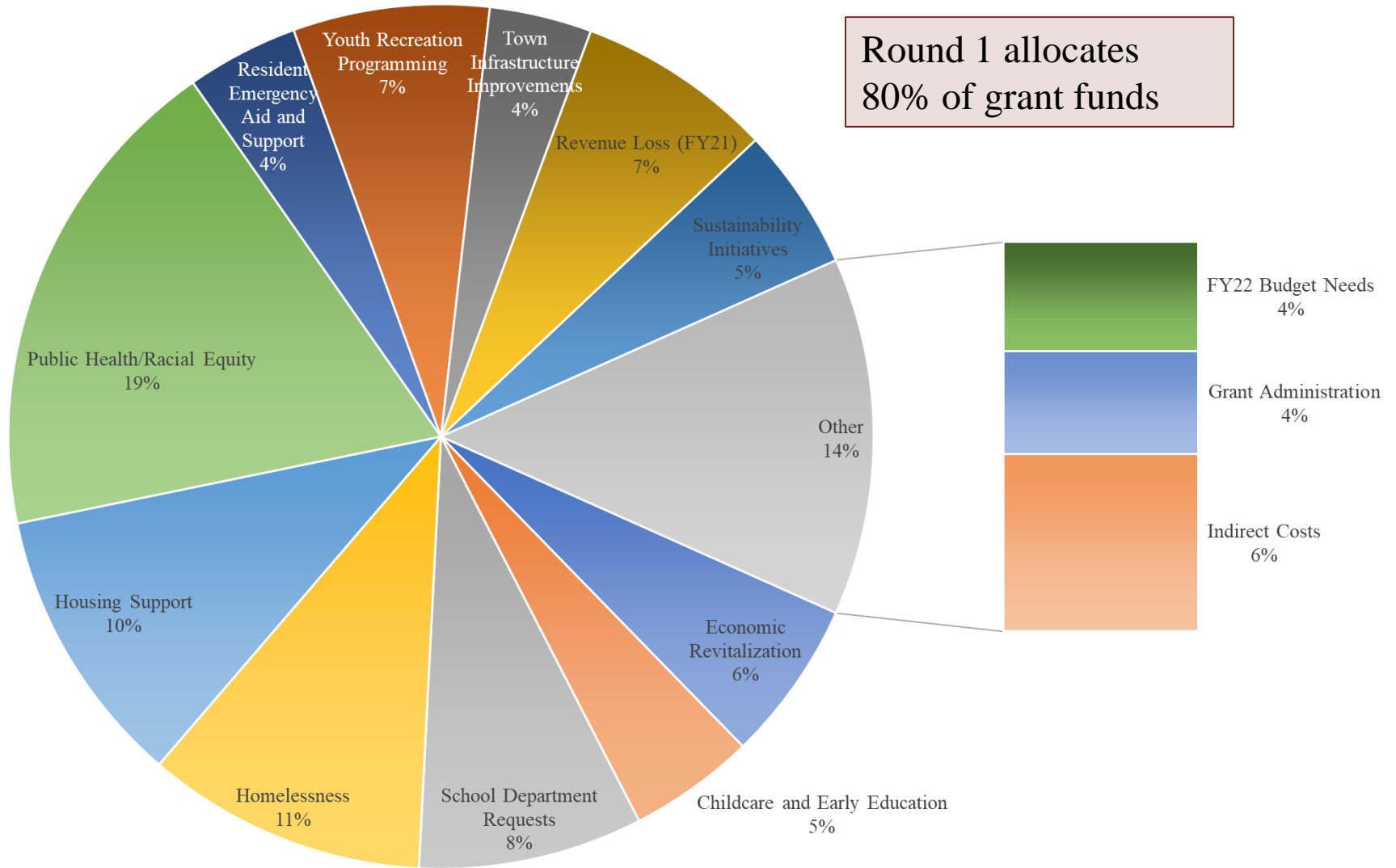
10/21 @ 7:00 PM

EngageAmherst



# Round 1 Proposed Allocation

Round 1 allocates 80% of grant funds



# Public Health and Racial Equity – 19%

## Appx. \$1.76m

### Impacts/Issues

- Long-term chronic mental health needs
- Increased demand for health services
- Healthy equity (racial disparities exacerbated by COVID)
- Increase in number of residents needing assistance and navigating care including translation services for those who do not speak English
- Unvaccinated residents

### Grant Allocation

- Create and expand mental health programming via request for proposals process (RFP) (through FY26)
- Fund DEI coordinator (FY22)
- Hire additional public health nurse and clerical support to support contact tracing and vaccine administration. Additionally, public health nurse will help support underserved populations (through FY23)
- Continue ambassador program (through FY23)
- Provide translation services (through FY23)
- Maintain four additional EMS staff (through FY23)
- Fund startup costs for community responder program (FY22)

# Homelessness – 11%

## Appx. \$1.00m

### Impacts/Issues

- Increased need for COVID appropriate spaces that include accessible showers and a warming area
- Increased need for supportive housing and a permanent shelter location including homelessness case management

### Grant Allocation

- Work collaboratively with key stakeholders to:
  - Explore transitional housing opportunities (FY22 to FY23)
  - Identify and implement shelter solutions

# Housing – 10%

## Appx. \$1.00m

### Impacts/Issues

- Increased housing insecurity
- Increase in home prices driven by movement of residents from urban areas to semi-urban and rural areas
- Increased demand for efficient temperature controlled indoor areas that are well ventilated

### Grant Allocation

- Explore opportunities to expand affordable housing stock (FY22 to FY23)
- Work collaboratively with the AMAHT to develop housing assistance programs (FY22 to FY23)

# School Department Requests – 8% Appx. \$800k

## Impacts/Issues

- Insufficient space caused by COVID and the social distancing modifications implemented at Fort River and Wildwood

## Grant Allocation

- Fund modifications to Amherst Regional Middle School to allow for sixth grade relocation (FY22)
- Fund additional costs related to sixth grade relocation (FY23 to FY26)

# Revenue Loss – 7%

## Appx. \$700k

### Impacts/Issues

- COVID and the closure of the University and colleges reduced revenues in various Enterprise Funds

### Grant Allocation

- Fund budget deficits in sewer, transportation, and possibly water enterprise funds (FY21)

# Youth Recreation Programming – 7%

## Appx. \$700k

### Impacts/Issues

- Greater demand for outdoor recreational opportunities
- Greater demand for youth programs, COVID highlighted some gaps in programming
- Reduced summer programming due to COVID limitations

### Grant Allocation

- Fund enhancements to Amherst recreation that support underserved populations (FY22 to FY24)
- Explore the creation or expansion of a youth center via a RFP process (FY22 to FY26)

# Economic Revitalization – 5%

## Appx. \$575k

### Impacts/Issues

- Closure of businesses due to diminished downtown activity
- Increase in demand for outdoor dining due to capacity and ventilation limitations
- Disproportionate impact on local art and cultural organizations from the closure of many entertainment venues

### Grant Allocation

- Fund small business startup/emergency relief program (FY22 to FY23)
- Work with Cultural Council to develop programs that create or promote opportunities for art and cultural organizations
- Fund improvements to downtown (FY22 to FY23)
- Fund construction of an accessible downtown public restroom (FY22)



# Sustainability Initiatives – 5%

## Appx. \$510k

### Impacts/Issues

- A rise in the price and availability of food; shopping at local markets remains a health concern for some of the most vulnerable individuals
- Greater demand for alternative means of transportation

### Grant Allocation

- Work collaboratively with the ECAC to target investments with the greatest reduction in fossil fuel usage (FY22 to FY23)
- Fund sustainability intern (FY22)

# Childcare and Early Education – 5%

## Appx. \$450k

### Impacts/Issues

- Increased demand for childcare and childcare assistance
- Preschool preparedness due to gaps in early intervention services in Town. Assessments have identified more children who need these mandated services
- Greater need for after school care at the elementary level

### Grant Allocation

- Create and expand childcare options through a RFP process (FY22 to FY26)
- Fund school department request to expand preschool (FY23)
- Fund school department request to expand wrap around services for students (FY22 to FY23)

# Resident Emergency Aid /Support – 4% Appx. \$400k

## Impacts/Issues

- Families with emergency needs from paying bills, buying groceries, and other challenges related to COVID
- Increased food insecurity
- Lack of affordable transportation to medical appointments and activities of daily living for seniors

## Grant Allocation

- Fund new transitional support coordinator (FY22 to FY24)
- Fund resident emergency fund and/or social support providers (FY22 to FY23)
- Fund delivery services and provide additional resources for the survival center (FY22 to FY24)
- Fund transportation for the senior center (FY22 to FY24)

# Town Infrastructure Improvements – 4%

## Appx. \$365k

### Impacts/Issues

- Increased importance of available Wi-Fi for the public while Town Hall was closed
- Increased importance of cybersecurity as more services transition online and the occurrence of cyber threats increase

### Grant Allocation

- Improve public Wi-Fi reliability (FY22 to FY23)
- Extend municipal fiber to key locations (FY22 to FY23)
- Fund cyber security improvements (FY22 to FY23)

# Other

## Impacts/Issues

- Need to manage the grant and any programs created by the grant, including data gathering and reporting
- Reduction in general fund revenues

## Grant Allocation

Indirect Costs – 6% Appx. \$581k

- Fund benefits and fringe costs associated with grant funded initiatives (FY22 to FY26)

FY22 Budget Needs – 4% Appx. \$357k

- Fund needs identified in the FY22 budget proposal (FY22)

Grant Administration – 4% Appx. 338k

- Fund ARPA grant manager (FY22 to FY26)

# Summary

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- Allocations responsive to many of the impacts/needs identified by departments and key stakeholders.
- Programs to be developed with a focus on equity and sustainability.
- Establish clear measures of success for programmatic allocations from the beginning.
- Allocations address long standing challenges many of which have been exacerbated by COVID-19.
- Round 1 allocates 80% of ARPA funds across six fiscal years. Remaining 20% to be allocated in round 2 next year.
- Council and community feedback is critical to the next step of refining this plan.

Thank you

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