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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Introduction

- District revitalization
- New jobs, housing & amenities
- Creative solutions
Natural Gas Explosion
November 23rd, 2012
Scores, 453 Worthington Street


Image Source: http://wfxt.images.worldnow.com/images/23600068_SA.jpg

Lower Worthington Street District

• **Task:**
  – Create trendy, 24 hour neighborhood
  – Attract market-rate residents

• **Issue:**
  – New Development not currently feasible
  – Building at Boston prices but can’t sell at Boston prices

• **Solution:**
  – Phasing
  – Priority Development Sites
Methodology

• Walking tours

• Interviews
  – Community organization
  – Business Improvement District
  – City employee
  – Citizens
  – Business owners

• Extensive research
  – Neighborhood data
  – Literature reviews
  – Case Studies
  – Public Incentives
  – Springfield History Museum Archives
Phasing Approach

• Phase One: Prep work (now-2017)
  – Assessing financial and regulatory barriers to redevelopment

• Phase Two: Adaptive Reuse (2017-2025)
  – Initial implementation

• Phase Three: New Development (2025-)
  – Increased activity to spur new development (bridge the gap)
Presentation Contents

• History
• Demographics
• Lynch Analysis
• Literature Review & Themes
• Priority Development Sites
• Policy Recommendations
• Conclusion
History: Rise of Development
1839 - 1950

- 1839 - Col. John Worthington, Charles Stearns & Western Railroad bring decades of rapid growth
- 1880s - Interdependent manufacturing with employers and employees living nearby
- Turn of the Previous Century – “City of Progress”

History: Decline & Opportunity
1950 - Current

- 1950s – Congestion, limited space, and costs lead to decentralization

- Post-1980s – Entertainment district and negativity

- Union Station and MGM

- History lessons: Speculation, mixed use, urbanism
District Details: Location

Metro Center Neighborhood

Main Street
Mattoon Street

Mercy Medical Center
Union Station
Paramount Theater
MassMutual & University of Ma - Springfield
Springfield Armory Museum
Quadangle Museums
Springfield Tech. Community College
MGM Springfield

Source: City of Springfield Assessors and Planning & Zoning Departments
For planning purposes only. Delineations may not be exact.
## District Details: Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Metro Center Neighborhood</th>
<th>Springfield</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Massachusetts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Living in Poverty (Under Age 18)</strong></td>
<td>47.0%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Living in Poverty (Ages 18 to 64)</strong></td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployed Labor Force (16 Years and Over)</strong></td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household Income (2012 dollars)</strong></td>
<td>$17,291</td>
<td>$36,475</td>
<td>$54,038</td>
<td>$67,577</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>High School Dropout Rate</strong></td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
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</table>

Source: United States, ACS 2007-2011 5-year estimates
# Tax Revenue & Land-Use

## Revenue by Land-Use

**2013**

- **Other**
- **Industrial**
- **Commercial**
- **Residential**

### Existing Land Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Land Use</th>
<th>Acres (GIS Calculated)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial / Retail</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed Use</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space / Recreation</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Lot / Vacant</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: City of Springfield Assessors Database 2013
Lynch Analysis
Lynch Analysis
Lynch Analysis
**Downtown Area: Public Perception**

**Crime Data Analysis**
- Perception versus Reality

**Sector E: Larger Downtown Area**

**Adult Uses & Nightclubs**
- Negative outside vs. indifferent local
- Profitable local businesses
- Negative impact on residential development
- Positive impact on tourism & entertainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>murder</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rape</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>robbery</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aggravated assault</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burglary</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>larceny</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B&amp;E MV (car breaks)</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen Motor Vehicles</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arson</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Springfield Crime Analysis Unit
Downtown Revitalization: Urban Core Revitalization

- Walkability
- Historic building stock
- Dispersing office space
- Vacant properties
Downtown: **Housing**

- Public/private development partnerships
- Security and safety
- Adaptive reuse prior to new construction

**Neighborhood Meeting**

Weds. Feb 2  7:00PM
The Peacock Lounge
552 Haight St.

**SAFETY and SECURITY IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD**

San Francisco, haighertation.com

Photo Source: http://www.personal.psu.edu
Downtown Springfield: Housing

Recommendations:

- Market Rate Housing Study
- Priority Development Sites
- Vacant Upper Floor Inventory
  - Pittsburgh Upstairs Downstairs
  - CT Come Home to Downtown
- Vacant parcels or excess parking
  - Winter Street
  - Pearl Street
Commerical

• Create an urban design
• Cultural activities/events
• Aesthetically pleasing
• Managing car and pedestrian flow
• 24 hour day and trendy neighborhoods
Gentrification: **Indicators and Mitigation**

- Raise in rent or property values
- Can affect housing and commercial
- Displacement
- Property appreciation rates
- Analyze rental market
- Social services under pressure
- Traditional residents able to maintain properties
- Track subsidy expirations
- Mixed-Income Housing

Photo Source: apartmenthomeliving.com
Industry and Employment

**Economic**
- Outside economic resources to the region
- Stable living-wage jobs to alleviate poverty
- Higher industrial tax revenue
- Complimentary industrial cluster

**Social**
- Maintain socio-economic diversity
- Solidify Springfield as a viable location in which businesses can thrive
- Produce a source of community pride in a previously underutilized area
Public and Green Spaces

- Increase in vacant and underutilized parcels in declining cities
- Fast and inexpensive improvement technique
- Parks, gardens & stormwater mitigation
- Social and ecological benefits
- Accessibility, maintenance & funding challenges
Priority Development Site: Willys Overland Building

- Constructed in 1916
- Originally used as a showroom and repair space for Willys vehicles and Jeeps
- 2 freight elevators
- 4 stories
- Building footprint of approximately 16,500 square feet
- Total square footage of approximately 73,000
- One foot thick poured concrete floors

Photo Source: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Willys_Overland_Block,_Springfield_MA.jpg
Priority Development Site: Willys Overland Building

Today

• The structure is zoned Business C
• The Willys block is on the National Historic Register as of 1983
• The block is located amid historically and presently residential buildings
• There is significant exterior damage to the rear of the building from the 2012 gas explosion
Case Study: Detroit, MI

- Customizable lofts in a mixed use setting
- Tax breaks for tenants
- Walkable to Midtown resources
- 14 units have sold within the last year as suburbanites start to move back to the city
Priority Development Site: Willys Market & Overland Lofts

GOAL: Use historic tax credits, assess and renovate the building bringing it up to code for mixed residential and commercial use.

We propose:

• Around 20 loft style units of varying size and value

• Ideally, a NEZ or similar tax abatement program can be implemented in the LWSD to encourage investment in lofts.

• A gym that is free to residents of the lofts, but that the public can also purchase memberships

• A market that sells produce from the adjacent community garden as well as basic grocery needs.
Priority Development Site: **Community Gardens**
Priority Development Site: Community Gardens

Proposed Green Space

- Proposed Community Garden
- Proposed Garden Parking
Priority Development Site: Community Gardens

Image source: Calliope Bosen
Priority Development Site: Community Gardens
Priority Development Site: Community Gardens

Image source: Calliope Bosen
Priority Development Site: Community Gardens

Phase One: Now - 2016

FUNDING

EPA Targeted Brownfields Assessments—The Basics

KidsGardening

IOBY

ACGA

Growing Community Across the U.S. & Canada
Priority Development Site: Community Gardens

**Phase Two:**
2017 - 2025

**Phase Three:**
2026 -

How do I...?
- Start an Urban Agriculture Project
- Learn more about Urban Agriculture
- Read about Success Stories & Ongoing Projects
- Find Resources & Related Links
- Read Frequent Questions and Answers

Image source: http://inhabitat.com

Source: http://epa.gov
Priority Development Site: Apremont Triangle

- Create amenity for residents and draw private investment
- Change way we typically use streets
- Reuse existing street configuration to create a public plaza exclusively for pedestrian use
- Maintain existing traffic patterns with added value of a pedestrian plaza
Priority Development Site: Apremont Triangle

Phase One

- Expand Corridor Storefront Improvement Program (DevelopSpringfield) and Small Business Storefront grant program (City of Springfield)
- Barricade plaza with large flower pots
Priority Development Site: Apremont Triangle

Phase Two

- Paint via a collaborative community process
- Moveable tables and chairs
- Encourage housing to fill vacancies on second floor of both retail buildings

Priority Development Site: Apremont Triangle

Phase Three

- Widen sidewalks
- Plant trees and create rain garden
- Pervious pavers
- Outdoor activity and event center
- Development of 33 Pearl St into micro lofts
Priority Development Site: Apremont Triangle

Phase Three

- Micro lofts at 33 Pearl St.
- Vibrancy will create a new market for urban dwellers seeking low cost living
Priority Development Site: Rail Ridge

- Suitable for mixed-use, market-rate housing, TOD
- Vacant and/or underutilized
- Historic buildings and industrial feel
- Train tracks provide backdrop and public space opportunities
Priority Development Site: Rail Ridge

- Potential starting point
- Focused, synergistic 4-corner intersection
- Lofts, storefronts, restaurant/bar, and parks
Priority Development Site:
Rail Ridge

Chapman & Brooks Block
139-141 Lyman Street

- Built 1910 – Classical Revival
- Former Dry Goods Warehouse
- Owned by: City of Springfield (vacant)
- Adjacent Lots for Parking
- Appx: 30,000 sq. ft.; six floors; solid frame
- Zoning: Industrial A
- Assessed Value: $372,700
Priority Development Site: Rail Ridge

Produce Exchange Building
115-125 Lyman & 194-206 Chestnut Streets

- Built 1899 – Nat’l Register of Historic Places
- Former Dry Goods Warehouse
- Owned by: Bruce Wright Group LLC
- Four storefronts & corner restaurant/bar
- Appx: 68,000 sq. ft.; four floors; solid frame
- Zoning: Business C (mixed use)
- Assessed Value: $248,100
Priority Development Site:
Rail Ridge

Cutler & Porter Block
113 Lyman Street

- Built 1894 – Nat’l Resister of Historic Places
- Former Shoe Factory
- Architect: Frederick S. Newman
- Owned by: Bruce Wright Group LLC
- Glass brick façade, direct light
- Appx: 35,000 sq. ft.; four floors
- Zoning: Business C (mixed use)
- Assessed Value: $163,400
Priority Development Site: Rail Ridge

Public Space

Green Park
• Vacant Lots
• Corner owned by Bruce Wright Group, Inc.

Rail Ridge Park
• Gravel Storage
• Owned by U.S. Government
Priority Development Site: Upper Lyman Cooperative Zone

**Current Condition**

- Only district space suitable for [industrial development](#)
- Vacant and/or [underutilized](#)
- Historic [auto](#) and [power](#) industry
- Limited [social interaction](#)
- [Rail access](#) to Boston, CT & NY
- Ongoing business [collaboration](#)
Development Goals - Basic

- Higher City Tax Revenue
- More Living-Wage Jobs for existing Residents
- Increased Industrial Profits

Recycling, Reuse & Repair

Community Service & Health

Food Distribution

Electric & Construction
Priority Development Site: Upper Lyman Cooperative Zone

Recycled Home Goods Workshops - Showroom
Priority Development Site:
Upper Lyman Cooperative Zone

Cooperatively Owned For-Profit
Industrial Greenhouse
Priority Development Site:
Upper Lyman Cooperative Zone

Potential Future Cluster Expansion

Prefabrcicated Home Manufacturing

Santa Monica, CA

Photo Source: livinghomes.net
Connectivity: Road Segment Network

- Spatial structure of cities
  - Buildings
  - Linear spaces

- Input to analytic segment model, depthmapX,
  Space Syntax Laboratory,
  University College London

- Catchment area of approximately 5000 acres

Lower Worthington Street District
Connectivity: Choice Analysis

Vehicular Scale
- Choice metric computes most likely path for every segment pair
- Main Street and State Street are natural vehicle thoroughfares
- Chestnut and Worthington Streets are major vehicle feeders

Pedestrian Scale
- Choice metric computes paths for segment pairs in radius of 3
- Dwight Street is main pedestrian thoroughfare
- High degree of connectivity on cross streets to Chestnut
- Worthington as major connector to Main Street
Priority Development Site: Dwight Street Greenway

- Break 1-way couplets
  - Improve commercial opportunities
- Chestnut and Worthington Streets
  - Commercial street level
  - On street parking
  - 2-way traffic
- Dwight Street
  - Not needed for vehicular traffic
  - Union Station to Mass Mutual Center
Priority Development Site: Dwight Street Greenway

Urban street to urban greenway

- Pedestrians and street furniture
- Bicycle tracks
- Transit and emergency vehicles

- No through vehicle traffic
- Open and safe
- Separated modal zones with integrated storm-water management
Priority Development Site: **Lyman Arcade**

- Glass covered walkway between granite wall and buildings
- Main Street to Dwight Street
- Open at ends and Kaynor Street
- Gateway to downtown from Union Station
- Food and vendor carts
- Retail across from wall
Financial Incentives and Programs

• Neighborhood Enterprise Zones (NEZ)
  Willys Overland Building

• Business Improvement District (BID)
  Apremont Triangle

• Historic Tax Credits (HTC)
  Rail Ridge

• MGL ch. 43D Expedited Permitting and MassWorks Infrastructure Grants
  Upper Lyman Cooperative

• District Increment Financing (DIF) and BID
  Lyman Arcade and Greenway

• Housing Development Incentive Program
  LWSD is in the Springfield Housing Development Zone
Policy Recommendations

- Redevelopment Overlay District
  - Site Plan Review for by-right uses
  - Special Permit by Planning Board
  - Form-based code
Conclusion:
Recommendations for Further Research

• Pro Forma
• Integration with casino plans
• More extensive building inventory
Acknowledgements

• Darrel Ramsey-Mulsolf
  • Studio Professor, UMass LARP Department
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• Don Courtemanche
  • Director, Springfield Business Improvement District
• Bob McCarroll
  • Member, Springfield Historical Commission
• Catherine Ratte
  • Principal Planner, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
• Frederic Rose
  • Wellspring Collaborative
• Holly Smith-Bove
  • President, Springfield Museums

Image Source:
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d9/Memorial_Bridge,_Springfield_MA.jpg