FROM QUADRANGLE TO SQUARE: CONNECTING CULTURE, ART AND PUBLIC SPACES IN DOWNTOWN SPRINGFIELD
GRADUATE URBAN DESIGN STUDIO SPRING 2021

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
Professors: Michael DiPasquale & Frank Sleegers

Lauren Azuela • Patrick Burns • Bo Carpen • Winfield Henry • Joseph Langlois
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Cover Page:
Claiming Space for Equitable Futures in Springfield, MA
"Residual Spaces / Resilient Narratives" by Bo Carpen
Michael DiPasquale and Frank Sleegers. Taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic the studio was run as a hybrid between in-person and remote learning. Professors DiPasquale and Sleegers could not have been more accommodating to our individual needs and checking-in with how we were doing both in and out of the studio. Their support and guidance was unwavering during a strange and challenging time.

Acknowledgments

From Quadrangle to Square: Connecting Culture, Art and Public Spaces in Downtown Springfield provides strategies to revitalize Springfield’s Metro Center through landscape architecture and public art initiatives, and to acknowledge the role that race has played in Springfield’s development from the City’s incorporation in the early 1600s through present day. With the Studio’s partnership between the Springfield Cultural Partnership, Armory Quadrangle Civic Association, Springfield Museums, Fresh Paint Springfield, and Art for the Soul Gallery, an overarching goal for each student was to create a cultural corridor along Bruce Landon Way from Springfield’s Museum Quadrangle to Court Square.

The Graduate Urban Design Studio 2021 created five unique proposals for revitalization of the project area within Metro Center. The Framework for the Studio builds upon recent and proposed improvements in the downtown area. Pynchon Plaza which had previously been closed was redesigned and unveiled in November of 2020. Future redevelopment within the project area are the replacement of the Mass Mutual Center’s parking garage and a boutique hotel and market rate apartments adjacent to historic Court Square. This redevelopment momentum is the backbone of this studio and an impetus to strengthen the connection between the Museum Quadrangle and Court Square. Intervened in this framework are goals of the incorporation of public art, improving the pedestrian experience in Metro Center, improving the local ecology, and establishing conditions for future residential and commercial development. Seen to varying degrees in individual proposals are the following:

• Human scale interventions to improve the pedestrian experience including traffic calming, utilizing large building facades, and establishing clear connection between spaces
• Increasing amount of multi-functional open spaces
• Improved ecological functioning including urban greening, reduction of imperious surface, and best management practices for stormwater management
• Improved conditions for future residential and commercial development including infill development, children’s activities, and designed spaces incorporating the needs of Springfield’s residents, workers, and visitors
• Propose unique renovations to the Mass Mutual Center parking garage, which is currently slated to be replaced
• Contribute to the functionality of existing public spaces within the project area
• Improve upon the functionality of existing annual events such as the Jazz Fest, and design spaces to accommodate the increasing number of large outdoor events such as street fairs, games and concerts at the Mass Mutual Center
• Ensure safety and inclusivity across race, age, and gender identity

Summarized Recommendations

Continuing a successful 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, this Graduate Urban Design Studio is grateful for their support and feedback throughout our studio, which was most sincere gratitude to the following individuals and organizations:

• Karen Finn, Springfield Cultural Partnership
• Betsy Johnson, Armory Quadrangle Civic Association
• Kay Simpson, Springfield Museums
• Britt Ruhne, Fresh Paint Springfield
• Tracy Woods, Art for the Soul Gallery
• Todd Crosset, Granny’s Baking Table

The students would also like to thank our instructors this semester, Professor Timothy T. Sheehan, Chief Development Officer for their on-going support of the UMass Amherst Design Center in Springfield and the Office of Planning and Economic Development of the City of Springfield to conceptually revitalize an area sponsored by the City of Springfield to specifically revitalize an area previously been closed was redesigned and unveiled in November of 2020. Future redevelopment within the project area are the replacement of the Mass Mutual Center’s parking garage and a boutique hotel and market rate apartments adjacent to historic Court Square. This redevelopment momentum is the backbone of this studio and an impetus to strengthen the connection between the Museum Quadrangle and Court Square. Intervened in this framework are goals of the incorporation of public art, improving the pedestrian experience in Metro Center, improving the local ecology, and establishing conditions for future residential and commercial development. Seen to varying degrees in individual proposals are the following:

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Sincerely,

Lauren Azuela
Patrick Burns
Ed Carpen
Winifred Henry
Joseph Langlois

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A very special thank you to Scott Hanson, Principal Planner from the Springfield Department of Planning and Economic Development for his wealth of knowledge of Springfield and invaluable feedback throughout our semester long studio.

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Studio Project Goals
- Promote equity and diversity
- Empower local artists and community members
- Address the impact of climate, flooding, & green infrastructure
- Urban design ideas that build social infrastructure
- Address the revitalization of vacant spaces
- Promote “Post COVID-19 Revitalization”
- Improve visual aesthetic of Metro Center

Learning Objectives
- Define the character of urban streets and districts
- Develop cohesive design theme and narrative
- Evaluate existing land use and activities
- Work at multiple scales and with varying design media
- Develop high quality graphic representations
- Understand and utilize basic elements of urban design
- Understand impact of design on demographic and cultural diversity
- Understand urban ecology
After the closure of the Armory in 1969, suburbanization and “white flight” caused people with economic and social advantage to flee the city. In an effort to “revitalize” Springfield, urban renewal strategies took place with the construction of the I-91 overpass and large super blocks, like the Mass Mutual Convention Center. Urban renewal often targeted and resulted in displacement of large neighborhoods of predominantly people of color. These strategies were ineffective and led to further economic decline.

European immigration dramatically decreased after WWI. During the Great Migration, African Americans left the south in search for work and greater opportunity in industrialized cities, like Springfield, MA.

Innovation and precision manufacturing continued in the beginning of the 20th century.

1901 - “Indian” motorcycles
1921 - Rolls-Royce opens manufacturing base

The Great Depression and two large flooding events took large hits to Springfield’s economy in the 1930s.

Many former underground railroad landmarks exist downtown. In 1844, Springfield’s first African American church, the Sanford Street Free Church, hosted visits by prominent abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth. Another notable figure, John Brown, formed an organization to prevent recapture of escaped slaves.

During the first half of the semester, the studio conducted research on the City of Springfield to better understand the site. The following timeline provides a glimpse of significant moments in Springfield’s past.

1777 - ARMORY OPENS
Early on, Springfield became a manufacturing city. This was first spurred by its prime location for trade along the Connecticut River. In 1777, during the Revolutionary War, the Springfield Armory opened for manufacturing of the nation’s firearms. This was a catalyst for the city to become a manufacturing center.

1788 - 1850’s
UNDERGROUND RAILROAD + ABOLITIONISTS
Many former underground railroad landmarks exist downtown. In 1844, Springfield’s first African American church, the Sanford Street Free Church, hosted visits by prominent abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth. Another notable figure, John Brown, formed an organization to prevent recapture of escaped slaves.

1800’s
INDUSTRIALIZATION + INNOVATION

1806 - First Merriam Webster Dictionary published
1819 - First lathe for use during assembly line production
1820 - First Modern Burns Steam Carriage
1834 - First vulcanized rubber
1854 - First adjustable Monkey Wrench
1856 - Smith & Wesson formed to manufacture revolvers
1893 - First gasoline-powered automobile by Duryea Motor

1856 - First Adjustable Monkey Wrench

1893 - First Gasoline-powered Automobile by Duryea Motor

1900-1930’s
MANUFACTURING & ECONOMIC DECLINE

1901 - “Indian” motorcycles
1921 - Rolls-Royce opens manufacturing base

The Great Depression and two large flooding events took large hits to Springfield’s economy in the 1930s.

CONVENTION CENTER, I-90, SUBURBANIZATION / WHITE FLIGHT

After the closure of the Armory in 1969, suburbanization and “white flight” caused people with economic and social advantage to flee the city. In an effort to “revitalize” Springfield, urban renewal strategies took place with the construction of the I-91 overpass and large super blocks, like the Mass Mutual Convention Center. Urban renewal often targeted and resulted in displacement of large neighborhoods of predominantly people of color. These strategies were ineffective and led to further economic decline.

History
The census tract that the project area is located has one of the lowest household median incomes in the city. Comparatively to Hampden County and the state, the discrepancy is far greater. This presents a challenge when designing an urban commercial corridor that often encourages spending.

The site is also diverse, with 71% identifying as Hispanic or Latino, 13% African-American, and 12% White. Identifying the people who live in the area is critical for consideration during design.

Demographics

Race and Ethnicity of Project Area

Race and Ethnicity of Springfield, MA

Median Income Comparison

Project Area Springfield Hampden County Massachusetts

$17,346 $39,818 $55,429 $81,215

Median Household Income (Dollars)

13,288 - 23,333
23,138 - 32,461
32,463 - 47,739
47,739 - 63,675
63,676 - 79,934
Springfield Town Boundary
Project Area Census Tract
After the death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer, peaceful protests against police brutality and racism were held across the United States. A BLM protest was held at Court Square in Springfield and this mural can still be seen on Court Street outside of City Hall. A goal of this studio was to honor African American heritage and the role of race in the development of Springfield.

Public Art Initiatives & New Development

The project area has benefited from recent public art initiatives and development and will receive future investment in market rate apartments and boutique hotel adjacent to Court Square. The Fresh Paint Mural Festival in 2019 facilitated the production of 10 large scale murals throughout the city with more artworks to be added. Pynchon Plaza’s newly opened redesign includes locations to feature public art. Detailed in individual proposals, this studio looked to further incorporate public art as a catalyst for revitalization and to create a cultural corridor from the Museum Quadrangle into downtown.

Above: Art installation at Pynchon Plaza
Left (Top): Skyview Downtown
Left (Below): Columbus Center Garage
Many of Metro Center’s landmarks and amenities lie within a 5 minute (.25 mile) walk of Bruce Landon Way, the main axis of the project area. Public transportation is readily available in the area with ample bus stops and routes, and Union Station is within a 10 minute walk (.5 miles). Pedestrian connections are best from East to West running parallel to Main Street. The North to South axis is characterized by major street crossings at Dwight St., Main St., and E. Columbus Avenue. I-90 and the New Haven-Springfield Railroad Line also impede foot traffic from accessing the Riverfront Park along the Connecticut River. Way finding signage throughout Metro Center provides visual coherence and a welcoming message to visitors unfamiliar with Springfield.
Street Use and Experience
Land Use and Changes in Urban Fabric

In our focus area, many neighborhoods were lost after smaller buildings and side streets were replaced by large blocks for institutional uses.

The varying land uses represent the different opportunities downtown. Many of the institutional uses are tourist and visitor destinations or places of work. While there are cultural and economic benefits to the established institutional uses, increased designated housing or mixed use developments can provide necessary affordable housing and revitalize otherwise empty buildings.
Mass Mutual Convention Center

Formerly known as the Springfield Civic Center, this convention center was first built in 1972. Now known as the Mass Mutual Center, there have been several renovations to the site which hosts large events, concerts, and basketball and hockey games.

Pynchon Plaza

Once a thriving plaza when first unveiled in the 1970s, the site eventually fell in disrepair and was largely closed off to the public. The renovated plaza was completed in 2020 with opportunities for art displays and will hopefully become a future space for people to congregate. This is a major axis point in the studio’s project area.
The figure-ground map to the left shows impervious (black) and pervious surface (white) within Springfield, with a higher concentration of impervious surfaces near the project area in Metro Center. One contributing factor to the amount of impervious surface is an abundance of parking in Metro Center. Of particular interest to this studio is the Mass Mutual Center Garage, which is slated to be replaced and a focal point of several individual designs. Urban greening and increased pervious surfaces were also a studio wide goal.
Public Open Space & Tree Canopy

There is a functional existing network of public open spaces in Metro Center. However, Bruce Landon Way lacks pedestrian scale open space, creating a lack of connectivity in the heart of downtown, an issue this studio aims to remediate.

The above map shows existing public open spaces in Metro Center. Three of the most prominent spaces can be seen on the previous page; the Museum Quadrangle (1), Court Square (4), and Pynchon Plaza (2) which was reopened to the public early in 2020.
Design Process

Our design process involved understanding the site through sketching and observations. The studio made six site visits during the semester and met with the city staff and community stakeholders both in person and virtually. Below are some sketches, analysis diagrams, and photos of a concept model of a community bench by a student.
Visitors will find their way by the colorful roadways to the Kaynor St. cafe and retail corridor where they will find streetside coffee and informal seating where they can sit and enjoy summer foliage or quickly grab a coffee on their way to a concert at the MGM. In addition to cafes, the space will feature rainwater retention troughs and well-informed bike lanes to encourage more environmentally friendly transit.

**FROM PARKING TO PLAY**
34-51
Winfield Henry

**SPARK: SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC ARTS & RECREATION KORRIDOR**
34-51
Lauren Azuela

**SPRINGFIELD’S HERITAGE PARK**
34-51
Joseph Langlois

**ARTFULLY RESOURCEFUL**
34-51
Patrick Burns

**RESIDUAL SPACES / RESILIENT NARRATIVES**
34-51
Bo Carpen
FROM PARKING TO PLAY

Winfield Henry
Project Narrative & Land Use

Downtown Springfield is a legible walkable area of the city with strong assets, including the Museum Quadrangle, Mass Mutual Center, accessible parking, Market Street Shops, Court Square, and various restaurants and office buildings. From Parking to Play looks to build upon Springfield’s existing assets with a focus on improving the residential experience of the city’s downtown by creating Thomas Thomas Park along Bruce Landon Way, and various edge treatments throughout the city.

Converting a 24,000 sq. ft. parking lot to a park, Thomas Thomas Park honors its namesake, who purchased his freedom from slavery and moved to Springfield where he was a successful restaurant owner and active member of the underground railroad. The park will serve as a gathering place where diverse groups are able to congregate, honoring the traditions of the Underground Railroad meetings which took place at the Sanford St. Church, buried by the footprint of the Mass Mutual Center.

With the Mass Mutual Center garage slated to be replaced, this design proposes a 39’ setback for the new garage and removal of the vehicle entrance on Bruce Landon Way to establish a clear connection from the newly reopened Pynchon Plaza and increasing sight lines into Thomas Thomas Park.

Adjacent to the new park is a 270’ linear playground along the new Mass Mutual Center Garage. Designed as a nature playground, play structures utilize natural features including a stump jump, rock scramble, and multi-level play structure. Plantings, ADA ramps, and various seating options make the playground inclusive and comfortable for kids and parents alike. Traditional basketball courts along the alley and garage roof offer the opportunity for more formalized sports. This playground will both activate the first floor of the garage and create a dedicated play space which Metro Center is lacking.

Bruce Landon Way will be narrowed to 25’ and the grade will be raised to be level with the sidewalk. Paired with the removal of the vehicle entrance and a continuation of materiality from sidewalk to street, weekday car traffic will be slowed, and the tree lined streetscape can transform into a vehicle free plaza. By designing a more permeable edge between Market Street and Thomas Thomas Park, users can seamlessly move from Pynchon Plaza down the new Bruce Landon Way, establishing a strong connection from the Quadrangle into downtown. An edge treatment will also be created at the intersection of Harrison and Main Streets, separating the existing plant bed from the building to create a space with moveable tables and chairs, activating the first floor and separating pedestrians from traffic.

Together, these interventions will improve the experience for the current residents in downtown Springfield and create flexible spaces to be enjoyed by the residents, workers, and visitors to Metro Center.
The primary focus of this design lies on the block between Bruce Landon Way and Harrison Ave. A more permeable edge is created along Market St. and the parking lot is converted into Thomas Thomas Park. The first floor of the garage is activated with a playground and traffic calming measures are implemented on Bruce Landon Way.

Phase 1 begins with the 270' alleyway playground and garage redesign, including the removal of the vehicle entrance along Bruce Landon Way. This creates a space dedicated to children, which is currently lacking downtown.

Phase 2 incorporates Thomas Thomas Park. This transforms the 24,000 sq. ft. parking lot into a park and creates a more permeable edge to market street. Thomas Thomas Park can host large gatherings for special events.

Phase 3 focuses on the streetscapes of the two blocks between State St. and Harrison Ave. Bruce Landon Way is narrowed and brought up to the sidewalk grade. Over 150 street trees are planted and speed tables are installed at the intersections of Bruce Landon Way at Dwight and Main Streets.

270' Playground
150+ Street Trees Planted
5 Sports Courts
Speed tables at Main & Dwight St. crossings
The existing edge on Market Street is defined by existing brick bench walls to screen the parking lot. Here, the parking lot is converted into a 24,000 sq. ft. park with a more permeable edge that retains the brick benches and existing honey-locust trees. Planters define Thomas Thomas Park, offering shaded seating and still allowing clear sight lines into the park. With the streetscape transformation on Bruce Landon Way, Thomas Thomas Park can host expanded Jazz Fest Events or be the site for a family barbecue for neighborhood residents.

One of the difficulties facing the site is the street crossing from the base of Pynchon Plaza to Bruce Landon Way. A continuity of materials and speed table create visual coherence from both sides of the street and work to slow traffic. The vehicle entrance to the Mass Mutual Parking Garage has been removed from Bruce Landon Way, and the garage set back 40' to increase pedestrian space. An artistic archway marks the entrance to the street, which has been narrowed and raised to sidewalk grade to better accommodate event closures.
Linear Playground

- Harrison Ave. Entrance
- ADA Ramp
- Terraced Seating
- Stump Jump
- Rock Climb
- Multi-level Play Structure
- ADA Ramp
- Garage Elevator
- Bruce Landon Way Entrance
From Parking to Play: Incorporating Children’s Play and Flexible Spaces in Downtown Springfield

**Narrative**

Downtown Springfield is a legible walkable area of the city with strong assets, including the Museum Quadrangle, Mass Mutual Center, accessible parking, Market Street Shops, Court Square, and various restaurants and office buildings. From Parking to Play Competition Board “From Parking to Play” looks to build upon Springfield’s existing assets with a focus on improving the residential experience of the city’s downtown by creating Thomas Thomas Park along Bruce Landon Way, and various edge treatments throughout the city.

**Incorporating Children’s Play and Flexible Spaces in Downtown Springfield**

**From Parking to Play:**

- **Phase 1**
  - Harrison Ave. Entrance
  - Parking garage
  - Rooftop basketball
  - 270’ linear playground

- **Phase 2**
  - Permeable Market Street edge
  - 24,000 sq. ft. parking lot to park
  - Thomas Thomas Park

- **Phase 3**
  - Mixed Use Development
  - Commercial
  - Public Open Space
  - Sidewalks

**Land Use**

- Residential
- Vacant
- Institutional
- Commercial
- Public Open Space
- Sidewalks
- Black History Museum
- Mural projects
- 150+ street trees
- Traffic calming
- Streetscape redesign
- Linear playground
- Rooftop basketball

**Existing Land Use**

- Commercial: Dwight St.
- Residential: Harrison Ave.
- Public Open Space: Main St., State St.
- Sidewalks: Market Str.
- Streetscape: Bruce Landon Way

**To Do:**

- Create a gathering place where diverse groups are able to congregate, honoring the traditions of the Underground Railroad
- Design a more permeable edge between Market Street and Thomas Railroad
- Transform a 24,000 sq. ft. parking lot into a vehicle-free plaza
- Design a dedicated play space which Metro Center is lacking
- Slow weekday car traffic
- Activate the first floor of the garage and create a dedicated play space
- Remove the vehicle entrance and a continuation of materiality from sidewalk to street
- Ensure ADA ramps, and various seating options make the playground inclusive and comfortable for kids and parents alike
- Traditional playground, play structures utilize natural features including a stump jump, rock scramble, and multi-level play structure
- Plantings, basketball courts along the alley and also garage roof offer the opportunity for more formalized sports
- This playground will both serve as a gathering place where diverse groups are able to congregate and activate the first floor of the garage

**From Parking to Play Competition Board**

“From Parking to Play” looks to build upon Springfield’s existing assets with a focus on improving the residential experience of the city’s downtown by creating Thomas Thomas Park along Bruce Landon Way, and various edge treatments throughout the city.
Throughout this studio I sought to create a space that celebrates the community of Springfield while honing the city’s rich African American and non-white heritage. This topic is especially important to me, not only because I am a person of color, but also because of my thesis research which focuses on curating the historical and modern narrative of the National Parks to better portray the true narrative and involvement BIPOC (black, indigenous and people of color) had in creating the many celebrated spaces within our diverse country. With this in mind I aim to create a plan to address the lack of historical representation of minorities in not only National Parks but also Legacy Cities like Springfield, Massachusetts where minorities played a substantial role in advancing the development of infrastructure, technology, science and the humanities and have not been given ample credit or celebration for their contributions. Overall the contributions of BIPOC have largely unrecognized as narrative of white people has pushed them to the wayside to be lost in the annals of the cities past.

The methods I have chosen to ameliorate this problem are as follows: The new Springfield Metro Center will incorporate three to four new micro-districts within the streets of Harrison Avenue/Boland Way, Dwight Street, State Street and Columbus Avenue. The districts will feature names of celebrated black activists, modern and historic who have advanced the African American and non-white heritage. This topic is especially important to me, not only because I am a person of color, but also because of my thesis research which focuses on curating the historical and modern narrative of the National Parks to better portray the true narrative and involvement BIPOC (black, indigenous and people of color) had in creating the many celebrated spaces within our diverse country. With this in mind I aim to create a plan to address the lack of historical representation of minorities in not only National Parks but also Legacy Cities like Springfield, Massachusetts where minorities played a substantial role in advancing the development of infrastructure, technology, science and the humanities and have not been given ample credit or celebration for their contributions. Overall the contributions of BIPOC have largely unrecognized as narrative of white people has pushed them to the wayside to be lost in the annals of the cities past.

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The work of John Brown and the like did not stop when the abolition of slavery was written into law. Nor did the Civil Rights Movement stop when segregation in schools was written out of the law. The fight for black lives is still going on and deserves every effort by its’ allies. We must expand the freedom and safety felt by white people to be felt by black and brown people as well. How do we do this then? With my plan for the new design of the Metro Center I will address black representation, community involvement and multicultural socialization to enact change that is authentic, representative of the fabric of Springfield and is most important, original and inspired by the rich stories of the individuals who have come to call the metro center their home and are proud of that. In addition to unifying the space through a motif of celebration of BIPOC, this new corridor of parks and playgrounds, “family rooms” and event areas where young and old, black and brown can gather beneath lush urban canopies surrounded by public art and commerce that celebrates black beauty. I hope that this space will offer an atmosphere that is safe, welcoming and will encourage socialization across all ethnicities. Contenders to be the namesakes of these districts include Mary Barksdale, who fought to desegregate Springfield schools in the 1960s, John Brown, an abolitionist from the early 19th century, Primus Mason, a benefactor and distinguished member of the Springfield community in the mid 19th century, Samuel Osgood, an active conductor of the Underground Railroad, and lastly Thomas Thomas, a former slave from Maryland who eventually partnered with John Brown as an activist in resisting the institution of slavery in the United States (Our Plural History). All of these individuals exemplify the powerful and proud Black voices of the city who played a role in making freedom for all to become a reality in our country.
New Union Station corridor incorporates a narrowed road way and expanded pedestrian corridor where visitors to the city can experience a well-informed entry point from the train or bus. The corridor features seating and up-to-date departure/arrival boards for public transit users. Colorful road paintings will adorn the sPark corridor to inform visitors of where they are while guiding them from the station to the MGM and Mass Mutual Center.

Branching off of the Union Station transit corridor, visitors will find their way by the colorful roadways to the Kaynor Street Cafe and retail corridor where they will find street-side coffee and informal seating where they can sit and enjoy summer foliage or quickly grab a coffee on their way to a concert at the MGM. In addition to cafes the space will feature rainwater retention troughs and well-informed bike lanes to encourage more environmentally-friendly transit.
Glimpse Into the Past at Court Square

In the heart of the historic metro district the re-imagined Court Square will feature scale size minimalist replicas of historic buildings from the abolitionist era and are inspired by the Franklin Court Sculptures in Philadelphia titled “Ghost Structures”. These sculptures will occupy the space year round and serve as a constant reminder of the historic buildings that once surrounded the square.

Granny’s Outdoor Table on Hillman St.

Granny’s Outdoor Baking Table will be the focal point of the north end of the sPark activities corridor. The space features an outdoor patio for dining, gathering and all manner of public performances scheduled by Springfield’s community organizations. After guests have enjoyed delicious begnets from Granny’s they can wander to the open air gathering space next door where informal performances such as rallies and impromptu music will occur. The archways featured at the site will be used for community advertising from local events such as the Springfield farmers market and ReGreen Springfield events.
Mosaic Park on Bruce Landon Way will serve as a post-concert gathering space located between two major points of interest in the Metro Center District. Within the park, visitors will find interactive sculptures representative of the historic buildings of 19th century. The sculptures will provide an informal play space where children can roam and peek from behind each of the brushed metal panels while at the same time learning about the history of the area. The park will also feature a large open lawn for picnicking and gathering near the outdoor stage where local bands may provide after concert music. Market Street, located just next door will offer food and drinks for the location and create a welcoming atmosphere for visitors and community members alike.

Pynchon to Riverfront Corridor on Main Street

Located on Main Street adjacent to Court Square, the new Pynchon Plaza to Riverfront corridor features rainwater retention basins with artistic bike lane dividers and wayfinding art on the roads surface. In addition to being a bright and active corridor, the Pynchon to Riverfront corridor will feature mural art on buildings nearby.
SPRINGFIELD’S HERITAGE PARK: A PLACE FOR ART, COMMUNITY, & CULTURE IN THE HEART OF DOWNTOWN SPRINGFIELD

Joseph Langlois

Community Backyard
- Grilling station
- Banquet style picnic tables
- Public Patio
- Local Market
- Rooftop Community Garden

Springfield’s Heritage Park
- Event Lawn
- Wooded Paths
- Amphitheatre
- Developed Veterans Way
- Hammock Grove
- Viewing Hill
- Covered Archway
- Integrated Art and Memorials
- Increased Pedestrian Space and Connectivity
- Old First Art Gallery

Heritage Park + Riverfront Park Linkage
This project aims to build off of already occurring projects in downtown Springfield and suggests capitalizing on the existing momentum as a way to potentially expand investment and development. Projects like the recent Pynchon Plaza redesign, ongoing Court Square Hotel restoration, and planned Mass Mutual Garage renovation all have existing momentum that can easily be brought to nearby locations in need of new life.

Areas like the ground level parking lot along Bruce Landon Way, Veterans Way across from the Municipal Complex, the parking lot nestled behind the Court Square Hotel, and the entire southwestern edge of Court Square all have massive potential to be redesigned into spaces that facilitate community activity and increase visual connectedness, enhance overall character, and boost the appeal of the downtown area.

The introduction of a Heritage Park celebrates all the contributions African Americans have made to the city of Springfield and is a central part of this proposal. 15 distinct locations were identified to place commemorative statues honoring those in the black community who have helped build Springfield into what it is today. Additionally, three large entry plazas and two other locations were identified as places for large scale semi-permanent sculpture works.

The final part of this project seeks to link the riverfront area with downtown and re-establish the connection lost when the highway and train tracks were developed, drastically separating the urban area from the water and cutting off one of downtown Springfield’s largest assets. By reconnecting pedestrian access from Court Square, through and past the interstate and railway, down to the riverfront, a major missing link will be replaced in the form of a new major walkway and general pedestrian destination.
Above: Zoomed in plan showing the proposed Community Backyard along Bruce Landon Way.

Left: Plan showing the primary areas of proposed redesign.

Focus Area

- Amphitheater
- Event Lawn
- Wooded Paths
- Covered Archway
- Viewing Hill
- Rooftop Garden
- Public Patio
- Grilling & Seating
- Food Market
- Residential Parking
- Veteran’s Way

Community Backyard

- Rooftop Community Garden
- Local Market
- Public Patio
- Community Backyard
- Above: Zoomed in plan showing the proposed Community Backyard along Bruce Landon Way.
Heritage Park Crossing

This perspective shows proposed conditions at the crossing from Heritage Park toward Riverfront Park. The proposed conditions are much more inviting and safe for pedestrians on the sidewalk along East Columbus Avenue.

The plan shows the locations of proposed large-scale art installations and African American memorial statues in Heritage Park, located adjacent to Court Square on the footprint of the existing courthouse.

Heritage Park

★

Community Backyard
○ Grilling station
○ Banquet style picnic tables
○ Public Patio
○ Local Market
○ Rooftop Community Garden

★

Springfields Heritage Park
○ Event Lawn
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Heritage Park + Riverfront Park Linkage
A safer, more accessible Riverfront Crossing under I-91 is a main goal of this proposal, seen above. This new crossing aims to mitigate the difficulties presented by E. Columbus Ave, I-91, and the railroad tracks that separate Downtown from the Riverfront Park.
ARTFULLY RESOURCEFUL
Revealing water through art and blue-green infrastructure
Patrick Burns
Artfully Resourceful is a public art initiative in Springfield, MA to stimulate and connect the half-mile corridor from the museum quadrangle to the riverfront park. Incorporating blue-green infrastructure strategies into public art simultaneously mitigates urban heat effect and alleviates pressure on the City’s stormwater system. These strategies include a series of rain barrels for collection that can be designed and fabricated by the community to contain water. A large detention basin at the lowest grade serves as a place for overflow and treatment. A key element of blue-green infrastructure implementation is education. Each intervention will provide educational signage to explain the process of water management and its benefits.

Along this corridor, a new garage is expected to replace the existing one. This is an opportunity for the city to rethink how this development can serve the existing community, particularly its marginalized communities who live downtown, while still attract visitors alike. Furthermore, today, a large surface parking lot is located between the garage and the Market Street shops. A proposed mixed-use building replaces the surface lot and completes the pedestrian commercial corridor of the Market Street shops. This portion of the project is meant to be a catalyst for future development which formalizes another corridor to Union Station.

Other locations, like the building facade of the Mass Mutual convention center, an updated War Memorial on Court Street, and an improved E Columbus Ave are examples of providing more seating and shade while also incorporating water resource management and stormwater mitigation with public art.
The new garage and proposed infill development activates and formalizes a green corridor to Union Station. The new mixed-use development replaces former surface parking lots.
New Bruce Landon Way

New Bruce Landon Way is a gathering space for residents and visitors of Downtown Springfield. The meandering form of the corridor emulates a stream and offers opportunity to sit, gather, or view art installations. A series of vegetated swales collect water from buildings, the street, and paths to allow for infiltration. This alleviates pressure on the city’s stormwater system. The new garage is setback from the street providing a play area and a small plaza. The south-facing facade is a perfect spot for public art and a climbing green trellis.

Segments of the garage have a green roof to reduce runoff before being channeled along facades of the garage. Water finally enters rain barrels or vegetated swales. A small rill in the center of the pathway captures some runoff before meeting a swale. This is another example of artfully revealing water on site.

The proposed mixed-use building features a cafe and stage for public performance. Portions of the ground floor of the garage have commercial space for retail or an art gallery.
Updates to the exterior of the Mass Mutual Center include murals, an additional roof water collection system, and a small rain garden along the building. Educational signage also describes stormwater management and benefits of increased vegetation.

Bottom: Additional seating under a grove of Linden trees creates a pleasant space at the Memorial Grove. A new memorial will honor the 54th MA Regiment, the second African-American regiment serving the Union Army in the Civil War. An updated stormwater system collects water from the street, enters a curb opening and travels through a runnel to an infiltration basin.

Left: Shortening the width of E Columbus Ave allows for street trees to act as a noise and wind barrier from I-91. Wayfinding art directs people to Connecticut River and a constructed wetland serves as overflow of stormwater in an underutilized space in front of the highway on ramp.

Memorial Grove + E Columbus Ave
Additional seating under a grove of Linden trees creates a pleasant space at the Memorial Grove. A new memorial will honor the 54th MA Regiment, the second African-American regiment serving the Union Army in the display a unified theme to indicate a continuous path from the museum quadrangle to the riverfront park.

Examples to address this include crosswalks which will be painted by local artists and to the city while also being the link to the riverfront. Today, barriers, namely, I-91, affect the continuity This initiative sees public art as a driver towards providing ecosystem services like increased biodiversity by the community to contain water. A large detention basin at the lowest grade serves as a place for into public art simultaneously mitigates urban heat effect and alleviates pressure on the city's stormwater system.

Channeling roof water alongside building facades reveals water as a dynamic resource. Artfully Resourceful incorporates painted rain barrels along the corridor to increase visibility of the fabric. Furthermore, stormwater runoff is exacerbated with almost no pervious surfaces for infiltration. Underutilized. The existing large garage and adjacent lot and completes the pedestrian commercial corridor of the Market Street shops. This development who live downtown, while still attract visitors alike. Furthermore, today, a large surface parking lot is located with almost no pervious surfaces for infiltration. Shortening the width of E Columbus Ave allows for street trees to act as a noise and wind barrier from I-91. Wayfinding art directs people to

Artfully Resourceful Board
Artfully Resourceful connects the Museum Quadrangle to the Riverfront park by incorporating blue-green infrastructure strategies into public art installations.
Community Bench is a nomadic, sculptural intervention designed to activate post-covid street life in the heart of downtown. The bench is designed to be participatory along its full timeline - from construction, to decoration, to its malleable form.
Residual Spaces / Resilient Narratives
re-energizes underutilized space in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in historic civic space in the United States. Low-cost design strategies such as large-scale murals and sculptural street furniture are combined with contemporary memorials and re-greened parks and plazas to layer new public amenities into the existing civic fabric. This methodology seeks to provide rapidly deployable design interventions aimed to build upon the momentum of current cultural activism and catalyze the re-emergence of post-COVID street life, while remaining flexible to future growth and shifting community needs. Design locations are chosen to strengthen existing pedestrian connections and build upon recent redevelopment along the cultural corridor of Bruce Landon Way from the newly redesigned Pynchon Plaza to the end of Court Square along Columbus Avenue’s access to the renovated riverfront.

On Bruce Landon Way, Intervention1 redesigns the Springfield Convention Center Garage and adjacent parking lot into a new downtown park with outdoor community art exhibition space, while anticipating future infill development and increasing pedestrian connections to the commercial corridor of historic Market Street.

Further South, Intervention2 proposes the installation of Community Bench, a work of kinetic street furniture built in collaboration with the community that invites the public to exert their influence in Springfield’s most persistent landscape of Court Square.

Intervention3 re-purposes the historic First Church as a community center and re-imagines the surrounding grounds as the commemorative landscape of Breathe Plaza adjacent to the Hampden County Court House. Breathe Plaza offers a different take on the memorial landscape with its dedication not to a singular past event, but to the ongoing activism of the Black Lives Matter movement and actionable support for the Breathe Act.
The redesign of SCCG and establishment of Abolition Park creates a new hub of activity at the intersection of the cultural corridor of Bruce Landon Way and the east-west transit connection from Union Station. This new public park offers a more casual public green in comparison to the memorial space of historic Court Square, with a street-facing plaza that transitions into an open lawn for recreation and events.

Brick street resurfacing and a large-scale street mural helps to dissolve Bruce Landon Way into one continuous streetscape that better integrates the new park with the Mass Mutual Center.

The open design of the new park, framed with vertical greening of the garage in the background makes for an inviting landscape as event visitors pour out of the Mass Mutual Center.

SCCG rooftop rec center is imagined with an indoor-sized soccer field that doubles as an ice rink in winter, community greenhouses, and events stage overlooking the new park below.

SPRINGFIELD CONVENTION CENTER GARAGE (SCCG) REDESIGN

The garage is redesigned for mixed use with recreational space at roof level and flexible design at street level in anticipation of future commercial infill development.

PARKING GARAGE FEATURES

- Double Height 1st Floor
- Double Height 1st Floor (3rd)
- Vine Trellis
- Vertical greening
- Beautifies garage air
- Detachable Panel Walls
- Infill development of street-level store fronts

ABOLITION PARK

The redesign of SCCG and establishment of Abolition Park creates a new hub of activity at the intersection of the cultural corridor of Bruce Landon Way and the east-west transit connection from Union Station. This new public park offers a more casual public green in comparison to the memorial space of historic Court Square, with a street-facing plaza that transitions into an open lawn for recreation and events.

The pedestrian-only alleyway adjacent to the SCCG is highlighted by a large “framing structure” that is meant to draw visual interest to the park, provide seating, and act as an outdoor gallery space. The frames can be dressed in a variety of media - whether painting canvases or projection screens are stretched across them, installations hung on all sides, or to act as a stage backdrop for performances.

Converting the alleyway to foot-traffic only and creating pedestrian passages through the garage’s ground floor increases the porosity of the block and connections to shops on historic Market St.
Community Bench is a work of sculptural street furniture proposed to be built in collaboration with the community and temporarily installed in Court Square. The bench is kinetic, participatory, and movable; envisioned to be constructed in modular sections measuring 6 feet long, 8 feet tall, and 8 feet wide. The structure is composed of 2”x2” wooden boards that can individually rotate 180 degrees on a hinge held at tension, allowing the boards to be arranged in various configurations by the user. Inspired by an urban acupuncture approach, the installation is imagined as a method of building community interest and engagement in an early phase of the master plans’ development.
The plaza redesign increases the height of the existing mounded topography with the use of retaining walls that double as seating. This is done to provide intimacy and insularity from the surrounding streets. Walking into plaza, the walls gently rise as the vegetation surrounds and embraces the visitor.

The plaza is redesigned with a central circular gathering area that breaks down into a grove of trees in raised planters as the space transitions to the more utilitarian area of the community center.

1. The two-sided projection of BREATHE creates a doubling between the more introverted space within the plaza and the memorial’s expression outwards towards East Columbus Ave. However, both views display the seasonality of the landscape treatment.
The proposed design interventions are envisioned as pieces of larger axes of influence, achieved through a phased approach.
Historically, Springfield is a city with a deep legacy of social justice movements, particularly the civil rights era. The city's current cultural activism and challenges remain tied to the period of Black Lives Matter. This project proposes a singular past event but to the ongoing activism of Black Lives Matter, offering a different take on the memorial landscape with its dedication not to commemorate a single life, but rather the collective impact of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Intervention 1 redesigns the Springfield Convention Mutual Center. This intervention takes inspiration from the Springfield Bicentennial commemorative landscape, aiming to hold space for the plurality of emotions that may be experienced in this historical context. The installation is imagined as a method of building community interest and engagement as an early phase of the master plans' development.

The intervention is envisioned to be constructed in modular sections measuring 6 feet long, 8 feet tall, and 8 feet wide. The Community Bench is a work of kinetic street furniture built in collaboration with the community and temporarily installed in Court Square. The bench is kinetic, participatory, and moveable, serving as an outdoor gallery. The bench is hung on all sides, or to act as a stage backdrop for installations that are meant to draw visual interest to the park.

The bench is a site-specific artwork that carves out a 50-foot circular gathering area where the words "I CAN'T BREATHE" are carved in low relief almost flush with the ground, while the "BREATHE" projects out in high relief. The design alters the existing highly directional organization of pathways, to reimage the adjacent landscape as a memorial to the Black Lives Matter era of civil rights activism that we are in today. The memorial also challenges issues around representation, collective agency, and public expression in contemporary memorials and regreened parks and plazas to layer new public amenities into the existing civic fabric. This methodology seeks to provide topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the topics of diverse representation, collective agency, and public expression in the heart of historic downtown Springfield in a series of three independent yet coordinated interventions designed to cultivate conversation on the