**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The City of Chicopee has tasked the Hills House Planners with “developing a conceptual Vision Plan for ‘Re-Visioning’ Memorial Drive.” Memorial Drive is a 3.7-mile-long commercial and residential strip that can be characterized as “anywhere U.S.A.” The Memorial Drive corridor is impacted by the adjacent Westover Air Reserve Base, the Massachusetts Turnpike, which bisects the southern portion of the corridor, and it’s location in the heart of the Knowledge Corridor. Some of the issues facing the corridor include conflicts between commercial and residential uses, problematic zoning, unfriendly pedestrian conditions, and issues related to a large quantity of impervious surfaces.

Hills House Planner’s vision for the Memorial Drive corridor is concentrating high-intensity commercial and entertainment uses in the southern “Marketplace” area off of the Massachusetts Turnpike, utilizing the central “Midtown” area as a transitional area with residential and neighborhood business establishments, and returning back to the historic Fairview Village feel of the northern “Uptown” area to reestablish a more human-scaled and walkable neighborhood. The use of performance zoning, implementation of a road diet, and increasing green infrastructure will assist the City of Chicopee in implementing this vision.

**REVISIONING THE CORRIDOR**

Hills House Planners were tasked by the City of Chicopee to identify and analyze existing land use and current zoning, commercial development, vacancy and infill opportunities, and opportunities and constraints near the two rotaries. Our recommendations include proposed land use and zoning to encourage and enhance commercial development, ease transitions between commercial and residential uses, and provide greater opportunities for all modes of transit, as well as an analysis of potential green infrastructure applications. Recommendations have further been tailored to six priority areas.

**GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

One of Chicopee’s greatest opportunities to attract development, ease land-use transitions, and further its achievements in stormwater mitigation in green infrastructure, with the greatest of these opportunities in complete streets projects, as all state-owned roads, including Memorial Drive, are being brought into compliance. Further opportunities include reducing combined sewer overflows through on-site solutions such as bioswales in parking lots and creating an inviting environment for consumers. By implementing walkable solutions along the corridor through green infrastructure techniques, Memorial Drive can improve the sense of place and economic development.

**UPTOWN**

The Bargain Outlets Shopping Center has the potential for growth and economic activity by redeveloping the location with mixed-use (commercial/housing) buildings. By creating a village in Chicopee on this central location to the Pioneer Valley.

**NORTHERN ROTARY**

Community input from the workshop included green infrastructure applications for the vacant parcel adjacent to CVS. We also propose implementing the Pizza Hut parking lot with green infrastructure and including temporary concrete to gain street face traffic. We envision increase community activity in the priority area.

**MIDTOWN**

A well-designed walking and bicycling path can set the tone for future developments and aid the transition from a heavily concentrated commercial area to a community residential neighborhood. The path, along with changes in sidewalk widths, should encourage mixed-use commercial along the last forested right-of-way and connect Chicopee’s river pathways.

**SOUTHERN ROTARY**

We propose the Southern Rotary as a new commercial destination two new mixed-use facilities. The design employs walkable pedestrian and landscaped buffers to mitigate any conflicts with the existing and adjacent residential uses.

**MARKETPLACE NORTH**

To reduce the impact of impervious surfaces, we propose implementing green parking lots that will like commercial growth and increase the aesthetics of the Chicopee Marketplace. Additionally, permeable materials should increase the area’s sustainability and walkability.

**MARKETPLACE SOUTH**

Due to the location’s adjacency to the Massachusetts Turnpike, we propose hospitality and other commercial uses to not only capitalize this prime location but also to extend commercial activity to the corridor’s southern boundary.

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University of Massachusetts, Amherst Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning Department Professors Elizabeth Blosser, MLA, J.D., Ellen Parker, Ph.D., Wayne Fidler, FASLA, FSAIP, John Pullin, FSAIP, Robert Ryan, Ph.D., and instructor Christina Arguinzoniz.

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**PROFESSOR DARREL RAMSEY-MUSOLF**

**TEACHING ASSISTANT: GREG LEWIS**