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# Revitalization of the Lower Worthington Street District (Springfield, MA)

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# Home in the Heart of Springfield:

## *the Lower Worthington Street District*



*A Studio Project – Regional Planning 675  
Department of Landscape Architecture  
and Regional Planning  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Fall 2013*



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Arise for Social Justice

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**“You'll look up and down streets. Look 'em over with  
care.  
About some you will say, "I don't choose to go there."  
With your head full of brains and your shoes full of  
feet,  
you're too smart to go down any not-so-good street.  
And you may not find *any* you'll want to go down.  
In that case, of course, you'll head straight out of  
town.”**

Geisel, Theodor S. & Geisel, Audrey S. (1990). *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* New York, NY: Random House.

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# Executive Summary

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Figure 1: Study area locus

In a section of the downtown neighborhood of Metro Center in Springfield, Massachusetts, among the historic brick buildings and warehouses to the east of Main Street, residents were used to seeing the flashing lights of passing fire trucks. But, on November 23, 2012, the day after Thanksgiving, emergency personnel and workers from Columbia Gas barely escaped the Scores Gentlemen’s Club on Worthington Street before a massive explosion obliterated the building and sent out a shockwave that damaged 62 other buildings, including 150 residential units. No one lost their life, but 21 people were injured. In short, it was one more disaster in a downtown recently visited by a tornado and consistently challenged by urban decline.

Our Studio Team was tasked to deliver well-researched suggestions for initial strategies that could revive this area into a 24-hour, trendy, market-rate neighborhood that would attract young professionals seeking both residential amenities and a walkable, urban lifestyle. Also important to the authors of this report are methods to preserve diversity and include the current residents within aspects of our approaches, specifically to provide opportunities to join in the economic benefits of revitalization and to avoid the typical trade-off of displacement as growth increases. The boundaries of the study area, which we branded the Lower Worthington Street District (LWSD), are Main Street, Lyman Street (along the railroad tracks), Spring Street, Matoon Street, and Bridge Street (see Figure 1, left).

The LWSD was once one of Springfield’s most vibrant centers of retail, wholesale, manufacturing, and innovation with many globally important inventions such as the gasoline-powered automobile. Since the closing of businesses due to suburban competition, downward industrial trends, and traffic congestion, the LWSD now contains underutilized buildings, empty storefronts,



and low-funded infrastructure. Still, there are some bright spots insofar as the healthy nightlife, including fine restaurants and live entertainment.

We found three important barriers to be aware of when planning for the redevelopment of the LWSD. First, the property values are currently too low to justify profitable investments in newly constructed, market-rate condominiums. Second, there is a pervasively negative public perception of the crime in Springfield's downtown, almost entirely held by those living outside the City, and it could prove difficult to dispel. Last, there exists a "chicken and egg" startup conundrum where a lack of small-scale amenities, such as coffee shops, corner grocers, and boutiques, hinders the number of potential new residents just as much as their presence would attract them.

Conversely, there are three key advantages held by the LWSD that can be exploited. Most importantly, Zimmerman Volk Associates, Inc. very recently released a residential market analysis of downtown Springfield and concluded there is a strong demand for market-rate housing. Next, there exists a large stock of existing historic buildings to be converted into loft-style units, which would play into the central competitive advantage of cities over the suburbs: authenticity. Finally, the downtown is anticipating major investments by outside entities: the rehabilitation of Union Station into a commuter transit hub creating TOD opportunities, the location of a satellite campus of the University of Massachusetts with its young residents and customers, and the arrival of an MGM casino that will bring thousands of visitors and world-class entertainment.

The Studio Team kept these factors in focus when creating a strategy and timeline for redeveloping the LWSD. To bridge the gap in construction costs and low selling prices, we propose that the City coordinate with private developers to make possible the adaptive reuse of many of the vacant or underutilized former factories, warehouses and showrooms in the district. We present our suggestions in three phases: the first outlining the regulatory and incentive tactics that can foster private interest, the second designating specific areas

well-suited for reuse, and the third allowing for new buildings with the assumption that previous activities sufficiently raised property values. To provide backup and wisdom to our findings, our research included academic literature on subjects related to urban revitalization, case studies of successful cities, and many interviews with extremely welcoming and helpful people of Springfield. We demonstrate our results, in priority development sites, with highly specific suggestions for what we consider to be the best opportunities in the LWSD, including market-rate residential, indoor markets, storefront shops, an industrial job center, and public space.

We believe that our findings describe a vision for the LWSD, with its unique and historic identity marketed as the “new” neighborhood to live, work, and play in, while outlining starting points that can be explored by Utile, Inc. Architecture + Planning, a design firm selected by DevelopSpringfield for their expertise in complex urban problems, to make revitalization a reality. Further research for this studio, were it to continue, would include the creation of a pro forma that analyzes market conditions, improvement costs, and potential impact of public incentives. As a team, our group was thrilled to take the first look at a dynamic neighborhood with incredible potential to return to greatness, and we are excited to witness its success.

## List of Acronyms

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<b>BID</b>	Business Improvement District
<b>CDBG</b>	Community Development Block Grant
<b>CDEs</b>	Community Development Entities
<b>CISA</b>	Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture
<b>DHCD</b>	Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
<b>DIF</b>	District Improvement Financing
<b>EACC</b>	Economic Assistance Coordinating Council
<b>EOA</b>	Economic Opportunity Area
<b>EOHED</b>	Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development
<b>EPA</b>	United States Environmental Protection Agency
<b>FRIT</b>	Federal Realty Investment Trust
<b>HD Zone</b>	Housing Development Zone
<b>HDIP</b>	Housing Development Incentive Program
<b>HUD</b>	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
<b>LWSD</b>	Lower Worthington Street District
<b>MassDEP</b>	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
<b>MassDOT</b>	Massachusetts Department of Transportation
<b>MBTA</b>	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
<b>MWIP</b>	MassWorks Infrastructure Program
<b>NEZ</b>	Neighborhood Enterprise Zone

<b>NMTC</b>	New Market Tax Credit Program
<b>QSREs</b>	Qualified Substantial Rehabilitation Expenditures
<b>RFP</b>	Request for Proposals
<b>TIF</b>	Tax Increment Financing
<b>TOD</b>	Transit Oriented Design
<b>USPS</b>	United States Postal Service



## Background and Objectives

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This report represents the final product of a eight-week planning studio in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The project was done for DevelopSpringfield, a not-for-profit development agency operating within the City of Springfield. All of the students are candidates for the degree of Master of Regional Planning.

DevelopSpringfield issued an RFP for consulting services to produce a redevelopment plan for the Worthington Street District that was affected by a major natural gas explosion in November of 2012. The studio team was asked to produce recommendations, while the RFP process was ongoing, to revitalize the area and make it attractive for market-rate housing. Our charter contained no constraints and allowed for imaginative planning. This report contains our recommendations. We regret that time constraints did not allow us to produce robust design mock-ups or to perform financial analyses and develop a pro forma for our recommendations. Clearly these are required.

Springfield, like all urban areas, is approaching a crossroad. For the first time, more than half of all Americans live in urban areas. Creating livable urban areas is critical. Cities must invest, innovate, and experiment or stagnate. The studio team is providing a phased implementation of a set of innovative ideas that we believe are practical, coherent, and implementable with political will. Springfield has an opportunity to begin reinventing itself for the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a model sustainable city where people want to live. The city should seize this opportunity.



## History of the Lower Worthington Street District



Figure 2: Downtown Springfield, 1822, Springfield Republican

Springfield, Massachusetts, founded in 1636 by William Pynchon of Roxbury, was settled at the confluence of the Connecticut and Westfield Rivers for its suitability to both trade and agriculture. After defecting from the Connecticut Colony and joining the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Springfield enjoyed a flourishing trade economy at the crossroads of New York City and Montreal, and Boston and Albany. Despite being razed during a battle of King Phillips War in 1675, the city since became a leading example of industrial innovation with many important inventions. It is with this focus on ingenuity and growth that the study of this particular piece of downtown Springfield begins.

The history of the Lower Worthington Street District (LWSD) is worth studying to better understand its identity, significance and potential to supplement the value of future redevelopment with uniqueness. When old company names are displayed above building entrances or when stories compliment the visual appeal of historic-industrial areas, urban neighborhoods stand to more successfully attract retailers and residents seeking authenticity. These connections to the past have come to be expected by new inhabitants of redeveloping city neighborhoods and should not be ignored, especially here with the LWSD's close relationship to innovation and entertainment. Additionally, lessons and cautionary tales can be found within the factual record of booms and busts in the LWSD, and can explain how the neighborhood reached its present day challenges. The below passages provide a short history of the LWSD's formation, glory and decline.

### PRE-CIVIL WAR (1700s – 1861)

Even though the LWSD is only one third of a mile from Court Square, the center of Springfield's development, the area had primarily agricultural uses for the City's first 200 years. At the end of today's Lyman Street were fields and pasture where half of the



village's cattle grazed.<sup>1</sup> Worthington Street is named after a father, Lieutenant John Worthington and his son, Colonel John Worthington. In 1720, the father bought 20 acres of farmland between the Connecticut River and what are now Spring, Bridge and Worthington Streets. He was more suited to societal development than agrarian uses and he quickly remodeled the farmhouse into Springfield's, and the region's, most prosperous and popular tavern. Called Worthington's, the hostelry entertained many notable people in governmental and military circles, with a separate barroom for "merriment and good fellowship among gentlemen who could hold their liquor."<sup>2</sup> This establishment was the first to begin a very long line of businesses in the LWSD that were, and are currently, dedicated to fun and entertainment.

Many years later, in 1836, a land speculator named Charles Stearns acquired the entire Worthington property for \$12,500, a price more than four times the amount paid for the parcel only one year before. It was a large gamble, but Stearns was willing to take the chance based on his inside information that the Western railroad planned to extend its lines to Springfield within a few years, completing a route to the Boston markets. When the extension was completed in 1839, Stearns laid out Worthington Street from the river to Chestnut Street, while reserving a park named Stearns Square, which remains today. The railroad formed a northern border to the LWSD with Main Street to the southwest and the Springfield Armory to the east. Within these edges, the City's highest concentration of commercial, manufacturing and innovation would soon thrive.

In the next two decades before the Civil War, the neighborhood quickly attracted railroad offices, machine shops, and freight storage along Lyman and Taylor Streets, those closest to the tracks. The employees that would supply the labor for these enterprises lived in new housing along Worthington and Bridge Streets, with the Irish families forming a community on upper Lyman Street, an area known as "Cheapland." By 1851, the first business to reach national prominence, the Wason Manufacturing Company, was located at the machine shops on Lyman Street and made luxurious sleeping cars for the railroads. It became Springfield's largest industry and by the 1860's, Wason was building thousands of cars per year. Clearly, the Western Railroad,



Figure 3: Advertisement for railway cars produced by the Wason Company.

<sup>1</sup> Green's History of Springfield (1899).

<sup>2</sup> Archives at the Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History.

later the Boston & Albany, was the catalyst for the LWSD's initial growth and rising land values.

## CIVIL WAR AND RAPID DEVELOPMENT (1861 – 1950)



Figure 2: Springfield Printing Company, Main and Worthington St, Springfield, MA



Figure 3: Duryea gas powered automobile on display.

The Civil War brought a building boom in the LWSD as the Springfield Armory was briefly the only remaining federal arsenal for the Union Army after the fall of Harper's Ferry, Virginia. To reach the railroad that would take them to the Hudson River, many of the soldiers passed through the neighborhood, with its manufacturers and merchants eager to provide for their every need.<sup>3</sup> The rapid growth would continue after the war's end in 1865, but with a major setback.

A fire that started in a lumberyard on Taylor Street on May 30, 1875 destroyed 45 buildings on Taylor, Worthington, Main and Bridge Streets. Springfield subsequently required that all new multi-story buildings in the LWSD be constructed of brick masonry.<sup>4</sup> By the 1880s, a strong, interdependent group of businesses were thriving with Lyman Street hosting wholesale merchants, manufacturers arranged on Taylor Street, and Worthington Street becoming the neighborhood's principal retail area.

Manufacturing in the LWSD gained a particularly noteworthy reputation for its mechanical prowess, mostly in metalworking, which attracted skilled immigrant labor from Germany. Wires and springs, sewing machines and steam heat apparatus were among the goods being made here. Although the adjacent railroad facilitated access to the national and global marketplace, each business seemed to have a local supplier or buyer ready to enable transactions deliverable by horse.

For example, the Powers Paper Company on Lyman Street produced the paper used by the Morgan Envelope Company (inventors of the postcard and window envelope) one block away on Taylor Street. Another purchaser was the Springfield Printing Company on Main and Worthington, which sold its services to the Springfield Republican newspaper, Merriam-Webster (first American-English dictionary) and Lutz Lithography,

<sup>3</sup> Phaneuf, W. (2011, June 5), Boom Town: Springfield Becomes Vital to the Civil War Effort. *The Republican*. Retrieved November 9, 2013 from [www.masslive.com](http://www.masslive.com).

<sup>4</sup> ---. (1941, June 19), Worthington St. Building Which Escaped Bad Fires to Be Razed. *Springfield Union*.

which in turn supported Milton Bradley (first board games), two blocks away on Dwight Street. The Springfield Steam Power Company, a massive enterprise that occupied most of the block between Lyman, Main and Taylor Streets, used a 400hp engine to generate local power for adjacent manufacturers. Additionally, residential components were an essential part of the neighborhood with business owners and railroad officials tending to live within blocks of their workplaces.

Once the workday was completed, the prominent businessmen and professionals would socialize at the Springfield Club-House on Chestnut and Worthington Streets.<sup>5</sup> With current emphasis placed on the importance of synergetic economic development in modern planning, the LWSD offers an example from the past when mutually beneficial, mixed-uses in close proximity was an unqualified success.

The turn of the 20th century brought more inventions for Springfield – so many that it acquired the nickname, City of Progress. In 1893, brothers Charles and Frank Duryea gave the first successful demonstration of a gasoline-powered automobile on Taylor Street. It was a one-cylinder, wooden-wheeled, sputtering contraption that gathered crowds of onlookers as it backfired down the street. This event has obvious importance as a pivotal moment in transportation history, but it also led to the LWSD as a center of early auto dealerships. As the Duryea brothers continued to manufacture their cars on Main Street, auto retail showrooms began to establish themselves in storefront windows on Worthington and adjacent streets. They sold Stoddard-Daytons, Paiges, Jewetts and Willys Overlands among others and some dealerships lasted for more than 40 years.<sup>6</sup>

The LWSD also continued providing Springfield with some of the best places for entertainment, recreation and socializing. Worthington Street added to its reputation for gatherings and fun with the establishment known as Globe Lunch, an eatery with notable regulars and famous athletes visiting the City. A smoking room in the rear was where many political campaigns were planned and victories celebrated. Worthington also became a “mecca for the bicycle enthusiasts and Sundays found many riders

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<sup>5</sup> King’s Handbook of Springfield (1884).

<sup>6</sup> (1954, July 2), Worthington St. Building Sold. *Springfield Union*.



Figure 4: WBZ Radio in 1922, Image courtesy of Hammond Museum of Radio.

quenching their thirst at the Globe.”<sup>7</sup> Both the Springfield Bicycle Club and the Massasoit Bicycle Club were headquartered on Worthington and merchants and repairmen ran many of the stores. In 1902, Smith’s Billiards opened on Worthington, which can still be visited today, and began over 100 years of concentrated entertainment options in the Stearns Square area. Twenty years later, the first music to be broadcast by a commercial radio station in the U.S. came from WBZ, located around the corner on Chestnut Street at the Kimball Hotel.

## OVERGROWTH, LOSS OF RETAIL AND THE DECLINE OF MANUFACTURING (1950s – PRESENT)

By the 1950s, a combination of national economic trends and local constraints were bringing the LWSD’s growth to a halt. The manufacturing and industrial output in the U.S. had peaked and firms in the neighborhood were beginning to close or relocate. But, ironically, the biggest impact on the neighborhood was the congestion of cars on its relatively narrow, one-way streets and a complimentary lack of parking spaces. The invention that had brought an economic identity to the LWSD, namely the automobile, inadvertently made the neighborhood a victim of its own success.

In an effort to alleviate the stifling traffic, a committee of local merchants and business owners petitioned the City to widen Worthington Street into a two-way route.<sup>8</sup> The members were blaming one-way traffic for ensnaring would-be shoppers in a slow and wide hunt for a parking space. They even accepted the necessary loss of three feet of sidewalk widths in order to accommodate their plan. Storefronts were becoming vacant and property values were plummeting. The petition was eventually rejected by Springfield’s traffic engineers for fear that the plan would funnel traffic towards the river where the newly completed Interstate 91 was causing its own congestion on Broadway.<sup>9</sup>

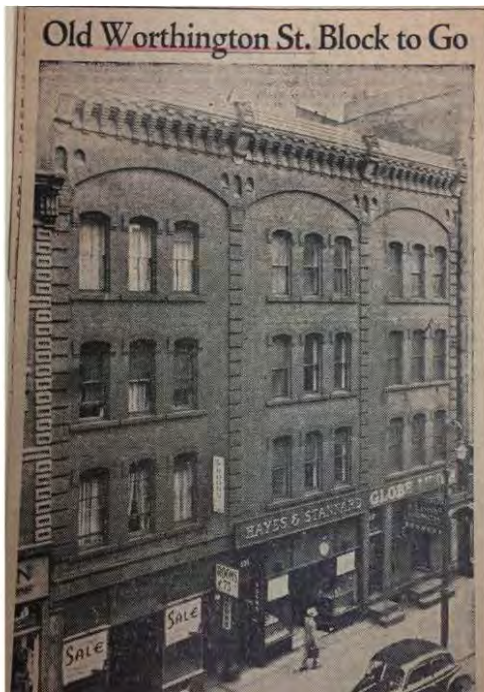


Figure 5: Newspaper clipping, from Lyman & Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History.

<sup>7</sup> (1941, June 19), Worthington St. Building Which Escaped Bad Fires to Be Razed. *Springfield Union*.

<sup>8</sup> (1958, June 19), Widening Is Proposed For Worthington St. *Springfield Union*.

<sup>9</sup> (1971, May 4), Barlow Vetoes 2-Way Traffic on Worthington. *Springfield Union*.

Other causes for businesses leaving the LWSD were the limited availability of space for expansion and the aging building stock. When compared to the cheaper options in the suburbs, auto dealerships couldn't resist the move. West Springfield, in particular, was the recipient of a "business caravan" of car retailers from the LWSD.<sup>10</sup> A trucking dealership, located on Worthington Street for 39 years, expressed disappointment to leave Springfield, but that the ample room and easy highway accessibility made the move across the river necessary.

Meanwhile, businesses relying on functional indoor space began to experience reduced maintenance on elevators, heating systems and other mechanical features. The costs required for their upkeep outpaced the income from rents. Tenants occupying the upper floors of older buildings were given notice to leave. Landlords decided to sit on their empty properties until urban renewal might provide an opportunity. The treasurer of the Poli Building, a magnificent block-wide structure at Worthington and Main Streets, told a newspaper in 1966, "We are just sitting tight, hoping that because of our excellent location, the property will be suitable for a redevelopment project."<sup>11</sup> Many owners of vacant property in the LWSD are still waiting. Of the number of businesses that left the LWSD during this time period were offices of the future Fortune 500 companies, IBM and Pitney Bowes.<sup>12</sup>

Along with empty upper stories, downtown Springfield began to lose its major ground floor retailers in the 1970s. Department store and anchor, Forbes & Wallace, closed its doors in 1976. The small businesses that remained in the LWSD were a few printers and picture framers. However, just when all seemed lost, in the early 1980s a renewed interest in living downtown brought middle income, young professionals seeking inexpensive properties to rehabilitate and live in.<sup>13</sup> Developers caught on.

Apartment conversions took place in the vacant upper floors where local power brokers, armed with low interest loans from local banking institutions and an upswing in demand, created Morgan Square Apartments at 15 Taylor Street, the former site of the



Figure 6: Theodore's Restaurant. Image from [smithsbilliards.com](http://smithsbilliards.com)

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<sup>10</sup> (1958, March 13), Moran Truck Co. Here Will Move to West Side. *The Daily News*.

<sup>11</sup> O'Rell, Barbara. (1966, June 22), 15 Firms to Move From Poli Building. *The Republican*.

<sup>12</sup> (1958, June 19), Widening Is Proposed For Worthington St. *Springfield Union*.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Robert McCarroll, member of Springfield Historic Commission, November, 7, 2013.

Duryea Brothers automobile company. The former YMCA was converted into 122 Chestnut Street, a rental building with fitness amenities and pool, in the Apremont Triangle Historic District.

The 1980s also witnessed a revival in the entertainment scene as a result of the new residents, especially near the Apremont Triangle. Bars and restaurants with names, The Frontier, Shannon's Corner and Sign of the Dog, opened and flourished with the new nightlife scene and the LWSD was known as the Club Quarter. Theodore's, a bar on Worthington, is still rated as one of the best places in the U.S. to catch blues bands.

Unfortunately, this resurgence of the area was short lived as corporate downsizing in the 1990s slashed available employment opportunities in the nearby office towers. Simultaneously, an epidemic of street crime, fueled by the arrival of unemployment and the drug trade combined to reverse the earlier desirability of living downtown. This led to plummeting property values and developers of market rate housing went bankrupt. Units in the McIntosh Building, Classical and Matoon Buildings each lost approximately 25% of their value and both investors and individual owners were left holding on to the properties. The decline in the 1990s, still experienced today, resulted in affordable housing being the only remaining option for landlords.<sup>14</sup>

In this section that reviewed the history of the Lower Worthington Street District, valuable lessons are provided that offer opportunities to tune into the unique assets that identify the area as its own place. These include the crucial mix of innovative industry and entertainment that result in extremely successful revitalized neighborhoods in many cities, such as Williamsburg, Brooklyn and Shoreditch, East London. Even in smaller cities like Pittsburgh and Buffalo, this is a dynamic relationship of work and play that fosters interest from younger artists and professionals. For example, the bicycle stories from Worthington Street could be picked up and used by a new bike shop catering to the fixed-gear ("fixies") set of urban two-wheelers. On the same street, bars and restaurants can harken back to the neighborhood's past status as a destination for recreation. Overall, they add up to a connection to authenticity coveted by city dwellers and unsuccessfully duplicated by suburbs.

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with Robert McCarroll, member of Springfield Historic Commission, November, 7, 2013.

# Site Description

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## NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

A profile of the Metro Center Neighborhood and the LWSD was created using 2011 United States American Community Survey 5-year estimates, Springfield assessor's information, and city GIS data. This overview will provide a brief analysis of current neighborhood demographics and economic statistics, as well as a synopsis of its geographical location. One should note that the demographic and economic statistics for the neighborhood were generated prior to the gas explosion that occurred in November 2012. These numbers may not accurately depict the current status due to the displacement of people and businesses.

The City of Springfield is comprised of 17 distinct neighborhoods, with a population of 153,552 people.<sup>15</sup> Springfield is the major economic hub for the Pioneer Valley and is home to many of its largest employers. A wide array of employment opportunities exists in the city and surrounding communities; commercial and entertainment attractions are prominent throughout the area. Springfield is also known as "The City of Homes" and provides a wide variety of residential options.

The City was initially founded and developed within the Metro Center neighborhood. Metro Center fully contains the project study area, the Lower Worthington Street District. The district is approximately 630 acres and is comprised of three census tracts (8011.1, 8011.2, and 8012). Metro Center is bounded by Interstate 291 to the north, Union and Howard Streets to the south, Federal Street to the east and the Connecticut River to the west. The diverse community is comprised of 6,107 residents, just 4% of the current population, of which 53% are Hispanic or Latino, 45% are White, and 23% are Black. The rich cultural mix in Metro Center, and the City itself, make it a vibrant and historic destination. However, both Springfield and the Metro Center neighborhood have fallen behind in recent economic and social trends.

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<sup>15</sup> U.S. Census 2012 Population Estimate

Income, employment, and education statistics in the neighborhood are below average when compared both to Massachusetts and the United States. In 2011, the average annual household income for the neighborhood was \$17,291 dollars. This amount is less than half of Springfield's average earnings. Both the City and the neighborhood also have high unemployment rates. In 2011, 2,645 people age 16 years and over participated in the workforce in Metro Center Neighborhood. Of that total, 421 were unemployed, creating a 15.9% unemployment rate, only slightly higher than Springfield as a whole, and almost twice as much as Massachusetts and the United States.

A majority of the employed residents in Metro Center work in the service sector. Nearly 60% of the labor force works in management, professional services, or service occupations. However, 42.3% of people age 18-64 are living in poverty. This is twice as many as the population in Springfield and three times as many as the United States.

Metro Center neighborhood is also home to 1,346 children under the age of 18. Almost half of this population is living in poverty. The neighborhood's high school dropout rate is also quite staggering when compared to Massachusetts and the United States. Nearly 18% of people age 16 to 19 years old in 2011 did not finish or were not enrolled in high school. These statistics are nearly double or three times as high as Massachusetts and the Nation. Investing in the neighborhood will benefit the city both socially and economically.

**Table 1. Household Income**

	<b>Metro Center</b>	<b>Springfield</b>	<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>Median Household Income*</b>	\$17,291	\$36,475	\$67,577	\$54,038
<b>Per Capita Income*</b>	\$14,192	\$18,930	\$35,899	\$28,590

\*Adjusted to 2012 dollars<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> United States, ACS 2007-2011 5-year estimates



**Table 2. Unemployment Rate**

	<b>Metro Center</b>	<b>Springfield</b>	<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>Unemployed Labor Force (16 Years and Over)</b>	15.9%	13.7%	8.1%	8.7%
<b>Unemployed Labor Force: Females (16 Years and Over)</b>	8.5%	11.6%	7.2%	8.2%
<b>Unemployed Labor Force: Males (16 Years and Over)</b>	24.1%	15.8%	8.9%	9.1%

17

**Table 3. Occupation by Industry**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Metro Center</b>
<b>Employed Civilian Population 16 Years And Over:</b>	2,224
<b>Management, professional, and related occupations</b>	30.0%
<b>Service occupations</b>	31.7%
<b>Sales and office occupations</b>	21.0%
<b>Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations</b>	0.0%
<b>Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations</b>	5.0%
<b>Production, transportation, and material moving occupations</b>	12.3%
<b>Production occupations</b>	3.1%
<b>Transportation and material moving occupations</b>	9.2%

18

<sup>17</sup> United States, ACS 2007-2011 5-year estimates

<sup>18</sup> United States, ACS 2007-2011 5-year estimates

**Table 4: Poverty Rates**

	<b>Metro Center</b>	<b>Springfield</b>	<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>Living in Poverty (Under Age 18)</b>	47.0%	39.0%	13.6%	20.0%
<b>Living in Poverty (Ages 18 to 64)</b>	42.3%	23.3%	10.0%	13.1%
<b>Living in Poverty (Ages 65 and Over)</b>	32.4%	17.7%	9.3%	9.4%

<sup>19</sup>

**Table 5: High School Dropout Rates**

	<b>Metro Center</b>	<b>Springfield</b>	<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>High School Dropout Rate (Ages 16 to 19)</b>	17.9%	11.2%	4.4%	5.9%
<b>High School Dropout Rate: Females (Ages 16 to 19)</b>	0%	8.2%	3.5%	4.9%
<b>High School Dropout Rate: Males (Ages 16 to 19)</b>	37.1%	14.1%	5.2%	6.8

<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> United States, ACS 2007-2011 5-year estimates

<sup>20</sup> United States, ACS 2007-2011 5-year estimates

## LYNCH ANALYSIS

A Lynch Analysis is based upon the theory that residents in a city should be able to recognize and organize urban elements into a logical design. Kevin Lynch states that “in the process of way-finding, the strategic link is the environmental image, the generalized mental picture of the exterior physical world that is held by an individual. This image is the product both of immediate sensation and of the memory of past experience, and it is used to interpret information and to guide action”<sup>21</sup> He asserts that mental maps consist of five elements: (1) *corridors*: the paths that people use to move throughout the city; (2) *edges*: boundaries and disruptions to the continuity of the city; (3) *districts*: areas characterized by common characteristics; (4) *landmarks*: external points of orientation that are usually apparent and readily discernible objects in the metropolitan landscape; and (5) *nodes*: concentrations of activity like squares and crossroads. Of these five elements, Lynch believes that corridors are particularly important because they organize urban mobility.

A clear mental map of our urban environment is necessary to combat the intrinsic fear of disorientation. This map gives people a sense of emotional security that improves the experience of shared space for those who live in, work in, and visit a city. This is a concept that Springfield must embrace in their metro center redevelopment plans. Many of the city’s perception issues stem from a block system that feels confusing or unsafe, and from streets that are largely devoid of people; it is difficult to navigate an environment where many buildings are vacant and there are few nodes for social gathering. By Lynch’s system, an environmental image has three components: identity (the recognition of urban elements as separate entities), structure (the relation of these elements to other objects and to the observer), and meaning (the combination of practical and personal value to the observer).

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<sup>21</sup> Lynch, Kevin, *The Image of the City*, MIT Press, Cambridge MA 1960

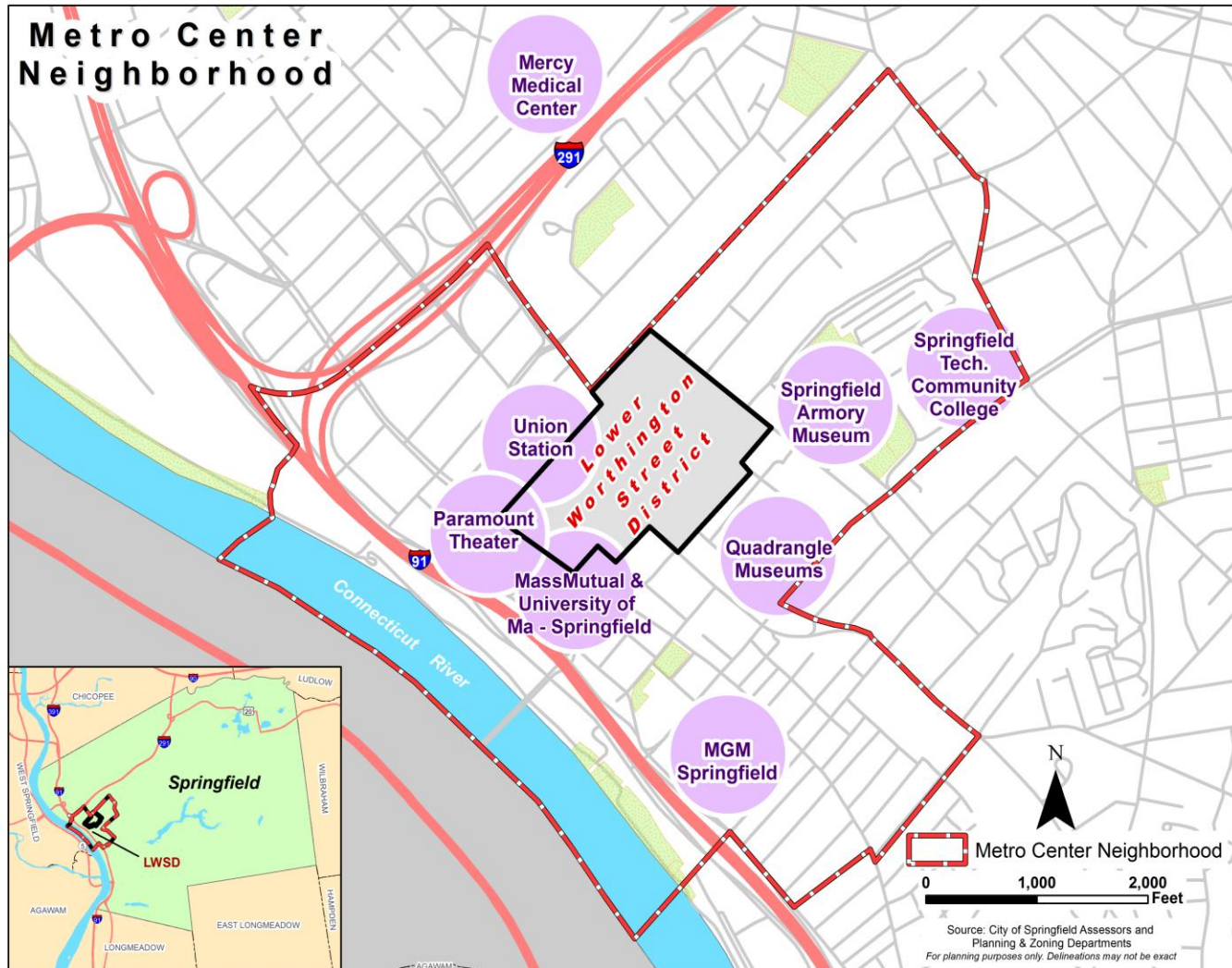


Figure 7 Geographic context of the Lower Worthington Street District

After visiting the metro center area (with particular attention paid to the redevelopment zone surrounding the site of the November 2012 gas explosion), we were able to apply Lynch's assessment and define his five mental mapping tools in this Springfield

neighborhood. The resulting Lynch Analysis (see below) will shape our recommendations for the downtown community in the hopes of creating a more cohesive, comprehensive, and comfortable city. Our goal is to use our findings to inform a plan that will provide a stronger identity, stronger structure, and stronger purpose for Springfield residents within this space.

The Lower Worthington Street District is centrally located in the Metro Center neighborhood of Springfield, Massachusetts. The area is bordered by Spring Street to the Northeast, Lyman Street to the Northwest, Main Street to the Southwest, and Mattoon and Hillman Street to the Southeast. Adjacent to Lyman Street is Union Station. The historic Armory and Springfield Technical Community College also border the site and are located along Byers Street (Figure 7). The site is approximately 61 acres in size and contains 4.7 miles of sidewalk, making it a very walk-able community.

### ***CORRIDORS***

It is notable that the corridors we were able to identify completely bypass the zone slated for improvement, or that they are streets that you would take to cut through the site; there are not corridors that draw you in and encourage you to stay. During our walking tour of the area around the blast, we determined that the neighborhood is totally walk-able and pedestrian friendly, but we wonder if that is the case solely because the area is so bereft of automobile traffic. While the lack of traffic makes it easy to travel on foot, the jarring absence of activity also creates an air of unease when traveling through the site using any mode of transportation. Bike lanes could be a way to get people and traffic in the neighborhood without completely reworking the traffic patterns and even prior to new businesses coming into the redevelopment zone.

### ***EDGES***

While an argument can certainly be made that there are breaks in the continuity of Springfield's downtown, we determined that there are none extreme enough to be labeled edges. In our visits we encountered no streets that were not crossable, and no areas that we really felt unsafe entering. The closest thing to an edge that we identified was the wall of abandoned warehouse buildings backed by the train tracks to the north west of Lyman Street. This is nothing that anyone would ever attempt to cross, but we feel that when the Union Station improvements are completed, this area will appear

less forbidding since there will be an active use behind these empty structures. There would also be a difference in the atmosphere of this area if the warehouses were occupied - shuttered windows and fliers declaring vacancy don't nurture an environment that invites people to stay.

### ***DISTRICTS***

A number of districts exist within downtown Springfield. Inside the redevelopment zone, there are two predominant residential districts in the area around historic Mattoon Street, and on Winter Street where the Armory Commons Condominiums are located. These areas are distinguished by architectural style and by an organized living community. Parks and services for the residents are accessible within these micro neighborhoods, thus, there is little opportunity for disorientation. Mattoon Street and the area immediately surrounding the Armory Commons complex are navigable and create a sense of safety that is lacking outside the district boundaries.

There is a lesson to be learned from these groupings. They create a legible space and are easier to navigate than the largely disjointed redevelopment area. Incorporating these present residential strengths to the other housing and commercial projects in the study area, fosters a sense of structure and should be a redevelopment priority. Mattoon and Armory Commons are obviously isolated sectors where people live, but they should be integrated into metro center to encourage an environment where people feel comfortable working, living, playing, or just passing through. This is an example of an instance in which form based code may be effective in uniting disparate sections into a successful urban hub.

In the area around Lyman Street, vacant (or seemingly vacant) warehouse properties have established this stretch as the Warehouse District in our analysis. This street is nearly devoid of all three environmental imaging mechanisms. Identity is muddled by a chaotic assortment of building types and uses and empty streets where little activity makes it difficult for any type of meaning to be recognized. This area has no discernible structure, and it is difficult to imagine why you would go there unless you worked in one of the warehouses. The Warehouse District is exciting however in that it has huge redevelopment opportunities since there are so few active uses.

Perhaps the largest prospect for redevelopment within the Warehouse District is the ongoing redevelopment of Union Station to the northwest. Inserting a functioning and much needed business into this underused strip of facades will not only bring some new revenue into the zone, but will also draw people in. The completion of a new Union Station would give property owners on Lyman the opportunity to redevelop vacant structures into storefronts or restaurants to entice rail-users to stay and spend money in the neighborhood for a while. Throughout the redevelopment zone, but here in particular, there are a number of old industrial buildings with historic architecture in the style that establish Mattoon Street and the Armory Commons as successful districts. These buildings on Lyman have fallen into a state of disregard, but most are structurally sound and are prime real estate for adaptive reuse. Another viable strategy for bringing life back to Lyman is to strengthen the connection to the aforementioned Mattoon Street district, located to the southeast. There is a market in the residents of this neighborhood that new business upstarts should be looking to capture. Other assets in the immediate area such as the museum culture and other historical sites should be capitalized on as well. The integration of a system of complete and lively streets linking landmarks, districts, and already heavily trafficked corridors is a first step in moving Lyman into the future of downtown Springfield.

The campus and fields associated with Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) form a district to the northeast of the study area. Like most of the districts discussed thus far, this is a standalone area that affords little interaction with the metro center at large. The one meager link between the STCC campus and the Lower Worthington Street District is the commuter lot where students can meet up to catch the shuttle to campus. This school's students, staff, and faculty should be a target audience for the rehabilitation of this part of Springfield as it could potentially keep them around for drinks with peers after classes, or bring them off campus and into the downtown for lunch.

There is an existing perception that the area around Worthington Street comprises an adult entertainment district, but our observations did not support this view. Since the Scores gentleman's club was leveled last year, there are only two adult-use establishments in the zone and the connection between them is too weak to constitute a district. The zone is peppered with vacant clubs and bars that fuel this misconceived opinion that Springfield is overrun with adult uses. A simple combative tool for this



Figure 8: Wall advertisement on an abandoned restaurant building in the area

issue is to utilize these unoccupied building facades as a canvas for public art (at a minimum until they are occupied again). There are a few attempts at public art within the redevelopment zone (Figure 9) but they are overwhelmed by provocative advertisements and signs from businesses that have long left the area. Old ads like these on abandoned buildings (particularly those owned by the city) could be covered with new wall murals that celebrate the proud history, existing culture, and future growth of Springfield.

### **LANDMARKS**

Also noteworthy, is that the majority of the landmarks in metro center are outside of the redevelopment zone and that they are utterly disconnected from the people and the places within it. What we are finding again and again is that the city has plenty of assets and opportunities, but that the connections are feeble. Strengthening existing connections and creating new landmarks within the downtown area are fundamental to giving this space a facelift.



Figure 9: Public art display on an abandoned building in the Warehouse District on Lyman Street

The museum quadrangle and the National Armory are within a mile of the zone and this rich historical connection should be embraced. Springfield was once the “city of firsts” and it has ties to the start of precision manufacturing, the invention of basketball, and the introduction of the automobile. The area is still rich with auto body shops and car dealers, but today these are often locally unfavorable land uses. One approach to incorporating these uses and tying them into historical context and outside landmarks is to embrace an auto theme in a shop, restaurant, bar, or coffee shop (i.e. old car seats for booths or wall art crafted from junked car parts in a bar). Reminders of the city’s connection with basketball prompt visitors to check out the Hall of Fame on West Columbus Ave and provide a point of pride for residents. Among the many households that earned Springfield the moniker the “city of homes” was that of Dr. Seuss and a sculpture garden just outside of the zone honors his prolific career. There is a shortage of open space in the zone and so working a tie-in to the garden would benefit the museum system and those who live downtown.

The Mass Mutual Center is another local landmark that brings a lot of people into the metro center, but never into the redevelopment zone. Our understanding from locals is that employees never have any cause to leave this building; they work, eat, and shop all



without ever having to set foot on the sidewalk. Perhaps if there were a place that they could purchase amenities that had more allure than the CVS within the Mass Mutual Center complex, or if a new trendy cafe could entice the workers to skip lunch in the cafeteria a few times a week, then the redevelopment area could marquee itself as the type of place where “suits” and young professionals go to hang out.

A very exciting potential landmark is the proposed site for the MGM Grand Casino, located to the south east of the redevelopment zone. MGM has projected restaurants, live entertainment options, and a shopping center. MGM could be a great opportunity for the city in all of these regards. Live entertainment is a wonderful way to draw outside populations into Springfield since other nearby casinos have prevented big acts from coming to the area in the past. The area is definitely in need of more retail options so whatever shopping venues MGM had in mind would improve the commercial climate.

The one thing to bear in mind with this new project on the horizon is that the city does not want to produce another phenomenon like the Mass Mutual building where patrons never need to leave the casino and venture out into the rest of the metro center. MGM has proposed transportation and street improvements and these should certainly be enhancements that the city pushes to see through to completion as they could connect outside landmarks like the casino and the Basketball Hall of Fame to the study area.

### ***NODES***

This analysis identifies both the strengths and the weaknesses of the metro center. Locating corridors, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks on a map of our study area helps us to pinpoint where our redevelopment strategies should be aimed. For example, the lack of identity in the Warehouse District gives us a blank slate for creative reuse, and the absence of landmarks within the area panned for redevelopment makes it clear that the area is in need of more homes or businesses. Perhaps the most striking discovery we made through this assessment is a glaring lack of nodes. Nodes (denoted by a pink polygon on the analysis), indicate areas where people gather; somewhere that you might ask a friend to meet you, or where you would run into an acquaintance and linger to chat for a while. The nodes within the redevelopment zone all provide some sort of amenity for the local community. They consist mostly of open space, but one

convenience store that carries produce and other pantry needs as well as cigarettes and scratch tickets serves as a gathering place for locals to shop and take a smoke break during the work day. Other nodes in the downtown are places where people work or hubs of travel; this type of node is concerning because it applies to only a certain audience, or to people only as they enter or leave the city. Nodes like the Peter Pan bus terminal and the Amtrak Station hold great potential for drawing visitors into the downtown. It would be useful for Springfield residents to have somewhere nearby to bring visiting friends and family after picking them up at the station, and visiting businessmen and women would surely enjoy getting to take in some local culture upon entering Springfield. The majority of the hotels in the city are on the outskirts of the downtown near West Columbus; historically, there were places to stay near the redevelopment zone but they have since been demolished or been converted to housing. It might be a nice touch to bring some sense of hospitality back into downtown Springfield with a hotel proximate to the city's travel hubs.

Additionally, the studio team has identified some sites that we are predicting as future nodes (shown in green in Figure 10). These sites include the areas that we have proposed for redevelopment in the Site Proposal section starting on page 86, in addition to ongoing projects in the city of Springfield. It is noteworthy that the Union Station improvements, the site of the proposed MGM casino, and the new UMass satellite campus all surround the LWSD. Our priority development sites target some of the areas in the district that are the most devoid of activity, so with these new developments it stands to reason that these now empty streets could someday buzz with activity.

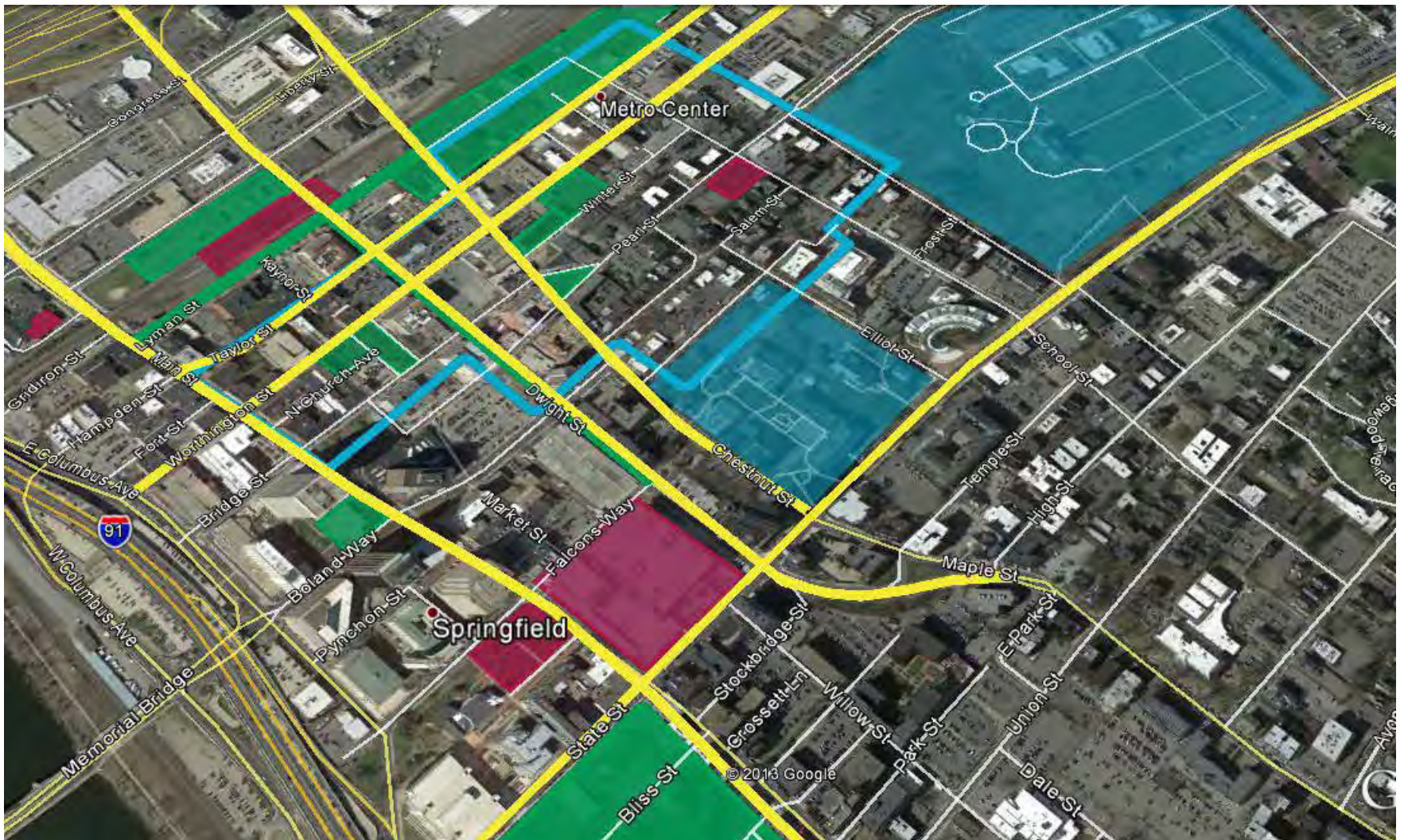


Figure 10: Lynch Analysis of Downtown Springfield

## CONNECTIVITY AND TRANSIT

In 2012 survey of traffic delays in the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the US, Springfield ranked 55<sup>th</sup> out of 100 for delays, though the average delay for a 30 minute commute was just under 2 minutes from Monday to Thursday and just over 2 minutes on Fridays.<sup>22</sup> These figures do not account for any delays due to inefficiencies in the local street network.

### *TRAFFIC*

Streets within Metro Center in general and in the Lower Worthington Street District in particular have alternating one-way traffic patterns. This is true whether the streets are narrow or wide and whether moderately or lightly travelled. These traffic-calming measures have been introduced into or have produced an environment with very little traffic of any kind and are counterproductive.

Vehicular traffic is often the lifeblood of small retail, provided there is opportunity to stop, park, run in, and make a quick purchase. Very short-term metered parking that turns over quickly is the key to facilitating this type of retail, which may be a drug store, a take-out restaurant, a hardware store, a flower shop, or a variety of other retailers. Longer duration visits to offices, sit-down restaurants, and multiple locales should be directed to surface or structured parking and discouraged from on street parking.

Two major pairs of roads intersect in the center of the district. Each pair is a one-way couplets. Dwight and Chestnut Streets run almost parallel from the northwest and the southeast providing connections from downtown to Interstate 291 eastbound and westbound. Both of these streets are wide accommodating 2 to 3 lanes of traffic and on street parking on both sides of the road. These function as raceways through the district with traffic often moving at high speeds. Worthington and Taylor Streets are the parallel pair that run from the northeast and southwest. They are one-way west of Chestnut Street and two-way to the east. Taylor connects to Interstate 91 through Main Street in the southwest after traversing the Club Quarter. From Main Street there are

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.governing.com/blogs/by-the-numbers/worst-friday-afternoon-rush-hour-commutes-american-cities.html>

northerly connections to the North End and southerly connections to downtown. Worthington heads northeast from Main Street, becomes two-way at Chestnut, and continues on to the McKnight neighborhood.

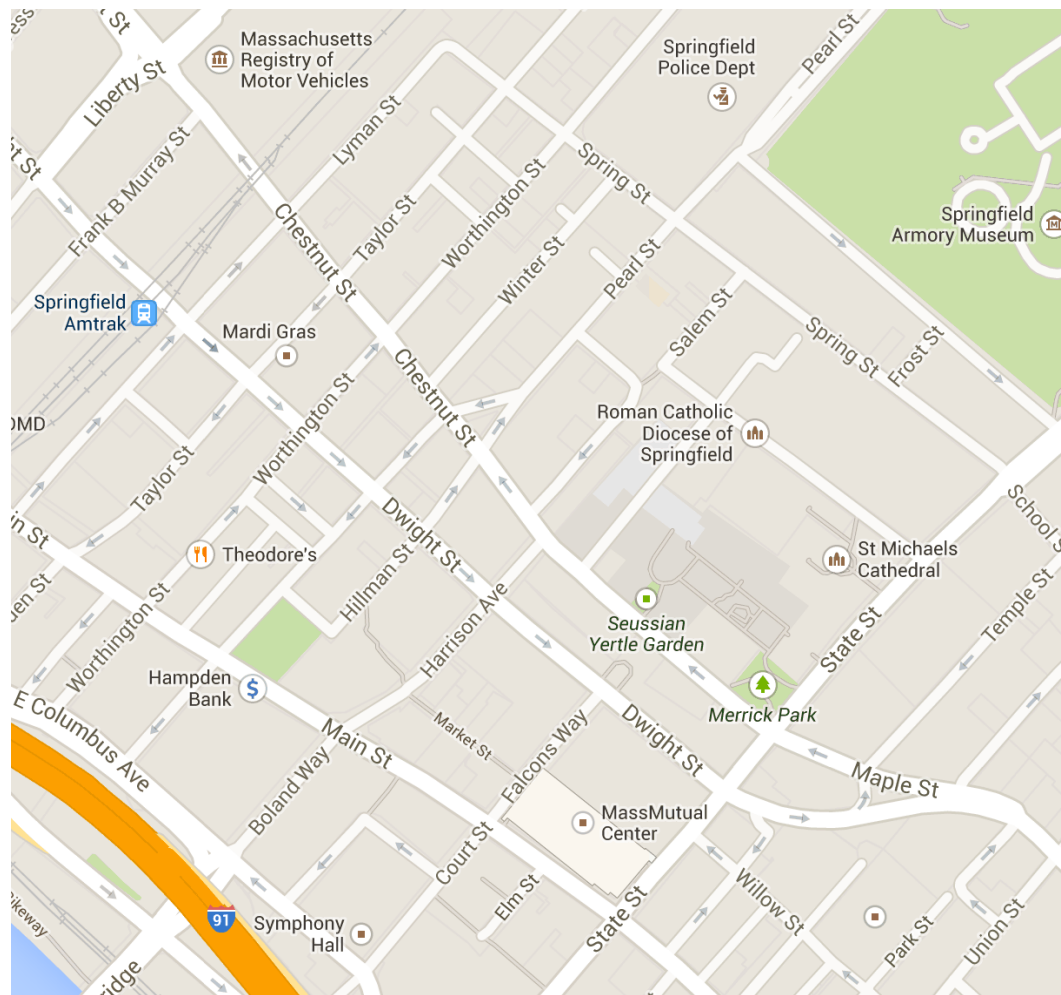


Figure 11: Map of the area around the Lower Worthington Street District showing one-way streets (Google Maps)

The general appearance of the streets and sidewalks is of worn out infrastructure. Revitalization of a neighborhood requires the impression that the city cares about the place. This is most easily conveyed through the condition of the streets. The area above Chestnut Street and to the east of the Club Quarter looks abandoned by the owners, tenants, and city; yet, it is adjacent to a thriving residential and cultural zone.

In promoting ‘Smart Growth’ through Executive Order 487 and Chapters 40R and 40S, Massachusetts suggests that a vibrant urban neighborhood can, in part, be catalyzed by complete streets that are designed for all modes of use and all types of users.<sup>23</sup> Modes includes pedestrians, bicyclists, and buses, as well as car and trucks. Users include all ages and abilities, including the mobility impaired.

Complete Streets is a program of Smart Growth America and the National Complete Streets Coalition to provide guidance to municipalities in implementing best-practice design standards. A summary of the objectives and rationale is provided in the introduction to their local policy workbook.<sup>24</sup>

For decades, the fields of transportation planning and design focused on moving able-bodied adults in automobiles, creating a system that provides reasonably good mobility and convenience for millions of Americans. However, the needs of travelers outside that group, including younger or older people, those with disabilities, and those who travel by transit, bicycle, or foot, have been routinely overlooked. Neighborhoods lack safe places to walk or bicycle, and access to key community resources such as parks, shops, grocery stores, and schools is now dependent on access to an automobile. Thousands of people are injured or killed while walking or bicycling every year, in part due to the inhospitable built environment. Buses move down streets slowly and drivers – when not speeding along neighborhood streets – are caught in traffic jams on major arterials.

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<sup>23</sup> [http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart\\_growth\\_toolkit/pages/state-policy.html](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/pages/state-policy.html)

<sup>24</sup> Seskin, Stephanie, August 2012, updated Spring 2013, Complete Streets Local Policy Workbook. Smart Growth America, Washington DC.

The Complete Streets movement aims to develop integrated, connected networks of streets that are safe and accessible for all people, regardless of age, ability, income, ethnicity, or chosen mode of travel. Complete Streets makes active transportation such as walking and bicycling convenient; provide increased access to employment centers, commerce, and educational institutions; and allow greater choice in traveling so that transportation doesn't drain a family's piggy bank.

The term Complete Streets means much more than the physical changes to a community's streets. Complete Streets means changing transportation planning, design, maintenance, and funding decisions. A Complete Streets policy ensures that, from the start, projects are planned and designed to meet the needs of every community member, regardless of their age, ability, or how they travel. Doing so allows a community to save money, accommodate more people, and create an environment where every resident can travel safely and conveniently.

Complete Streets can be achieved through a variety of policies: ordinances and resolutions; rewrites of design manuals; inclusion in comprehensive plans; internal policies developed by transportation agencies; executive orders from elected officials, such as Mayors or Governors; and policies developed by stakeholders from the community and agency staff that are formally adopted by an elected board of officials.

A vibrant, walk-able neighborhood should not be optimized for cars. The uses that are being promoted should be actively encouraged in ways that are obvious to those who are on the street. This means that where cars are necessary, pedestrians and cyclists should be buffered from them to the maximum extent possible. Where possible and practical, surface water absorption into the ground should be encouraged as opposed to direct channeling into a storm-water system. Parking should be available to patrons of area businesses, but not a priority over foot and cycle traffic.

The renovation of Union Station provides an opportunity for beginning to accrue some of the benefits of transit-oriented development. Initially, train and passenger traffic through Union Station will be low, but it will be the major intermodal transportation link

for the city with numerous local and inter-city buses converging on the site. The pedestrian traffic from Union Station to the cultural venues, downtown offices, STCC, and the new casino through the Worthington Street District can help in the revitalization effort, provided that pedestrians feel safe and welcome.

### ***SPATIAL CONNECTIVITY***

Cities consist of a network of both built structures and the open spaces that connect them. Over the past century, cities like Springfield have been gradually and relentlessly optimized for the automobile. As we progress into the twenty-first century, this model has clearly become unsustainable; cities need to become places for people, not vehicles. Transportation as a sector is the largest contributor in the United States to greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>25</sup>

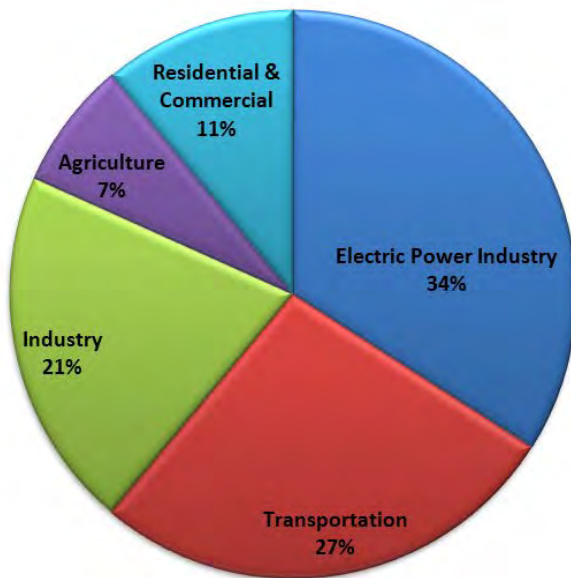


Figure 12: US Greenhouse gas emissions by sector, 2010

Every redevelopment effort contains within it the opportunity to redefine priorities, to create a city where people want to live, work, and play and not just drive through. Green infrastructure has played an important role in shaping new ways of thinking of how human systems can work in conjunction with the natural environment. However, most of the effort to date has focused on revitalizing natural corridors and utilizing natural infrastructure to replace or augment built infrastructure. While these efforts are important and provide alternatives to the vehicle pathways that predominate our cities, they do not directly address what a city optimized for people should look like.

Green infrastructure has focused on providing alternatives to sprawl and the efficient conservation of existing resources. Benedict and McMahon defines green infrastructure as “natural lands and processes” that is perceived of as an amenity used to augment the built environment.<sup>26</sup> While protection of the natural environment and providing access to it are important, it does not address the more pressing problem of how to design cities for people.

The complete streets movement, as described above, provides guidelines for municipalities to convert existing, car-optimized streets into streets that everyone can

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.c2es.org/docUploads/US%20GHG%20by%20Sector\\_0.png](http://www.c2es.org/docUploads/US%20GHG%20by%20Sector_0.png)

<sup>26</sup> Benedict, Mark A. and McMahon, Edward T. 2006. Green infrastructure: linking landscapes and communities. Island Press, Washington, DC.



and will want to use. Springfield should embrace this paradigm in general and the Lower Worthington Street District provides an ideal test bed. The LWSD, as described earlier, is currently a warren of one-way, overbuilt streets that are optimized for relieving traffic congestion that does not exist.

In order to understand the study area and its connections to the area surrounding it, a simplified line model of the street grid was constructed from the US Census Bureau TIGER files. (Figure 13) The model catchment area covers roughly 3.6 by 2.1 miles or approximately 5000 acres around the Lower Worthington Street District. This area represented most of the main feeder streets into downtown Springfield.

The line model was input into the depthmapX tool, version 0.25b,<sup>27</sup> in CAD format. The tool is a product of the Space Syntax Laboratory at University College London. The CAD drawing was converted to an axial map where any linkage errors were corrected. The axial map was then converted into a segment map and an angular segment analysis was performed. The map was analyzed as an interconnected network.

The results of the analysis show the degree of choice (or between-ness) associated with each link in the network. For an analysis of automobile traffic, a radius of 'n' was chosen. This causes every combination of segments to be paired and the path between the two selected nodes is analyzed across the network to determine an optimal route that minimizes number of turns, angular change, and distance. The number of

times that an optimal route passes through each link is tabulated as a measure of choice.

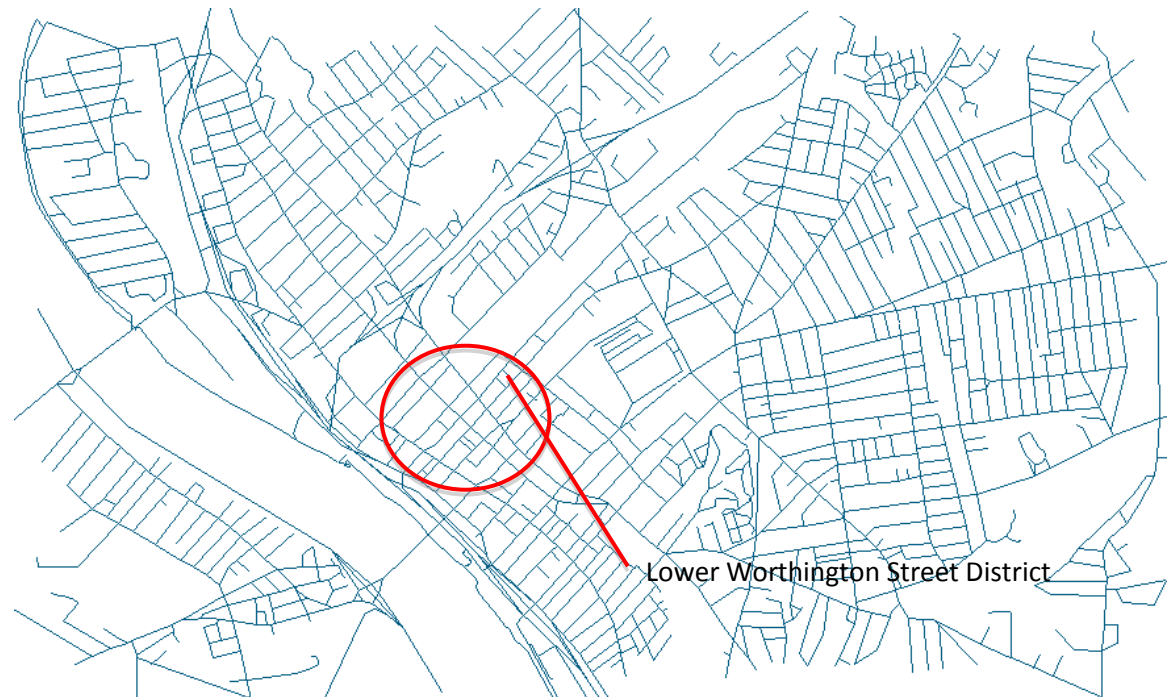


Figure 13: depthmapX rendering of existing street connectivity in downtown Springfield

<sup>27</sup> www.spacesyntax.net

Links with a higher value for choice represent those paths that a driver would naturally take to navigate the network between any random pairs of nodes. This can be interpreted as the roads that are likely to receive the most traffic. Figure 14 shows the resulting values with higher values shown in progressively thicker and darker red lines. The choice of optimal route accounts for the natural impedances within the road network. The algorithm has been shown by Space Syntax to closely mimic actual human behavior.<sup>28</sup>

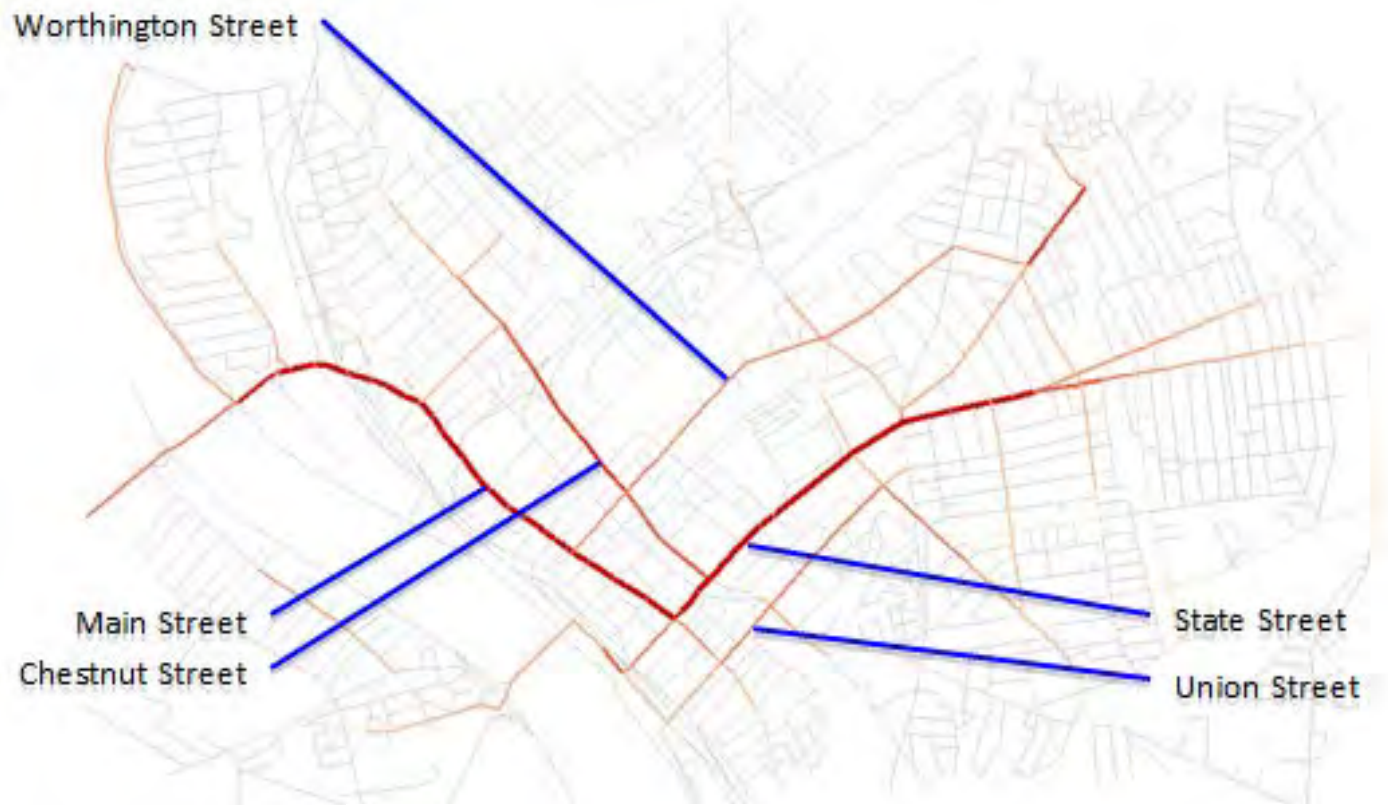


Figure 14: Mapping of choice in vehicle-level angular segment analysis

<sup>28</sup> Hillier, Bill. 2008. The new science of space and the art of place: toward a space-led paradigm for researching and designing the city. In Tigran Haas (Ed.) *New Urbanism and Beyond: Designing Cities for the Future* (pp. 30-39). New York: Rizzoli.

The heavy lines indicate that Main Street, State Street, Chestnut Street, Worthington Street, and Union Street are the natural thoroughfares in downtown Springfield. Bay Street, Wilbraham Road, and West Street/Plainfield Street are major feeder roads into the downtown.

There are several limitations of the analysis. First, the catchment area was not large enough to capture the influence of the Interstate Highways and more distant neighborhoods. Second, the network does not capture one-way streets, of which there are many in the study area. Third, signalized intersections are not differentiated. Behavioral changes in driving patterns to account for the signal delays within the network are not represented. This will tend to under-weight side streets that, though involving more turns and angular change, will be used by local vehicle drivers to avoid signals.

A second angular segment analysis was performed using a radius of three. This provides a localized view of which segments will be used with what frequency. A radius of three roughly represents a 5 to 10 minute walk, which is the typical range for pedestrians before seeking alternative modes of transportation.<sup>29</sup> Unlike motor vehicles, pedestrians choose destinations that are typically close by to where they are. The model assumes that a typical trip will cause an average pedestrian to walk along three segments to reach the destination. As with the previous model all segment pairs are analyzed against the network to determine an optimal route, though the set of pairs is constrained by the choice of a radius. The number of times a segment is used in an optimal route is calculated and recorded as the choice score. Figure 15 shows the model results. Segments with higher choice values are represented in increasingly darker red and wider lines. The Lower Worthington Street District is shown in green.

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<sup>29</sup> Guerra, Erick and Cervero, Robert. 2013. Is a Half-Mile Circle the Right Standard for TODs? Access, No. 42. University of California Berkeley.



Figure 15: Pedestrian-level angular segment choice analysis. Study area is shown in green.

The analysis indicates that while Dwight Street had little value to vehicular traffic, it is extremely important for pedestrian traffic. Both Worthington and Chestnut Streets play important roles for people walking and driving. Main Street is also important to both populations.

These findings lead us to recommend that the two major sets of one-way couplets through the study area (Worthington/Taylor and Chestnut/Dwight) be replaced with one major two-way street in each direction. The vehicle analysis indicates that these should be Worthington and Chestnut. These two streets will be much easier to develop

as commercial districts when most of the area traffic, in both directions, is confined to them (as well as to Main Street on the edge of the study area).

The Chestnut Street right-of-way averages 60 feet in width and can easily accommodate bidirectional traffic and parking on both sides of the road. Two-way traffic will increase friction on the roadways and naturally slow down traffic. Worthington is slightly narrower, averaging 50 feet in width, but should still be able to accommodate traffic and parking. Tree planted buffers should be provided between the parking and the sidewalks with storage areas for rainwater infiltration. The tree-lined edges will also make the streets more visually appealing and separate walking customers from traffic.

As Dwight Street is no longer required to carry traffic, it is proposed that it be converted into an urban street greenway with vehicle traffic limited to transit and emergency vehicles. The Dwight Greenway will connect Union Station to the Mass Mutual Center on a route that is purpose built for pedestrians and bicyclists. This proposal is discussed further in the priority development site section later in this document.

### ***FUTURE TRANSIT OPPORTUNITIES***

Greater Springfield is serviced by a regional bus system operated by the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority. Buses replaced the historical trolley network that covered most of the area during the 1930s, with the last trolley running in 1940. Automobiles had replaced public transit as a preferred means of transportation. Buses were viewed as the new, flexible solution for those who could not afford automobiles. The federal government recycled all of the rails and catenary poles for the war effort.

The current bus system operates on a largely first-shift schedule; from morning commute times to late afternoon and early evening. This schedule disadvantages the population that most needs transportation services: lower-income individuals without personal automobiles. Access to available jobs requires access to reliable transportation for the hours being worked. Second- and third-shift positions are largely inaccessible without a private automobile. Even for first-shift workers, schedule reliability, particularly when connections are required, makes keeping a job a challenge.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.northeastern.edu/dukakiscenter/transportation/tolloftransportation/>

Lowell, Massachusetts has proposed replacing downtown shuttles and bus routes with a trolley system.<sup>31</sup> The project is estimated to cost \$65.7 million. Sources for capital funding are primarily federal through the Small Starts (up to \$75 million) and Urban Circulator (up to \$25 million) programs. Operations and Maintenance expenses were projected at \$3.4 million per year. Similar, modern systems have been built in Tampa, Florida; Little Rock, Arkansas; Memphis, Tennessee; Kenosha, Wisconsin; and Portland, Oregon.



Figure 16: Proposed trolley system for Lowell, Massachusetts

The US Department of Energy estimates that transit uses 42% less energy per passenger mile than buses. This, along with reductions in car trips, can have a major impact on Springfield's contributions to anthropogenic climate change. Initially, three routes would be proposed. The first would roughly replace the shuttle service detailed in the MGM casino proposal. The second would run north of Union Station and connect the major hospitals with the new intermodal transit hub. The third would connect the local colleges to downtown, providing a convenient way for students to live downtown and commute to school. Future extensions should connect other Springfield neighborhoods and the surrounding communities.

Local transit has the opportunity of connecting people to a wide variety of destinations as well as jobs. Local transit can provide the crucial link between commuter services and the quarter-mile that people will typically walk to their destination. By connecting tourist sites, hospitals, retail, entertainment, colleges, and downtown housing with Union Station, Springfield has the opportunity to become a model for sustainable cities and attract demographics beyond the traditional users of public transportation in the area.

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.heritagetrolley.org/images/LowellStudy2011.pdf>

## PARKING

Downtown Springfield suffers from a surplus of parking. Within the study area, there are structured lots and surface lots maintained and operated by the Springfield Parking Authority (SPA) containing 654 spaces. There are also metered and unmetered on-street spaces throughout the area. Two additional SPA Garages are within one block of the study area. Together with a planned garage in the Union Station redevelopment they will in total contain 2,111 additional spaces.<sup>32</sup> There are also several private surface lots within the study area. The MGM Casino proposal includes 4,970 spaces that will replace 859 existing spaces within the casino development area.

level of available parking exceeds the existing and potential demand. Empty parking structures and surface lots are not inviting places. These underutilized places also contribute to the high amount of impervious surfaces in the area. Several of these lots and other empty lots from demolition should be consolidated for future development in the long term and converted to green-space in the near term. All low lying or potentially low lying areas should be set aside for natural stormwater management, bypassing, to the greatest degree possible, the current stormwater system and mitigating CSO issues.

**Table 6: City-owned surface and structured parking in the vicinity of the study area**

<b>Parking within study area</b>	<b>Parking Spaces</b>
Winter Street Lot	85
Apremont Lot	46
Dwight Street Lot	107
Taylor Street Garage	380
Morgan Square Lot	36
<b>Parking within 1 block</b>	
Civic Center Garage	1232
Columbus Center Garage	479
Planned Union Station Structured Parking	400

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.parkspa.com/facilities.shtml>

# Public Perception

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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the month of October, a small sample public participatory effort was conducted. A total of thirteen people were interviewed, including business and restaurant owners, local residents, and the community organization Arise for Social Justice. Scott Hanson, Springfield's Principal Planner, and Don Courtemanche, Springfield's Business Improvement District Director, were also interviewed. Through our conversations we gained information on what people would like to see in the downtown, as well as gained insight into the perceptions people have of the Metro Center area. This section will identify the perceptions people have of downtown, and how closely they mirror reality.

## SOCIAL

Through our conversations we learned that downtown has an active entertainment scene, though it is not widely publicized, or widely known. Some community members spoken with educated us to the different entertainment options, while some felt there was not much activity downtown for them. The majority of people interviewed agreed that non-Springfield residents are unaware of what the downtown Metro Center neighborhood has to offer. Through our conversations and research in the area, we found there to be a number of venues and events that may appeal to different demographics who are looking for an evening out in Springfield.

Theodore's Restaurant, located at 201 Worthington St, has live blues music seven days a week, and a lively lunch and dinner crowd. The Springfield Museums has a "Cocktails and Culture" event once a month that highlights a different museum. These themed evenings, including "Samurai, Sake, Sushi," and "Martinis, Jazz and the Roaring Twenties" draw upwards of 750 attendees. The Student Prince, located at 1610 Main Street, is a beloved Springfield restaurant and place "to be seen." The owners recently



opened a German style beer garden across the street, signaling the market for an additional establishment in the downtown area.

Stearns Square Park, located between Worthington St and Dwight St is home to a lively summer concert series on Thursday evenings, which draws upwards of 5,000-8,000 people. Additionally, 350 Grille, located at 350 Worthington St, is an upscale restaurant located in close proximity to the blast site. Mattoon Street Arts Festival, held annually in September, is the longest running arts festival in the Pioneer Valley.

The downtown Metro Center neighborhood is home to the city's adult entertainment district, which houses five adult entertainment venues. Our interviewees do not feel there is a large association with adult entertainment with the area, and do not see this as a dominant use. Additionally, most people we spoke with were not opposed to these businesses. One interviewee noted that late night crime in the area was not due to the strip clubs, but more so the bars and alcohol use in the area.

While there are a number of nightlife options, the neighborhood does seem to be lacking in family activities. One long-time Springfield resident remembers spending time downtown with her parents and siblings getting lunch, going to department stores, and then ending the afternoon at the arcade. She feels there is a lack of family activities, movie theaters, delis and places to shop. Downtown appears to be a business-oriented area during the day, lacking additional vibrancy to attract non-workers during those hours.

## **PHYSICAL PERCEPTION**

As part of our interviews, we asked what neighborhood community members perceive the blast site to be located in. The overall consensus was that the blast site is on the periphery of the downtown. The blast site has had the effect of physically fracturing the downtown. The amount of damage still present has had a negative effect on the activity in the area, leaving it looking and feeling deserted and desolate. While the explosion occurred about a year ago, there is still time to recover the area without a permanent scar. Recovery action is definitely needed to bring this area back to life.

One downtown resident believes that the downtown boundaries reach up to Spring Street, including the blast site. He believes the Armory and Springfield Technical Community College are not in the downtown, but rather in the periphery. His determination covers our whole area of study, but many other respondents believed otherwise.

Don Courtemanche, the Springfield BID director, sees Dwight Street as the dividing line now. He believes the explosion severely fractured the area, leaving only the area from Main Street to Dwight Street appearing walk-able from the downtown core. This area is dense, filled with businesses and appears safe to explore. However, beyond Dwight Street the remnants of the explosion and the vacancies prevent people from exploring. Many office tenants have left since the explosion, and many of the apartments surrounding it are not currently in use.

While 350 Grille and Mardi Gras bring many people to this area of the downtown, most drive in and park in the establishments' gated parking lot, with no intention of leaving the building. The area is very car oriented, yet has a skewed perception about lack of parking. People think there are no easy parking options in the area, despite the vast spans of parking lots, both public and private.

The office and restaurant owners we spoke with believe their customers come primarily from other neighborhoods in Springfield, or from outside the city completely. Theodore's, a popular Jazz and BBQ restaurant in the area says that a majority of its clientele do not live in the city as far as they can tell. Another business owner also believes that most of his clients live outside of the downtown area, many of whom live in other Springfield neighborhoods. He thinks his business would thrive if there was more entertainment in the city, such as a sports arena to bring more people to the area.

These business owners also expressed their opinions on the physical infrastructure of the neighborhood. One business owner believed that the general area is dilapidated and hopes for more attention from the city. He believes more activity will help bring in more customers. Another business owner mentioned a similar issue in which it appears that planners and the city are doing the bare minimum in the area. He said that there has been a lot of talk about improvements but not many have been seen. There is still

some optimism though, as the owner believes the city is doing what they can to help the neighborhood.

While many of these people view the area beyond Dwight Street as not part of the main downtown, there is hope to bring it back. Part of the studio group’s goal is to bring cohesiveness back to downtown. There is opportunity to bring more activity throughout the area and possibly encourage entertainment venues to come into the area, and for some to return which have left. The car dependent section could use more people on the streets and more attractions to bring them there. By enlivening the area, this could add to the downtown environment, expanding on the great businesses already there.

## CRIME PERCEPTION

The perception of crime within Springfield is high. The residents of Springfield are aware of the negative perception of the downtown Metro Center neighborhood. When talking with a variety of people within the Springfield community they see crime perceptions originating from being over publicized, concentrated at late night hours, contained within certain groups of people involved with drugs, and the visual perception of the physical area. From talking with residents and community representatives the Studio Team has found that the negative perception comes from particular uses in the area. The LWSD has an adult entertainment district that contains a concentration of five strip clubs and many parking lots.

Residents believe the crime is over-publicized by the news stations such as Masslive and the local news. Don Courtemanche talked of the “perception not supporting reality” and one of the contributors being news reports. Springfield has many festivals, concerts, and community engagement opportunities but residents of surrounding communities in Massachusetts

do not attend because of the heightened sense of crime activities. These events have seen high attendance from people traveling from the Hartford area, which Don Courtemanche believed to be a result of Masslive and local new reports not being broadcasted in those areas. In conversations with the Springfield Police

**Downtown Springfield, MA Crime Data**  
Comparison between 2012 and Jan.- Nov. 2013

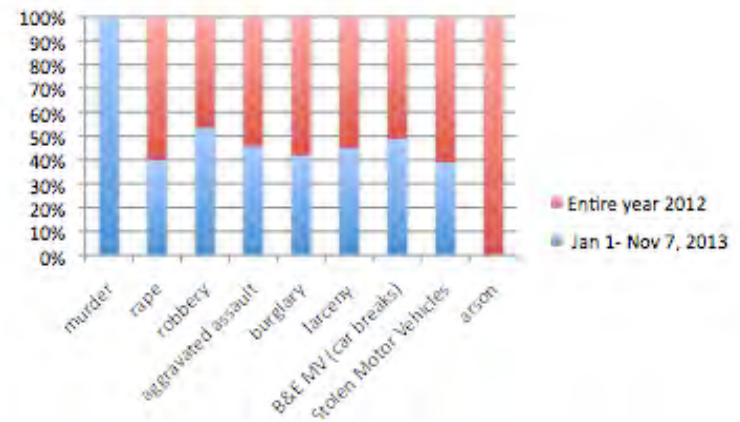


Figure 17: Springfield 2013 violent crime as a percentage of 2012 crime by category

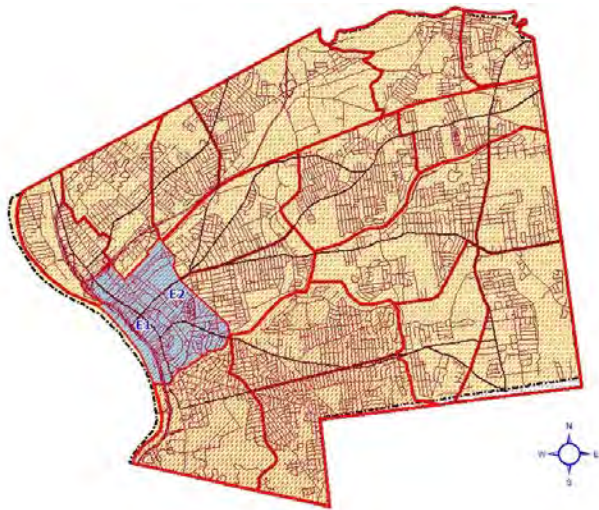


Figure 18: City of Springfield Police Department's Sector E reporting area

Department the Studio Team learned that most crime occurs between 1 A.M and 3 A.M from patrons of bars and clubs as they begin to close.

When talking with a community representative, they talked of the visual perception in the LWSD. There lacks a feeling of unity to the downtown's main stretch, which has also created a lack of "eyes on the street" to create a sense of security.<sup>33</sup> Members of a community group felt that there was a lack of police presence patrolling the streets. More pedestrian activity on the streets would create a stronger security presence with more "eyes on the street".

There are many valuable resources within the downtown for family entertainment, such as the Hippodrome. The Hippodrome, as well as the museum complex, lacks connectivity to the downtown district. The area encourages people to drive due to excessive parking. Commuters that work within the downtown area do not leave their establishments because everything is provided for them within their place of work; creating an empty environment on the street.

The area the studio team has been focusing on for crime data analysis is the Metro Center neighborhood, which contains the LWSD and downtown Springfield. This can be seen in Figure 18 where all of sector E is the Metro Center. The studio team will only be looking at the amount of crimes committed in the Metro Center not the amount of arrests from the crimes committed.

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<sup>33</sup> Jacobs, Jane, (1961). *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Random House, New York.



## Redevelopment Literature

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Before developing proposals for specific sites within the LWSD, the Studio Team performed case study research, used its own preferences for urban lifestyles, and a review of relevant academic literature. In order to better understand which aspects of revitalization may be suitable, articles were chosen that pertain to economic and planning issues in downtown redevelopment, housing, retail, industry jobs, and public spaces. Although the topic of bringing back growth and vitality to urban cores is an evolving study, with many similar challenges such as declining populations, disinvestment and suburban competition, each city faces its own unique issues and therefore, its own opportunities.

### DOWNTOWNS

Even though downtown redevelopment has been a well-attempted strategy of city governments and planners since the 1960s, most U.S. downtowns still have acute economic challenges and are seen, at least by surrounding suburbs, as difficult to access, irrelevant, and dangerous.<sup>34</sup> By the early 1980s, some were ready to cede the argument to the critics of expensive revitalization programs and to a general lack of federal support for American cities by questioning whether downtowns could truly be saved.<sup>35</sup> Given the many endogenous factors that affect the health and vitality of downtowns, such as sprawl, malls, and other competition, redevelopment strategies should continue to be implemented and given time to mature.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Robertson, K.A., (1995). Downtown Redevelopment Strategies in the United States: An End of the Century Assessment. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 61(4), 429-437.

<sup>35</sup> McGrath, D., (1982). Who Must Leave? Alternative Images of Urban Revitalization. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 48(2), 196-203.

<sup>36</sup> Robertson, K.A., (1995). Downtown Redevelopment Strategies in the United States: An End of the Century Assessment. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 61(4), 429-437.

One classic argument against developing in existing areas versus at a city's edges is that it is more expensive with high costs for site acquisition and demolition.<sup>37</sup> But, even as the age of the automobile allowed for the option of suburbanization, prescient views from the 1930s warned of the even larger collective costs ahead for abandoning downtowns and failing to take advantage of its existing infrastructure.<sup>38</sup> Without heeding this advice, most downtowns have experienced decline, particularly smaller metropolitan regions like Springfield, as the suburbs became the preferred areas for growth.<sup>39</sup>

But, more recent literature identifies a reversing trend as “many American cities are experiencing a rise in the number of residents in their downtowns.”<sup>40</sup> This turnaround is ascribed to various reasons, but most include features that a city can provide which suburbs cannot, such as its historic building stock and a “new appreciation for downtown living.”<sup>41</sup> However, the phenomenon is not widely shared among cities with only a small number of U.S. metropolitan regions being perceived as having successfully revitalized centers.<sup>42</sup> One study found that:

Revitalization policies should concentrate on niche markets that show little interest in homogenized suburban activities. More specifically, planners should focus on the retention and enhancement of the distinct physical characteristics that clearly distinguish downtowns from suburban environments.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Batholomen, W., (1939). Planning Considerations in the Location of Housing Projects: I. The Case for Downtown Locations. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*. 5(2), 32-35.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Filton, P., et al., (2004). The Successful Few: Healthy Downtowns of Small Metropolitan Regions, *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 70(3), 328-343.

<sup>40</sup> Birch, E.L., (2002). Having a Longer View on Downtown Living. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 68(1), 5.

<sup>41</sup> Danielson, K.A. & Lang, R.E., (2010). Live Work Play: New Perspectives on the Downtown Rebound. *The Planning Review*, 46(180), 91.

<sup>42</sup> Filton, P., et al., (2004). The Successful Few: Healthy Downtowns of Small Metropolitan Regions, *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 70(3), 328-343.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. at 328.

These urban qualities can be enhanced by certain strategies to develop their potential. Typical and familiar strategies include pedestrianization, historic preservation, and office development.<sup>44</sup>

To make a downtown more pedestrian-friendly not only improves traffic congestion and economic activity, but it provides an essential boost to its street image for other potential users.<sup>45</sup> The rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings offers downtowns an edge in the competition with suburbs – authenticity. This aspect is highly valuable as it brings a specialized target market of young, affluent, educated adults seeking local specialty shops, an absence of chain retail anchors, strong concentration of entertainment and food, and historic/architectural themes.<sup>46</sup> Promotion of office space is supposed to facilitate the corporate core of the downtown and many cities, like Springfield, have towers with mixed use, indoor retail on the ground floors.<sup>47</sup> But, this can be of very limited value due to its disconnection from the street and the tendency of office workers to stay inside. Dispersed office space made available in the upper floors of existing buildings in the LWSD could provide opportunities to attract participation in food, beverage and retail from the increased workers on the sidewalks.

A specific strategy appropriate for the LWSD will be to convert vacant properties into occupied, productive uses. Such desolate stretches of urban landscape are often an impediment to reinvestment due to their association with crime, although one study shows that properties are highly discounted in areas perceived to have high crime rates.<sup>48</sup> According to Joseph Schilling, a Vacant Properties Revitalization Cycle is a framework for cities to employ and it includes; 1) Prevention and Assessment, 2)

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<sup>44</sup> Robertson, K.A., (1995). Downtown Redevelopment Strategies in the United States: An End of the Century Assessment. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 61(4), 429-437.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Lynch, A.K., & Rasmussen, D.W., (2001). Measuring the Impact of Crime on House Prices. *Applied Economics*, 33(15), 1981-1989.



Stabilization, 3) Rehabilitation Resources, 4) Property Transfer, and 5) Long-Term Revitalization Strategies.<sup>49</sup>

Stabilization of a whole site or neighborhood is for most cities, an immediate goal. They can usually employ a large variety of abatements and enforcement tools in order to motivate the property owners to clean up and properly secure their buildings. The intention is to eventually attract private investment back to the area by using city assistance to stabilize several particular priority development sites. It can be very helpful to investigate the owner's reasons for letting the property's condition deteriorate to its present state. It's possible that the owner has an interest in repairs and rehabilitation but cannot afford them, or perhaps the owner is interested only in real estate speculation.<sup>50</sup> Recently, a landlord of a vacant property on Worthington Street refused an offer to establish an independent coffee shop so that he could continue to use the space for his own storage purposes.<sup>51</sup> Also important is an accurate and updated map of vacant properties so that the city can identify patterns and developers can quickly ascertain opportunities.<sup>52</sup>

Once the priority sites are stabilized, the city can provide the owners with a list of possible funding resources to motivate rehabilitation of the vacant properties. These rehabilitation resources can include financial help (i.e., grants, loans, tax credits and abatements, and waiver of city liens) and technical assistance (i.e., fast-tracked permitting, flexible codes, private sector and nonprofit referrals, and coordination with city agencies). Community development corporations (CDCs) are also a vital resource for property owners seeking to rehabilitate their vacant buildings, with some CDCs actually managing or acquiring the properties.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Joseph Schilling, "The Revitalization of Vacant Properties: Where Broken Windows Meet Smart Growth," (2002b) International City/County Management Association, 21-22 (available at [www.icma.org/vacantproperties](http://www.icma.org/vacantproperties)).

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Springfield business owner, November 18, 2013.

<sup>52</sup> Joseph Schilling, "The Revitalization of Vacant Properties: Where Broken Windows Meet Smart Growth," (2002b) International City/County Management Association, 21-22 (available at [www.icma.org/vacantproperties](http://www.icma.org/vacantproperties)).

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

By making it a priority to save and reuse existing buildings in the LWSD, the city can assist developers with accessing the demand for intact, rehabilitated living spaces that can spur increases in land values and lead to further development.

## HOUSING

Traditionally, downtowns were not considered an appropriate place for residential living.<sup>54</sup> The creation of additional housing opportunities in U.S. downtowns with the encouragement of strong city policies is critical to their overall economic development.<sup>55</sup> The promotion of downtown housing has become a core strategy of public/private development partnerships, mostly BIDs, in conjunction with city government, usually the planning and economic development departments.<sup>56</sup> Focusing leadership resources on increased security and safety, combined with aggressive conversions of buildings into apartments, dramatically lowered vacant commercial space in other cities.<sup>57</sup>

When considering the historically significant building stock present in the LWSD, it is not difficult to imagine beginning with their conversions to housing. Adaptive reuse is a “process by which structurally sound older buildings are developed for economically viable new uses.”<sup>58</sup> The Urban Land Institute considers this process as performing “a variety of repairs or alterations to an existing building that allow it to serve contemporary uses while preserving features of the past.”<sup>59</sup> A particular style of apartment that has spread throughout the U.S. in popularity is the loft, converted from an older factory, school or commercial space. Lofts, as depicted in media and advertising, have become a necessary component in the idealized concept of urban

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54 Danielson, K.A. & Lang, R.E., (2010) Live Work Play: New Perspectives on the Downtown Rebound. *The Planning Review*, 46(180), p. 91.

55 Ibid.

56 Birch, E.L., (2002). Having a Longer View on Downtown Living. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 68(1), pp. 5-21.

57 Ibid.

58 Austin, Richard L. Adaptive Reuse: Issues and Case Studies in Building Preservation. Woodcock, D.G., Steward, W.C., & Forrester, R.A., (eds.). New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1988.

59 Bookout, L.W., Jr., Residential Development Handbook. Second Edition. Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 1990.

living.<sup>60</sup> In larger cities with healthy real estate markets, these conversions occur privately, but in cities attempting to revitalize areas, public incentives in the form of federal or local tax abatements are necessary to make the deals worthwhile.<sup>61</sup>

Another important aspect of downtown residential development is the role of the market-rate condominium. Once land values increase enough to make new construction of housing viable to developers, the condominium has proved to establish a solid, middle-class transformation in the social and physical geography of the city.<sup>62</sup> They introduce the concept of exchange value between urban governance and city living, bringing more stakeholder residents into the downtown.<sup>63</sup> Springfield's zoning ordinance, 4.4.13(B), concerning required parking for new dwelling units is currently written so as not to slow development. Also, the older buildings in the LWSD are ill-suited to provide onsite parking without substantial renovations. One case study on the topic of parking, which is an issue certain to arise once the neighborhood gains residents, shows that strict requirements for developers create barriers to housing development.<sup>64</sup>

However, a major consideration with any new influx of market-rate residents into an urban area is a gentrifying effect on its existing residents. In Springfield, housing policy followed a national and state trend of providing affordable housing in greater numbers. But, more recently, concern over the concentration of poverty has led to an interest in the adoption of mixed-income redevelopment via public/private partnerships.<sup>65</sup> Along with the dispersion of low-income housing has been a renewed interest in private investment in downtowns.<sup>66</sup> The phenomenon of gentrification not only affects the

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<sup>60</sup> Birch, E.L., (2002). Having a Longer View on Downtown Living. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 68(1), pp. 5-21.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Rosen, G. & Walks, A., (2013). Rising Cities: Condominium Development and the Transformation of the Metropolis. *Geoforum*, 49, pp. 160-172.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Manville, M., (2013). Parking Requirements and Housing Development. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 79(1), 49-66.

<sup>65</sup> Goetz, E.G., (2012). The Transformation of Public Housing Policy, 1985-2011. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 78(4), 452-463.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

poor, but also any economic class unable to meet rising housing costs.<sup>67</sup> When residents combine with older residents, city planners are encouraged to prepare for shifts in visions of the neighborhood and to prepare for conflicts.<sup>68</sup>

Supplying affordable units within new developments may reduce unwanted displacement, but overall, the addition of market rate housing to downtowns is viewed as key to revitalization. Although it is not a standalone solution, or “silver bullet”, for solving city woes, housing development can be a symbolic aid to an ongoing, comprehensive plan.<sup>69</sup> In order to successfully exploit housing demand, the establishment of downtown amenities shows a strong relationship with investor choices.<sup>70</sup>

## RETAIL

There are five themes identified as beneficial to encouraging retail development in downtown cities: creating an urban design plan, emphasizing cultural activities and events to attract consumers and businesses, creating a mixed-use environment, establishing shared ownership via collective management of downtown infrastructure and public spaces, creating attractive neighborhoods for urban residents, and managing auto and pedestrian flow.<sup>71</sup> Although major chains, such as WalMart, dominate the retail sector and will into the future, small scale businesses have substantial

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<sup>67</sup> Podagrosi, A., Vojnovic, I. & Pignozzi, B., (2011). The Diversity of Gentrification in Houston’s Urban Renaissance: From Cleansing the Poor to Supergentrification. *Environment and Planning A*, 43(8), 1910-1929.

<sup>68</sup> Spain, D., (1993). Been-Heres Versus Come-Heres Negotiating Conflicting Community Identities. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 59(2), 156-171.

<sup>69</sup> Birch, E.L., (2002). Having a Longer View on Downtown Living. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 68(1), 5-21.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Padilla, C. & Eastlick, M.A., (2009). Exploring Urban Retailing and CBD Revitalization Strategies. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 37(1), 7-23.

opportunities to adapt in a way that appeals to consumers by offering original, local and independent goods and services not well suited to big box stores.<sup>72</sup>

An initial study of retail potential in a downtown should include a list of what downtown can currently support and what is possible with an increase in local residents and out-of-town commuters or consumers. This would include an analysis of urban entertainment, regional retail and local-serving retail.<sup>73</sup> In a trendy neighborhood, these might entail: bars, restaurants and performance spaces; upscale yet affordable clothing outlets (Urban Outfitters and American Apparel); and local boutiques, art galleries, used clothing stores, record shops, and bicycle repair/retail. These varied retail options should be located in a concentrated, walkable district, establishing a regional destination that contributes to a critical mass of interest, identity and a “reason to live there.”<sup>74</sup>

## INDUSTRY AND EMPLOYMENT FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS

As a development program that recaptures the LWSD’s historic identity as a vibrant area of employment and production, Springfield may wish to consider promoting newer forms of businesses that can alleviate some of the elements of existing poverty. Such a direction, as part of a redevelopment strategy, can establish greater community acceptance of efforts to revitalize the district and introduce market-rate housing. Certain articles are describing an exciting trend that is emerging in other post-industrial downtowns.

As an alternative to seeking an anchor for the LWSD in the form of a large, chain retail establishment, with its typically low-wage jobs, a newer strategy to build wealth and community participation from the ground up may be more appropriate. For example, the Evergreen Cooperative Initiative in Cleveland, Ohio is creating worked-owned

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<sup>72</sup> Evans, J.R., (2011). Retailing In Perspective: the Past Is a Prologue to the Future. *International Journal of Retail, Distribution & Consumer Research*, 21(1), 1-31.

<sup>73</sup> Leinberger, C.B. (2005). Turning Around Downtown: Twelve Steps to Revitalization. The Brookings Institution. Washington DC. Retrieved from: <http://content.knowledgeplex.org/kp2/img/cache/documents/79501.pdf>.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

businesses that offer services and supply goods to the city's existing anchor institutions, such as major hospitals. Rather than taking an overused, top-down approach of subsidies and vouchers for its poor, this program seeks to generate wealth via asset-building opportunities for the cooperative workers. Specifically, the coops operate a green, commercial-scale health care bed linen laundry, a clean energy and weatherization company, and a year-round, large-scale food production hydroponic greenhouse on 10 acres in the heart of Cleveland. These enterprises are already promoting a pride in ownership from its workers and a stake in their city's outcome.<sup>75</sup>

Harnessing the support and labor of a neighborhood into cooperative businesses, while taking onto account community culture, can establish entrepreneurial possibilities that lend to social capital among its residents.<sup>76</sup> The formation of worker-owned cooperatives in otherwise stagnant, low-income neighborhoods, with open membership and democratic powers, can create a base for the participation of residents where both social and economic growth can be fostered.<sup>77</sup> Successful cooperative enterprises do create wealth for their members to accumulate in the form of share value and dividends. With a direct stake in their business, cooperative workers tend to have greater concern for their communities and their sustainable development.<sup>78</sup>

Research has shown that by bringing together different combinations of income levels, an optimal result of mutual benefit can be realized.<sup>79</sup> For the poor, an intensively close-knit form of bonding social capital is used to help them get by, but they do not quite possess the wider and extensive bridging social capital that allows the non-poor to get ahead. With the right amount of support from a clear government policy of non-

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<sup>75</sup> Howard, T, Kuri, L. & Lee, I., (2010). The Evergreen Cooperative Initiative of Cleveland, Ohio. The Cleveland Foundation, Retrieved from [http://community-wealth.org/\\_pdfs/news/recent-articles/10-10/paper-howard-et-al.pdf](http://community-wealth.org/_pdfs/news/recent-articles/10-10/paper-howard-et-al.pdf).

<sup>76</sup> Peredo, A. & Chrisman, J., (2006). Toward a Theory of Community-Based Enterprise. *Academy of Management Review*, 31(2), 309-328.

<sup>77</sup> Majee, W. & Hoyt, A., (2010). Are Worker-Owned Cooperatives the Brewing Pots for Social Capital? *Community Development*, 41(4), 417-430.

<sup>78</sup> Nembhard, J., (2002). Cooperatives and Wealth Accumulation. *American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings*, 92(2), 325-329.

<sup>79</sup> Woolcock, M. & Narayan, D., (2000). Social Capital: Implications for Development Theory, Research, and Policy. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 15:2, 225-249.

segregation that mixes people of various economic backgrounds, social relationships may develop that open opportunities for everyone.<sup>80</sup>

The development of the LWSD should not occur in a vacuum, without connections to not only the amenities in its vicinity, but also to the existing residents nearby. Trust and civic cooperation lead to more robust economic performance, however polarization of classes and ethnicities can inhibit this phenomenon.<sup>81</sup>

## **PUBLIC AND GREEN SPACES**

Ever since Ebenezer Howard proposed ideas in *Garden City of To-morrow*, combining the benefits of town and country into one settlement, many planners have used his bold aims as guidance, but few have genuinely adopted his message.<sup>82</sup> Older industrial cities have experienced a decline in their populations and subsequent increase in vacant or abandoned properties. Although Springfield's population is relatively stable, the LWSD does have several properties that are no longer in use. This can be a deterrent to reinvestment.

One of the quickest ways to stabilize a blighted neighborhood and create new interest is to install a network of green infrastructure on vacant lots. These may include "new parks, community gardens, restored habitat, flood mitigation and storm water treatment sites, and urban agriculture plots linked with existing green spaces."<sup>83</sup>

Although Springfield may or may not consider the recent trend of urban agriculture as a potential use of its available space, this phenomenon is popular with the younger demographic the City seeks to attract.<sup>84</sup> Either community gardens or larger scale

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Knack, S. & Keeffe, P., (1997). Does Social Capital Have an Economic Payoff? *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 112(4), 1251-1288.

<sup>82</sup> Richert, E.D. & Lapping, M.B., (1998). Ebenezer Howard and the Garden City. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 64(2), 125-127.

<sup>83</sup> Schilling, J. & Logan, J., (2008). Greening the Rust Belt: A Green Infrastructure Model for Right Sizing America's Shrinking Cities. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 74(4), 451-466.

<sup>84</sup> Mendes, W., et al., (2008). Using Land Inventories to Plan for Urban Agriculture. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 74(4), 435-449.

farming operations combine desirable, and generally beneficial, city goals of promoting sustainability, a green image and healthier food options. In Portland, Oregon, a public land inventory was created to understand, analyze and display the potential for urban agriculture and in the City of Montreal, community gardens are a designated land use.<sup>85</sup>

The benefits of such a focus on green amenities can bring a needed transition toward increased property values, improved health and new jobs. But, some of the challenges to the creation of green infrastructure include lack of funding, ongoing maintenance issues, accessibility, and inexperienced design.<sup>86</sup> Still, a smaller-scale pilot program on a priority site, recommended for the blast area in a section below, could be a prime learning opportunity while promoting a new direction for the LWSD.

This brief review of planning and economic literature on topics relevant to the revitalization efforts in the LWSD is by no means exhaustive. But, hopefully it can provide an understanding of which initiatives, proposed later in this document, are appropriate going forward.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Schilling, J. & Logan, J., (2008). Greening the Rust Belt: A Green Infrastructure Model for Right Sizing America's Shrinking Cities. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 74(4), 451-466.





# Current Policy

## ZONING

The City of Springfield updated its zoning ordinance in August of 2013; however, the zoning districts in the Lower Worthington Street District (LWSD) were not amended. The intended purpose of the recently adopted zoning ordinance is:

“to protect the health and safety of its inhabitants, to promote economic development, to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City, to preserve the cultural, historical, architectural, and open space heritage of the community, to increase the amenities of the City, and to reduce the hazard from fire by regulating the location, use, and arrangement of buildings and the urban and open spaces around them.”

The LWSD is located in the heart of Springfield’s downtown and incorporates a variety of zoning districts including Business A, Business B, Business C, Industrial A, Residential C, and Open Space. Figure 19 illustrates how the zoning districts in the WSD are spatially organized.

The southern and western portion of the WSD is made up completely of Business C zoned parcels with the exception of one Open Space parcel, Stearns Square. The Business C cluster is the most vibrant of the clusters and consists of mostly mixed use buildings with retail storefronts on the street level of buildings with residential and commercial uses on upper floors. There is also a cluster of Industrial A and Business B zoned parcels, which is the least intensely developed portion of the district and is made up of auto-oriented and industrial uses. The eastern portion of the WSD is made up of a Business A and a Residential C cluster. The Business A cluster is intended for neighborhood businesses; however, most of the parcels zoned Business A are actually a variety of residential uses.

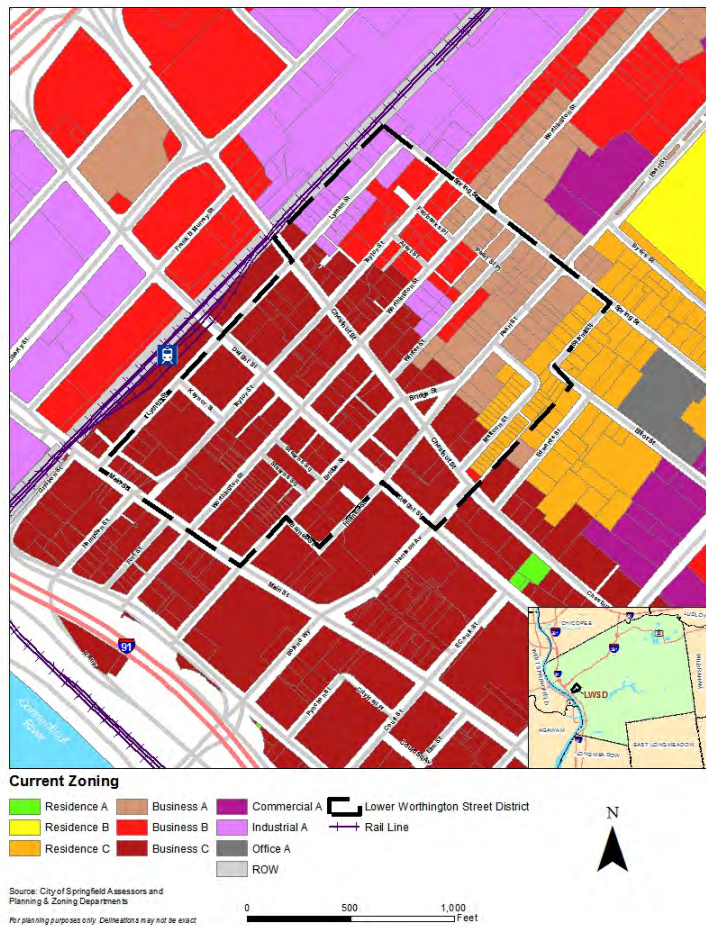


Figure 19: Current Zoning

Table 7 has been modified from the City of Springfield zoning ordinance to show the general purpose and permitted uses of zoning districts in the Worthington Street District.

**Table 7: Zoning Districts and Permitted Uses**

<b>District</b>	<b>General Purpose</b>	<b>Summary of Permitted Uses and Special Character</b>
Residential C (Res C)	Multi-family Residential	Single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, and multi-family dwellings; and public facilities.
Business A (Bus A)	Main Street and pedestrian oriented shopping districts with residential allowed.	Provides for the appropriate development and special requirements of a variety of settings, including neighborhood and inter-neighborhood shopping along major roads that connect different parts of the city.
Business B (Bus B)	General business services that are more intense in nature than those in Business A. It is also applied to properties that provide services to heavier industrial land uses, but are not themselves industrial in nature.	Provides for a wide range of highway oriented automotive and service business activities, which ordinarily require either arterial or highway or light industrial locations.
Business C (Bus C)	Downtown with pedestrian amenities and high rise buildings with no setbacks. Mixed uses.	Accommodates a wide range of high intensity business, cultural and governmental uses appropriate for a downtown location and for this special area of the City.
Industrial A (IA)	Range of Industrial and Business uses.	This district provides for the full range of industrial and business uses compatible with a major urban center. However, special review and approval is required in the case of certain potentially hazardous or obnoxious uses. Because of the densely developed character of the city, certain other such uses are prohibited.
Open Space (OS)	To provide for the active and passive recreational needs of the City and the protection of its bountiful natural resources.	Passive and active recreation and natural resources. Development occurs as needed to support the primary use, such as restrooms in a park or a crematorium in a cemetery.

## TAX BASE AND LAND USE

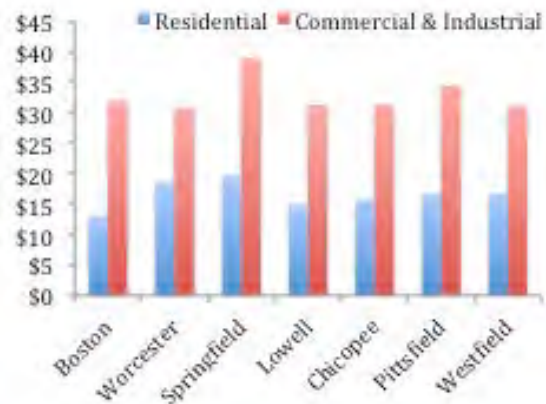


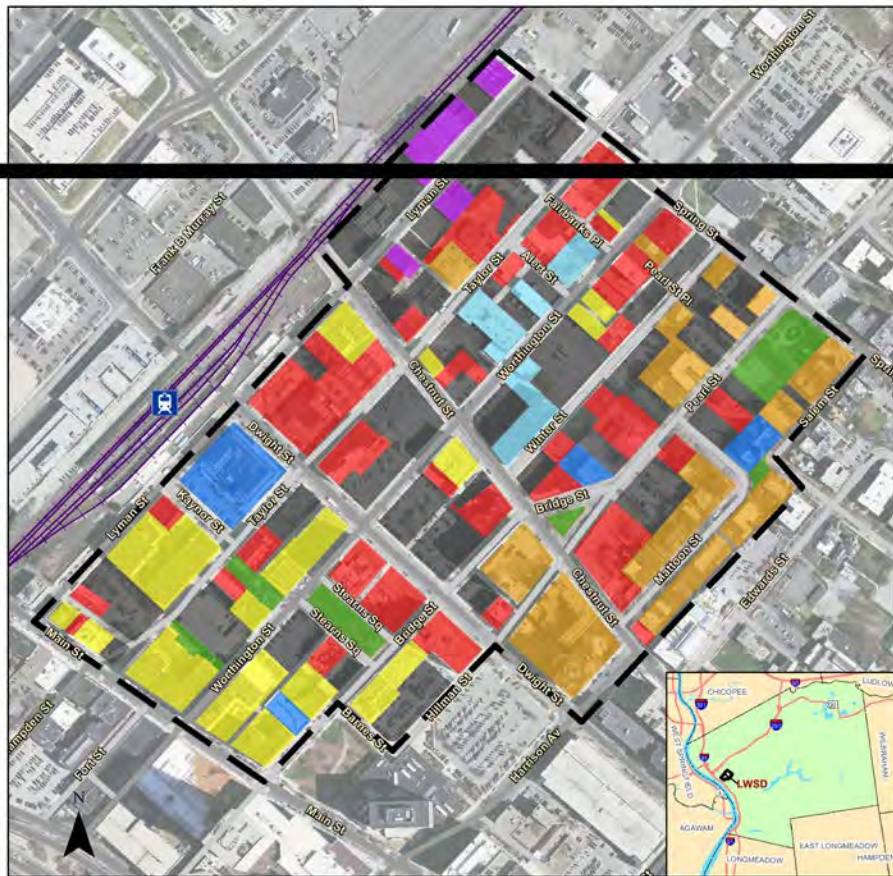
Figure 20: Comparison of property tax rates in selected Massachusetts cities for 2013

The city of Springfield maintains current tax rates of 1.97% (Residential) and 3.89% (Commercial/Industrial). These are among the highest when compared to various urban centers throughout the state (Figure 20), however the city does still remain as an affordable location for residents and businesses due to lower overall assessed property values. Despite these high tax rates and affordable values, Springfield has experienced annual declines in total tax revenue since 2010.<sup>87</sup>

The major contributors to Springfield's property tax revenue, and recent decline, are residential and commercial uses (57.2% and 24.39% respectively). The economic benefit of these major tax-producing uses is evident, but the amount of city land required to generate these taxes is often less discussed. Springfield's housing stock accounts for nearly 88% of city land parcels while commercial uses account for slightly less than 5%.<sup>88</sup> Commercial property tax rates are obviously higher than residential, but this relationship between land use and tax revenue illustrates the challenge that Springfield faces in terms of overall land use efficiency. The city has expanded on a single-family suburban model that now struggles to adequately support a modern urban center. In comparison, Boston and Worcester maintain a more balanced distribution of tax revenue with Boston attracting significant commercial contributions and Worcester relying on emerging industrial contributions.

<sup>87</sup> Massachusetts Department of Revenue. (2013). Property Tax Trend Report [Data File]. Retrieved from <http://www.mass.gov/dor/local-officials/municipal-dat-and-financial-management/data-bank-reports/property-tax-information.html>

<sup>88</sup> Springfield, Massachusetts Assessors Department. (2013). Fy2013 Tax Bills. [Data File]. Retrieved from <http://www3.springfield-ma.gov/finance/assessors.html>



- Existing Land Use**
- Commercial / Retail
  - Industrial
  - Institutional
  - Mixed Use
  - Open Space / Recreation
  - Parking Lot / Vacant
  - Residential
  - Vacant Building / Structurally Unsound

Existing Land Use	# of Parcels	Acres (GIS Calculated)
Commercial / Retail	57	9.7
Industrial	7	1.0
Institutional	4	2.0
Mixed Use	35	6.0
Open Space / Recreation	11	1.9
Parking Lot / Vacant	103	14.2
Residential	54	6.1
Vacant Building / Structurally Unsound	11	1.5

Source: City of Springfield Assessors and Planning & Zoning Departments



Figure 21: Existing land use by parcel



Figure 22: McIntosh Building Market Rate Condominiums on Chestnut Street

The Lower Worthington Street District provides an interesting opportunity to diversify Springfield’s tax base while also exploring methods to produce high tax revenue within condensed land areas. Multi-level rental and condominium units like Kimball Towers and the McIntosh Building (Figure 22) have already highlighted the potential benefit of this dense residential infill. These two buildings account for almost \$163,000 in property taxes for 2013. In comparison, approximately 60 single-family homes would be required to produce that same financial benefit to the city.<sup>89</sup> Additionally, the large amount of developable land and adaptive reuse potential within the Lower Worthington Street District makes this area an attractive location for future residential development. Springfield city officials have expressed clear support for new and rehabilitated downtown market-rate housing. This is a stated priority, but it is also critical to recognize the tax benefit of improving and developing successful commercial and industrial properties as well. Aside from higher tax rates, additional commercial and industrial uses have the potential to create new jobs and more effectively capture outside buying power.

Moving forward, our studio team has placed a high priority on redevelopment techniques that will serve the community both socially and financially. These goals are not mutually exclusive, but an expanding city budget, that is less reliant on low density and low tax-rate uses, is critical to stabilizing the city as a whole, and reestablishing the Lower Worthington Street District as a cultural and economic anchor for the city.

## ADULT ENTERTAINMENT USES

Existing adult entertainment districts and newly proposed adult clubs are a source of controversy amongst the general public, city officials, and business owners. From some perspectives, adult entertainment districts establish unfavorable uses of space and create negative perceptions within a community. On the other hand, they are also considered to be a tactical economic development strategy; they bring jobs and tax revenue into a city. These particular businesses are utilized as tourist attractions to promote economic growth and stability.

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<sup>89</sup> Springfield, Massachusetts Assessors Department, 2013

Adult entertainment districts have existed within the urban framework since the 19th century. But current attempts to control their expansion are being established by cities and policy makers.<sup>90</sup> In the mid 1980's, in the case "City of Renton v Playtime Theaters, Inc., 475 U.S. 41 (1986), governments were given the ability to regulate adult uses as long as the purpose is to mitigate potential secondary effects. There is a realization that these establishments create excessive noise, depress property values and increase crime rates.<sup>91</sup> Restrictions have been implemented through zoning policies, business licensing procedures, and adult entertainment laws.<sup>92</sup>

Adult entertainment in downtown Springfield does exist and is a main influence to the community's economy. There are five adult venues within the Metro Center neighborhood, all within the City's entertainment district. However, their prominence in the area may actually deter new commercial and residential investment. Adult uses are usually associated with crime and violence, and harm city reputations, discouraging future revitalization and development.

In some communities, adult entertainment is supported by city government, local business people and residents. Such enterprises are capable of promoting job growth while also increasing tax revenues, especially in low-income areas. For example, upscale gentleman's clubs are capable of earning \$20 million a year in urban areas. In cities like Atlanta, where there are 40 adult clubs, the industry has generated nearly \$250 million a year.<sup>93</sup> These venues thrive and are economically beneficial to both cities and business owners despite negative perceptions and criticisms.

In Springfield, these existing businesses continue to prosper. This proves that there is a market demand for such forms of entertainment. This demand may be exogenous, meaning people from outside the region are attracted to these venues. However, adult

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<sup>90</sup> Ryder, A. (2004). The changing nature of adult entertainment districts: Between a rock and a hard place or going from strength to strength?. *Urban Studies*, 41(9), 1659-1686.

<sup>91</sup> McCleary, Richard, & Weinstein, A. C. (2009). Do "Off-Site" Adult Businesses Have Secondary Effects? Legal Doctrine, Social Theory, and Empirical Evidence. *Law & Policy*, 31(2), 217-235.

<sup>92</sup> Ryder, A. (2004). The changing nature of adult entertainment districts: Between a rock and a hard place or going from strength to strength?. *Urban Studies*, 41(9), 1659-1686.1660

<sup>93</sup> West, D. M., & Orr, M. (2007). Morality and economics: public assessments of the adult entertainment industry. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 21(4), 315-324.

entertainment areas are potentially major obstacles to future revitalization efforts. Offensive environments created by adult uses undermine family-friendly atmospheres, making it an unwelcome area for certain populations.<sup>94</sup> Real estate companies, property developers and residents who are also exposed to these uses feel uncomfortable due to their proximity.<sup>95</sup> This negative stigma may result in the loss of property values because businesses and residents are unwilling to locate near or around these entertainment zones. Targeting sources of revenue that have said negative externalities to be spent in Springfield rather than somewhere else is tactical, yet not strategic economic development.

For Springfield, the issue comes down to which demographic they wish to attract and whether or not the existence of adult uses should be managed or prohibited. In their current numbers and locations, it is possible to gain residents who are younger, whether artistic or professional, but not likely retirees or middle-income families. Certainly, the potential attraction to the area would be adversely affected if the “Entertainment District” were to expand significantly.

Springfield also needs to consider that the presence of a casino and its patrons will create pressure for adult businesses to expand beyond their current number and size, most likely to a degree much larger than city and regional residents alone could support. The outsized impact on local LWSD residents and the potential market-rate arrivals should be analyzed since a few strip clubs might be tolerable, but a growing concentration of adult entertainment services could tip the scale from “chic” to inappropriate for families and empty nesters.

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<sup>94</sup> Hubbard, P., Matthews, R., Scoular, J., & Agustín, L. (2008). Away from prying eyes? The urban geographies of adult entertainment'. *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(3), 363-381.

<sup>95</sup> West, D. M., & Orr, M. (2007). Morality and economics: public assessments of the adult entertainment industry. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 21(4), 315-324.





# Redevelopment Overview

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## HOUSING

### ***CURRENT HOUSING INVENTORY***

Springfield's Metro Center neighborhood has a total of 3,538 housing units, 89% being occupied. The neighborhood has a very large rental base, with 96% of units being renter occupied, and only 4% owner occupied.<sup>96</sup> The majority of housing is in large-scale apartment buildings, such as the Kimball or The Worthy, or brownstones and townhouses on Mattoon St and Elliot St.

While there is market rate housing in the neighborhood, the majority of units are subsidized in some form. According to the Residential Market Potential study, 13 downtown properties contain approximately 1,765 subsidized units, and tenants with section 8 vouchers occupy an additional 324 units. This adds up to 90% of all downtown units being subsidized in some form.<sup>97</sup> The boundaries for the Zimmerman/Volk study are slightly smaller than the Metro Center neighborhood as a whole, but are more representative of the proposed Lower Worthington Street District.

While there is a need for market rate housing, we learned from a community group that there is also a need for additional subsidized housing in the Lower Worthington Street District. The community group spoken with was not averse to market rate housing, and the housing study provides evidence and support for additional market rate housing. The first step to revitalizing the area is additional market rate housing. This will create a larger range of incomes leading to a healthier economic base. As typically, "retail follows rooftops," bringing people to downtown is the first step. Ultimately, market rate housing with the inclusion of additional affordable units will ensure a range of housing

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<sup>96</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2011 5 year estimates, Metro Center Neighborhood

<sup>97</sup> Zimmerman/Volk Associates. (2013). Update: Residential Market Potential, Downtown Springfield. Clinton, NJ: Author, p. 24

to serve the needs of those looking for an urban core and the amenities it can bring, and those who have called downtown Springfield home through its decline.

### **MARKET RATE HOUSING**

The housing study indicates a strong demand for market rate housing in downtown Springfield. The largest potential market is younger singles and couples, at 69%.<sup>98</sup> Young people are attracted to loft style apartments rather than typical suburban style apartment complexes<sup>99</sup>, and this puts downtown Springfield at an advantage. Many buildings, such as the Willys Overland Building, provide adaptive reuse opportunities for loft-style units. We recommend that adaptive reuse on existing buildings be the first phase of adding market rate housing to the downtown area, with new residential construction happening once rehabilitated properties have proven successful, with strong occupancy rates.

Empty nesters comprise 23% of the prospective households that could potentially move to downtown.<sup>100</sup> The housing study identifies the median income range of potential empty nesters and retirees as between \$71,000 - \$157,000.<sup>101</sup> These income ranges allow for empty nesters with disposable income to frequent the restaurants, events, and other amenities our Studio Team anticipates a higher income housing population will bring. With the low rental and ownership costs, those with disposable income will be important assets for revitalizing the downtown. While the focus should be on attracting young professionals to the downtown, focus should also be given to attracting empty nesters that may have stable disposable income to spend and are looking to downsize.

The rental market is much stronger than the ownership market. Lofts are the most attractive unit type and have become a “staple ingredient in the way urban living has been idealized through the media and advertising.”<sup>102</sup> While reliance on tax credits and financial incentives will most likely be necessary for redevelopment, the adaptive reuse

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<sup>98</sup> Zimmerman/Volk Associates, p. 20

<sup>99</sup> Zimmerman/Volk Associates, p. 20

<sup>100</sup> Zimmerman/Volk Associates, p. 20

<sup>101</sup> Zimmerman/Volk Associates, p. 21

<sup>102</sup> Field & Irving (1999), as cited in Birch, E. (2002). Having a longer view on downtown living. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 68 (1), p. 10

of buildings into loft style housing can lead to further development investment.<sup>103</sup> Additionally, our Studio Team conducted an informal poll of fellow students to assess their preferred live space. Forty-two percent of our respondents were between the age of 18-24, and 55.6% of respondents showed a preference for loft style live units.

Springfield's December 2013 approval of the Market Rate Housing Incentive Zone and Plan, part of the statewide Massachusetts Housing Development Incentive Program, provides developers with access to a tax credit of up to 10% on development costs, and a local property tax exemption. We encourage the city to ensure a streamlined process is in place to help developers access this program. It will be imperative for developers to identify gap financing to supplement the cost of housing development. The housing study estimates that downtown Springfield should be able to support up to 106 new market-rate units per year over the next three years, and up to 171 units per year over four to seven years.<sup>104</sup>

Our recommendation is that Springfield focus on the production of multifamily loft and apartment buildings. While the bulk of market rate units will likely be rental due to the current market, in the future ownership will be ideal to increase the tax base. However, any increase in downtown residents will have a positive effect on bringing additional amenities to the downtown area. Additionally, many area college students head to Boston and New York City post graduation. These cities have become cost prohibitive to live in. With the addition of market rate housing to Springfield, and creation of amenities, there is the potential to attract students looking for urban amenities who cannot afford to move to larger urban cores. Ultimately, the addition of market rate housing is the first step to bringing in residents with the means and desire to live in an urban, twenty-four hour day, city center.

### ***PROVIDENCE, RI***

The revitalization of a city, as seen in Providence, RI, is a long-term investment. While Providence now has a booming downtown rental market, with many amenities for residents, this process began 30-40 years ago.

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<sup>103</sup> Bullen, P., Love, P., (2009) "Residential regeneration and adaptive reuse: learning from the experiences of Los Angeles", *Structural Survey*, 27 (5)

<sup>104</sup> Zimmerman/Volk Associates, p. 39

Previously an area with very few residences, Providence’s downtown shares many historical similarities with Springfield. Similar to Springfield, in the 1960s and 70s Providence faced a loss of department and retail stores to the suburbs, as well as the loss of middle class and affluent families. Both of these factors contributed to a declining downtown.<sup>105</sup> One important factor to Providence’s revitalization was strong collaboration between the business elite, as well as solid leadership and public/private collaboration.<sup>106</sup> Revitalizing without such support may be more difficult than creating collaboration between different parties and interests.

Providence’s mayor, Vincent “Buddy” Cianci, was integral to revitalizing the downtown. He used a number of incentives: tax breaks for prospective investors, condemned properties for redevelopment, worked with corporate entrepreneurs, and used federal dollars for a wide array of projects. Additionally, “he successfully lobbied the legislature to provide income tax and sales breaks for artists who live and work in the refurbished upper-floor loft and studio spaces in downtown Providence.”<sup>107</sup> These incentives helped to spur the renaissance Providence is experiencing today.

Providence was a downtown area that had few amenities, with poor public perception. Today, Providence is a lively, active area with a national reputation for top restaurants, theaters, bars, and activities. Current adaptive reuse housing developments are commanding upwards of \$2,000 for an 817 square foot two bedroom, luxury unit.

### ***PROVIDENCE REVOLVING FUND***

The Providence Revolving Fund is a community-based, not for profit, lending corporation that administers a \$6.5 million Downcity Loan and Grant Program for the downtown neighborhood. The loans and grants are for capital improvements, and are in the form of construction loans, storefront improvement loans, and storefront loans. One of the Downcity Fund Priorities is upper story housing conversion, with a goal



Figure 23: Peerless Lofts prior to redevelopment.



Figure 24: Peerless Building after adaptive reuse.

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<sup>105</sup> Orr, M., West, D. (2002). Citizens views on urban revitalization, the case of Providence, RI. *Urban Affairs Review*. 37 (397), pp. 399, 402

<sup>106</sup> Orr, M., West, D. (2002), pp. 403-404

<sup>107</sup> Orr, M., West, D. (2002), p. 405

aimed to, “Encourage the development of market rate and affordable rental and owner occupied housing and live/work space within historic buildings.”<sup>108</sup>

The Peerless Lofts in downtown Providence is a prime example of adapting existing property into loft style rental units.<sup>109</sup> Originally home to a department store, the Peerless lofts consists of five individual buildings, and is a beautiful 220,000 square feet of space that have been rehabilitated with retail space on the ground floor, and 97 units residential units on floors two through seven. This was done in part by a \$1 million loan from the Revolving Fund’s Downcity Fund.<sup>110 111</sup> The Revolving Fund’s loan, though small in comparison to the larger project, was an interesting funding source and key investment to support the rehabilitation of these historic buildings.<sup>112</sup>

### ***CONNECTICUT’S COME HOME TO DOWNTOWN PILOT PROGRAM***

Come Home to Downtown is a program that provides services to owners of small, under-utilized downtown properties and is “aimed at facilitating viable, interesting housing opportunities while revitalizing downtown neighborhoods while providing customized technical assistance.”<sup>113</sup> The program is a collaborative effort between Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC) and the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority. While this pilot program has been aimed at communities smaller than Springfield (Middleton, Torrington and Waterbury), our Studio Team feels a similar program would be viable in downtown Springfield to provide assistance to building owners for potential rehabilitation for residential units. The program works through collaboration between

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<sup>108</sup> Providence Revolving Fund. Downcity Loans. Retrieved November 20, 2013, from <http://www.revolvingfund.org/downcityloans.php>

<sup>109</sup> At least 8 units in the Smith Building are made affordable through low income housing tax credits. <http://lihtc.findthedata.org/l/24976/Smith-Building>

<sup>110</sup> Providence Revolving Fund. Peerless Building – Cornish Associates. Retrieved November 20, 2013, from [http://www.revolvingfund.org/consulting\\_peerless.php](http://www.revolvingfund.org/consulting_peerless.php)

<sup>111</sup> The Revolving Fund’s loan was one funding stream, other known financial incentives included: State and Federal/historic Tax Credits and New Markets Tax Credits, resulting in \$11.5 million dollars. Peerless Building, Providence, RI. (2013). Retrieved November 22, 2013, from <http://nticfunds.com/projects/peerless-building-providence-r/>

<sup>112</sup> Peerless Building, Providence, RI (2013)

<sup>113</sup> Come Home to Downtown. (2012). Retrieved November 18, 2013, from <http://ctmainstreet.org/who-we-are/come-home-to-downtown>

municipal officials, building owners, and the CMSC to develop viable development options including:

- Determining what financing would likely be needed for redevelopment
- Performing an assessment of zoning and regulatory requirements
- Reviewing the downtown management function
- Measuring the downtown's walkability<sup>114</sup>

Part of the recommendations that come forth for building improvements include attracting new residents and bringing in market rate housing. A similar four-step process for building owners in the Lower Worthington Street District that have vacant space might serve as a catalyst for redevelopment. A program based on this model could provide building owners with the knowledge and support to begin the process of financing and rehabilitation.

### ***MIXED-INCOME UNITS***

Understanding the conflicting needs for different housing types, we recommend exploring mixed-income developments in the Lower Worthington Street District. This neighborhood is currently experiencing concentrated poverty, and it is important to integrate the area with different income levels. At the same time, we do not advocate bringing in market rate housing that may alienate or displace the residents that live there. We believe current lower-income residents should be included in the process to revitalize the area, and their needs around housing should be taken into full consideration along with the building of market rate housing.

While we are advocating for mixed-income housing developments, it can be incredibly difficult for developers to receive financing for building mixed-income developments, as often the incentives are very low for them. We recommend Springfield explore financing options for mixed-income units, and provide incentives and subsidies to developers when possible.

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<sup>114</sup> Come Home to Downtown. (2012)

### ***HARTFORD, CT CAPITAL REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY<sup>115</sup>***

Hartford, Connecticut's Capital Region Development Authority finances downtown residential developments that are 80% market rate and 20% affordable. They have created a model that brings in a large percentage of market-rate housing, while including affordable units. As Springfield has a lack of and potential for market rate housing, this model would bring in the market rate units, while adding to the existing and large percentage of subsidized units. The Capital Region Development Authority provides gap financing for housing development projects; a major factor preventing development in the Lower Worthington Street District. This financing is provided through equity with preferred status, a traditional mortgage, or 'soft' second mortgages.

### ***SUBSIDIZED UNITS***

A large percentage of housing in the Metro Center and Lower Worthington Street District neighborhood are subsidized in some form, and a large percentage of units are presumed to be occupied by tenants with mobile section 8 vouchers. As the housing study found, 90% of all downtown units in their study area are subsidized in some form.

Our larger plan of bringing in market rate housing and commercial amenities creates the possibility of an increase in property values, which will likely lead to an increase in rent. We do not want the creation of market rate housing to lead to gentrification, ultimately displacing residents. We hope steps will be taken to ensure people who have made the downtown their home prior to revitalization will be considered and valued in the redevelopment process.

### ***DISPLACEMENT MITIGATION STRATEGIES***

While gentrification is not an immediate concern for Springfield, we recommend the city be prepared for potential displacement due to increased property values and rent, in addition to a change in the culture and character of the Lower Worthington Street District. Proactive steps taken by Springfield should be embraced and respected by a

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<sup>115</sup> Capital Regional Development Authority. CRDA Housing Program. Retrieved on November 20, 2013 from: [http://crdact.net/projects/current/Housing\\_Program.html](http://crdact.net/projects/current/Housing_Program.html)



target population of young professionals, who want to feel they are becoming a part of something “authentic.”<sup>116</sup>

The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at the University of Ohio has identified methods of monitoring a community for displacement, and we recommend Springfield create a system to track the following indicators:

1. Property appreciation rates, how fast they are going, compare rates with the region, the city or other urban neighborhoods
2. Analyze the rental market in the community. Determine if rents are changing and how they compare the change in rents in the region, the city or other urban neighborhoods
3. Are critical neighborhood social services under pressure to relocate?
4. Determine if any displacement is occurring in the neighborhood. Are other local (neighborhood) housing opportunities available to displaced residents?
5. Are traditional residents able to maintain properties, monitor if code violations are threatening to cause displacement<sup>117</sup>

Additionally, our Studio Team recommends creating a system to track the expiration of subsidized housing incentives, as landlords may choose to turn their units over to market rate if rents have risen, and a greater profit can be gained from the market. If displacement is to potentially occur this way, the city should have a strong notification plan in place to give residents proper notice and proper assistance in the relocation process.

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<sup>116</sup> It is important to also acknowledge the November 21, 2013 Richard Florida article on The Atlantic Cities blog which states, “gentrification is much less likely in smaller, more sprawling metros, those with older industrial and blue-collar economic structures, and where a higher share of the population commutes to work by car.” Florida, R. (2013, November 21). The gentrification puzzle. The Atlantic Cities. Retrieved November 22, 2013 from <http://www.theatlanticcities.com/neighborhoods/2013/11/why-some-places-gentrify-more-others/7588/>

<sup>117</sup> Reece, J. (2004). Technical Memorandum on Gentrification Issues. The Ohio State University Kirwan Institute for Race and Ethnicity. pp. 3-4

## ***PHASING IN OF MARKET RATE HOUSING***

### ***PHASE ONE***

Phase One in the creation of market rate housing should start with an exploration of the different financial incentives available to rehabilitate upper level floors into residential units. Creating a program such as Connecticut's Come Home to Downtown Program could provide needed assistance to property owners in assessing funding streams for financing. There may be a number of issues that have to be considered in adaptive reuse such as zoning, environmental, and feasibility. Understanding these issues will be the first step to recognizing the potential.

Springfield should also assess what buildings have vacant upper floors with potential for transitioning into loft style units. Creating an inventory of adaptive reuse spaces is an important step to understanding where potential rehabilitation can occur in Phase Two.

Additionally, in order to attract people to live in newly created market rate housing, a marketing and branding campaign should be undertaken. Due to the poor public perception of downtown, the city must market existing amenities such as the museums, symphony, current restaurants, summer events, and any other unique social amenities in order to attract people to live in the LWSD. The city should also brand itself on the historic and beautiful architecture, noting the dynamic history of the area and the opportunity to live in an urban core with great historical significance.

### ***PHASE TWO***

Phase Two of implementing market rate housing, estimated from 2017-2025 should begin to see the rehabilitation of current buildings into residential use. We recommend the city explore mixed-use options for the Willys Overland Building, and the Produce Exchange building located at 127 Lyman St. We also recommend the city conduct an inventory of vacant upper floors in the LWSD that may be prime for adaptive reuse into residential units.



**Figure 25: Willys Overland Building post gas explosion, Springfield, MA.**

The Willys Overland building, located at 151-157 Chestnut and 10-20

Winter Street provides an opportunity for a mixed-use development, with commercial uses on the first floor, and residential housed on top. The Willys Overland building has a sister building in Detroit, MI. Detroit’s rehabilitated Willys Overland building shows the great potential for this historic building. In addition, the building is on the National Historic Register.

We recommend that the city explore historic tax credits, tax abatements, and the Massachusetts Housing Development Incentive Program as financial incentives for redevelopment. The Willys Overland building is in an ideal location as it is diagonal from the Kimball Towers, and across the street from the McIntosh apartment building, both market rate housing developments. With the potential revitalization of Apremont Triangle, we anticipate the Willys Overland location as a prime place to live.. Additionally, Willys Overland is structurally and aesthetically a prime location for adaptive reuse loft apartments with its large, open windows and high ceilings.

The Produce Exchange Building, part of the National Historic Register, is another opportunity for adaptive reuse. With three upper floors and 17,000 square feet of space on each, its close proximity to Union Station, as well as our proposed commercial activity on the first floor, we believe this location will make for a prime housing development.

### ***PHASE THREE***

Phase Three, which we estimate to occur starting in 2026, should explore the potential of building new construction for market or mixed-income housing in the downtown. This phase would build upon the success of filling market rate units in rehabilitated buildings, such as the Willys Overland. We recommend the city consider converting vacant parcels and underutilized city owned parking lots into new mixed-use, and preferably mixed-income, construction. The following parcels have been identified as ideal locations:

- **339 Worthington St** (Dwight Street Parking Lot, 107 spots), on the corner of Dwight and Worthington. This location has access to Union



**Figure 26: Willys post rehabilitation in Detroit**

Station, the Entertainment District and Stearns Square. Additionally, it is in close proximity to the Kimball Towers and the McIntosh.

- **33 Pearl Street**, (Apremont Triangle Lot, 46 spots), has close proximity to the library and museums, Springfield Technical Community College (STCC), and is located in Apremont Triangle. The redevelopment is explored further in the Apremont Triangle Priority Development Site section.

These parcels are owned by Springfield Parking Authority, and bring in no tax revenue. While tax incentives would likely be needed for new build, any revenue stream will likely be larger than what is currently earned. Additionally, downtown Springfield has an excess of parking spots, and these lots do not appear to be fully utilized. Our hope is by 2026 residents will have amenities in the neighborhood to walk too and will not be reliant on personal vehicles. Therefore, having parking directly adjacent or below the building will not be imperative. Students and young professionals often have flexibility in walking five to ten minutes for parking, though empty nesters may desire parking directly in or next to the building. The proximity of parcels to STCC provides an opportunity to market units to young professional age students who are interested in living by the school, and having access to amenities such as restaurants, coffee shops and a grocery.

Micro lofts are beginning to gain traction in cities like New York, Providence, Seattle, and Portland. Micro lofts tend to be between 225-450 square feet and are ideal living spaces for recent graduates and people who desire a small living space with minimal upkeep, or those unable to afford a larger living space. These types of live spaces are best for people who like the 24 hours day, and prefer to spend more time outside of the apartment than inside. If the trend for these small lofts/apartments continues we recommend building micro lofts at 33 Pearl Street next to Apremont Triangle. This would be ideal for STCC students, as it would offer them a chance to live within walking distance of school, in units that tend to be cheaper than standard sized lofts and apartments.

By 2026 we believe the Lower Worthington Street District will have a lively scene that recent college graduates from the Pioneer Valley, and the greater New England region,

may have an interest in living in. Having an array of housing options and price points will be important to attracting recent college graduates.

### ***ADDITIONAL HOUSING TOOLS***

Below are additional programs and tools our Studio Team recommends be explored as methods to create additional housing to downtown. Inclusionary Zoning and Community Benefits Agreements are tools to create a space for market rate and affordable housing, while Pittsburgh's Downtown Upstairs Fund focuses on creating adaptive reuse market rate housing.

### ***INCLUSIONARY ZONING***

Adoption of inclusionary zoning will ensure that new developments contain a certain percentage of affordable units. While 16.2% of Springfield's housing is subsidized (as of April 30, 2013), well over the 10% level desired by Chapter 40B, our Studio Team learned from community interviews there is still need for additional affordable housing in the downtown area. An inclusionary zoning ordinance would ensure that a certain percentage of developments would include affordable units, while still bringing in a majority of market rate units. While Springfield has gone above and beyond regarding inclusivity of diverse incomes compared to its neighboring communities, our recommendation is to continue that inclusivity by providing for all income levels within new developments.

### ***COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENTS***

Community Benefits Agreements (CBA) are commitments private developers make to create opportunities for local workers and communities.<sup>118</sup> This tool is a way for developers to work directly with local community groups to ensure their developments serve the needs of the local community. For Working Families, a national network of advocacy organizations, defines CBAs as:

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<sup>118</sup> Policy & Tools: Community Benefits Agreements and Policies. (2012). Retrieved on November 16, 2013, from <http://www.forworkingfamilies.org/resources/policy-tools-community-benefits-agreements-and-policies>

a project specific agreement between a developer and a broad community coalition that details the project's contributions to the community and ensures community support for the projects. Addressing a range of community issues, properly structured CBAs are legally binding and directly enforceable by the signatories.<sup>119</sup>

Community Benefits Agreements have more flexibility than government agreements, as they are between the developer and community so there is room for creative approaches to different problems, without certain legal constraints that come from government imposed conditions. Through a CBA, the developer can know that his or her project has the support of the community, and will be less likely to face opposition. For the community, CBAs can mean the project will have local hiring preferences, affordable housing, and living wage conditions.

### ***PITTSBURGH'S DOWNTOWN UPSTAIRS FUND***<sup>120</sup>

Pittsburgh's Downtown Upstairs Fund provides free pre-development consultation and schematic drawings for building owners considering renovation of their upper floors, as well as gap financing to owners of buildings with up to eight floors of potential residential development. The program encompasses two subprograms, the first being the Life Safety Program as it provides financing for life safety rehabilitation, such as additional means of egress, sprinklers systems, fire/smoke alarms, elevator installation. The second sub-program is the Vacant Upper Floors Program, which helps to create residential units (and commercial) in vacant or underutilized upper floor space. This financing is provided in the form of 0% interest loans. We recommend that Springfield explore the creation of a similar program to aid building owners in the redevelopment of their properties.

The first step to creating a vibrant downtown Springfield is bringing in the people with the means and desire to live an urban lifestyle. Through adaptation and creation of market rate housing there will be space for those who want to live in the Lower Worthington Street District. We recommend Springfield implement programs that will

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<sup>119</sup> Policy & Tools: Community Benefits Agreements and Policies. (2012)

<sup>120</sup> Upstairs Downstairs Fund. Retrieved on November 16, 2013 from [http://www.ura.org/pdfs/Downtown\\_Upstairs\\_Fund\\_Program\\_Guidelines\\_final.pdf](http://www.ura.org/pdfs/Downtown_Upstairs_Fund_Program_Guidelines_final.pdf)

help building owners assess the barriers, financial need, and available programs to help in the creation of housing.

## **COMMERCIAL**

One task our Studio Team was charged with was to create a “cool” neighborhood that we would want to live in within the Springfield downtown. This request applies not only to our residential recommendations, but also to our commercial research; trendy, young, market rate tenants eat, shop, and hang out in different places than other demographics do. Since DevelopSpringfield is hoping to make the LWSD a trendy cultural enclave, our Studio Team has identified commercial goals, strategies, and case studies that could help attract this population to frequent the neighborhood.

### ***GOALS***

Commercial goals hinge largely on the implementation of existing resources and cultural assets in the LWSD. Not only are “going green” and “creative economies” trendy buzz words that are attractive to young professionals, they are great planning practices. Our Studio Team will combine sustainable smart growth initiatives such as mixed-use buildings and adaptive reuse, with goals based upon precedents that have forged artistic and hip economies in other cities similar and dissimilar from Springfield. The LWSD should aim to:

- Promote a prosperous commercial atmosphere that inspires private investment that is well-matched to adjacent neighborhoods
- Encourage mixed-uses that can be supportive of each other in the LWSD
- Create smooth transitions from commercial to noncommercial uses
- Identify, evaluate, and improve ways to protect historic and cultural sites
- Maximize the opportunities for public/private partnerships to produce jobs, expand the tax base, and enhance the Metro Center
- Structure commercial centers around existing transportation facilities
- Promote the use of sustainable designs



### ***COMMERCIAL REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES:***

Early strategies include improving the general appearance of the LWSD through renovation projects, urban greenery, and public art. An aesthetically pleasing neighborhood is more appealing to both businesses and residents, so after visual improvements have been made, the LWSD can really begin to appeal to the type of population that will continue to invest in the neighborhood's existing assets and culture. These strategies include:

- Sponsor projects that diminish visual blight
- Appeal to key demographics that will continue to frequent and invest in new and existing businesses in the LWSD
- Contribute to the acquisition and development of parks, trails, open space and public art
- Promote easily accessible pedestrian paths and bikeways to and within the redevelopment area
- Stimulate mixed-use commercial and residential revitalization projects that serve to smoothly transition from the Metro Center to the surrounding residential neighborhoods
- Encourage upper-story residential uses and ground floor retail in the commercial area

### ***APPROACHES***

Our Studio Team suggests four approaches for the commercial redevelopment of the LWSD that involve providing opportunities for the existing population and attracting new residents and businesses to the neighborhood. Our plan hinges upon building on resources that exist in the city currently to create new prospects for everyone that lives, works, and travels to the city.

#### ***APPROACH 1. ATTRACT ARTISTS***

There is no arguing that the implementation of a creative economy has produced high levels of success in many revitalization efforts, but is this type of development tool worth the hype? According to current statistics, capitalizing on an arts based economy

is very smart. A recent UN News Centre article observed that trade in creative goods and services reached a record high in 2011 and that this stream of revenue has more than doubled from 2002 to 2011. In addition to these sizable economic benefits, the creative economy adds to comprehensive social growth, a better neighborhood dialogue, and overall quality of life for residents.<sup>121</sup>



Figure 27: Among the many works of art to see in Paducah are these masterpieces in the National Quilt Museum.

#### Case Study: Paducah, KY

The Artist Relocation Program in Paducah, KY was officially adopted in 2002 and has had enormous success there. In its first ten years, the program has been pivotal in recruiting over 75 new artists, residents, and businesses to the targeted neighborhood in Lowertown. More than \$30 million in private investment has been poured back into the community paralleled by only \$2 million of City General Fund money spent.

The initiative hinges on providing financial incentives such as low-cost housing and rehabilitation assistance to artists that want to relocate to the city.

Encompassing a historic neighborhood, Lowertown features a large number of older, derelict structures have been offered to applying artists at prices far below market rate. These properties are already zoned for live-work spaces and comprise a maximum reimbursement of \$2500 for architectural improvements on properties owned by the Paducah Renaissance Alliance (PRA). Other perquisites include marketing and promotional support, monetary moving assistance, aid for business start-ups, rehabilitation costs up to \$5000, acquisition assistance, and restaurant incentives on qualifying proposals

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<sup>121</sup> Creative economies boost growth, social and cultural development – UN reports. (2013, November 14). *UN News Center*. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp/http://www.unisdr.org/www.iaea.org/story.asp?NewsID=46492>

The PRA has had such success by identifying candidates that have previously implemented a successful art business model and have proposed an appropriate plan for the city of Paducah. There is a rigorous application process that involves the submission of a business plan, resume, or portfolio, in depth and up to code rehab plans, floor plan and exterior façade illustrations, at least two well-founded third party total rehab estimates, a timeline of work to be done that must start within 90 days of acquisition and be completed within two years, and proof of financial ability. Priority is given to owner occupied properties, to uses which contribute to the district through workshops or public projects, and to galleries or businesses that uphold a minimum number of hours in which they are open to the public.

In a 2007 article in the Boston Globe, the results of the artist relocation program are succinctly addressed: “Crime has been reduced, houses restored, and galleries now dot the 26-square-block area.”<sup>122</sup> The LWSD may be smaller in size than Paducah, but the benefits from implementing similar incentives in Springfield could have huge implications for physical and psychological neighborhood revitalization, perception improvements, and job creation.<sup>123</sup>

### **Case Study: Tacoma, WA**

Tacoma, WA is a parallel to Springfield in that it serves as a more affordable alternate to nearby Seattle; akin to the spillover Springfield receives from larger northeastern cities. There is a successful arts cooperative in place in Tacoma that operates on a system of exchanging a combination of a monthly fee and volunteer hours for studio and gallery space. This type of mutual studio system saves artists the money they would pay for rent on an individual studio, and artists keep all of their own profits. Members also enjoy the support of having cooperative funds to help with marketing expenses, and an existing group of artists to help organize and conduct open houses. The associates of the co-op make business decisions and keep the books, but nearby gallery owner

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<sup>122</sup> Daniel, D. (2007, October). Art community thrives in a Kentucky river town [Editorial]. *Boston Globe*. Retrieved from [http://www.boston.com/travel/getaways/us/articles/2007/10/28/art\\_community\\_thrives\\_in\\_a\\_kentucky\\_river\\_town/?page=1](http://www.boston.com/travel/getaways/us/articles/2007/10/28/art_community_thrives_in_a_kentucky_river_town/?page=1)

<sup>123</sup> Artist Relocation Program. (2012). *Paducah Renaissance Alliance*. Retrieved from <http://www.paducahalliance.org/artist-relocation-program>

Carolyn Burt states that this type of system has its flaws. In Burt's experience co-ops struggle when it comes time to use communal funds, and there is little consistency on the books with so many people keeping records. Burt runs her gallery like it is a co-op for the most part, but she keeps the books and collects a 5 percent commission in a fund for the use of her artist tenants when planning gallery events.

Tacoma is currently trying to take the next step in establishing a thriving artist community: live/work spaces. Live/work studios deliver low rent housing and on-site studios on top of the communal and supportive environment found in a co-op. Organizers in Tacoma, however, have hit a stumbling block at this juncture. The primary challenges surrounding live/work spaces relate to zoning, and the sizable private and public investments. So far, there is a lot of interest, but there are no buildings that are zoned for this type of development that are affordable for artists. The current city code requires the installation of an array of expensive safety measures in an area zoned for residential and public use (such as an art gallery). The city arts administrator in Tacoma has spoken out concerning why they have not reached out to developers regarding this type of mixed-use, stating, "So far there hasn't been the financial support for a government-backed live/work space." Requirements for developers used in nearby cities include a building for the rehab and \$500,000 in up front predevelopment costs. Coupled with zoning and cost concerns for potential residents in Tacoma, live/work studios are not an option there just yet.

The case study in Tacoma serves to show the importance of phasing in a functioning art community. Cooperatives are based on an archetype in which members control finances and business decisions. They are easy to form and provide solutions for critical problems that artists face. Co-op galleries offer a great way for fledgling artists to get exposure. They also afford artists with little professional experience the chance to work in the gallery and to become familiar with the sales side of the art business; potentially encouraging new gallery or store front startups in the future. Being staffed by artists can also be a detriment in a co-op gallery however, particularly if artists are uncomfortable on the sales floor or cannot work cohesively with an array of others. For these reasons, our recommendation for a Phase One gallery project builds on the model employed by Burt at her gallery in Tacoma. Burt has experience running a business and assumes responsibility for managing the books and making decisions for the gallery. Her artists keep their profits, but have the commission she keeps to help with group events.

This is a good jumping off point for a city like Springfield that might lack existing artists with good business sense. There is also currently some concern surrounding the ability of Springfield artists to pay rent on a live/work space; a local resident heavily involved in the arts community expressed that the artists he works with could not afford an apartment with an on-site studio. This is another reason that live/work spaces are a great goal, but are a ways off for Springfield. At this stage, the most feasible option for the LWSD is providing market rate housing options adjacent to gallery spaces or co-ops so that artists can live and work in the same neighborhood if not the same building, or embracing a strategy like that used in Paducah. If Springfield could find a financial institution to partner with, artists that might not be able to finance renovating a space out of pocket could start to build equity in a property renovation that is supplemented by loans and city grant money. This gives the residents a stake in the city and encourages them to stay to build a business and a home.<sup>124</sup>

Right here in Springfield's own backyard there are a handful of auspicious arts initiatives. The Performance Project stationed within the LWSD on Taylor Street has an impressive assortment of financial supporters throughout the Pioneer Valley. A partnership between the Performance Project and the nearby Paramount Theater could serve as the foundation for an Arts District in Springfield. New programs and galleries installed in the future could then benefit from and build upon the relationships already existing within the district. There is also the potential to tie the Arts District to the proximate Cultural District that was just approved. The Performance Project creates a network of local



**Figure 28: The Mural Project initiative associated with the Springfield Performance Project is a great resource for the creation of public art that is already within the LWSD.**

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<sup>124</sup> Artist Cooperatives Easier to Start than Live/Work Spaces. (n.d.). *The News Tribune*. Retrieved from <http://www.thenewstribune.com/2010/01/24/1041947/artist-cooperatives-easier-to.html>

residents who are interested in the arts and who could help to provide support, awareness, and even public art for the district. The Mural Program is an offshoot of the Performance Project which has a mission to construct a creative environment for young adults and aims to teach them how to create murals while helping them form valuable relationships in their community. Figure 28 is an example of what this program is capable of and how they could contribute to public works of art within an Art District. The Performance Project also has the potential to establish connections with the nearby Paramount Theater to incorporate existing residents into a district that encompasses visual and performing arts.<sup>125</sup>

Another community partner is the Indian Orchard Mills to the northeast of the LWSD. This redeveloped mill houses a variety of offices, machine shops, furniture, cabinet and countertop manufacturers, die cutters, screen printers, web designers, advertisers, contractors, private studios and the Dane Gallery. Indian Orchard Mills boasts that it is home to the largest group of artists in Springfield but the mill does not actually provide housing. Indian Orchard is home to approximately 130 artist tenants, and this is a market that would certainly be interested in live/work spaces or galleries near housing options in another area of the city.<sup>126</sup>

## ***APPROACH 2. PROVIDE AMENITIES***

The LWSD is currently lacking in critical commercial amenities that could attract businesses and market rate tenants. In our site visits, we noticed that within the LWSD there is no public gym, no daycare, no beauty salon, no grocery store or full service corner store, and very scarce retail and restaurant options. There are some definite holes in existing resources here. Many of the restaurants that used to exist in this area have closed or relocated. A noteworthy restaurant, the 350 Grill, is connected to the Mardi Gras gentlemen's club and therefore may not be desirable for all patrons. There are many residents that do not have regular access to open space as the few green space and recreational amenities within the district are either not entirely public (such as the park and tennis courts associated with the Armory Commons Condominiums) or

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<sup>125</sup> The Performance Project - HOME. (n.d.). *The Performance Project*. Retrieved from <http://www.performanceproject.org/>

<sup>126</sup> Indian Orchard Mills. (n.d.). *Indian Orchard Mills*. Retrieved from <http://www.indianorchardmills.com/>

are overwhelmed by surrounding businesses and traffic (such as Triangle Park at the split of Bridge and Pearl Street).

There are communities of professionals and students that bookend the district. These are demographics that should be considered when exploring what type of commercial development might be desirable. Cafes, bars, restaurants, and coffee shops could pull Mass Mutual employees or STCC students into the LWSD for their lunch break, or for drinks at the end of the day. Many of the downtown employees might be more likely to live near the Metro Center if there were more hip hangouts, or family friendly eating and entertainment options. In our meetings with some stakeholders and Develop Springfield representatives, we were charged with the task of making Springfield “cool”; of appealing to our own demographic to draw young professionals into the LWSD. Based on a survey that we circulated to peers that will soon be entering the world of the young professional, the following amenities were priorities when they considered moving to a city:

**Bars, breweries and restaurants.** Nearly 90% of people surveyed said that walkable restaurants were a must in a neighborhood. (Walkability was defined by most of the focus group as within a one mile radius or a 15 minute walk.) Bars or breweries were a common answer as well and a brew-pub is something that has been requested by both locals and those in our study group.

**Groceries and farmers markets.** Most people who took our questionnaire expressed that they would usually drive to the grocery store, but there was a heavy preference for walking and taking public transit. Even those who stated that they like to walk to the grocery store preferred that the store is within a very short walk of their home. This is a huge gap in the resources present in the LWSD. There is not a full-service corner store or market within the district so residents have to walk a good distance, take a bus (with a limit of three bags per passenger), drive, or shop at the convenience stores located more proximate to them.

**Open Space.** Parks, basketball courts, running and biking trails were all desired. In general, well maintained green space builds a greater sense of safety and better neighborhood perceptions. Recreational sites could contribute to more human traffic in

the neighborhood. Activity was something that was also preferred and public parks are a great way to encourage bustle.

**Locally owned coffee shops.** It is no secret that college students drink coffee. But that does not mean that the way to draw young professionals into the LWSD is by installing a Starbucks; in fact, most answers regarding wanted amenities specified “locally owned” businesses. In addition to the responses we gathered, in an interview with a former resident of the district, we were told that while she was living there she would have liked to have a place to get coffee while she walked her dog in the morning.

**Gym.** Not only does the LWSD currently have an absence of outdoor recreational options, it also lacks a public gym. Some of the apartment buildings in the area have gyms that are open only to residents. Opening one of these gyms to the public for a membership fee is a short term solution for providing gym access to residents, but the groups’ recommendation in the long term is for the implementation of a public 24 hour gym in the LWSD.

Other requests included theaters, live entertainment options, a track (if not in a field complex perhaps just a lighted path around a park), a yoga facility, and outdoor cafes. Retail or housing may be the planning equivalent of the chicken or the egg, but whichever comes first there is no disputing that the residential and commercial uses in a neighborhood must be complementary. We asked our peers what they would need in commercial assets before they would live somewhere, but the question of amenities is also applicable to finding out where people want to shop, eat, and hang out. Better commercial resources breed higher demand for housing, and vice versa. The key to getting the residents and the businesses is to provide a neighborhood where people want to live and work.

### ***APPROACH 3. APPEAL TO THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT***

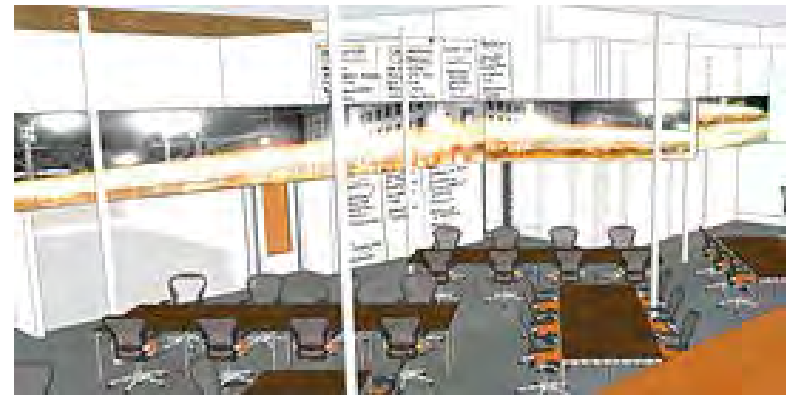
Any planner, economic developer, or city official knows that spurring job creation is always a goal, and this is certainly true in Springfield. One of the best strategies for creating jobs includes making Springfield attractive to the people who actually create jobs -- local entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs not only help create jobs for others, it has also been found that these risk takers generally contribute to other desirable factors in



their community. They embrace a lifestyle of healthy choices, trustworthy workplaces, and a pursuit of knowledge capital that helps to continue neighborhood improvement even outside of new job creation. The LWSD is in need of people more than anything else and attracting entrepreneurs who can aid in implementing jobs for present and future residents is a big step for the economic development and the revitalization of the district. The Sovereign Bank in the city currently offers space and assistance for business startups, but the concern of our Studio Team is that these spaces may be too expensive for many entrepreneurs, especially in the stage of the company when it may just be one or two people working. Our precedents offer some options for providing support and space to these businessmen and women on a scale that is appropriate for their needs and their budgets.

### **Case Study: Denver, CO**

Galvanize in Denver is a self-described community of entrepreneurs and innovators. Tenants are generally business start-ups that do not have a lot of money and are highly mobile, so the month-to-month arrangements that Galvanize offers in the form of “seats, stations, or suites” are a prime option. An added benefit to the layout of this business incubator is that it features many of the amenities we have identified as lacking in the district (i.e. a coffee shop, beer bar, gym and game room that are included in the fee renters pay). Galvanize serves as a low risk way for entrepreneurs to get their feet wet; many people with a business plan are unwilling to invest the kind of money necessary to procure a space without a guarantee that their business will take off, so this type of arrangement allows them to build a client base and save money until getting a permanent space is feasible. The organization is founded on the idea that start-ups can grow and be accommodated throughout each stage of their development (from seat to station to suite) until they have the means to move out of the incubator.<sup>127</sup>



**Figure 29: An example of desks for rent and the community space available to members of the Galvanize community.**

There are some existing assets for business startups in the city already. Sponsored through STCC, the Business Growth Center provides office space, access to business

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<sup>127</sup> Galvanize. (n.d.). *Galvanize*. Retrieved from <http://galvanize.it/>

resources, and mentoring services. Coupled with a thriving entrepreneurship studies program at the college, this business center is a prime candidate for the example of student involvement in innovation in business employed by Worcester, MA (see Approach 4 for details.)

#### ***APPROACH 4. CAPTURE THE STUDENT MARKET***

Springfield features an educational consortium comprised of the eight public and private colleges in the Greater Springfield area. This conglomerate encompasses American International College, Bay Path College, Elms College, Holyoke Community College, Springfield College, Springfield Technical Community College, Western New England University, and Westfield State University. These institutions often cooperatively promote educational, cultural, and social programs to encourage connectivity between the schools and access for all Greater Springfield area students to the respective strengths of each college or university. Not only is this a great academic and extramural opportunity for students, it is an occasion for the LWSD to encourage all members of the College Consortium to live, work, and play in the area not only while in school, but post-graduation as well.

#### ***Case Study: Worcester, MA***

Worcester, MA is home to nine colleges and universities with a total population of approximately twenty-five thousand students. What Worcester's commercial strategy has successfully accomplished is a system that combines including the students in economic development initiatives, and considering this large demographic in the way they market and group businesses. The city offers incentives to students and to year round residents to frequent local businesses and they embrace the student population in promoting opportunities to start businesses.

Shrewsbury Street is a strip of restaurants and bars that is a hot spot for Worcester City Consortium students. It is walkable from several universities and is located amid a high concentration of apartments. There is a vibrant night life and many of these restaurants offer discounts to students. Springfield needs to create a strip, and a night life culture like this; one that is not perceived to be a part of the adult uses that give the neighborhood some of its perception problems. The restaurants, pubs, and businesses of Shrewsbury Street also participate in a number of events that appeal to students. The

annual Taste of Shrewsbury Street allows Worcester residents and Worcester City students to sample the fare of the street with the purchase of a \$25 button. They offer another very similar event that is exclusively for undergraduates in which tickets only cost \$10. Other events include the Walk and Rock and the Holiday Stroll; proceeds from all of these events benefit the beautification of Shrewsbury Street and keep “restaurant row” and the night life for the city college kids in business.

Additionally, Worcester has a program called “WOO Cards.” These cards are free to students in the Worcester City Consortium or can be purchased for \$20 a year by any Worcester resident. They provide concessions on admission to theaters, museums, sporting events, and discounts at participating restaurants and businesses. The WOO Card encourages students and locals to keep their business in the city and to support the arts in their community.

The final student-oriented initiative further builds upon the goal of encouraging entrepreneurs to make their home in Springfield. Worcester has implemented an incubator focused on the growth of a diverse array of businesses in their downtown. The goals of the city hinge on attracting creative tenants, small businesses, and on giving college students real world experience. The incubator has set a goal to involve Worcester college students by launching a student business entrepreneurship program. This program reserves city funded space for students to occupy at a low rate. Interested students receive mentoring in running a functioning business while in college, and receive internship and project opportunities. This type of university relationship with the incubator encourages students with an interest in business to start building a customer base in Worcester, and that makes it more likely that they will choose to remain in the city and take their idea to the next level.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Moran, Y., Holovnia, N., Lanciani, K., & Rosales, M. (2008, December). *Recommendations for a Creative Business Incubator for the City of Worcester* (Publication No. ES1-WPC4). Retrieved [http://www.wpi.edu/Pubs/E-project/Available/E-project-122008-202704/unrestricted/Recommendations\\_for\\_a\\_Creative\\_Business\\_Incubator\\_for\\_the\\_City\\_of\\_Worcester.pdf](http://www.wpi.edu/Pubs/E-project/Available/E-project-122008-202704/unrestricted/Recommendations_for_a_Creative_Business_Incubator_for_the_City_of_Worcester.pdf)

## INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND JOB CREATION

The Lower Worthington Street District presents a limited supply of living-wage job opportunities for existing and incoming residents. The majority of district jobs are provided by commercial, auto, and service related businesses. Additionally, many of the more active businesses are sporadically located and struggle to attract consistent outside buying power. Main Street and State Street have both initiated business development through a variety of public and private partnerships, but the full impact of this surrounding improvement has not penetrated deeply into the LWSD.<sup>129</sup>



Figure 30: Newly Re-Opened Tyre Trak Automotive Center on Chestnut Street

The district itself is often perceived as a nightclub and entertainment quarter because these are some of the most stable, and therefore prominent, businesses in the area. Successful locally owned businesses like Worthington Market, Tyre Trak Automotive (Figure 30), Line Source, Inc. and Theodore's are potentially overshadowed physically and psychologically by other businesses that promote a less positive perception of the area. Vacant and seemingly vacant parcels also reinforce this reputation of economic instability.

Although several large employers are located just outside of the LWSD, there is a clear disconnect between employees of these businesses and the surrounding local labor force. LWSD residents largely do not have access to these nearby job opportunities, while high-wage downtown employees are presented with limited motivation to support existing businesses within the LWSD.<sup>130</sup>

Industrial development is an excellent opportunity to improve the economic power and assets of current district residents. It is common to promote job training and professional development as a means to infuse low-income residents into the existing job market rather than creating high quality, and locally controlled jobs that

<sup>129</sup> DevelopSpringfield. (2012). *Corridor Storefront Improvement Program (CSIP)*. Retrieved from <http://developspringfield.com/programs.html>

<sup>130</sup> (C. Gonzalez, Latino Chamber of Commerce, personal communication, October 21, 2013).

fit the needs of current residents.<sup>131</sup> This method of job creation promotes a more stable economic anchor and community pride at the neighborhood level, matched by increased tax revenue at the city level.

The traditional image of industry and manufacturing is declining across large portions of the nation. A long history of precision manufacturing in the greater Springfield area has slowed this decline to a certain extent, but local manufacturing employment still aligns with the decelerating national trend.<sup>132</sup> Many cities across the country have experimented with more localized and sustainable forms of industrial development in order to generate economic growth and create new jobs. Cities like Cleveland, Seattle, and Houston have all experienced a recent industrial renaissance that is anchored by energy, technology, and food processing industries. Additionally, industrial development in these cities is often the key element in generating some of the most successful local economies in the nation.<sup>133</sup>

The Springfield Wellspring Collaborative frequently highlights the importance of promoting new Hampden County industries that employ local residents and compliment the current economic makeup of the area. The initiative recognizes the challenge in attracting new large-scale industries to the area, and therefore promotes a model that encourages new jobs that will support major Springfield economic contributors like Bay State Medical Center, Big Y Foods, and Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance.<sup>134</sup>

The Springfield labor force itself also presents a specific challenge in terms of multiple target demographics in need of improved employment opportunities. Entry-level jobs that provide a realistic opportunity for promotion are needed for residents with limited education, and more high-wage industry jobs are needed for local graduates who are

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<sup>131</sup> (The Cleveland Foundation, 2010).

<sup>132</sup> United States Bureau of Economic Analysis. (2013). Local Area Economic Profiles. [Data File]. Retrieved from <http://www.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?ReqID=70&step=1#reqid=70&step=1&isuri=1>

<sup>133</sup> (US Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2001-2012)

<sup>134</sup> The Center for Popular Economics. (2013). *Wellspring Cooperative Collaborative – Community Revitalization through Economic Democracy*. Retrieved from <http://www.populareconomics.org/2013/01/wellspring-cooperative-collaboration-community-revitalization-through-economic-democracy/>

entering the labor force and do not often view Springfield as a viable option for long-term employment.



Figure 31: New EcoBuilding Bargains facility on Warwick Street

Several emerging businesses that surround the LWSD also provide more context regarding the type of new industrial development that can thrive within the current economic landscape. EcoBuilding Bargains (Figure 31) and Performance Food Services are located just north of the district and have experienced recent success. These two growing area businesses have established stable business plans, and address a growing global need for higher quality food and waste reduction.<sup>135</sup>

These Springfield realities create an environment in which the production of recycled and rebuilt home goods, along with industrial food production can potentially play a significant role in enhancing existing industries while also providing accessible jobs to targeted segments of the local population.

Ultimately, successful industrial development in downtown Springfield must incorporate three distinct methods to enhance the economic base of the LWSD. New businesses must be attracted to the district through incentives, streamlined development, and an adequate local labor force. Existing businesses must be retained and expanded through technical assistance and affordable operations costs. Lastly, supportive industrial clusters must be established in order to create an environment in which various individual businesses contribute to the greater economic strength of the area as a whole.

<sup>135</sup> Tuthill, Paul. (2011, November 18). Demand Grows for Recycled Building Materials. Northeast Public Radio. Retrieved from <http://wamc.org/post/demand-grows-recycled-building-materials>

# Priority Development Site Proposals

## OVERVIEW

This analysis of the LWSD, in addition to a review of current redevelopment practices, has provided important insight regarding how and where Springfield officials may successfully initiate the revitalization process within the Lower Worthington Street District. Transforming the LWSD into a vibrant and diverse neighborhood is certainly an incremental undertaking. With this in mind, our Studio Team has identified eight priority development sites that address current challenges related to housing, retail, employment opportunity, public green space, and pedestrian access. These priority development sites (Figure 32) are also intended to compliment ongoing and future efforts to create a more active and economically stable downtown Springfield.

These priority development proposals have been structured into phases in response to realistic financing constraints. The focus of Phase One is critical short-term preparation over the next five years (present-2017). Phase One recommendations include the assessment of financial and regulatory barriers to redevelopment. Phase Two (2017-2025) includes initial implementation and adaptive reuse. Adaptive reuse is of primary interest because the LWSD maintains a strong inventory of underutilized and historic structures. This reuse presents a more feasible approach to generate positive change that has the ability to attract more private investment for new construction moving forward to Phase Three (beyond 2025).

An enhanced quality of life for existing residents, and attracting new residents to the LWSD is the overarching goal for all proposed priority development sites. A more marketable and financially prosperous LWSD is critical for the city moving forward. Our Studio Team also made concerted efforts to minimize the loss of current residents and existing neighborhood culture with each of these proposed development sites.

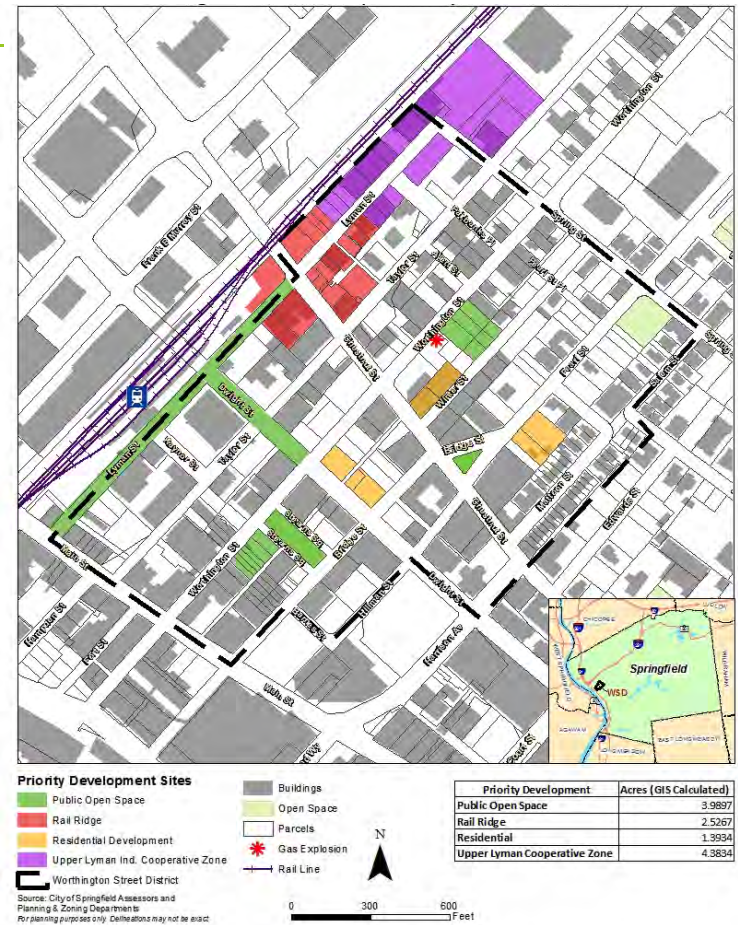


Figure 32: Locations of each Priority Development Site

## APREMONT TRIANGLE

### CURRENT STATUS

The Apremont Triangle is a prominent triangle located on the northern edge of Chestnut Street where Bridge and Pearl Streets intersect. A report commissioned by the Urban Land Institute identifies the Apremont Triangle as a priority project site that could serve as a neighborhood retail hub for Mattoon Street, Kimball Tower, and Pearl Street residents.<sup>136</sup> Our Studio Team thinks that Apremont Triangle has potential to be converted into a civic plaza with Bridge St used exclusively for pedestrians. A new civic plaza can take advantage of the existing green space, street configuration, architectural details, and retail storefronts to enhance the vibrancy and cultivate the character of the neighborhood.

There are multiple assets around Apremont Triangle that are complementary to a vibrant urban neighborhood. The Kimball Tower Condominium building sits at the base of the Apremont Triangle (site #1, Figure 33), which is an eight story brick façade building with a historic cornice, arches, windows, and a prominent entry way. Along the north side of the Apremont Triangle, which is the Bridge Street side, sits a two-story mixed-use building (site #2) with ground floor retail spaces and residential spaces on the second floor. Retail uses include storefront churches, a barber shop, a mini mart, a bakery, and a vacant restaurant that previously served as a bar. This building is also an architectural staple for the neighborhood with large windows and detailed designs on the cornice. Along the southeast side of the Apremont Triangle, located on Pearl Street, sits another two story mixed use building (site #4) that also consists of architecturally historic details. This building has a gap on the facades that provides a passageway for parking. The neighborhood around the Apremont Triangle lacks the presence of street trees with the exception of a tree on the triangle itself and two trees on the Chestnut Street side.

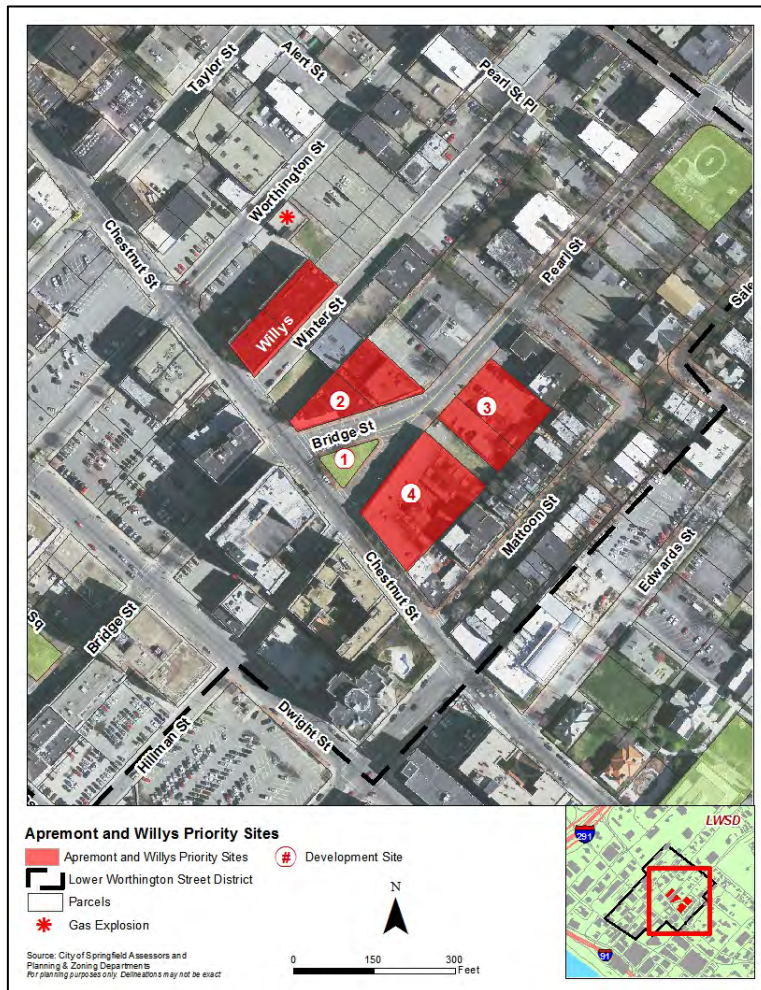


Figure 33: Residential Priority Development Sites

<sup>136</sup> Urban Land Institute. (2006). Springfield Massachusetts: Strategies for a Sustainable City.



The Apremont Triangle forms the northern boundary of the Springfield Business Improvement District (BID). The BID provides supplementary services including a security camera network, leave and snow removal, flower plantings, landscape maintenance, a summer concert series, and an arts festival.

#### *SITE GOALS*

Recent planning trends indicate that cities have been shifting towards creating more public spaces that are safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. One method of doing so is to permanently close down public streets and replace them with pedestrian plazas where people can enjoy civic life. The public street is a valuable asset that is largely hidden in plain sight with the primary function of moving cars from point A to point B. New York City has looked at their streets differently by updating and remaking them. A new way to think of streets is to shift the focus of primarily using them for automobiles and opening them up exclusively for pedestrian use through the creation of civic pedestrian plazas.<sup>137</sup> A pedestrian public plaza at the Apremont Triangle will complement the surrounding neighborhood and businesses, connect to surrounding assets, and enhance the culture, diversity, perception, and safety of the neighborhood.

#### *STRATEGY*

Reconfiguring the Apremont Triangle into a vibrant civic pedestrian plaza will be a significant change that could potentially disrupt the flow of traffic and the availability of on-street parking. Due to the significant impacts of abruptly closing down a street, our Studio Team proposes that the reconfiguration occur in phases and only closes the Bridge Street side of the Apremont Triangle. Only closing down the small portion of Bridge Street retains existing traffic patterns by allowing Pearl Street to become a two-way street that

allows access to the parking lot for that building from both directions.



Figure 34: Large Flower Pots - 48th Street and Baltimore Avenue, Maryland

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<sup>137</sup> Janette Sadik-Khan. (October 2013). New York's streets? Not so mean any more [video file]. Retrieved from [http://www.ted.com/talks/janette\\_sadik\\_khan\\_new\\_york\\_s\\_streets\\_not\\_so\\_mean\\_any\\_more.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/janette_sadik_khan_new_york_s_streets_not_so_mean_any_more.html)

#### *PHASE ONE*

Although the buildings flanking Apremont Triangle have architecturally significant details, our Studio Team thinks DevelopSpringfield's Corridor Storefront Improvement Program should be expanded to include other commercial hubs that need attention beyond State Street and Main Street, such as the Apremont Triangle. The City of Springfield could also allocate Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the Small Business Storefront grant program to help business owners improve their facades. The facades of the buildings at Apremont Triangle will benefit from window repairs, signage improvements, and more prominent entryways that are more open to the sidewalk and the proposed pedestrian civic plaza. In addition to improving the facades, our Studio Team suggests encouraging a variety of business uses that cater to everyday needs of area residents such as coffee shops, cafés, restaurants, and convenience stores to fill storefronts that are currently vacant on Bridge Street and Pearl Street. The inclusion of outdoor seating would be an amenity that existing residents and young urban professionals working downtown would take advantage of.

Landscape improvements could be completed under the management of the BID. When Apremont Triangle transitions into a pedestrian plaza large flower pots could serve as the primary mechanism to block off the plaza from automobiles. The flower pots could incorporate colorful plants to bring vibrancy to the neighborhood, while also helping reduce storm water runoff. The grass area on the Apremont Triangle appears to be worn. Proper maintenance of the grass area could enhance the look and feel of the neighborhood. With proper grass and ample pedestrian access, the grass area could be used more for sitting.



**Figure 35: Painted Asphalt, Tables, and Chairs - Sunset Triangle Plaza, Los Angeles, California**

#### *PHASE TWO*

Phase Two should occur simultaneously with Phase One and also consist of inexpensive activities that could be implemented by the BID. The BID could host an artist design competition for painting the street that would serve the function of a community engagement activity and will mark the space as something other than a road. A competition could be held for local artists to submit designs for painting the street that could be judged by stakeholders in the community such as local elementary students, area residents, or neighborhood business owners. The example from Sunset Triangle Plaza in Los Angeles shows how a painted street could look. A cost effective and less permanent alternative to painting the street is hosting an annual chalk design festival.

Some amenities that other pedestrian plazas have incorporated are bike racks and movable tables and chairs. Bike racks will provide an amenity for those who prefer to travel by bicycle. Kelly Clifton of Portland State University found that pedestrians and bicyclists spend more money in neighborhood retail establishments compared to motorists.<sup>138</sup> Renowned city planner, William H. Whyte, has studied urban spaces and suggests that people prefer movable chairs in order to face a preferred direction when sitting.<sup>139</sup> Tables could also complement movable chairs to give people the option of enjoying a meal in the civic plaza, ideally from a future food service establishment at Apremont Triangle.

Phase Two should also consist of the rehabilitation of the upper floors in the two mixed-use buildings that flank Apremont Triangle. Urban dwellers will seek housing options that are close to amenities and a civic pedestrian plaza will certainly be an attractive amenity in the neighborhood. When the neighborhood starts to become more vibrant our Studio Team believes that an increase in private investment of residential uses in the neighborhood will ensue.

### PHASE THREE

Phase Three should consist of capital improvements that are feasible for the BID to implement, but will take a few years for planning and construction. One capital improvement that will benefit the triangle is wider sidewalks on the Bridge Street side to allow the planting of street trees. Our Studio Team thinks that the Apremont Triangle would benefit from the planting of more street trees because they will make the neighborhood more inviting and provide shaded areas for people to enjoy during the summer. Wider sidewalks will also make the triangle more walkable and would ideally attract more pedestrians to the triangle to support neighborhood businesses.



Figure 36: Rendering of Development at Apremont Triangle

Another capital improvement that the BID can oversee is a permanent alternative material for the plaza. An alternative material, such as permeable pavers, would serve

<sup>138</sup> Kelly Clifton. (August 2012). *Consumer Behavior and Travel Choices: A Focus on Cyclists and Pedestrians*. Oregon Transportation Research and Education Consortium.

<sup>139</sup> Whyte, W. H. (1980). *The social life of small urban spaces*. Washington, D.C: Conservation Foundation.

two purposes. Permeable pavers would imply that the area is separate from the road and for pedestrians only. Another purpose that permeable pavers can serve is for storm water management purposes. Pavers are pervious and allow storm water to penetrate the soil to recharge the ground water system as opposed to using sewer capacity. The pavers should be something that is level with the grass portion and serve as a cohesive bond between the two materials.

This new public pedestrian plaza could also serve as an outdoor event and activity center for the BID to host farmers markets, pop up markets, festivals, live music, and restaurant sampling events. Our Studio Team suggests that Springfield start an outdoor restaurant festival that samples Downtown Springfield's diverse dining options in one location. The Apremont Triangle could be a great place to host such an event in order to spur interest in the neighborhood and to help revitalize the neighborhood.

The redevelopment of Apremont Triangle will increase the vibrancy and amenities in the neighborhood. We anticipate that this will attract development interest for the creation of new housing around the Apremont Triangle. The City of Springfield owns a parking lot at 33 Pearl St (site #3) that is situated adjacent to Apremont Triangle to the east. We have identified this site as an ideal location for a micro loft housing development. These small and minimal units will be attractive to STCC students and urban dwellers seeking low cost living that requires minimal maintenance. This parcel's location in the Business A zoning district allows for the creation of apartments with a Special Permit Review by the City Council.

### ***PHASING SUMMARY***

In the table below our Studio Team summarizes the implementation phases. Constructing a pedestrian plaza is something that can be done incrementally overtime using funds from the BID and with minimal traffic interruption. The development of Apremont Triangle is a project that will help revitalize the neighborhood but will also complement other development projects proposed by our Studio Team along Chestnut Street.

**Table 8: Apremont Triangle Phasing Summary**

<b>Phase One (now – 2016)</b>	<b>Phase Two (2017-2025)</b>	<b>Phase Three (2026 – future)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expand Develop Springfield’s Corridor Storefront Improvement Program</li> <li>- Offer more assistance from the City of Springfield’s Small Business Storefront grant program</li> <li>- Enhance the plaza with large flower pots</li> <li>- Landscape maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Paint the pavement through a community design competition or chalk festival</li> <li>- Install bike racks</li> <li>- Place movable tables and chairs</li> <li>- Encourage rehabilitation of housing on upper floors of mixed use buildings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Widen sidewalks</li> <li>- Plant trees and provide a rain garden for storm water management</li> <li>- Permeable pavers</li> <li>- Activity and event center</li> <li>- Micro lofts at 33 Pearl St.</li> </ul>

## RAIL RIDGE

### CURRENT STATUS

The intersection of Lyman and Chestnut Street is essentially a mixed-use, four-corner, mini-neighborhood waiting to happen. Historic buildings, open spaces and easy accessibility, with the cozy backdrop of the elevated rail line, combine for the potential of lofts, parks and ground floor retail and restaurants. Such a development with high visibility can showcase in one glance what the LWSD can offer and encourage similar layouts around other key intersections in the neighborhood. Off-street parking, bright sunshine for gardening and an abundance of empty brick wall space ready for public art round out this future “spot.”

In its present state, the properties immediately on or near the four corners of Lyman and Chestnut are underutilized or vacant.

**194-206 Chestnut and 115-125 Lyman – Produce Exchange Building:** The largest and most active building of the site is on the south corner. It is a four story, mixed-use brick building with ground floor retail and apparently vacant upper floor residential. These windows are covered with plywood, possibly as a result of the gas explosion. Currently, it has as tenants a beauty shop and a massage business. The building is rich with historic value for marketing to potential occupants. Built in 1899 as The Produce Exchange Building, it served as a wholesale storage facility for provisions traded by the adjacent rail freight and is now included on the National Register of Historic Places. It is owned by the Bruce Wright Group LLC and co-owned by Colebrook Management. Valuation is assessed at \$248,100 with annual taxes generating \$9,378 in revenue. Each of the four levels contains approximately 17,000 square feet of space. Despite the covered windows, the overall exterior of the building is in fair condition.

**113 Lyman Street:** Adjacent to the Produce Exchange Building, is another historic gem. The four story former shoe factory is known as the Cutler and Porter Block, also on the National Register of Historic Places. Built in 1894 by Frederick S. Newman, a prominent architect in the Connecticut River Valley and designer of the Chicopee Bank Building on Court Square, this structure has a beautiful glass brick façade behind a tree-lined portion of Lyman Street. It is also owned by the same entity, Bruce Wright Group, Inc. The first

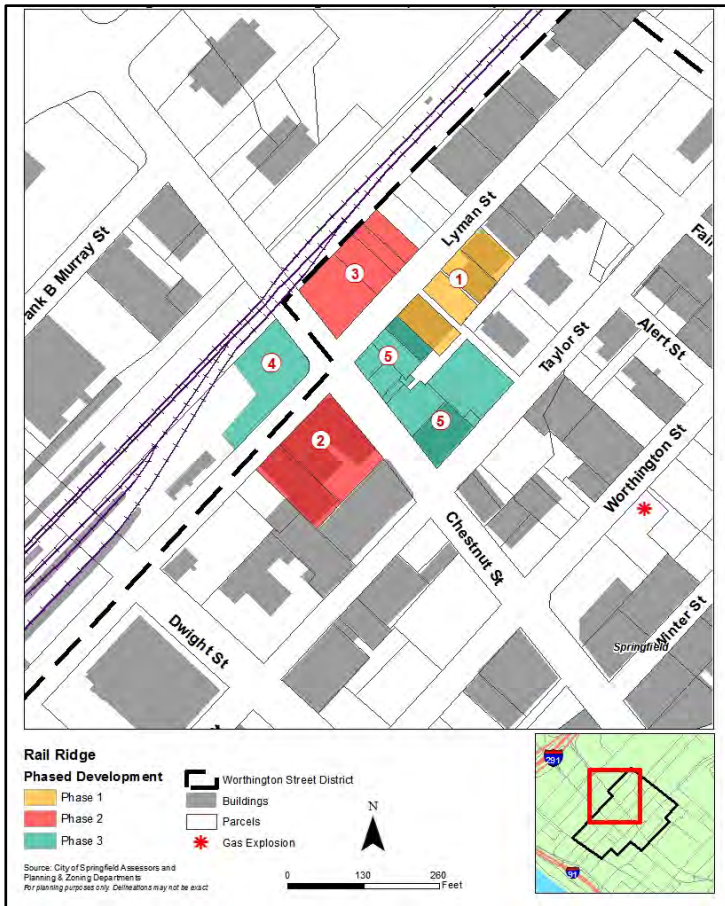


Figure 37: Phased development at Rail Ridge.

floor is occupied by a business called Linesource Design Technology, Inc. and seems to serve as storage for their manufactured products. Whether the upper floors are occupied is unknown. The building was assessed at \$163,400 and generates \$3,768 in annual taxes. Each story is approximately 8,800 square feet and the exterior of the structure appears to be in fair condition.

**139-141 Lyman Street:** Moving back across the intersection with Chestnut Street, our Studio Team found one of the only city-owned, vacant buildings in the LWSD. Built in 1910 in a Classical Revival style, this six story structure is the Chapman & Brooks Block, a former storehouse for dry goods delivered by rail. It was once announced that architect William B. Reid of Holyoke would design this “fireproof” warehouse with a frame and girders of steel, equipped with elevators, electric light and steam heat.<sup>140</sup> Current zoning is Industrial A and it is assessed at \$372,700 with no taxes being generated due to city ownership. Each floor is approximately 5,000 square feet. Lack of maintenance has led to its deteriorating condition. Springfield also owns the adjacent vacant lots to the east.

**187 Chestnut Street:** A series of 10 parcels, mostly used as surface parking, is located on the eastern corner of the intersection. Owned by Paul D. Lessard and Richard J. Sachetti, the property is assessed at a combined \$647,300 due to a large, five story building on a parcel at 191 Chestnut Street. This building is not a part of the Rail Ridge priority development site, but the parking lots serving it would be in consideration for new construction at a later phase.

**Vacant Lots:** On the north corner of the intersection of Chestnut and Lyman Streets is an empty lot overgrown with vegetation and owned by Bruce Wright Group, Inc. It is approximately 9,300 square feet and was assessed at \$72,500 with taxes of \$2,637 due annually. Adjacent to this corner lot are four additional parcels of vacant land, currently used for trailer storage, that comprise .22 acres. They are owned by the Frankie Chips Association, Inc. in Holyoke and their valuation is \$29,100.



Figure 24; The Produce Exchange Building.

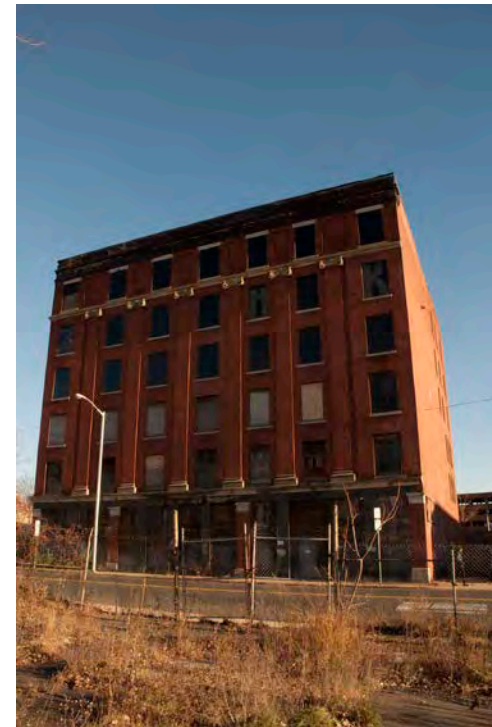


Figure 39; 141 Lyman Street, a City-owned property suitable for loft conversions.

<sup>140</sup> Bulletin of the American Warehousemen’s Association, Vol. 10 (1909).



Figure 40; Vacant Corner Lot for Proposed Green Park



Figure 41; Amtrak Wall for Potential Upper Park

**Granite Wall Rail Yard:** This beautiful wall that gives Lyman Street part of its character beginning at Main Street terminates at the Chestnut Street iron rail bridge after a graceful curve at the west corner of the intersection. The property above is used primarily as open space and gravel storage by its owner, Amtrak.

### ***SITE GOALS***

The LWSD needs a starting point for its objective to turn the neighborhood into one that attracts a younger, professional and creative set that can contribute to its future amenities. This particular site offers both existing buildings and empty spaces with which to redesign a lifestyle destination for new residents, focused on one intersection by the railroad. With the rehabilitation of Union Station one block away, this site is suitable for the consideration of transit-oriented development.

The storefronts at the Produce Exchange Building are ideal for urban amenity enterprises, such as boutique or used clothing, art space, or coffee shop. A particularly well-suited business with a direct tie to the past would be a green grocer with local fruits and vegetables. At the corner of the intersection is perhaps the most potentially successful space. Now vacant, its outer door faces the intersection at a diagonal angle from the corner of the building and it seems like a natural location for a creative restaurant and bar. This would provide an immediate anchor institution and a reason to redevelop the city-owned building on Lyman Street.

Open areas opposite the buildings provide an opportunity to combine indoor development with outdoor public spaces, an attractive feature to those seeking urban places to live. The lots between the elevated rail lines and Lyman Street can be redesigned as small green parks with areas for picnicking, sunning and meeting. Above the granite wall is the potential space, albeit an unlikely outcome due to its federal ownership, for the neighborhood's own micro-High Line. Overlooking the intersection, the upper park gives a birds eye view for watching people in the lower park, outdoor restaurant seating in front of the Produce Exchange Building, and on the street. A synergy between snack/coffee shops on Chestnut and the two parks is created, giving people a place to recreate and socialize.



The intersection, once developing as its own sub-district neighborhood, can be given an identifiable name to steer additional outside interest, such as Rail Ridge. Although most larger areas are difficult to determine how to begin development, by focusing on a single point of four corners, all viewable together, the prospect and critical mass for generating interest, is easier.

### ***STRATEGY***

One of the most important aspects of beginning a priority focus on Rail Ridge is to assess the challenges and impediments to development. Part of this is contacting the owners of the properties to evaluate their intentions, financial abilities and potential interest in either redeveloping or transferring the property. Due to the possibility of temporary public acquisition being necessary to spark the site's initial momentum, Springfield may wish to establish partnerships in advance with private entities interested in the project.

### ***PHASE ONE***

The first step toward generating attention to the area will be to finally, successfully transfer the city-owned building to a potential developer in order to renovate the property into loft units. Its high valuation should be reassessed to a lower amount in order to make the purchase more attractive and assistance with funding for the improvements should be made available in advance, perhaps with subsidized city loans.

One of the more interesting facts about the site is that most of it is owned by a single entity which could make things easier or more difficult. Springfield should contact the Bruce Wright Group LLC directly to determine their intentions for the Produce Exchange Building, Cutler & Porter Block, and the vacant corner lot on the north side of the intersection. Available incentives, including historic tax credits, should be mailed along with a descriptive version of the city's vision for the neighborhood. Relate that the space on the corner is a prime location for a restaurant and offer any available food entrepreneurial incentives. If the owners have no intention of improvements for the vacant lot, the city should be prepared for a public acquisition.

There exists a problematic negative crime perception of not only Springfield, but of Lyman Street in particular. In order to convince investors of the city's commitment to

the area, additional police patrols should be routed along Lyman or a satellite police office could be established in one of the storefronts in the Produce Exchange Building.

### ***PHASE TWO***

After lofts are available on the housing market, either in the city-owned building or in one of the historic buildings, sufficient interest will be paid to the site by both investors and potential residents. The latter will be evaluating the local amenities for offer and the city should be out in front of their expectations with construction of the lower park on the north corner. Street construction of widened sidewalks along the Produce Exchange Building will encourage store owners and potential shops to expand seating. A restaurant anchoring the neighborhood in the same building's corner space could be enough of an amenity to entice at least some initial market-rate residents.

Once these developments are underway, Springfield should use any available capital with Amtrak to begin an attempt to acquire a portion of their parcel on the elevated corner of their rail yard. This is an excellent potential public space. If it is accessible from the street and safely separated from the rail line, it could be designed as a unique urban place, like a piece of the High Line, where one can sit and observe people from above while drinking coffee purchased right below.

### ***PHASE THREE***

After significant rehabilitation of buildings has been completed and the converted apartments are occupied, the city should reward their belief in the site with construction of the upper park on the former Amtrak space. Also, property values will have surely risen beyond the present gap between the cost of new construction and retail value, so the owners of the east corner should be encouraged to develop a mixed use structure there that will complement the style and function of the Produce Exchange Building across the street.

### ***CONCLUSION***

In the table below our Studio Team summarizes the implementation phases. Beginning with communication with current owners and finding available financing, public funding and tax incentives will be key before implementing the plan.

**Table 9: Rail Ridge Phasing Summary**

<b>Phase One (now – 2016)</b>	<b>Phase Two (2017-2025)</b>	<b>Phase Three (2026 – future)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Begin to market the city-owned building and adjacent lots to private developers for loft conversions.</li> <li>- Assess the potential for historic tax credits for rehabilitation of the Produce Exchange Building and Cutler &amp; Porter Block.</li> <li>- Start additional police patrols.</li> <li>- Offer assistance from the City of Springfield’s Small Business Storefront grant program and pursue restaurant entrepreneurial incentives.</li> <li>- Encourage a “foodie” restaurant bar to open in the corner of the Produce Exchange Building.</li> <li>- Attempt public acquisition of vacant lots on northern corner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Former city-owned building comes to market with rehabilitated loft spaces.</li> <li>- Widen sidewalks on west side of Chestnut Street.</li> <li>- Negotiate with Amtrak for a public acquisition of subdivided parcel.</li> <li>- Offer rehabilitation incentives in the form of tax abatements and historic credits to the Bruce Wright Group, Inc.</li> <li>- Begin whisper campaign to rename the site after first new businesses are established in Produce Exchange Building.</li> <li>- Design and install lower park space on northern corner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design and install upper park space on elevated west corner with stairs and elevator on Chestnut.</li> <li>- With higher property values, entice owner of east corner to develop new, mixed-use construction.</li> </ul>

## WILLYS OVERLAND BUILDING

### *CURRENT STATUS*

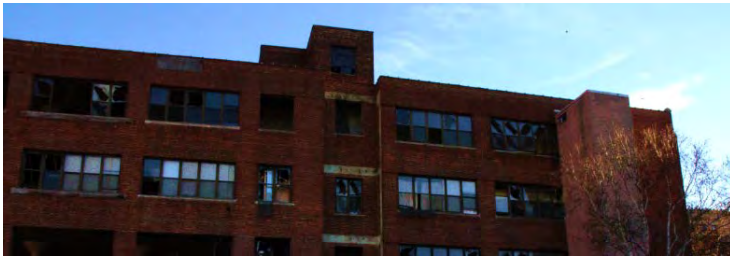


Figure 42: Exterior damage to the Willy's Overland Building

The Willys Overland Block stretches from Chestnut to Winter Street within the LWSD [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Springfield, Massachusetts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Springfield,_Massachusetts). The four story building was constructed in 1916 as a sales and service facility for the Willys Overland Motor Company. Willys Overland was one of the manufacturers that established Springfield as a city of cars alongside other prominent dealers like Rolls Royce and Pontiac. The building's exterior is a brick facade with large windows on each wall and nominal embellishment. Formerly, the building had a showroom on its first floor, while upper floors included storage space and auto assembly rooms, connected by large freight elevators. To support the weight of the cars and the shop equipment, the floors are nearly one foot thick poured concrete.

The building is located within a few blocks of the Apremont Triangle and the Kimball Hotel. These districts have historically and presently accommodated residential uses, and our Studio Team feels that this structure is presently appropriate in position, structure, and potential for mixed-use residential development. Since Willys was part of the automobile industry that gave Springfield legs in machine line manufacturing years ago, it is still located in a strip dominated by dealerships, repair shops, and other vacant showrooms. This is a centrally located structure in the LWSD that could definitely satisfy the needs of the neighborhood by housing desirable and needed commercial and residential assets. It is zoned Business C which supports mixed uses.



Figure 43: Assessors snap shot of the location and dimensions of the Willy's Overland Building<sup>1</sup>

The space is currently owned by a construction company, and (at least prior to the gas explosion) was home to a handful of storefront churches and a radio station. The present leasing of the space leads us to believe that not only is it structurally fit to be occupied, but that the property owner is likely not opposed to renovating, renting, or selling the space. An added advantage for any party interested in redeveloping the Willys Overland building is that the nearly century old structure was added to the National Historic Register in 1983. Since the site is on the Historic Register, and has previously and could yet again be slated for commercial use, the property owner and/or the developer could be eligible for historic tax credits to help with the cost of a

renovation. There was some significant cosmetic damage to the rear of the structure in the 2012 gas explosion, and some of the windows are still broken or boarded (Figure 42), so accurately assessing this destruction and making the appropriate repairs is key to redeveloping this priority site.

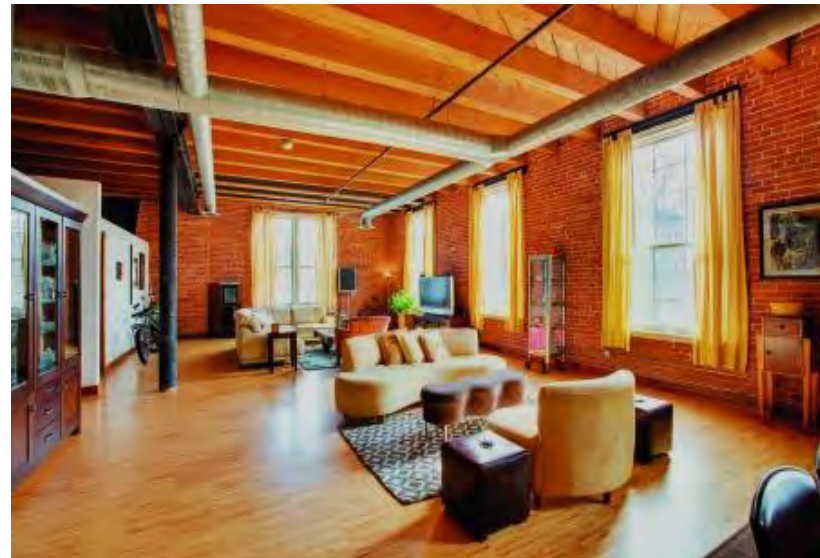
### **SITE GOALS**

Willys Overland Springfield has a twin building located in Detroit, MI that has been converted to lofts and retail space. Keeping with the city's desire to attract young professionals from in and around Springfield to live in the LWSD, and with the results of a survey we circulated indicating that lofts are the preferred housing type for this demographic, we are proposing that Willys Overland Springfield be redeveloped in accordance with this model. Our proposal for Willys has a few variations from the uses employed in Detroit based on the site specifics and on the unique needs of Springfield.

The building in Detroit was constructed a year after the structure in Springfield. The space was used as a warehouse after its heyday as a showroom, and the freight elevator access to the 2nd, 3rd and 4<sup>th</sup> floors (originally necessary for completing auto repairs on the upper floors) continued to be useful. Willys then served as shop space for the Detroit Public School system for a short time before the building was purchased by the Midtown/DeMattia team and was slated for redevelopment.

Willys Overland was chosen for revitalization as part of an effort to make the Midtown Detroit neighborhood more livable. Like Springfield (and so many other urban areas), Detroit has witnessed an economic downturn and suffers from local and national perception problems. The new Willys Overland Lofts are located within a Neighborhood Enterprise Zone allowing for nominal property taxes. The NEZ concept was installed in Michigan to encourage residents of the city to move to distressed areas that suffer from a lack of residents. This development was the last to launch before the housing market crash in 2008. The Michigan Chronicle has admitted that drawing in residents for the first few years was difficult, but the market is improving and within the last year, fourteen of the units have been sold.

Units are priced from \$142,900 (for 940 sq. ft.) to \$640,000 (for 2,830 sq. ft.). The Chronicle article continues to elaborate on why they think the lofts have recently begun



**Figure 44: An example of one of the many unique loft spaces being offered in Willy's Overland Lofts. Midtown, Detroit<sup>1</sup>**

to sell by quoting a local real estate expert, “Many of our buyers are downsizing from large suburban homes and like the vibrancy that this prime Midtown location offers.”<sup>141</sup> National trends as a whole are changing too as more people are drawn towards walkable mixed-use neighborhoods located in the city. Detroit has been benefitting from this change in preference and Springfield should be aiming to attract suburbanites to their city as well.

The amenities offered in the Detroit Willys certainly do not dissuade people from wanting to move in either; most apartments feature granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, Merillat cabinets, exposed brick, concrete columns and ceramic tile in the bathrooms. The lofts consist of 75 units that range from 600 to 3,000 square feet with over 30 unique floor plans and buyers are given the opportunity to work with designers and architects to customize their unit (including the option to combine multiple units) prior to move-in. There is a rooftop common space for all residents and live/work opportunities are available.<sup>142</sup>

On the lower floors of the building commercial offerings abound. Bikes, clothing, watches, and art are all for sale, and the lofts are within walking distance of all that downtown Detroit has to offer. Our proposal for Willys Overland Springfield is for a similar mixed use project. We feel that, at minimum, the two upper floors can be converted into trendy, market rate lofts, while the lower levels can be used for retail space that the LWSD is in need of. In our brainstorming sessions, we attempted to think of uses that would serve both the existing Springfield community and new area residents (in the lofts or other projects). The greatest uses that we could envision included:

- A public gym
- A beauty salon
- A community market that ties into the adjacent community garden proposed for the blast site
- A day care to replace the damaged building on Worthington

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<sup>141</sup> Michigan Chronicle - Making Detroit A Better Place To Live And Work. (n.d.). *Michigan Chronicle*. Retrieved from <http://www.michronicleonline.com/index.php/business-original/14313-making-detroit-a-better-place-to-live-and-work>

<sup>142</sup> Willys Overland Lofts. (n.d.). *Willys Overland Lofts*. Retrieved from <http://www.willysoverlandlofts.com/>

- A “DIY” themed shop. This type of store could sell art and artisan craftwork in addition to supplies and books about undertaking such products
- A local café that make use of produce from the aforementioned garden

After exploring the standing zoning code for the proposed redevelopment and considering the uses that would make us want to live in a building, our Studio Team has settled on a mixed use that incorporates approximately 20 loft-style units, a public gym, and a ground floor market retail space that sells produce from the community garden (see the section on Community Gardens), other fresh prepared foods, and basic grocery needs: Willys Market and the Overland Lofts.

While a day care is definitely one of the more desirable lower floor uses, Springfield’s zoning code at present may prohibit that use from the site. The code states that a day care must include 20,000 square feet of space plus an additional 1,000 square feet of space for each child if more than 20 kids attend the facility. The footprint of the building is approximately 16,600 square feet for a total square footage of 73,772. Since there is not a single floor that could accommodate a daycare, we are proposing that the most appropriate commercial uses are a market and a gym. The group visualizes the market serving in collaboration with the community garden to sell produce and make fresh salads and sandwiches. The space could sell other dry goods as well as basic grocery needs (bread, milk, eggs) so that tenants in the lofts have readily available resources. The gym should be included in the cost of the units within the building for any tenants, and should also be open to the public for a membership fee.



Figure 45: Suggested use for the Willys Overland Building

#### SUGGESTED PHASED APPROACHES

The first step in the redevelopment of Willys is conducting a site evaluation. The building may be sound enough for the infrequent uses it currently accommodates, but there are definitely improvements that will need to be made before it is livable. The property owner or a developer should also look into receiving funding (we feel that this property qualifies for up to 20% of the rehabilitation costs) to see what type of aid is available. Perhaps having these subsidies in place may help entice a developer who is willing to embark upon what we understand may be a risky venture by building market rate lofts or apartments in Springfield. The last step in Phase One is to observe the

Massachusetts Zoning Regulations that state that any building slated for mixed use commercial must be up to code for commercial use, even in the portions that are slated for other uses. This means that not only must the first two floors be up to code for commercial, but the top two floors slated for lofts must also meet these requirements.

It may be advisable to implement the commercial half of this site’s mixed use first. A successful market, café, or shop creates traffic and buzz about a neighborhood and spurs more commercial development which makes living there more desirable. With the buildings current zoning, the market and gym can be installed once Willys is up to code with no major zoning changes. Enacting a NEZ as seen in Michigan could also be a great Phase Two step to entice residents to consider these lofts while they are under construction.

In Phase Two, the lofts go on the market. It would be helpful if there was a financial institution that could offer fair financial assistance to parties interested in customizing and purchasing these properties.

**Table 10. Phasing for Willys Market and the Overland Lofts**

<b>Phase 1 (now – 2016)</b>	<b>Phase 2 (2017-2025)</b>	<b>Phase 3 (2026 – future)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Negotiate with the current property owner regarding the site proposal or the sale of the site.</li> <li>- Apply for historic tax credits for the rehabilitation of the structure.</li> <li>- Start bringing the building up to code for commercial uses so that the gym and market installation can make the building more appealing to potential tenants prior to and during loft construction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Construction is completed on the gym and the market contributing to a vibrant use that inspires inhabitation of the lofts in progress.</li> <li>- Explore the implementation of a Neighborhood Enterprise Zone that would offer tax reductions and encourage current Springfield residents and new residents to move downtown.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lofts go on the market.</li> <li>- Get the backing of a financial institution that can offer assistance for the customization and purchase of units.</li> <li>- Improved property values and perception coupled with the enactment of a NEZ attract more housing and business to the LWSD.</li> </ul>





## UPPER LYMAN COOPERATIVE ZONE

### ***CURRENT STATUS***

The Upper Lyman Cooperative Zone is located on the northern most portion of Lyman Street (Figure 46). The area currently consists of a mix of large vacant lots and underutilized buildings that are in poor physical condition. Nine land parcels on Lyman and Taylor Streets have been identified as priority sites for future industrial development in this area. Seven of these parcels run parallel to the Amtrak rail line and create a disjointed and aesthetically unappealing faced (Figure 47). The Cara Distribution Company appears to be the only active use for these parcels.

Two remaining parcels are located across the street, and provide approximately 2 acres of developable land. The former Daigle's Frame Shop is a small single story office space with an attached three bay garage. The rest of the land area consists of a large parking lot that is overgrown with weeds, and entirely surrounded by a barbed wire fence. A portion of the parking lot is currently utilized for Springfield Technical Community College parking.

The entire priority development site is zoned for General Industrial (IA) uses by the city. This zoning designation is intended to “provide the full range of industrial and business uses compatible with a major urban center.”<sup>143</sup> This designation is conducive to light industry, office, and agriculture uses with little need for special permit or site plan approval.

There is a long history of automobile and power industries in the area but currently there is a noticeable lack of social interaction and activity, particularly during the daytime hours.

An existing area business inventory was created in order to gauge what type of new business may have the ability to thrive within, and enhance the current economic landscape. This inventory highlights a clear concentration of businesses related to



Figure 46: Upper Lyman Cooperative location.

<sup>143</sup> Office of Planning and Economic Development. (2013). *City of Springfield Zoning Ordinance*. Retrieved from <http://www3.springfield-ma.gov/planning/zoning-ordinances.html>

Recycling, Reuse, and Repair, Community Service and Public Health, Food Distribution, and Electrical Engineering and Construction. After observing this industry clustering, the studio team concluded that there is a clear opportunity to capitalize on this culture of recycling and healthy foods through new industrial development.

### **SITE GOALS**

The Upper Lyman Cooperative Zone is intended to serve as a downtown Springfield community economic development catalyst. The primary goal of industrial development in this area is to provide living-wage jobs for local residents and to enhance existing city industries and tax revenues. The secondary goal of this Cooperative Zone is to maintain local socio-economic diversity by alleviating poverty and the potential for future displacement through the creation of more stable area job opportunities. Political and financial support are most likely required to initiate industrial development, but Upper Lyman Cooperative Zone businesses are ultimately expected to maintain financial stability and profit.

The rehabilitation of the former EF Collins and Sons Power Company Building, and the construction of a cooperatively owned for-profit industrial greenhouse on the 2.5-acre former Daigle’s Auto property will serve as the centerpiece for job creation and economic stabilization for the Lower Worthington Street District. The Rebuilding Exchange in Chicago, IL and the Green City Growers Cooperative in Cleveland, OH are positive examples of how Springfield can successfully incorporate these types of stable job centers into a long-term vision for LWSD industrial development.

#### **Rebuilding Exchange – Chicago, IL**

The Rebuilding Exchange was created in 2009 in Chicago’s west side, a neighborhood that struggles with derelict buildings and empty lots.<sup>144</sup> When these buildings are demolished the majority of materials are sent to local landfills. The Rebuilding Exchange recognized these unused physical and social assets, and responded by creating a retail warehouse to keep these local materials out of landfills. Since 2009, the organization has reclaimed 8,000 tons of building materials and made over \$2 million worth of



Figure 47: Upper Lyman façade.



Figure 48: Rebuilding Exchange Workshop Space

<sup>144</sup> Erbenraut, Joseph. 2012, December 4). Rebuilding Exchange Aims to Help Chicago Reclaim Its Manufacturing Mantle. Huffington Post. 125, 21-24.

materials available to the public.<sup>145</sup> This facility is similar to Springfield’s Ecobuilding Bargains, but has expanded beyond the reclamation of materials and now maintains a showroom that sells RX Made line furniture and home goods. This showroom emerged out of a job-training program for adults with barriers to employment (Figure 48). The original intent of creating a skilled local workforce has emerged into a successful enterprise that allows employees to sell products both on site and online.



Figure 49: Green City Growers employees

#### Green City Growers Cooperative – Cleveland, OH

Green City Growers Cooperative, Inc. is a Cleveland based hydroponic greenhouse located in the city’s Central Neighborhood (Figure 49). This 3.2-acre indoor-outdoor facility operates year round and produces approximately 3 million heads of lettuce annually, along with various other fresh produce.<sup>146</sup> 45 employees are representative of the local labor force and are given the opportunity to invest in company ownership with funds directly from their paychecks. This employee owned model is intended to enhance financial assets and establish a sustainable for-profit local business. Green City Growers supplies some of the city’s largest employers including: the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, and Case Western Reserve University. A construction grant from the Cleveland Foundation was the catalyst for this project but the for-profit ownership structure of the business allows the property to contribute to both city and state tax revenues.

### **STRATEGY**

#### **PHASE ONE: SITE PREPARATION AND COLLABORATION**

The northern portion of the Worthington Street District provides the greatest opportunity for future industrial development. Current zoning in the area is conducive to industrial uses and the current amount of developable land allows for large-scale new construction.

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<sup>145</sup> Main, Cynthia. (2012, December 11). RX Made: How We’re Upcycling Building Waste and Creating Jobs. Good Magazine. 45

<sup>146</sup> The Cleveland Foundation. (2010). The Evergreen Cooperative Initiative of Cleveland, Ohio: Writing the Next Chapter for Anchor-Based Redevelopment Initiatives. Cleveland Ohio.

Over the next 3 years the city should explore the feasibility of purchasing identified priority development parcels, or encourage the consolidation of these parcels in order to streamline any ownership transfers that may be required for industrial development. Many Massachusetts municipalities have also utilized priority development site designation (43D) to attract new development to specific city locations. This designation would contribute to the attractiveness of the Upper Lyman Cooperative Zone as a realistic site for industrial development.

The EF Collins and Sons Power Company Building is located within the Downtown Springfield Railroad Historic District. Significant tax credits are associated with any potential rehabilitation work, so this property is perhaps the most feasible to target as a first site for industrial development.

An environmental assessment of the area should also be considered as a result of the long history of automobile related business in the area. Auto storage and repair sites frequently encounter environmental issues, so an assessment should provide a more accurate picture of the overall cost that may be required to successfully develop on upper Lyman Street. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission has worked closely with the nearby communities of Chicopee and Ludlow to include Brownfields assessments during the revitalization of critical industrial areas, so this agency should be considered for potential collaboration.<sup>147</sup> (The Cecil Group, 2012).

Initiating new industrial development on upper Lyman Street, particularly in terms of attracting investment, will require a collaborative effort amongst a variety of Springfield stakeholders. Several existing organizations like the Greater Springfield Consortium, the Wellspring Initiative, DevelopSpringfield, and Common Capital, Inc. have all initiated projects and programs that overlap with this vision for industrial development and job growth within the LWSD. This is a progressive team that can continue to attract investment and attention to this area. Additional support from the local chamber of commerce and business leaders is also worth pursuing.

The establishment of priority funding is critical during the early stages of preparing upper Lyman Street for industrial development. State funding streams like the

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<sup>147</sup> The Cecil Group. (2012). Chicopee West End Brownfields Area-Wide Plan. Boston, MA.



Figure 50: Current condition of Collins Building25



Figure 51: Proposed Collins Building rehabilitation

Massworks Infrastructure Program and Gateway Plus Action Grants clearly align with the goals of this vision.<sup>148</sup> Federal grants from the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are also potential funding opportunities to initiate industrial development if the city of Springfield is to take the lead on a project such as this. New Market Tax Credits and Foundation support are also viable options for financial backing.

### ***PHASE TWO: CONSTRUCTION & STABILIZATION***

The Construction of these two Upper Lyman Cooperative Zone businesses has the ability to complement existing city industries, capitalize on a growing national push for more sustainable industry development, and provide jobs to local residents who may not have access to many downtown employment opportunities. A rehabbed Collins building facility would house workshops and showrooms for recycled and rebuilt home goods (Figures 50 and 51). This proposal is directly related to the success that EcoBuilding Bargains has experienced just north of the site on Warwick Street.

EcoBuilding Bargains has established a viable industry that takes advantage of local assets in a way that benefits a wider segment of the population than just direct employees.

The Collins building facility would enhance the impact of this culture by providing more related jobs and establishing a mutually beneficial relationship. Additionally, local Putnam Vocational Technical High School Students and Springfield Technical Community College students are perfect community leaders to push this vision forward. These skilled students, and successful institutions, have the ability to transfer academic practice into actual industrial growth that has the ability to benefit a variety of Springfield residents. The rehabilitation of the Collins building can also serve as a symbol of community investment in an area that is currently underutilized and perceived as being unsafe and unattractive.

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<sup>148</sup> Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. (2013). *Grant and Funding Programs*. Retrieved from <http://www.mass.gov/hed/community/funding/>

The cooperatively owned for-profit industrial greenhouse (Figure 52) is proposed for the parcel directly across Lyman Street on the former Daigle’s Auto Lot. This lot is approximately 2.5 acres and has the ability to support such a facility. This proposal is primarily influenced by Springfield’s strong food distribution industry. Several specialized food distribution organizations surround the site including the Cara Distribution Company, Carando Gourmet Food Co., Foley Refrigerated Trucking Service, and N. Winer and Sons. These are locally owned businesses that all serve to benefit from a successful food production facility. Larger food distributors like Big Y foods and the Performance Food Group are also clear contributors for a successful greenhouse business model.

Year round food production from the facility may also be used to supply the Springfield Public School system with locally grown and affordable produce to enhance several healthy foods initiatives that have been championed by the city. The cooperative ownership structure is intended to directly impact local wealth and assets for current community residents. This facility has the ability to provide stable jobs that present a realistic opportunity for promotion. Local ownership has also proven to encourage more employee investment in the success of a business and a sense of pride that comes from a fulfilling job.

***PHASE THREE: SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY CORRIDOR***

With these successful upper Lyman Street industries established, the third phase of site development focuses primarily on the expansion of industry northward along the rail line. This expansion is intended to connect these new businesses with JF Industrial Scrap, Eastern Vehicle Recycling, and EcoBuilding Bargains in order to create a sustainable industry corridor that is bisected by rail access and flanked by Springfield Technical Community College. The most critical developable land for this expansion is the Bay State Medical Shuttle service lot located on Spring Street and the former Performance Food Group headquarters on Taylor Street. One potential idea to jump-start this expansion is a prefabricated home manufacturing facility that would again utilize the technical skills of local students and labor.



Figure 52: Proposed cooperatively owned greenhouse.

**Table 11 Phasing for the Upper Lyman Cooperative**

<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Phase 3</b>
Consolidation of upper Lyman parcels to streamline ownership transfers	Construction at priority development sites	Stable Economic Anchor
Designate Upper Lyman as a Priority Development Site (43D)	Job creation and local for-profit cooperative ownership	Increased city tax revenue
Brownfields Environmental Assessment	Increasing area property values	Decreased unemployment
Continued stakeholder collaboration (Greater Springfield Consortium, Wellspring Collaborative, DevelopSpringfield, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Community Capital, Inc.)	Increased daytime activity	Expand industrial development north along rail line to Armory Street (industrial corridor)
Establish Priority Funding (new market tax credits, Massworks Infrastructure, Gateway Plus Grants, Historic tax credits)	Resident pride for neighborhood and community	Higher job placement for Putnam Voc. and STCC graduates



## LYMAN ARCADE

### CURRENT STATUS

Lyman Street is currently an underused minor connecting street between Main Street and Chestnut Street. It is bordered by the granite retaining wall for the train tracks to the northwest. The granite wall is broken by an arch at Main Street and track overpasses at Dwight and Chestnut Streets, as well as a tunnel that currently serves as the Amtrak Station. The opposite side of the street has several commercial buildings; Kaynor Street, a minor side street; and the Massachusetts state office building. Both sides of the street have metered parking and the area in front of the Amtrak entrance is used for passenger and luggage drop off.

The current owner of the building on the corner of Kaynor Street heading down to Main Street is currently performing some façade repair work. We are unclear as to what his intentions for leasing the ground floor spaces and the upper floors are, but any investment in the properties within the district is welcome.

### SITE GOALS

With the redevelopment of Union Station on the opposite side of the tracks, the primary entrance to Amtrak will no longer be on Lyman Street, removing much of what little traffic uses the street. The goal for redeveloping the area is to provide Lyman Street with a use that will make it the gateway between the revitalized Union Station and downtown Springfield.

Lyman Street has the potential to be a welcoming threshold to the city for both daily commuters arriving by commuter rail and bus, as well as visitors arriving by inter-city rail and bus. As transit options are expanded using Union Station as an intermodal hub, the potential for pedestrian and bicycle traffic through Lyman Street will also expand.



Figure 53: Lyman Arcade and Dwight Street Greenway



Figure 54: Milan, Italy Arcade - Galleria Vittorio Emanuele. First covered shopping area in the world. <sup>1</sup>



Figure 55: Arcade in Kyoto, Japan.

### **STRATEGY**

The proposed development at Lyman Street is to provide a covered arcade enclosing the area from Main Street to Dwight Street with a covered arcade encompassing the sidewalks and street area. Arcades such as this, dating from the mid-1800s and constructed of steel and glass, are popular in Europe in cities such as Milan, London, and Naples. There they provide an upscale pedestrian shopping experience sheltered from the weather. More modern examples can be found in Japan, where low-end retail is more prevalent. Many are open to the elements at their ends.

By incorporating a glass roof over the street and incorporating the granite retaining wall from the Union Station platform, passive solar gain in the winter could effectively moderate the temperatures within the enclosure. The covered area would become a prime location for restaurants with outdoor seating and cart-based vendors. Food trucks could be a transitional use, prior to restaurants becoming established. This could be an anchor for up-scale redevelopment in the Club Quarter. The arcade would provide a welcoming, pedestrian-friendly portal to the newly redeveloped Union Station and has the potential to become a destination for food and retail.

A covered arcade would also create an ideal place to offer bicycle rentals. This would allow visitors to explore the local attractions that Springfield has to offer without requiring a car. A bike share facility could also support and promote use of commuter rail by extending access to area employers beyond a short walk from the station.

European implementations of arcades tend to be more akin to indoor shopping malls. The Japanese version resembles more of an enclosed street, often accommodating bicycles as well as pedestrians. In the Springfield context, a Japanese model would be more appropriate.

The current street is of low value for both parking and through traffic. Access to all of the buildings for deliveries could be accomplished in the rear or during early morning hours. Street facing property owners could be encouraged, through the prospect of higher rents, to improve their properties. Ground floors, and possibly basements and second floors, could be converted to clubs, restaurants, cafes, and retail. Upper floors would do well as up-scale housing or offices. District Improvement Financing (DIF) could

potentially be used as a funding source by monetizing the improved real estate values to help fund construction.

Were there significant interest from developers and property owners, the arcade could be extended northeast on Lyman along the retaining wall to Chestnut Street and southeast along Dwight to Worthington Street. The cross connection in front of the underpass on Dwight Street could be emphasized by a dome.



**Table 12: Lyman Arcade Phasing Summary**

Phase 1 (now – 2016)	Phase 2 (2017-2025)	Phase 3 (2026 – future)
Planning and design work	Build arcade from Main Street to Dwight Street	Possible extension across Dwight Street to Chestnut Street

**Figure 56: A modern arcade, Goldman Sachs, New York City.<sup>1</sup>**

**Table 13: Dwight Street Greenway Phasing Summary**

Phase 1 (now – 2016)	Phase 2 (2017-2025)	Phase 3 (2026 – future)
Planning and Design. Convert Chestnut Street to two-way traffic. Eliminate most traffic from Dwight Street.	Replace current streetscape with greenway. Route downtown loop trolley down Dwight Street.	Consider further connections to other bike paths and northern extension to Bay State Hospital.

## DWIGHT STREET GREENWAY



### ***CURRENT STATUS***

Dwight Street is a major one-way thoroughfare through the heart of the Metro Center neighborhood. It is located between two other major thoroughfares, Main Street to the west and Chestnut Street to the east. Dwight Street is a seventy-foot wide public road supporting southerly traffic and connecting Interstate 291 and the hospital district in the north to Maple Street and State Street in the south. Chestnut Street averages sixty feet in width and serves the same purpose connecting the same areas with northerly traffic. Both roads do not appear to be necessary to support the actual traffic volumes, though a detailed traffic study is required.

### ***STRATEGY***

Our proposal is to convert Chestnut Street to two-way traffic, at least from the Convention Center to Union Station, and reserve Dwight Street for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit. The length of the road in the study area, and perhaps beyond, would be converted to a greenway with substantial tree plantings, separated infrastructure for each use, and rain gardens to assist in storm-water management.

Having a landscaped access route from Union Station to the downtown core and casino site would enhance the travel experience for commuters and visitors arriving at Union Station. The Dwight Street Greenway would provide access to the entertainment district and enhance the quality of life for the residential units adjacent to Dwight Street and in the immediate area. It would also provide a natural gateway to the new cultural district.



## COMMUNITY GARDENS AT LOWER WORTHINGTON

### *CURRENT STATUS OF SITE*

Our studio team proposes to construct a community garden located in a city owned parking lot adjacent to the blast site (Figure 57). This lot spans 170 feet between Winter Street and Worthington Street and is approximately 160 feet long. The area is currently zoned industrial and the uses by right are community gardens, farmers markets, parks, and outdoor sales and storage.<sup>149</sup>

The parking lot is a main contributor to the overabundance of impervious surfaces within the site. Converting this area into a community garden will reduce the amount of water being discharged into the Connecticut River. More green infrastructure allows water to filtrate into the water table.



Figure 57: Site for proposed community garden

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<sup>149</sup> City of Springfield Zoning Ordinance

## GOALS FOR SITE

The purpose of this site is to create a functional urban community garden. This garden will be vast in size in order to cater to the wants and needs for surrounding residents. We hope to create an educational space for neighboring school and church groups as well. This space should feel welcoming for all residents, encouraging people to work with the earth. The community garden will not only contribute to the social vitality to the neighborhood but also reduce the amount of impervious pavement. Overall it will create awareness of some best management practices throughout the neighborhood and the need for storm water management.

We also propose multi use activities for the site for a broader range of community engagement opportunities. We have identified and proposed inviting artists and local youth groups to create murals on the wall of the Willys building. It creates an opportunity for resident to claim the space and create a feeling of ownership. This builds a form of respect to the area that will contribute to the safety and security of the site. This artist theme connects to Stearns Square as well. Potential youth groups are the YMCA programs, public high school art department, Boy and Girls Club, or Big Brothers Big Sisters.

## CURRENT FARMERS MARKETS

We have identified various farmers markets throughout Springfield and their walking distances to and from the community gardens at Lower Worthington. A list was compiled using CISA (Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture).<sup>150</sup>

The closest farmers market is Go Fresh Winter Market. It is only a 10-minute walk from the location of the blast area. However, this place of commerce is only available during the winter months. The other market to note is Market Square, which has a community garden. This site is strictly reserved for educational purposes for surrounding youth groups. It is approximately a 30 minute walk.

<sup>150</sup> <http://www.farmfresh.org/>



Figure 58. Uses on the proposed site.



Figure 59: Suggested art wall.

The closest farmers market is Go Fresh Winter Market that is only a 10-minute walk from location of the blast. However, this is only available during the winter months. The other market to note is Market Square, which also has a community garden. This particular garden is strictly for the youth and for educational purposes and is also a 30-minute walk.

This site will cater to the surrounding community by creating opportunities for the future residents moving into the loft spaces to rent plots that will generate revenue for the garden. Looking at the short-term uses and getting the garden kick started, there are many community groups that this process would provide educational experiences for in how to construct urban agriculture opportunities.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has created a toolbox in the steps to creating community gardens.<sup>151</sup> In instances where a Brownfield site is being converted into a garden, first steps include identifying potential risks and possible environmental contaminants. The EPA also outlines design strategies, construction, and planting ideas. There are a number of funding opportunities through grants and community engagement that the EPA has identified that could be useful in the implementation of this garden.

*Case Study: Mason Square Gardens, Springfield*

**Mission:** Currently there is a youth run community garden in Mason Square that provides produce for the farmers market at Mason Square. It was kick started by *Gardening the Community* (GTC), which is a food justice organization, and their goal is to “engage in youth development, urban agriculture and sustainable living to build healthy and equitable communities.”<sup>152</sup>

**Method:** The program recruited and employed neighborhood youth to grow fruits and vegetables on abandoned and vacant lots in the city of Springfield. The



Figure 60. Mason Square Gardens.

<sup>151</sup> <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/urbanag/steps.htm>

<sup>152</sup> <http://gardeningthecommunityblog.wordpress.com/about/>



food was sold at local markets and donated to food shelters. They originally converted three vacant lots into urban gardens for the youth, but because of a violation of the land use policies they had one site repossessed by the city at 488 Central Street. Philip G. Dromey, Springfields Deputy Director of Planning Food and Policy, had discussed how the city's goals were to put these vacant lots back onto the tax role. These vacant lots were taken by the through the tax title process and the city wants to put housing on these parcels. There is a drive for community gardens by the City and local residents. There is a need to put into place a crafted ordinance that will address the city's concerns and help support residents who want to grow their own food.

**Funding:** Gardening the Community has collaborated with schools, businesses, farms, non-profit foundations, and residents of the Pioneer valley. A list can be found on their website.<sup>153</sup> They have also established monthly online donation system, for either \$10 or \$20, which anyone that wants to contribute to the cause is able to.

### ***CASE STUDIES***

These case studies will show urban gardens through the development of comprehensive planning and how it increases community's social benefits. Common themes for the social benefits of urban gardens are that they have a strong community building aspect. They present gathering places that contribute to the areas parks and open space systems and support neighborhood livability. Community Garden programs also encourage organic gardening, building of healthy soil, composting, food sustainability, nutritional education, and intergenerational activities.

#### **Mission: Portland, Oregon**

The Community Gardens program in Portland, Oregon has provided gardening opportunities for the physical and social benefit of the people and neighborhoods of Portland since 1975. There are 48 community gardens located throughout the city, developed and operated by volunteers and Portland's Parks & Recreation staff, offering a variety of activities. They have created a Community Gardens Toolkit, which is resource guide that will helps residents get involved in the community garden movement. The Portland Parks & Recreation Community Gardens program is unique

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<sup>153</sup> <http://gardeningthecommunityblog.wordpress.com/our-partners/>



because it allows you to rent your own plot of land with the necessary watering, fencing, and support needed to reap your first harvest. The program helps with connecting with other communities so it not only allows for the sharing of knowledge and resources, but also serves as a great opportunity to meet your neighbors and grow community. Gardening ties into the larger movement for sustainable food systems that will help to provide future generations with food security.

**Funding:**

In 2011, The Friends of Portland Community Gardens (FPCG), in partnership with PP&R and the Brentwood-Darlington Neighborhood Association, acquired funding from the Community Watershed Stewardship Program to support the development of a community garden in Errol Heights Park.



Figure 61: Case study in Portland, Oregon

Gardeners rent an ADA accessible raised bed for \$20, 50-sq-ft plot for \$12, 100-sq-ft plot for \$25, a 200-sq-ft plot for \$50 or a 400-sq-ft plot for \$100 per year. Scholarship assistance is available. The plot rental fee pays for the land and the water. Gardeners provide their own tools, plants, seeds, soil amendments, and any other supplies.

**Case Study: Austin, Texas**



Figure 62: Case study in Austin, Texas.

**Mission:** The Coalition of Austin Community Gardens mission is to facilitate the creation of more community gardens in the Greater Austin Metro Area. They strive to foster

stability and land security for existing gardens, and to help them to become more vibrant, diverse places. One example is Deloney Community garden in Austin Texas, their mission is to reclaim urban space for growing food. They hope to exchange skills and resources that empower people to create food gardens at home. Another goal of theirs is to emphasize the reuse of salvaged materials to build the garden.

**Methods:**

Close to 1,000 volunteer hours were donated towards the completion of Phase one of the project. Phase two will focus on building, installing water catchment, pumping and irrigation systems, a compost tea brewer, rotating compost barrels, harnessing active (panels) and passive (greenhouse) solar energy, trimming trees to make space for eight more raised beds, replacing seven invasive trees with fourteen fruit trees, creek bank restoration and building a creek bridge. First priority for bed space at the community garden goes to Deloney street residents.

**Funding:**

The Deloney Street Community Garden used grant funds to create a brand new community garden on a vacant lot in East Austin. Volunteers removed poison ivy, built raised beds, and installed a community pavilion/water catchment system to create a thriving community space and garden dedicated to food crops.

**Suggested Phasing Approaches**

Phase one will involve an environmental analysis to see how contaminated the lot is from the parking lot use and surrounding buildings. The soil will need to be tested to evaluate whether raised beds are needed or if outside soils should be brought in. The final aspect that needs to be explored is funding. The studio team has suggested some options for doing so but a plan will need to be formed for creating and sustaining this space. Plot rentals will be important for keeping a stream of money coming in, but costs will need to be negotiated to keep the garden feasible. For the beginning stages GTC has many funders and active members. The EPA has also identified grants and funding

opportunities. Another popular method in funding community gardens has been crowd funding through Now in your Backyard<sup>154</sup>.

Phase two should include gaining public input. Public participation methods should be used to help educate local people about the project and to gain their input to find out exactly what they would like to see. Getting people from the adjacent residential areas will be key for making the garden successful. It is important to gain a dedicated group of people who would like to be involved in the long term so that the gardens stay maintained. This can then attract new gardeners to the plots over time. Conversations should also be started with collaborating with local schools and other groups for educational programs. Since there are few schools in the area, attracting church groups could be key to starting programs. These programs could be little to no cost in the beginning to try and encourage students and their families to rent a plot after they have taken the workshops and learned about the processes.

Phase three will result, hopefully, in a functional garden. The ultimate goal of this project is to give gardening opportunities to local residents, and to provide a partnership for the sale of produce from the garden to the neighboring proposed marketplace. This small-scale food production will be beneficial to the residents in providing them outdoor, productive activities as well as fresh local food. Educational programs should be up and running and have plans to sustain themselves. This garden should be helping the LWSD environmentally, socially and economically, all while sustaining itself.

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<sup>154</sup> <http://ioby.org/>



## STEARNS SQUARE + EXTENSION

### *CURRENT STATUS OF SITE*

Stearns Square is a current park area that is used frequently throughout the summer months. While it hosts weekly events during the warm season, there is great potential for increased use year round. The fountain within the space appeared decommissioned when the site was visited in early fall. Statues had allegedly been removed after being stolen too many times. There are benches in the area, but little activity was noticed in the area each time it was visited. The studio group sees great potential for this space for both active and passive uses.

### *GOALS FOR SITE*

The studio group envisions a vibrant park for this area, which connects people to art and activity space. There are several researched approaches that can boost the user rate as well as the perception of the park area. To begin, we would like to add a public art wall for people to paint at their free will. We suggest creating rough guidelines to keep the wall covering appropriate, but otherwise we will leave the content free to use for any park user. We also would like to encourage artist events for public display. Festivals can give local artists a chance to show their work while giving local and visiting people a reason to come and enjoy the space. This will hopefully draw any local artists to begin appreciating the space as their own territory.

By extending the park to include the adjacent parking lot, we would like to add activity features such as a basketball court and swings. We would also like to leave space open for playing and picnicking. By adding activity, the area could potentially feel safer for both residents and visitors. There are several businesses surrounding the park area, which could benefit from the added activity as well as the added eyes on the street. The abundance of activities will aim to attract a variety of users as well as be friendly to families.



Figure 63: Proposed extension to Stearns Square

Maintenance will be very important for keeping the space clean and presentable. With the art wall as a risk to this, rules will be needed for the space. These rules should be as limited as possible though to make people feel comfortable expressing themselves and enjoying the space, without the fear of penalties for their actions. This park is for the people, so making users feel as welcomed as possible is essential for getting people to use it regularly.

Marvin Gardens of Connecticut LLC and Store Avenue own the parking lot adjacent to Stearns Square. The address of this plot is 233 Worthington Street. We have not come in contact with this group but we encourage the City to explore their long-term intentions.

The current zoning for the plot is designated as Business C. However, the prohibited uses for this include sales, storage, and outdoor display of goods for retail sales and services. This may be a conflict when considering programming through artist spaces and food trucks. There is, however, an option for permitting for outdoor temporary places of amusement. So if the programming is set up to be temporary rather than permanent then a permit may be granted by the planning board through site plan review.

### **ART WALL**

Our main priority for the site is to promote artist space. There is a large wall on the edge of the park on the Telecommunications building to the north. While this wall is painted white already, we recommend painting a fresh coat of white paint and invite local artists to paint an original work. The wall has what appears to be filled in windows, so we recommend potentially limiting the artwork to these sections of the wall, allowing the former window frame to act as a frame for the new artwork. While this wall will invite graffiti, a list of rules can be added which state that any inappropriate language or artwork will be covered up. This will allow local artists to show their work and make the space their own. Also this will hopefully make local residents feel more attached to the space and therefore care more for it.



**Figure 64: Example of a successful art wall.**

### **CASE STUDY: PORTLAND, OREGON**

Mission: City Repair is based in Portland, Oregon and is a great example of how art can create community expression, gathering places, and also contribute to place making. City Repair facilitates artistic and ecologically oriented placemaking through projects that honor the interconnection of human communities and the natural world. Artwork in our neighborhoods can also create a strong sense of place; whether it is a mural, a sculpture, temporary art such as chalk drawings or functional art pieces like benches or lampposts. Public art presents an opportunity for a neighborhood to tell its history, express local culture and have a fun project for anyone to get involved. As the process of developing a community place proceeds; people develop deeper relationships and more energy to create together because they live together. Creating a common ground that transcends the differences among people powerfully addresses this isolation and creates an environment where people feel like they can do anything they set their collective minds to. This image shows one of their community projects and the visual enhancement of the area.



Figure 65: Inspiration for the visual enhancement of the space.

Funding: Mostly volunteer staff and thousands of volunteer citizen activists have accomplished the many projects of City Repair. There has been funding through many sources and mostly by the community at large. All individual community projects of City Repair are self-funded, which means they only need to raise money to cover the administrative costs.<sup>155</sup>

### **BASKETBALL COURT**

We also would like to convert the parking lot adjacent to Stearns Square into an extension of the park. This would provide space for active uses through features such as a basketball court and a swing set. These features could make the park a destination for people. By having the combination of uses, families are more likely to be attracted to stay and picnic while their kids can play.

There are also ecological benefits to this conversion of space. The Worthington Street District is filled with an abundance of impermeable pavement. By removing this section of impermeable parking area, we could provide a large area for natural drainage. Grass

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<sup>155</sup> <http://cityrepair.org/about/>



and other vegetation should be planted. The basketball court will need a form of hard surface, but impermeable pavement could be used to help prevent runoff. There may be concern about the loss of parking space by doing this. We have looked into the use of the basketball court for temporary parking during special events such as the summer concert series. We recommend making the court parking for motorcycles only, since a large segment of the people who attend arrive on motorcycles. This will help minimize any damage to the court which larger vehicles may cause but still allows for multiple functions of the space.

### **CASE STUDY: PHILADELPHIA**

**Mission:** In Philadelphia both the water department and PECO, a private energy company, worked with West Philly Coalition for Neighborhood Schools in efforts to green the schoolyard at Henry C. Lea School. The coalition is a group of neighborhood activists working to bring the community and its resources into West Philly’s schools. The group focused on the elementary school and one aspect was an effort called “Greening Lea” that aimed at transforming the schoolyard into an environmentally and kid-friendly space. One goal was to show the community that things are happening by using the greening of Lea school as a visual indicator. Currently the schoolyard is a massive paved desert across from the community garden plots. One aspect of the project was to create a series of outdoor “rooms” and play areas including a pervious basketball court. The idea is to create a Secret Garden feel in the schoolyard, linking nearby neighborhood gardens with a classroom.

**Methods:** A charrette was held to create a Greening Lea Master Plan where fundraising opportunities and available grants would be identified. The Master Plan for the Lea schoolyard was developed in 2012 by a volunteer design team through a service grant from the Community Design Collaborative. The plan is based on ideas from the CDC’s Transforming Urban Schoolyards Design Charrette, which took place in Spring 2012. During the charrette, over 35 design professionals met with the school community and together developed early visions for what the school could look like. The CDC design team then solidified these visions into a cohesive plan.

**Funding:** Project stakeholders include representatives from the School District of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Water Department, Lea’s Principal, Dr. Caroline Watts



Figure 66: Case study from Philadelphia

from UPenn, and WPCNS. The Department of Streets may also be brought in for consultation on the streetscape design. Regular biweekly stakeholder meetings will be held alternatively at the Lea School and at School District Headquarters throughout the course of the project.<sup>156</sup>

### ***PROGRAMMING***

While Stearns Square is well known in the area for its summer concert series, we would like to expand on the programmed functions for the space. This will help draw attention to the space, as well as make the space feel more welcoming to new users. To connect with the theme of the art wall, we suggest having artist events held in the park on a regular basis. This could give space for local artists to display their art. These events could also invite food trucks to service the crowd with food, or the event could be coordinated with local restaurants to encourage people to come into the neighborhood and stay to eat locally.

### ***MAINTENANCE***

Maintenance is key for both improving the appearance of the space as well as the sense of safety. While there are benches and a fountain, it is important to make sure the fountain is cleaned out and working. It could also be beneficial to provide additional benches around it. This space should feel welcoming, which it currently struggles with. While the statues that were located here were removed because of vandalism, it is important to figure out a way to have these or other decorative features. This will involve getting creative with protecting the art from getting stolen or better yet, having the statues created by local residents to try and gain a better respect for them.

A key aspect to making this all happen is a strong coordination with the Business Improvement District group which currently maintains the area. While they are doing a great job in keeping the park clean, going the extra few steps suggested could make a huge difference for this space. An agreement should be set up to evaluate what the rules for the artist wall should be as well as guidelines for how to maintain each part of

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<sup>156</sup> <http://westphillyschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/PhaseIRFP.pdf>

the park. This should be a space that caters to the people, so carrying out actions such as removing statues should allow for some input from the local residents.

### ***SUGGESTED PHASING APPROACHES***

Phase One for this project should include discussions with the owner for the public acquisition of the parking lot. It will also involve researching the rules and standards for event permitting for additional programming for the site. Also, the owners of the parking lot and the Telecommunications building will need to be negotiated with for use of the spaces respectively. Funding options should be researched for the cost of conversions.

Phase Two will involve outreach to artists to see what the interest level is for displaying public art. The wall should be painted, if allowed, and advertised locally for public painting. Outreach to local groups should occur to coordinate potential event planning for the space. Also, coordination with the Business Improvement District group should occur to layout guidelines for how the park should be maintained, to the extent of their abilities.

Phase Three should be the final implementation steps for a functional community space. This space should cater to local artists as well as families. Events should bring in additional people to the site, and increased use will bring more eyes to the park to help increase safety. We hope to connect this space to other community spaces in the area. The walk to the priority development site The Community Gardens at Lower Worthington should be made easy and safe. Connections with other public space and programming should be strong and sustainable. This space should give residents a sense of ownership, which will result in better respect and more care for the area. Overall, this space will ideally be safe to any person considering using it.

## Available Redevelopment Incentives

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Springfield's fiscal year 2014 budget indicates that a major influence on the budget comes from the tax levy, which is contingent upon overall economic conditions and the housing market.<sup>157</sup> Available funding incentives and programs are presented that can help spur private investment to increase Springfield's tax levy. The following section presents some financial incentives and programs for the city and development entities to further investigate for eligibility. Taking advantage of the tools mentioned below and engaging in public-private partnerships can put less strain on municipal fiscal resources and cultivate future economic growth.

### **FEDERAL PROGRAMS**

#### *DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, SECTION 108 LOAN GUARANTEE PROGRAM<sup>158</sup>*

Section 108 provides states and communities with a source of financing for economic development, housing rehabilitation, public facilities, and large-scale physical development projects. Such public investment has been used as a mechanism to stimulate private economic activity by providing the initial resources that gives private firms and individuals the confidence they need to invest in distressed areas. The caveat about the Section 108 program is that it is not risk-free. If there are no feasible repayment mechanisms the local Governments that borrow funds from Section 108 must pledge their current and future Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocations to cover the loan amount.

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<sup>157</sup> City of Springfield. 2013. Fiscal Year 2014 Adopted Budget.

<sup>158</sup> U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development. *Community Development Block Grant Program*. [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/comm\\_planning/communitydevelopment/programs/108](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs/108)

*UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY, NEW MARKET TAX CREDIT PROGRAM (NMTC PROGRAM)*<sup>159</sup>

The primary goal of the New Market Tax Credit Program (NMTC Program) is to stimulate new or increased investments into operating businesses and real estate projects located in low-income communities. Individual and corporate investors receive a tax credit against their federal income tax return in exchange for making equity investments in Community Development Entities (CDEs). CDEs are intermediary financial institutions that disperse capital from investors to businesses located in low-income communities. CDEs can offer loans and investments to businesses operating in economically distressed areas at more flexible rates and terms than the normal market.

## **MASSACHUSETTS PROGRAMS**

### *MASSHOUSING LOANS*

MassHousing is the State of Massachusetts affordable housing bank. The primary goal of MassHousing is to “support the creation, preservation, and long-term viability of affordable home ownership and rental housing opportunities for Massachusetts residents with modest incomes”.<sup>160</sup> Actions undertaken to achieve their goal include: working with private and public entities that share the same vision of high-quality, sustainable affordable housing; and by collaborating with businesses and residents to integrate affordable housing that promotes economic and social self-sufficiency. The agency is self-sustaining and does not use tax payer money to fund its programs and is regarded as one of the premier housing finance agencies in the county.

MassHousing accomplishes their mission by selling bonds to real estate developers who agree to build apartments where at least 20% of the total units built are affordable to lower-income residents. MassHousing also refinances loans to owners of existing apartment communities who agree to keep their units affordable for a long period of time. MassHousing also provides 30-year fixed rate loans by contracting with more than 150 local lenders in Commonwealth. Once a borrower is approved for a MassHousing

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<sup>159</sup> U.S Department of the Treasury. New Market Tax Credit Program Fact Sheet. [http://cdfifund.gov/docs/factsheets/CDFI\\_NMTC.pdf](http://cdfifund.gov/docs/factsheets/CDFI_NMTC.pdf).

<sup>160</sup> MassHousing. *The MassHousing Mission*. [https://www.masshousing.com/portal/server.pt/community/about\\_masshousing/221/mission\\_statement/266](https://www.masshousing.com/portal/server.pt/community/about_masshousing/221/mission_statement/266).

loan, MassHousing then purchases that loan from the lender and the borrower will make payments to MassHousing.

*EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (EOHED), HOUSING DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM (HDIP)<sup>161</sup>*

The HDIP provides Gateway Cities, which Springfield is one, with two tax incentives to increase residential growth, diversify housing stock, support economic development, and promote the stabilization of neighborhoods. One tax incentive is similar to a TIF but oriented for developers that make substantial investments in housing rehabilitation to multi-unit market rate housing for lease or sale. The incentive is in the form of a real estate tax exemption for five to twenty years on 10-100% of the increased property value, the increment, resulting from improvements. The other incentive is a state tax credit for Qualified Substantial Rehabilitation Expenditures (QSREs) that are awarded through a rolling application process. The Department of Housing and Community Development approved the City of Springfield's request to adopt the HDIP program on December 17, 2012. All of the LWSD is in the HD Zone as identified by the city's HDIP Plan & Zone Application.<sup>162</sup>

*MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION, MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL REHABILITATION TAX CREDIT PROGRAM<sup>163</sup>*

Buildings that are, or are eligible to be, listed in the National Register of Historic Places can receive up to 20% of the cost of certified rehabilitation expenditures in state income tax credits. The properties must produce income and be owned, in whole or in part, by a for-profit entity that pays state income taxes. Properties that are entirely owner-occupied and do not have an income-producing component, are not eligible to apply. State rehabilitation tax credits can be used in tandem with federal historic tax credits.

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<sup>161</sup> Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED). Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP). <http://www.mass.gov/hed/community/planning/housing-development-incentive-program-hdip.html>.

<sup>162</sup> City of Springfield Office of Planning and Economic Development. (December 2012). HDIP Plan & Zone Application. <http://www.mass.gov/hed/docs/dhcd/cd/hdip/hdip-springfield-zone-plan-pdf.pdf>.

<sup>163</sup> William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth. March 27, 2008. *"The Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program: A Brief Description"*. Massachusetts Historical Commission. [http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhccpdf/brief\\_description.pdf](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhccpdf/brief_description.pdf).

*MASSACHUSETTS PERMIT REGULATORY OFFICE, CHAPTER 43D – EXPEDITED LOCAL PERMITTING*<sup>164</sup>

Chapter 43D is a tool that promotes targeted economic and housing development by guaranteeing local permitting decisions on priority development sites within 180 days. Cities and Towns have an option of opting into Chapter 43D, which Springfield has done. By opting in, Springfield receives priority consideration for multiple financing tools including MassWorks Infrastructure Program grants and brownfield remediation assistance. Priority development sites must be zoned for commercial, industrial, residential or mixed-use purposes, consist of a 50,000 square foot building, approved by the local governing authority, and must be approved by the state Interagency Permitting Board.

*EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (EOHED), THE MASSWORKS INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM (MWIP)*<sup>165</sup>

MWIP represents an administrative consolidation of six former grant programs, each of which was created to provide municipalities and other public entities with infrastructure funding to support economic development, job creation, and housing development (market rate and affordable). While funds are not available to private companies directly, they enable communities to offer flexible and competitive benefits to the private sector. The most recent grants were announced in November. Here are a few examples:

**Littleton** - \$1.8 million for roadway safety and capacity improvements to Route 119/Great Road to assist with the redevelopment of the former Cisco Systems site, which expects to break ground in the spring and to provide improved access to the IBM Mass Lab Facility. Identified as a development priority in the ongoing 495/MetroWest Development Compact. Expected to create 400 jobs.

**Revere** - \$995,985 for pedestrian access connecting a planned mixed-use redevelopment project to the Wonderland Station Transit Station and Revere Beach.

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<sup>164</sup> Massachusetts Permit Regulatory Office. <http://www.mass.gov/hed/business/licensing/43d/what-is-it/>.

<sup>165</sup> Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED). <http://www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/pro/infrastructure/massworks/what-is-it/>

Allows the MBTA to reincorporate an aspect of the Transit Plaza plans that was eliminated when the bids for the project came in higher than expected.

*BROWNFIELDS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS*<sup>166</sup>

Various agencies throughout Massachusetts work with federal agencies to offer incentives and financial assistance programs that aim to overcome obstacles associated with redevelopment of contaminated property. A couple programs offered by the state are mentioned below.

**Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)** – The MassDEP encourages site cleanup and the redevelopment of brownfields to protect human health and to promote sustainable development. The MassDEP Waste Site Cleanup Program includes flexible cleanup standards that allow parties to clean a site only up to the standards of the future use, which helps limiting the total cost of cleanup. Municipalities can receive technical assistance from the MassDEP to resolve regulatory issued that can slow down the redevelopment process of brownfields. The United Stated Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) works closely with the MassDEP. The MassDEP receives funding through grants from the EPA to conduct brownfield site assessments and cleanup activities.

**MassDevelopment Brownfields Redevelopment Fund** – MassDevelopment provides interest fee financing for up to \$100,000 for environmental assessment of brownfields. Site assessments help determine if any contaminants exist and the extent to which a site is contaminated. An assessment will also help a developer come up with a remediation plan. MassDevelopment also helps with site cleanup by providing flexible loans up to \$500,000 for the clean-up of brownfields

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<sup>166</sup> Massachusetts Brownfields Program. (2013). *Brownfields Resource Guide*. <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/cleanup/brg2013.pdf>.



## LOCAL PROGRAMS

### *DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT FINANCING (DIF)*<sup>167</sup>

District Improvement Financing is a public financing alternative available to all cities and towns in the Commonwealth. Municipalities can fund public works, infrastructure, and development projects by allocating future tax revenues from a predefined district to pay project costs. The Economic Assistance Coordinating Council (EACC) approves District Improvement Financing. A development program must explain how the DIF will encourage increased residential, commercial, and industrial activity within the district. DIF provides financial benefits to developers by providing infrastructure and surrounding amenities to support their projects. Early public funding takes the initial burden off the developer and minimizes risk.

**Somerville, MA – Assembly Square**<sup>168</sup> In 2011, the Somerville Board of Aldermen approved for the City of Somerville to borrow \$25.8 million to fund new roadways and a storm water outflow to the Mystic River.<sup>169</sup> These infrastructure upgrades will spur investment from a private developer, Federal Realty Investment Trust (FRIT), to create a new mixed-use neighborhood, called Assembly Row (currently under construction), on the site of a former Ford Motor factory. Assembly Row is estimated to create 1.75 million square feet of new office space, 852,000 square feet of retail space, a 200-room hotel, 2,100 residential units, 9,700 permanent jobs, and an Orange Line train station that is currently under construction. The \$25.8 million bond will repaid from \$24 million expected annual municipal tax revenue.

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<sup>167</sup> Massachusetts Smart Growth / Smart Energy Toolkit. [http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart\\_growth\\_toolkit/pages/mod-diftif.html](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/pages/mod-diftif.html).

<sup>168</sup> City of Somerville. *Assembly Square - Squares and Neighborhoods*. <http://www.somervillema.gov/departments/ospcd/squares-and-neighborhoods/assembly-square>.

<sup>169</sup> Metzger, Andy. May 3, 2011. *Somerville Alderman Approve \$25 Million Loan for Assembly Square Redevelopment*. Wicked Local Somerville. <http://www.wickedlocal.com/somerville/news/x741440543/Somerville-aldermen-approve-25M-loan-for-Assembly-Square-redevelopment>.

#### *TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF)*<sup>170</sup>

TIF provides a direct upfront benefit to a Developer in the form of short-term tax break on the tax increment of a property for an agreed upon term between five and twenty years. It is assumed that when investment occurs the property value of a particular parcel will increase and the owner will need to pay taxes on the increment of that value increase. A TIF is an agreement that a developer makes with the municipality to only pay a certain percentage of that increment between five and twenty years. A TIF Zone must be in an area approved by the Economic Assistance Coordinating Council (EACC) as an Economic Opportunity Area (EOA) or found to be an area “presenting exceptional opportunities for economic development” by the Director of Economic Development. Some beneficiaries of these programs:

**Custom Carbide (Springfield)**<sup>171</sup> - Custom Carbide is a small manufacturing company specializing in high-end quality carbide milling products, such as end mills and reamers. Custom Carbide purchased a 30,000 square foot abandoned building, previously owned by the United States Postal Service (USPS) and tax-exempt, in the downtown vicinity that will allow this property to be put back on the City's tax roll. Custom Carbide has committed to creating 21 new full time jobs, retaining 27 full time jobs and investing \$2 million of new equipment that add to the personal property tax base. Under the TIF agreement, Custom Carbide will receive a special tax assessment for five years.

#### *SMART GROWTH INCENTIVES*

Chapters 40R and 40S of the Massachusetts General Laws encourages cities and towns to establish new smart growth overlay zoning districts to promote smart growth development principles. Chapter 40R provides financial rewards for communities that adopt special zoning districts allowing as-of-right higher density residential development. Communities can use design review to regulate physical characters of development proposals as long as they are not unduly burdensome. Smart Growth zoning districts can be overlaid in areas near transit stations, area of concentrated development, and areas with underutilized facilities.

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<sup>170</sup> Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development. *Tax Increment Financing (TIF)*. <http://www.mass.gov/hed/business/incentives/tax-increment-financing-tif.html>.

<sup>171</sup> Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED). 12/22/2011. “Patrick-Murray Administration Approves Economic Development Projects That Will Create & Retain 3,631 Jobs In Communities Across the Commonwealth”. <http://www.mass.gov/hed/create-retain-jobs.html>.

### Smart Growth Financial Incentives<sup>172</sup>

1. *Zoning Incentive Payments:* Municipalities can receive zoning incentive payments from the state upon approval of a smart growth overlay district. The payment amount is passed on the potential number of new housing units that can be constructed in the district minus the total number of housing units allowed under the previous zoning district. Payments to municipalities range from \$10,000 for up to 20 units to \$600,000 for 501 or more housing units.
2. *Bonus Payments:* Once building permits have been issued in an overlay district, a community will receive a bonus payment of \$3,000 for each new housing unit.
3. *Education Costs (Chapter 40S):* With the expected increase in housing under an overlay district that will also increase the chance of adding school aged children to a school district, which costs money. Therefore, communities will be reimbursed for any net cost associated with educating students living in new housing under a smart growth district.
4. *Funding Preference:* When awarding discretionary funds, DHCD and the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Transportation, and Administration and Finance must give preference to municipalities with an approved smart growth zoning district.

### FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

The financial incentives and programs mentioned above are tools that should be used by future developers and the city to help stimulate private invest in the Lower Worthington Street District and throughout the city. With the tax levy serving as a primary source of revenue for the city, expanding that levy with minimal costs to the city is an economic development strategy that the city should take advantage of. Future economic development will cost the city and state lost tax revenues at first but in the long-term will have a positive fiscal impact on the state and city budgets.

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<sup>172</sup> Massachusetts Smart Growth / Smart Energy Toolkit.  
[http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart\\_growth\\_toolkit/pages/mod-40R.html](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/pages/mod-40R.html).

## Conclusions and Recommended Next Steps

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While we believe the Lower Worthington Street District has potential to thrive as a newly popular neighborhood, we also think it can also be a destination for people in search of an urban shopping and restaurant experience. The district is surrounded by many regional attractions as well as quality local destinations.

We hope that the recommended priority development sites provide a convenient jumping off point for further research into revitalizing the area. We chose sites mostly along Chestnut Street because it is a main corridor between the Quadrangle museums and Union Station, and also because of its building stock suitable for reuse.

Our site recommendations include opportunities for market-rate housing, retail amenities, industry, job development, and public space. While there is no established formula for redevelopment as our research has shown, we are certain that with the correct mix of leadership, partnership, and resources, the LWSD stands to become an exciting place for young professionals to live.

### POLICY SUGGESTIONS

#### ***MIXED USE REDEVELOPMENT OVERLAY DISTRICT***

Expanded mixed-use development by right.

Recommend that development decisions (i.e., site plan review) are heard by a planning board.

Form based code for overlay district.

Standards for shared parking.

Sustainability requirements, perhaps for increased density.

Allow adult entertainment uses by site plan review.

***10 – 15 YEAR TAX ABATEMENT ON ADDED VALUE FOR GREEN ROOFS***

Benefits to city in storm-water abatement, though improvements are on private property. Additional encouragement may be required.

Can be compatible with solar panels that are already abated under state law.

## Appendix

### PROPERTY TAX RATES FOR SELECTED MASSACHUSETTS CITIES, 2013.

City	2013	Property Tax		2013 Total Levy	Res %	Com %	Ind %	Pers Prop. %	Total Valuation	Tax Rev Per	Value Per
		Res	Com &								
Boston	617,594	13.14	31.96	1,683,681,080	39.16%	50.80%	1.34%	8.70%	92,199,271,698	\$2,726	\$149,288
Worcester	181,045	18.58	30.85	239,690,683	60.60%	24.86%	7.03%	7.52%	10,878,856,279	\$1,324	\$60,089
<b>Springfield</b>	<b>153,060</b>	<b>19.71</b>	<b>38.98</b>	<b>167,403,337</b>	<b>57.20%</b>	<b>24.39%</b>	<b>3.72%</b>	<b>14.69%</b>	<b>6,696,353,300</b>	<b>\$1,094</b>	\$43,750
Lowell	106,519	15.01	31.32	108,866,883	69.01%	15.14%	9.91%	5.93%	6,082,517,858	\$1,022	\$57,103
Brockton	93,810	16.88	31.91	111,500,261	64.03%	25.70%	4.76%	5.52%	5,486,239,872	\$1,189	\$58,482
Framingham	68,318	17.84	39.98	167,025,508	59.62%	28.83%	5.74%	5.81%	7,268,634,368	\$2,445	\$106,394
Chicopee	55,298	15.74	31.40	69,052,512	63.33%	17.15%	10.96%	8.55%	3,584,845,830	\$1,249	\$64,828
Pittsfield	44,737	16.70	34.47	68,567,361	63.89%	20.68%	7.36%	8.06%	3,341,803,760	\$1,533	\$74,699
Westfield	41,094	16.72	31.09	60,801,097	73.28%	16.65%	6.76%	3.31%	3,187,262,666	\$1,480	\$77,560