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Springfield`s Upper Lyman Warehouse District - Visions for Revitalization

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Abstract

This report documents the work of the Senior Urban Design Studio in Springfield's Upper Lyman District in downtown Springfield. It is part of the Metro Center neighborhood and adjacent to the Union Station that will be revitalized in 2016. The district is challenged by high vacancies and general abandonment. Housing opportunities and market-rate housing in particular are very low. The primary goal of the project was to develop a staged vision to revitalize and rediscover the Upper Lyman Warehouse District and to improve livability in the heart of downtown Springfield for employers, employees, residents, and visitors. The following recommendations can be articulated:

Zoning regulations and creative incentives should encourage mixed land uses.

Strategies such as adaptive reuse for significant historic buildings or urban infill could keep some of the historic character.

New housing typologies should attract a diverse clientele to accommodate different styles of life, create a robust mix and support the vibrancy of the city.

New retail with focus on grocery markets can attract people to live in downtown and provides food security.

A pedestrian and bicycle-oriented circulation system should connect to the Arc of Recreation and the Connecticut River Walk and Bikeway and to local assets like Downtown, the Union Station and the Quadrangle Museums.

Include strategies should transform our area on a short-term basis and foster shaping a community. Art performances, temporary public art, urban agriculture, more specific programming for vacant land can help identify and shape places.

Designing the streetscapes as visual experiences to encourage walking.

One idea for a site responsive intervention on Lyman Street by Chris Johnson was developed further and realized in the fall of 2011 by Professor Frank Slegers as art mural COMMUNITY SPIRIT - EI ESPIRITU DE LA COMUNIDAD.

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