MAIN STREET AND GREEN SPACES:
CREATING A COMMUNITY VISION IN INDIAN ORCHARD

GRADUATE URBAN DESIGN STUDIO SPRING 2022

Rebecca Bagdician-Boone • Li-Ting Hsu • Remington Pontes
Muskaan Handa • Abby Derick • Jake Harlow • Suzanne Warner
MAIN STREET AND GREEN SPACES: CREATING A COMMUNITY VISION IN INDIAN ORCHARD

GRADUATE URBAN DESIGN STUDIO SPRING 2022

Rebecca Bagdigan-Boone • Li-Ting Hsu • Remington Pontes • Muskaan Handa • Abby Derick • Jake Harlow • Suzanne Warner

UMass Amherst Design Center in Springfield
Department of Landscape Architecture & Regional Planning
In Collaboration with the City of Springfield Office of Planning and Economic Development
Graduate Urban Design Studio Spring 2022
Associate Professor Frank Sleegers

Contact:
Frank Sleegers
Associate Professor
Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning
210 Design Building
University of Massachusetts
551 North Pleasant Street
Amherst, MA 01003-9357

Email: sleegers@larp.umass.edu

© UMass Amherst, Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning • UMass Amherst Design Center, 2022
Editor: Rebecca Bagdigan-Boone
Printed: July 2022

This project was sponsored through the US Dept of Housing and Urban Development and the City of Springfield.
We acknowledge that this project takes place on the indigenous land referred to by the indigenous Algonkian Native American inhabitants of what is now called Springfield as “Agawam.” This refers to the region bordering the Kwinitekw (now known as the Connecticut River), spanning from present-day northern Connecticut into the Holyoke Range. The Agawam people inhabited this area since the end of the glaciation period and populations still exist today, despite the reverberations of the brutal actions, erasure, and destruction caused by the colonization of white settlers.

We would also like to acknowledge the difficulty surrounding conversations specifically relating to the Indian Orchard neighborhood of Springfield. The neighborhood’s official name can be considered by some to be problematic, as well as the common names and lore surrounding certain points of interest within its borders (Indian Leap, for example). Referring to these places as such without a more critical understanding and proactive recognition of the indigenous cultures that preceded them is not something we intend to do with this project.

We would like to express our appreciation towards everyone that we got a chance to work with this semester and the invaluable time and expertise throughout this semester.

Finally, we would like to thank Professor Frank Sleeper for his guidance, expressos, and tireless enthusiasm. Sincerely, Rebecca Bagdigian-Boone Li-Ting Hsu Remington Pontes Muskania Honda Abby Decker Jake Harlow Suzanne Warner

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

If able, please consider donating and supporting the following organizations.

Donate to the Native American Rights Fund
“Since 1970, the Native American Rights Fund (NARF) has provided legal assistance to Indian tribes, organizations, and individuals nationwide who might otherwise have gone without adequate representation. NARF has successfully asserted and defended the most important rights of Indians and tribes in hundreds of major cases, and has achieved significant results in such critical areas as tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, natural resource protection, and Indian education.”

Support Cultural Survival
“Cultural Survival supports a movement of empowered Indigenous Peoples organizing their communities to engage the international processes, national policies and human rights bodies to respect, protect, and fulfill their rights. Our organization is Indigenous-led and has a diverse board of directors bringing experiences from the Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds to inform our perspectives and scope of work.”

Sign up for MA Indigenous Legislative Agenda Action Alerts
“We are working to support legislation currently before the Massachusetts State Legislature that will benefit Indigenous Peoples.”

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to express our appreciation towards everyone that we got a chance to work with this semester and the invaluable support we were granted from the City of Springfield and Mayor Dominick Sarno. We are grateful to have been a part of the ongoing partnership between the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at UMass Amherst and the Office of Planning and Economic Development of the City of Springfield. Additionally, we would like to formally recognize the following individuals for graciously lending us their time and expertise throughout this semester.

Alex Train Director Chelsea Housing and Community Development Department
Britt Ruhe Director of Commonwealth Murals, Founder of Fresh Paint Springfield
Wayne Feiden FAICP Director of Planning and Sustainability City of Northampton
Michael Di Pasquale Extension Assistant Professor of Regional Planning, UMass Amherst
Robert Markey Multidisciplinary Artist
Scott Hanson Principal Planner at City of Springfield, Massachusetts
Peter Gagliardi Former President and CEO of Way Finders Inc
Ramon V Murray Principal at Murray Design Group
Zaida Govan Ward 8 City Councilor, President of the Indian Orchard Citizens Council
Orlando Ramos State Representative, 9th Hampden District
Valerie Aponte Board Member, Indian Orchard Citizens Council
Yolanda Cancel Board Member, Indian Orchard Citizens Council
Alvin Allen Principal Planner at City of Springfield, Massachusetts
Marcos Gonzalez Project Manager, Planning and Economic Development
Brian Lefebvre The Barber Shop
Jase Olavarria Planning and Economic Development Intern

Hector Velez Civil Engineer, Springfield DPW
Mohammad Sandhu Owner of the “Former Barber Shop” 137 Main
Mike Yusaf Owner of the “Former Barber Shop” 137 Main
Stephen Nemphos Owner of the “Former Barber Shop” 137 Main
Jonah Snowdon Staff Writer/Photographer, Turley Publications
Emily Kawano Co-Director Wellness Cooperative Corporation
Fred Rose Co-Director Wellness Cooperative Corporation
Tina Quagliato Sullivan Director of Disaster Recovery
Vladimir Carbajal Civil Engineer of the City of Springfield
Timothy T. Sheehan Chief Development Officer of the City of Springfield
Brian M. Connors Deputy Director Of Economic Development
Alexander R. Sherman City Forester of the City of Springfield
Michelle Pescezza Visual Artist
Betsy Medina Manager, Indian Orchard Mills
Greta Sleegers Visiting scholar

We would like to express our appreciation towards everyone that we got a chance to work with this semester and the invaluable support we were granted from the City of Springfield and Mayor Dominick Sarno. We are grateful to have been a part of the ongoing partnership between the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at UMass Amherst and the Office of Planning and Economic Development of the City of Springfield. Additionally, we would like to formally recognize the following individuals for graciously lending us their time and expertise throughout this semester.

Alex Train Director Chelsea Housing and Community Development Department
Britt Ruhe Director of Commonwealth Murals, Founder of Fresh Paint Springfield
Wayne Feiden FAICP Director of Planning and Sustainability City of Northampton
Michael Di Pasquale Extension Assistant Professor of Regional Planning, UMass Amherst
Robert Markey Multidisciplinary Artist
Scott Hanson Principal Planner at City of Springfield, Massachusetts
Peter Gagliardi Former President and CEO of Way Finders Inc
Ramon V Murray Principal at Murray Design Group
Zaida Govan Ward 8 City Councilor, President of the Indian Orchard Citizens Council
Orlando Ramos State Representative, 9th Hampden District
Valerie Aponte Board Member, Indian Orchard Citizens Council
Yolanda Cancel Board Member, Indian Orchard Citizens Council
Alvin Allen Principal Planner at City of Springfield, Massachusetts
Marcos Gonzalez Project Manager, Planning and Economic Development
Brian Lefebvre The Barber Shop
Jase Olavarria Planning and Economic Development Intern

Hector Velez Civil Engineer, Springfield DPW
Mohammad Sandhu Owner of the “Former Barber Shop” 137 Main
Mike Yusaf Owner of the “Former Barber Shop” 137 Main
Stephen Nemphos Owner of the “Former Barber Shop” 137 Main
Jonah Snowdon Staff Writer/Photographer, Turley Publications
Emily Kawano Co-Director Wellness Cooperative Corporation
Fred Rose Co-Director Wellness Cooperative Corporation
Tina Quagliato Sullivan Director of Disaster Recovery
Vladimir Carbajal Civil Engineer of the City of Springfield
Timothy T. Sheehan Chief Development Officer of the City of Springfield
Brian M. Connors Deputy Director Of Economic Development
Alexander R. Sherman City Forester of the City of Springfield
Michelle Pescezza Visual Artist
Betsy Medina Manager, Indian Orchard Mills
Greta Sleegers Visiting scholar

Finally, we would like to thank Professor Frank Sleeper for his guidance, expressos, and tireless enthusiasm. Sincerely, Rebecca Bagdigian-Boone Li-Ting Hsu Remington Pontes Muskania Honda Abby Decker Jake Harlow Suzanne Warner
**PROJECT AREA**

**Studio Project Goals**

- Make Main Street in Indian Orchard more beautiful, safer, and more accessible for pedestrians
- Showcase both tangible design interventions and conceptual creative proposals for Main Street
- Create new opportunities and incentives for local businesses

**Learning Objectives**

- Explore what defines a cohesive, vibrant, and functional Main Street
- Evaluate existing land use, vacancies, and opportunities
- Engage with the community and learn what it means to be an advocate for residents’ wants and needs
- Examine trends in urban mobility and ways to create pedestrian friendly streetscapes
- Work across scales and develop a phased approach to design implementation
- Assemble and display final work as high quality, professional board
Main Street and Green Spaces takes a focused look at the neighborhood of Indian Orchard and provides strategies for urban design and landscape architecture to support residents’ visions for the future. With the Studio’s partnership between the Indian Orchard Citizen’s Council, Grow IO (Wellspring Harvest), and the Springfield Office of Planning and Economic Development, the overarching goal for each design team was to create a cohesive, phased plan for redeveloping Main Street around the Oak and Main intersection and Parker and the Ludlow Bridge. Special attention was requested for exploring traffic calming measures and ways to support the local businesses present.

In addition to the design proposals that would be given to the City at the conclusion of the project, the Studio wanted to leave behind tangible deliverables. Restoring a mosaic bench that had been an eyesore to the local businesses was one way the group was able to give back to the community.

The Graduate Urban Design Studio 2022 created four unique proposals for revitalization of the two focus areas. Although each team explored different methods that interested them, main themes between the groups were:

• Bike friendly infrastructure
• Sidewalk improvements and pedestrian scale interventions
• Inclusion and celebration of the arts
• Improved connections between the Indian Orchard Mills and Main Street
• Connection between the Chicopee River and the neighborhood
An important component of designing with the neighborhood was finding a space to use as a base camp, a place where residents could walk by and stop in with their perspectives and visions for Main Street. We found that space in the Barber Shop on 137 Main Street. We transformed the idle space into a place for collaboration and community events, getting our feet on the ground and gaining a more holistic understanding of Main Street.
COMMUNITY VISIONING EVENT

From the beginning of the studio, planning and implementing a community visioning event was at the top of the list of importance. Getting the community’s input into what they wanted to see in their own neighborhood was vital for us, as a group of “outsiders.”

Based off past studio’s outreach programs, we decided that two methods would be used to gather input.

The first “game” was affectionately referred to as Red Dot Green Dot. Neighbors were given maps of the overall scope as well as zoomed in on the two focus areas, Main and Oak, and Parker Street. Participants would take a colored dot and mark areas they liked as is in green areas and where they wanted to see improvements in red. They could leave comments and ideas on what they’d like to see there, and share memories they had of favorite places in the neighborhood.

The second activity was the Typology “game.” Each table was given examples of interventions that could be suitable for the focus areas (such as bike racks, skateparks, pocket parks, street trees, murals, etc), and they could leave feedback on where they’d like to see it, or if they didn’t imagine it’d be a good fit within the neighborhood.
COMMUNITY VISIONING EVENT

We gathered a lot of important feedback from the event. At the end of the event, the attendees identified the nine most important actions they’d like to see taken in the neighborhood. They are:

- Fixing street lights and pot holes
- Creating green space and adding more color
- Creating and emphasizing views to the river
- Establishing a connection to the Mills and the Greenway
- Proposing a unified aesthetic throughout the neighborhood
- Creating a vegetation management and maintenance plan for the Greenway
- Adding fruit trees and benches along the streets
- More designated play spaces for children
- Storefront “face lifts”

Equally valuable as the feedback we got from the community was getting to engage with the people who came out that night. Sharing a meal and getting to hear stories from the residents was a special moment for the team. As our first foray into community engagement, we felt that the night was a success and a great way to kickoff the design process.
We were invited to join a walk with Mayor Domenic J. Sarno and his cabinet. Walking throughout the neighborhood, we were able to get perspectives from the city of Springfield on the developments they envisioned. Of particular focus was ways the City would be able to aid in traffic calming, beautification, storefront façade improvements, and open space improvements through the parks and along the waterfront. A stop into the barbershop gave us opportunity to share our insights and gain feedback on early iterations. Particularly valuable to our process was getting an opportunity to speak with members of the DPW and forestry departments.

Above - photo of the group discussing storefronts and vacant businesses along Main Street.

Left - Mayor Domenic J. Sarno and Zaida Govan leading the group at the beginning of the walk.

Photos courtesy of the City of Springfield
TOUR OF THE INDIAN ORCHARD MILLS

With a studio goal of integrating the programming happening within the Indian Orchard Mill into Main Street, touring the Mills was a necessity. Betsy Medina, the manager at the Mills, showed us around the historic building and explained a bit about the artists and businesses operating within it. Every hallway within the Mill functioned as a Main Street of sorts, with artists displaying their wares and engaging with the visitors to the space.

The Chicopee 4 River Watershed Council’s mission is to promote stewardship, conservation, enjoyment, and restoration of the rivers and ecosystems within the Chicopee 4 Rivers Basin. To help accomplish this they sponsor events that involve getting members of the community out into these landscapes. The studio participated in one such event, a river clean up day. With the guidance and encouragement of C4R’s coordinator Keith Davies and events manager, Jim Emerson, neighborhood residents and the UMass group helped remove 20 bags of trash from the greenway.

RIVER CLEAN-UP

The Chicopee 4 River Watershed Council’s mission is to promote stewardship, conservation, enjoyment, and restoration of the rivers and ecosystems within the Chicopee 4 Rivers Basin. To help accomplish this they sponsor events that involve getting members of the community out into these landscapes. The studio participated in one such event, a river clean up day. With the guidance and encouragement of C4R’s coordinator Keith Davies and events manager, Jim Emerson, neighborhood residents and the UMass group helped remove 20 bags of trash from the greenway.

Left - A view down one hallway within the mill showing how the artists are using the opportunity to showcase their work
Top left - View of a former covered pedestrian walkway across the canal
Above - An example of one studio space that is home to a plant studio and storefront
Above - flyer from C4R
Left - the group celebrates a job well done
On one of our initial walk throughs of the neighborhood, we saw a series of existing mosaic benches that were in disrepair. Residents and members of the Indian Orchard Citizens Council had voiced their desire to see the benches restored to their original state, adding color to Main Street and more seating. One of the studio’s goals was to provide the neighborhood with tangible pieces at its conclusion, and the bench ended up being one of them. Multidisciplinary artist Robert Markey was able to join us for a weekend, providing the materials and expertise to repair one bench formerly at the corner of Oak and Main. Robert created the dove and butterfly end caps to the bench, and the students worked together to design and construct the seat. After stripping the old tiles off, new Italian tiles were individually cut and placed. The new bench was placed at the entrance of Myrtle Street Park close to the office of the Indian Orchard Citizens Council. The redesigned bench brings the color and vibrancy from the community gardens out into the street. After the success of this project, Markey was then commissioned to complete additional pieces for the City of Springfield, once again showing the value of the arts in the city.
The second tangible deliverable from the studio was a temporary parklet set up along Main Street in front of the Barber Shop. We modeled the parklet after other Parking Day events UMass had been involved in, and we were curious to see what the neighborhood’s reaction would be to alternative uses for street parking. We started by drafting a simple structure for the exterior made of wooden pallets. We applied for a temporary occupancy permit from the Springfield DPW, and they generously waived our filing fee. In keeping with the neighborhood’s desire for more color and incorporating the programming of the Mill throughout Main Street, we decided on an art making program, supplying the parklet with everything needed for painting (including a gallery space). We scheduled for the parklet to coincide with the open studio day happening at the Mill, hoping to capture the visitors there.

At the conclusion of the event, we unfortunately had only one participant in our painting day, but we did learn a lot of important lessons. The first was that we should have devoted more time towards marketing the event, similarly to the amount of attention we paid for our community visioning event. Getting buy-in from key community partners would have been beneficial for stirring up attendance. Without that marketing, we were entirely reliant on capturing the attention and engagement from passersby, of which there were scarce. Over the course of the three or so hours we were in the parklet, only four pedestrians walked by. The limited pedestrian traffic we had observed during the week on Main Street continued into the weekend. Additionally, our location of the parklet could have been optimized more to capture the traffic that was present around the Mills. There is a stark disconnect between the vibrancy happening within the Mills compared to the energy along Main Street, and measures should be taken to create a more cohesive connection between the two. What we learned during the parklet event provided us with more grounded information that we could use when presenting and finalizing our design proposals.
The studio spent first half of the semester studying the history of the Indian Orchard neighborhood to help better understand the site, providing a solid foundation for the coming design work. The following provides a glimpse of significant moments in Springfield’s past.

The Eastern Algonquins resided in the Connecticut River Valley for at least 2,000 years. They were semi-nomadic, fluidly adapting to the seasons.

In the 1630s, the English settlers arrived. Springfield was founded by William Pynchon in 1636, and John Pynchon later expands the area for trade throughout the Valley.

In the 1670s, tensions begin to rise over the idea of “ownership” of the land, culminating in King Phillip’s War. After, many indigenous people fled the area for Canada.

The Indian Orchard Mills were chartered by the State of Massachusetts in 1837 and construction was completed in 1846. The Mills produced primarily linen and cordage.

In 1846 the dam and canal were constructed. The Chicopee River was highly sought after during the Industrial Revolution because of the change and elevation over its course.

The Mill shifted to electric power in 1916.

The Indian Orchard Canal is still in use today and provides hydroelectric power.

A completed rail line in 1841 from Boston and Albany made Springfield a hub for industry.

Growing demand for workers brought on a surge of immigration both from abroad, primarily Europe, and from the deep south. The people coming to the area were seeking opportunities for work and to escape oppression.

A second wave of immigration came after WWII with people arriving from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

HISTORY

A completed rail line in 1841 from Boston and Albany made Springfield a hub for industry.

Growing demand for workers brought on a surge of immigration both from abroad, primarily Europe, and from the deep south. The people coming to the area were seeking opportunities for work and to escape oppression.

A second wave of immigration came after WWII with people arriving from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The Indian Orchard Canal is still in use today and provides hydroelectric power.

A completed rail line in 1841 from Boston and Albany made Springfield a hub for industry.

Growing demand for workers brought on a surge of immigration both from abroad, primarily Europe, and from the deep south. The people coming to the area were seeking opportunities for work and to escape oppression.

A second wave of immigration came after WWII with people arriving from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The Indian Orchard Canal is still in use today and provides hydroelectric power.
One of the first things we learned about Indian Orchard was how much the residents resonated with the neighborhood’s legacy of having an independent spirit. Maintaining that sense of independence is important to the residents, and the neighborhood hosts a variety of events that bring everyone together. Indian Orchard’s Chess in the Parks has proven to be a popular activity among all generations and brings together the community in a way that is unique to IO. Other popular events are the IOCC Food Truck Festival which draws a lot of people to the downtown area, as well as the Indian Orchard Mill’s Open Studio days where people can tour the Mill and get a glimpse into the artists’ studios. Natural areas like the Greenway along the Chicopee River and Indian Leap are valuable assets and exclusive to IO.
From our neighborhood analysis on available natural systems, we learned that there was potential to expand on the current existing green space and create new connections between them. This would be particularly helpful in achieving our goal of better integrating the Greenway into Main Street as well as breaking up the remarkable amount of impervious surface that exists today. With a CSO located adjacent to the boat launch on Water Street, any ways in which we can minimize stormwater runoff within the neighborhood would have significant positive effects on the water quality in the river.

Indian Orchard is the only neighborhood within Springfield with its own zip code (01151). Compared to the rest of Springfield, Indian Orchard has a similar annual household median income. Although this lower than the average in Massachusetts, it is higher than the Memorial Square neighborhood in Springfield. The median age in Indian Orchard is 34.5 and 60% of the population is between the ages of 18 and 64. This makes creating spaces that cater to young people an important factor in retaining residents within the neighborhood.
The area around Oak Street has still a strong urban fabric that reflects the history of Indian Orchard as a planned mill town. Towards the Pinevale Street crossing, the number of vacant buildings and lots is increasing. This area provides opportunities for future development such as the growing of the planned restaurant district.

The current zoning aligns well with the land uses in the area. "Business A" serves pedestrian oriented uses and allows for mixed uses. Two minor recommendations include: a) establishing the lower part of Pinevale Street as "Open Space" to reinforce the green way on Water Street; b) reducing "Service Business" on Main.

The area around Parker Street is characterized through non-defined edges along Main Street and vacant lots on the side of the Chicopee River. These vacancies could provide opportunities to accommodate improved access to the River. The edge of the River is also zoned "Service Business". It is recommended to change this to "Open Space" to encourage uses that align with the goals of ecology and recreation. The triangular area on the southern side of Main Street is a little bit underutilized while providing great opportunities for additional commercial activities around the successful "Brick House Tavern".
Early on in our conversations with the neighborhood we heard that there was going to be a need to balance the amount of available parking on street with the desire for life and vibrancy at the pedestrian level. Further complicating that was the neighborhood’s current reliance and culture of driving, especially to local businesses like barber shops and beauty salons. In addition to that, it was vocalized that the residents wanted to see traffic calming measures put into place, especially in the Parker Street focus area where traffic speeds off the Ludlow Bridge and makes it difficult to cross as a pedestrian, often forcing walkers to be stranded on traffic islands surrounded by asphalt. There’s also the opportunity to improve the PVTA bus stops in the neighborhood with better seating and shade, as well as introducing bike friendly infrastructure. Creating protected bike lanes and adding ValleyBike stations will ideally help to gradually shift the car-centric culture of the neighborhood and build a more pedestrian friendly Main Street experience.
The first half of our 14 week studio was spent compiling our conventional neighborhood analysis while simultaneously brainstorming and developing the materials for our community engagement event. We purposely delayed starting the formal design process until after the community engagement event to guarantee inclusion of the residents’ ideas and visions for their neighborhood. Once the event was completed, we spent time analyzing the data and determining what actions were ranked as being the most important. We also began to plan what our tangible deliverables were going to be and what materials we’d need. Throughout the second half of the semester, we made sure to work in the Barber Shop at least once a week, making ourselves available to passerbys. Guest critiques and short workshops during class allowed us to have focused conversations about our team designs. At the conclusion of our 14 weeks, teams presented their work twice; the first presentation was held at UMass during the department’s presentation week. The second and final presentation was held in the Barber Shop as a casual gallery show where neighbors could come and have a conversation about the final ideas created while in Indian Orchard.
THE NEIGHBORHOOD THREAD

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY: CREATIVE PLACEMAKING IN INDIAN ORCHARD
Li-Ting Hsu • Remington Pontes

INTERLACE: COMMUNITY AND ART
Muskaan Handa

MAIN STREET MOSAICS
Abby Derick • Jake Harlow • Suzanne Warner
THE NEIGHBORHOOD THREAD: WEAVING TOGETHER HISTORY, COMMUNITY, AND ECOLOGY IN INDIAN ORCHARD

Rebecca Bagdigan-Boone
PROJECT NARRATIVE

Indian Orchard’s neighborhood pride and distinct character served as inspiration for my project’s narrative. There were a few key takeaways from the community engagement that I felt I would be able to address in my design. They are: creating a connection to the Mills from Main Street, creating events and event space, adding public art and color onto streets, clarifying the access to the Mills and to Water Street, creating bike friendly streets in preparation for ValleyBike stations, and adding seating and shade along Main Street. While addressing these program elements, I sought to answer the question “How can I use urban design to create a distinct neighborhood identity reflecting the unique character of Indian Orchard in a way that is visually coherent?”

Other pieces I pulled from the community event are these themes of Connection and Reconnection, with residents desiring to connect more to the Mills, the Chicopee River, and the local businesses on Main Street, and by doing so, reconnect with history, nature, and their neighbors (especially in light of the pandemic). A second theme was one of Diversity and Biodiversity, where Indian Orchard’s history and identity would be celebrated, the variety of backgrounds and cultures in the neighborhood would be showcased, and street level habitats and pollinator connectivity would be introduced throughout.

The proposal is the creation of an Indian Orchard “Signature Section” in the form of pairs of vertical elements framing the roadways. These sections would repeat throughout the neighborhood and signal to visitors and residents that they’re in the 01151. The pairs of elements recall the feel of the grid planting layouts found in orchards, referencing the neighborhood’s namesake. Incorporating “over” and “under” moments with these vertical elements reiterates subtly the history of the mill’s industrial past, and provides opportunities to introduce street amenities like public art, bike racks and lanes, mosaic bench seating, and more. These amenities could be mixed-and-matched to best suit the needs of the businesses and residences adjacent to the roadway without losing on street parking.

A reorganization of an unclear parking lot breaks up the vast swath of impervious surface, provides much needed clarity and access to a Mill entry, offers space for storm water retention and infiltration, creates a flexible event space with a potential mural backdrop, all without losing vital parking.

Accepting the overall proposal would be a three phase process. The first phase would involve pedestrianizing the Pinevale connection and clarifying Water Street’s greenway by clearing out understory brush and invasive plants and finishing with resurfacing. This would allow for bike access to Indian Leap and connection of the greenway to Main Street. Initial trials for protected bike lanes and new public art events like a community plum statue painting would be started within this phase. The second phase would involve reorganizing the parking lot by Myrtle Street and the Mill and adding new bus stops to the PVTA route through the neighborhood. The third phase would involve the total Main Street redesign and traffic calming measures.

All together these neighborhood threads braid together to intertwine history, community, and ecology.
The rearrangement of the parking lot by Myrtle Street features one-way traffic flow and rain garden areas for stormwater retention and infiltration. The pedestrianized Pinevale connection clarifies access from Main Street to the Chicopee River. Centre Street features more planting areas for trees and pollinator connectivity while half the street remains parking. 5’ bike lanes and 7’ sidewalks are throughout the plan.
The signature sections of Indian Orchard establish community identity in a subtle way without the need for signage. These sections play off of the idea of an orchard with paired vertical elements. Each half of the mirrored roadway can be mixed-and-matched with one another to best suit the needs of the street-scape.
PARKING LOT REDESIGN

The rearrangement of parking at the Myrtle Street lot creates a flexible plaza space for neighborhood events. A potential mural wall showcasing the neighborhood’s history could serve as a background and welcome into Main Street. Fiberglass plum statues bring a piece of the Mill’s artist studio’s vibrancy out to the street. Storm water and pollinator gardens tie in ecosystem functions.

MILL ENTRY PROPOSAL

An unclear and uninviting entry into the Indian Orchard Mills is redesigned into a space that is welcoming to all visitors. A historic mural could be an opportunity to showcase indigenous history and artistry. A patio allows visitors to interact and see the historic rails that once ran between the Mill and Chapman Valve. An outdoor gallery space allows artists to display their work in a public setting. Pollinator gardens bring biodiversity back to the site.
THE NEIGHBORHOOD THREAD: WEAVING TOGETHER HISTORY, ECOLOGY, AND COMMUNITY IN INDIAN ORCHARD

HISTORY
Indian Orchard’s indigenous history, mill and industrial history, and the stories of those who have immigrated to the neighborhood, both recently and from the past.

COMMUNITY
Indian Orchard’s diversity, their independent spirit and neighborhood pride, the “born and raised” mentality found within 01151.

ECOLOGY
Creating more tree canopy coverage, interventions to impervious surfaces, strings of beads forming pollinator opportunities, and protecting water quality for those who live in the neighborhood’s habitats.

CONNECTION AND RECONNECTION
DIVERSITY AND BIODIVERSITY

When speaking with the community, they vocalized the desire to better connect Main Street with the artists and activities surrounding it. There is a feeling of disconnection from the Mill Entry, an area that doesn’t play off of the idea of an orchard with paired vertical elements. Each half of the mirrored roadway can be mixed-and-matched with another one to best suit the needs of the street-scape. The signature sections of Indian Orchard establish community identity in a subtle way without the need for signage.

The goal of these sections is to create a recognizable neighborhood typology that signals to visitors they’ve entered a special location. The signature sections function as a gateway to the neighborhood, helping to orient visitors to Indian Orchard’s identity.

The current parking lot across from the Myrtle Street park is disorganized and a vast, uninterrupted expanse of impervious asphalt. A reorganization of the lot allows for the introduction of vegetation and stormwater management spaces and a new plaza area without sacrificing the number of marked spaces that are currently present (currently have 100 marked spots, now have 102). A flexible plaza space can host community events and there could be potential for a mural backdrop.

CELEBRATE
Celebration and the arts are already important to the neighborhood. The goal is to showcase variety of backgrounds and cultures, and to create street-level habitats. A corridor with pollinator connectivity could help play off of the idea of an orchard with paired vertical elements. Each half of the mirrored roadway can be mixed-and-matched with another one to best suit the needs of the street-scape.

ValleyBike

The objective is to propose an accessible and sustainable investment approach that could address the barriers to cycling and support the development of a more equitable bike network. This includes exploring how to best integrate a safe and convenient bike network into the community, and how to address the current barriers to cycling such as limited infrastructure and lack of on-street bike parking.

PROPOSED MILL ENTRY
When speaking with the community, they vocalized the desire to better connect Main Street with the artists and activities surrounding it. There is a feeling of disconnection from the Mill Entry, an area that doesn’t play off of the idea of an orchard with paired vertical elements. Each half of the mirrored roadway can be mixed-and-matched with another one to best suit the needs of the street-scape. The signature sections of Indian Orchard establish community identity in a subtle way without the need for signage.

The goal of these sections is to create a recognizable neighborhood typology that signals to visitors they’ve entered a special location. The signature sections function as a gateway to the neighborhood, helping to orient visitors to Indian Orchard’s identity.

The current parking lot across from the Myrtle Street park is disorganized and a vast, uninterrupted expanse of impervious asphalt. A reorganization of the lot allows for the introduction of vegetation and stormwater management spaces and a new plaza area without sacrificing the number of marked spaces that are currently present (currently have 100 marked spots, now have 102). A flexible plaza space can host community events and there could be potential for a mural backdrop.
CULTIVATING COMMUNITY:
CREATIVE PLACEMAKING IN INDIAN ORCHARD

Li-Ting Hsu • Remington Pontes
This proposal aims to leverage arts and culture in order to respond to and shape urban landscape conditions in Indian Orchard. By improving connections to the Indian Orchard Mills, activating underutilized public spaces, and prioritizing the pedestrian experience, this proposal seeks to develop new economic opportunities for local residents, facilitate social interaction and integration, encourage physical recreation, improve accessibility to public green spaces, and restore ecosystem services such as stormwater management.

For the Oak Street focus area, this proposal presents various design interventions to enhance pedestrian circulation between the Indian Orchard Mills, the Main Street shopping area, and Myrtle Park. A proposed pedestrian promenade along Oak Street links Main Street and the adjacent community to the riverfront greenway. In order to incentivize new economic opportunities, the proposed Main Street Plaza is designed to accommodate various community events including seasonal arts and farmers markets.

For the Parker Street focus area, this proposal accentuates pedestrian safety and aims to reduce barriers to pedestrian circulation through complete streets design and policy. The Parker Street concept also integrates new public gathering spaces, a community skatepark, a pedestrian promenade, and green infrastructure such as street trees and permeable paving.
The Main Street and Greenway Plazas accentuate community art and site materiality. These spaces include facades for new murals, wayfinding signage, landscape lighting, and various sculptural elements including an ornamental fence and play features comprised of railway steel.

Main Street Plaza accommodates a variety of community events including arts and farmers markets as well as daily uses such as outdoor dining. The greenway plaza connects Main Street to the riverfront greenway and provides leisure space and views of the Chicopee River. Both spaces integrate stormwater management infrastructure and aim to encourage physical recreation.
This perspective shows the proposed park and community garden, located on the corner lot adjacent to the intersection of Main Street and Parker Street.
Our design concept aims to leverage arts and culture in order to respond to and shape urban landscape conditions in Indian Orchard. By improving connections to the Indian Orchard Mills, activating underutilized public spaces, and prioritizing the pedestrian experience, our proposal seeks to develop new economic opportunities, facilitate social interaction and integration, encourage physical recreation, and improve ecosystem services such as stormwater management.
INTERLACE: COMMUNITY AND ART
Muskaan Handa
DESIGN OBJECTIVE

Ease of Accessibility
Improving pedestrian access by increasing crosswalks at proper intervals.

Barrier Free Design
Improvising on user accessibility with improved pavements and increased resting stops. Also, increasing ADA parking spaces.

Pedestrian Friendly
Redesigning the internal pathway movement for a better user experience using the same ideology of transitional spaces.

Socially Interactive
Additionally providing multi-purpose spaces for social gathering spaces. Improving common spaces in the public realm for public activities.

Diversity of Users
Providing social gathering spaces as per all age groups including outdoor dining and play sets catering to the user diversity breaking the irritation of age difference in the community.

DESIGN STRATEGIES

This proposal focuses on pedestrian and user experience, how can urban design intervention increase community engagement and activities keeping their interests in mind. Majority of the community indulged in an artistic background. Hence, the concept revolves around community and art. Interlacing both together and creating spaces that not only uplift the neighborhood and beautify spaces but also engage the community to come together by introducing outdoor dining spaces, common features like mural art and sculptures.

Rehabilitating the street pattern was a part of the proposal but also to revitalize the neighborhood with a splash of color. Increasing interaction with different age groups by bring together playgrounds and chess tables, creating family outdoor spaces in front of restaurants and taking care of the fundamentals like parking spaces and introducing proper cycling lanes and bus stands with green roofs.
The major concern were business fronts and how the street experience has a huge impact on it. The street pattern I focused on immediately reflects on my concept by pushing out and pulling in sidewalks but simultaneously leaving a clear straight path for vehicles. This pattern is intentionally made to provide an extended sidewalk in front of businesses that can have outdoor dining like restaurants and the sidewalk is pulled inwards for either bus stops or convenience stores that need the extra parking space.

Main Street Section

I also introduced bike lanes and plantings strips for this junction. As spoken about in the introduction, we worked on a mosaic bench which helps reflect on my concept of introducing color but I also incorporated mural crosswalks and facades that can have fresh paint Springfield or the IO mills can use for mural paintings.

Sidewalks, Green spaces, Color, Murals, Benches, Crossings, Street pattern
Almost the same concept for the street pattern has been followed by introducing bike lanes and planting strips but no on street parking, instead, reorganized the parking lot to increase the number of parking spaces. Also mural crosswalks were introduced and marked out façades for fresh paint Springfield. During our progress, such junctions usually demand a roundabout as a solution which wasn’t possible given the space and shops around next to the bridge. Keeping in mind to improve pedestrian experience, “pedestrian roundabouts” were created on both junctions of this area hoping for it to improve accessibility and walkability.

Also, for enhancing the pedestrian experience on such a busy road, it is proposed to remove two lanes, one in front of the Brick House Tavern and secondly a “right only lane” coming from the Ludlow bridge. Closing the street in front of the Brick House gives us an opportunity to pedestrianize the space and create a boulevard catering to more green spaces, resting spots and increasing activity like outdoor dining.
The Proposed design reconnects the historic and current artistic vibrancy occurring in Indian Orchard with the neighborhood at large. It celebrates the uniqueness and independence of this community within the larger context of Springfield while also creating greater connectedness for residents and tourists traveling on foot and bicycle through the neighborhood.
Phase 1 ART

The Masterplan identifies Opportunity Areas for FRESH PAINT MURALS as well as CHAIN LINK FENCE ART and CROSSWALKS that could also be used to display art. NEIGHBORHOOD FURNITURE includes plexiglass furniture echoing mosaics throughout the neighborhood as well as SCULPTURAL BENCHES inspired by the historic train tracks that run along the riverfront.

Phase 2

Storm water, Planting, Circulation

STORMWATER infiltration zones are created on city streets, with rectilinear tree pits along main street and rain gardens along cross streets such as Oak that mimic a river corridor.

PLANTINGS include orchard grids of new trees throughout the neighborhood.

NEW BICYCLE CIRCULATION connects the two commercial zones of Main Street as well as the adjacent Ludlow Riverway via protected 1- and 2-way bike lanes.
The design for Oak Street was to incorporate visual cues in the streetscape that would indicate that the street leads to the riverwalk. Cues include undulating rain garden beds turning the street into a river and sidewalk paint. This will be repeated in N-S corridors.

Main Street (at Parker): Space for Pedestrians and Bicyclists

The design for Main Street at Parker Street reclaims a side alley for pedestrians and nearby restaurants while the wide right of way accommodates a new two-way protected bike lane.
Future plans for Indian Orchard under this design include making use of underused spaces such as parking lots and current vacant properties to expand the green spaces for outdoor gatherings and events in Indian Orchard.

At Myrtle Street Park, the edge of the IO Mills parking area is expanded to support a walking path, new tree cover, and a food truck parking area next to a new linear park along the historic mill buildings on Front Street.

At Main Street and Parker Street, a new outdoor dining plaza, skate park, and new Ludlow Bridge Park overlooking the Chicopee River create diverse outdoor spaces in a new commercial district supported by infill mixed use development in the existing parking lot.
The picnic and food truck zone will be an extension of Myrtle park across Main street into the parking lot. This will create a more inviting entrance to Indian Orchard and break up the visual monotony of asphalt. The parking lot will also feature rain gardens for infiltration and pedestrian malls that connect to the riverwalk and the Mill.

The overlook park will be the connection between Main street, the Mill and the riverwalk. The historic train tracks on site will be incorporated into plantings and sculptural benches. The existing building will be refurbished for artist studios and store fronts and the open space can be an event lawn or sculpture garden.
Ludlow Bridge Park

Ludlow Bridge Park, on the site of a former gas station and current vacant lot, serves as a gateway to Indian Orchard, connecting the neighborhood to the Chicopee River and its orchard history. Improved bicycle and pedestrian access to the Ludlow Bridge and Main Street ensure the park is an accessible resource for the community.