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

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<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
<td>Allen, Karl S; Berube, Mark D; Bosen, Calliope E; Lewis, Gregory Robert; Mello, Alexander Casey; Michniewicz, Caitlin Anne; Rosa, John Armando; Spencer, Sarah; Wasserman, Stacy E</td>
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Executive Summary

In a section of the downtown Metro Center in Springfield, Massachusetts, among the historic brick buildings and ware- houses 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 Lancer Gentlemen’s Club on Worthington Street before a massive explosion obliterated the building and sent out a shock wave that damaged 62 other buildings, including 16 residential units. No one lost their life, but 21 people were injured. In short, it was one more disaster in a downtown recently torn by a tornado and consistently challenged by urban blight.

Our Studio Team was tasked to deliver a conceptual master plan and implementation framework that would address many of the issues plaguing the LWSD, including:

- Diverse land uses, including housing, retail, and entertainment
- A clear vision and land use potential
- A strong sense of identity
- A walkable open space network
- Public transportation
- Safe streets and sidewalks
- A mixture of housing, including market rate and affordable
- A comprehensive transportation plan
- Public art
- Renovation and adaptive reuse
- A clear identity and reputation
- Adequate stormwater management
- A sense of place
- Enhanced pedestrian circulation
- A strong sense of identity
- Safe and attractive streets

The LWSD was once one of Springfield’s most vibrant centers of trade, commerce, and entertainment. With the loss of many institutions and businesses, the LWSD has experienced a decline in population and activity over the past several decades. In this area, low-density, high-rise commercial buildings, vacant storefronts, empty warehouses, and low-fund industries and tax revenues have comprised the LWSD’s economic base. The University of Massachusetts, which is a critical asset, is located on Union Street, a huge renovation project to rehabilitate Union Station into a central entertainment and retail hub for Mattoon Street, Kimball Triangle as a priority project site that could serve as the centerpiece for job creation and economic development.

The Fall 2013 MRP Planning Studio - Home in the Heart of Springfield: the Lower Worthington Street District

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