



# Springfield Panel

Urban Land Institute  
September 24-29, 2006

# Acknowledgements

- City of Springfield
- Mass Development
- Springfield Finance Control Board
- Economic Development Council
- Chamber of Commerce
- Interviewees





# Our Panel

- **Lew Bolan, Principal**  
Bolan Smart, Assoc. Washington, DC
- **Elizabeth Davison, Director,**  
Montgomery Cty. Dept. of Housing  
and Community Development, MD
- **Barry Elbasani, FAIA,**  
**President**  
ELS Architecture and Urban Design,  
Berkeley, CA
- **Patrick Fox, President**  
Saint Consulting, Hingham, MA
- **Jeff Kaplan, Associate**  
Wulfe Urban, Houston, TX
- **Ray Kuniansky, Jr., COO**  
Atlanta Neighborhood Development  
Partnership, Atlanta, GA
- **Ellen McLean, Partner**  
M<sup>2</sup>, Pittsburgh, PA
- **Alvin McNeal, Senior Vice-  
President**  
Fraser Forbes Company, LLC,  
McLean, VA

# Our Assignment

- Assess Market Potential
  - Assets and Opportunities
  - Role and Brand of the City
- Analyze Proposed Projects
- Look at Physical Linkages
  - To the River
  - From neighborhoods to downtown
- Consider the Economic Development Approach
- Review City Structure and Development Process
- Suggest Implementation





# Our Process

- Read extensive briefing materials
- Tour most of the City
- Receive on-site briefing
- Interview approximately 130 people
  - Residents
  - Employers and employees
  - Investors/lenders



# What Did We Hear?

- Frustration, annoyance, embarrassment re: current situation and Control Board
- Applause for the work to date
- Continue discipline and progress
- Strong love of the City
- Both downtown AND neighborhoods must thrive.
- Government the answer?

# Overarching Principles



# Strong Leadership = Springfield's Success

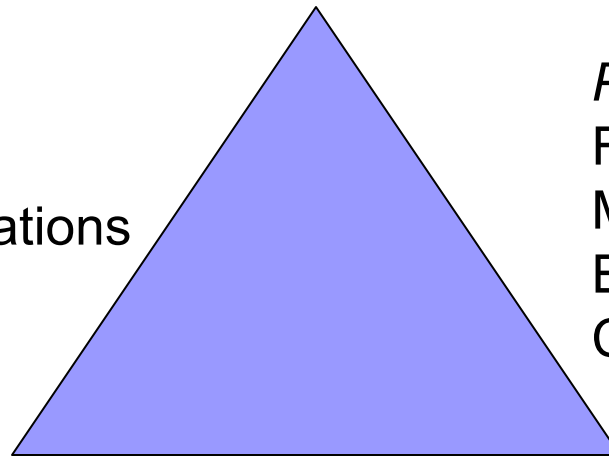
- Leaders at the highest levels, across all sectors—public and private--must commit and engage positively

## *Private Sector:*

Business leaders  
Nonprofit organizations


## *Public Sector:*

Finance Control Board  
Mass Development  
Elected Representatives  
City Staff



## *Community:*

Citizens  
Neighborhood associations



# Strong Governance = Long Term Health

- The City with the Financial Control Board has made enormous strides
- The job is only partially done

Therefore, the Board must remain for another term



# Springfield Guiding Principles

- Commitment to excellence
- Adhering to the highest ethical standards
- Ensuring high value for tax dollars
- Insisting on customer satisfaction
- Being open, accessible and responsive
- Appreciating diversity
- Striving for continuous improvement
- Being accountable



# Diversity and Inclusiveness

- Accept diversity as here to stay
- Continue outreach and education of minorities
- Make sure staff looks like the community
- Celebrate a City of many cultures
- Promote a climate of tolerance
- Develop a grassroots leadership program

# Market Potential:

## *Bringing the City Back*

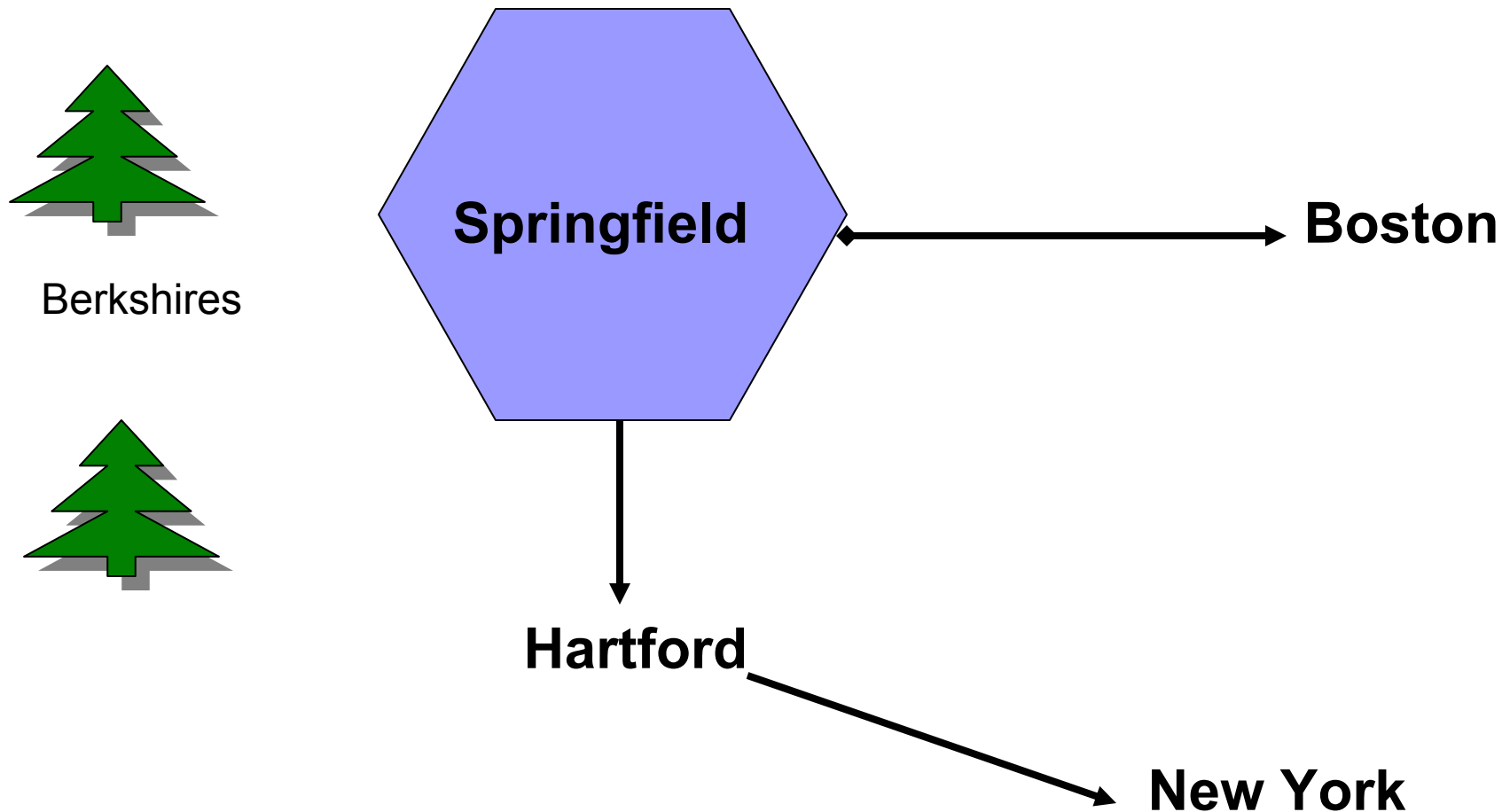


# The City's Housing Stock...

- Is both a Blessing...  
and a Curse



*The City's centrality has not been capitalized on.*



# Downtown has POTENTIAL



- Adaptive re-use
- Possibly higher education
- Main Street revitalization

# *Need for more aggressive marketing*

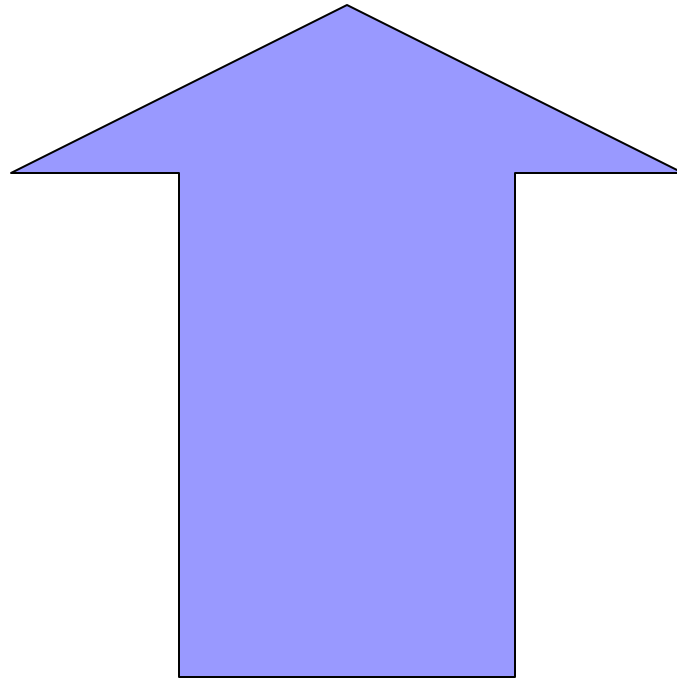
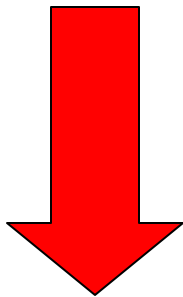
- To businesses, in area and out
- To residents, existing and prospective
  - To young people
  - And empty nesters
- To visitors and tourists



# *Are you your own worst enemy?*

- Talk the City up

- Not DOWN



# Springfield Reinventing Itself

- Culture
- Economy
- Government



# *Strengthening the Present, Planning the Future*



# Springfield

- 35 parks, ponds, water in virtually all neighborhoods
- Beautiful homes, trees, churches, buildings
- Major institutions, businesses, cultural, educational
- Compact: 17 neighborhoods within 15 minutes of downtown



# Neighborhood Strategies

- Conservation areas
  - High homeownership
  - Good services
  - *Example: 16 Acres, Forest Park*
  - *Strategy: Enhance with capital improvements, beautification*



# Neighborhood Strategies

- Transition areas
  - Moving...up or down
- *Example: Hungry Hill, McKnight*
- *Strategy:*
  - *Key projects to act as stabilizers*
  - *Key capital improvements*
  - *Focus on crime prevention*
  - *Support retail and services*



# Neighborhood Strategies

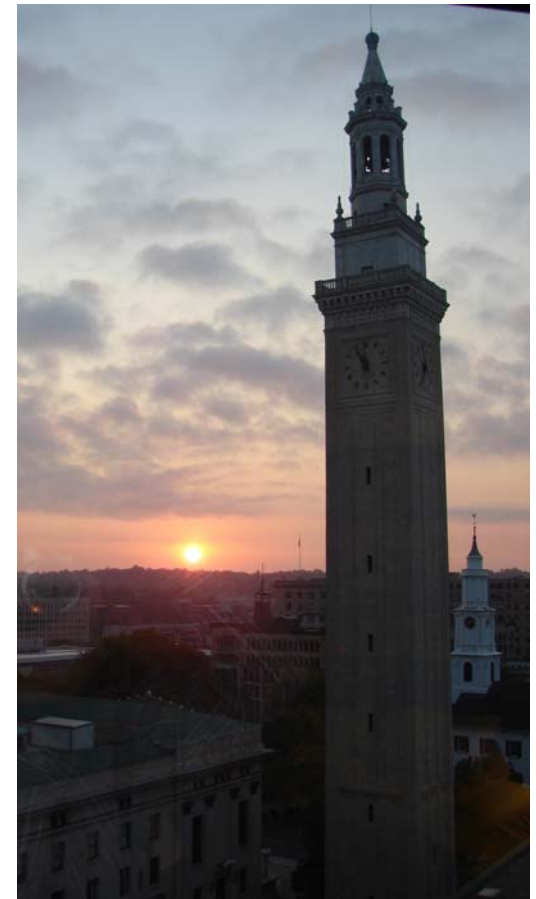
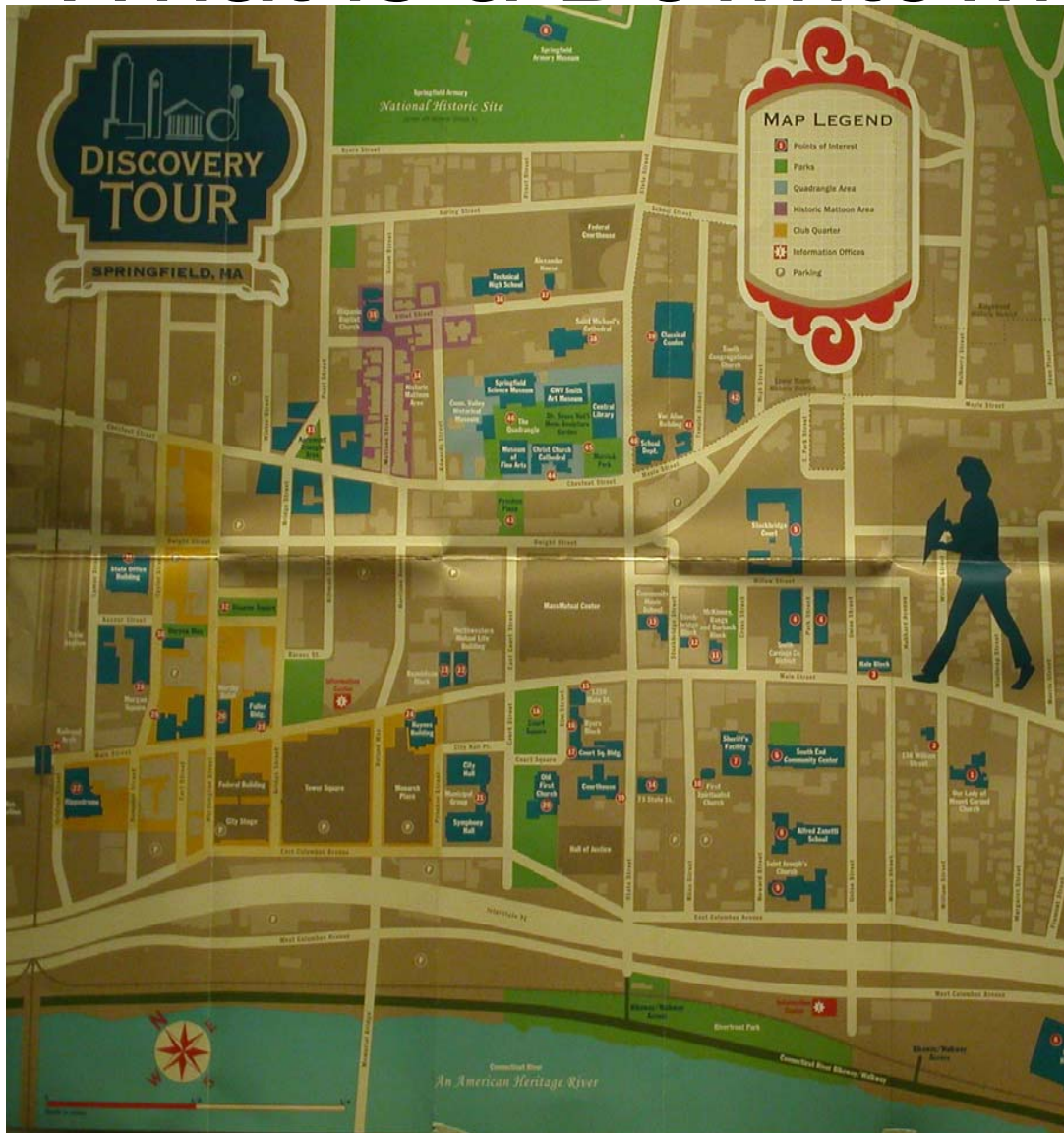
- Intervention Areas
  - Low homeownership
  - High crime
  - Low property values
- *Example: South End/Hollywood/Gemini*
- *Strategy:*
  - *Major, catalytic projects*
  - *Law enforcement*



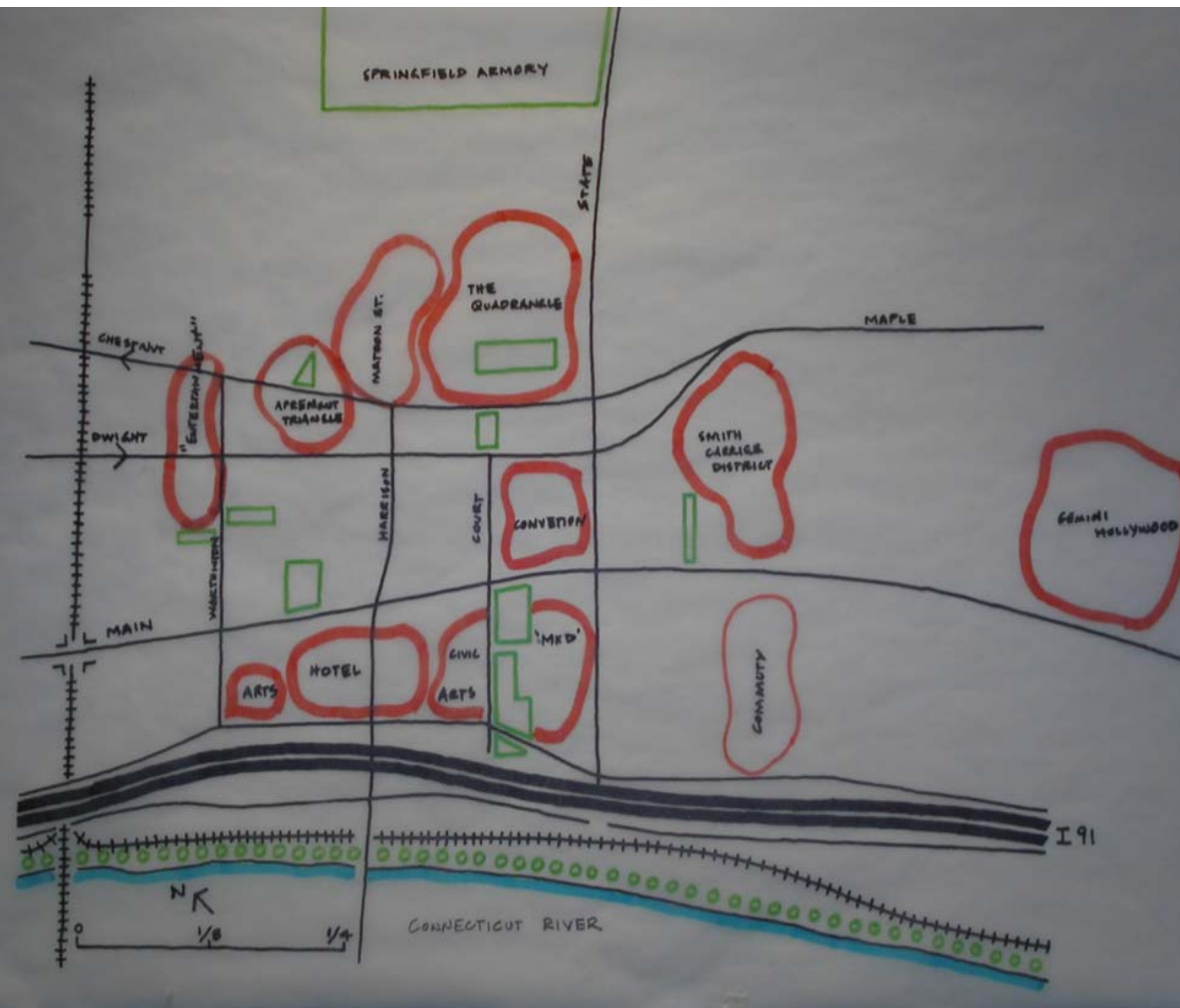
# Downtown

- Crucial to City (and metro) success
- Lots to applaud:
  - Employers
  - Civic center
  - Museums
  - Residential
- Compact
- Walkable
- Sense of history
- Lots of parking
- Accessible

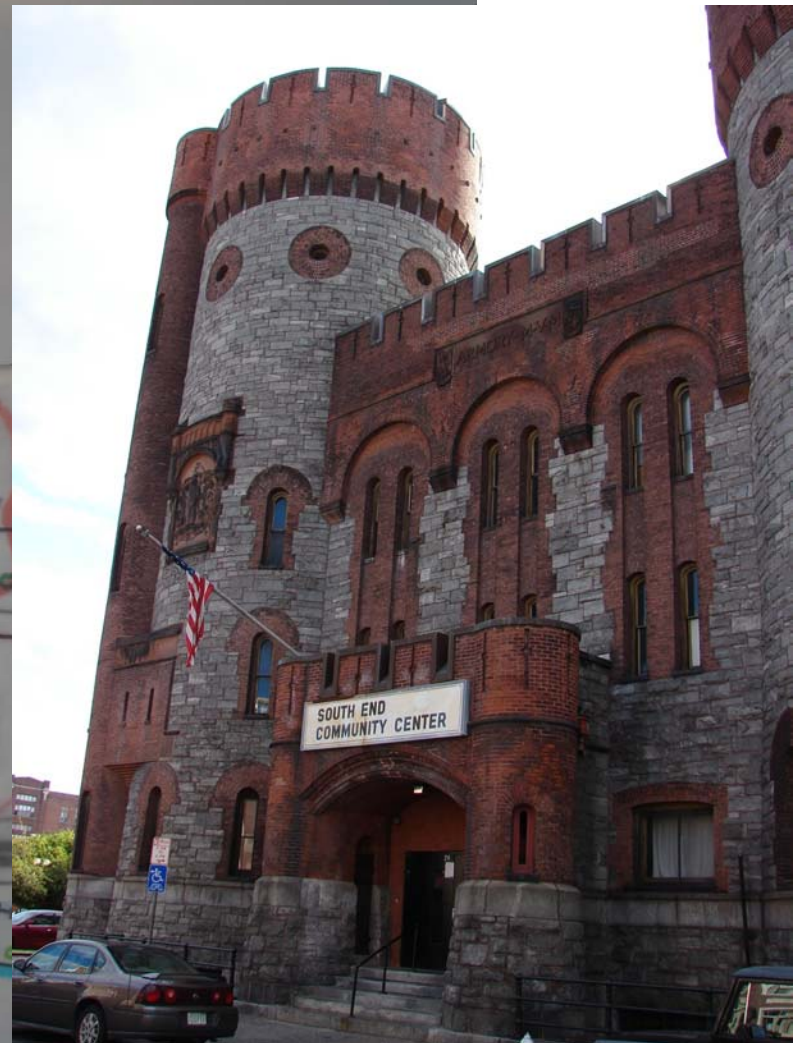
# What is a Downtown?



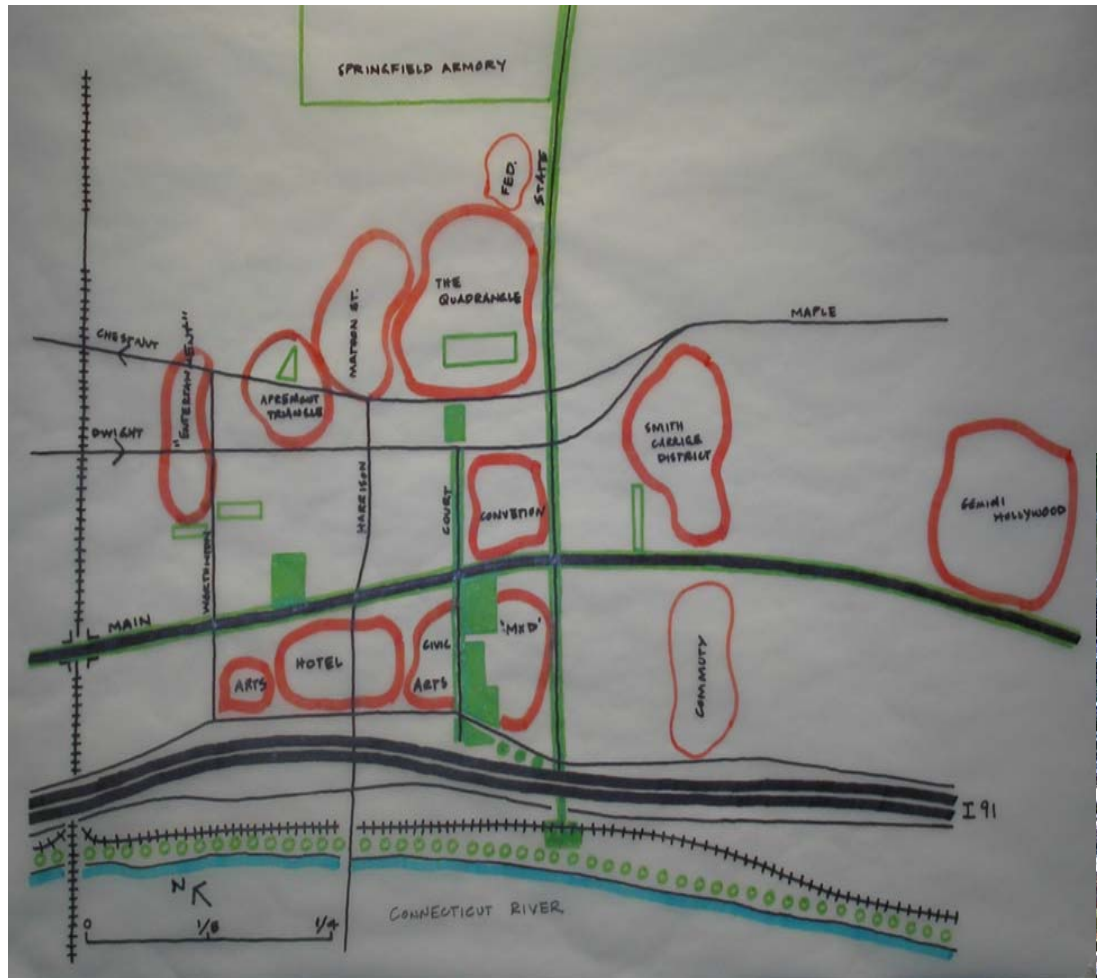
# Downtown Districts



# Walkability



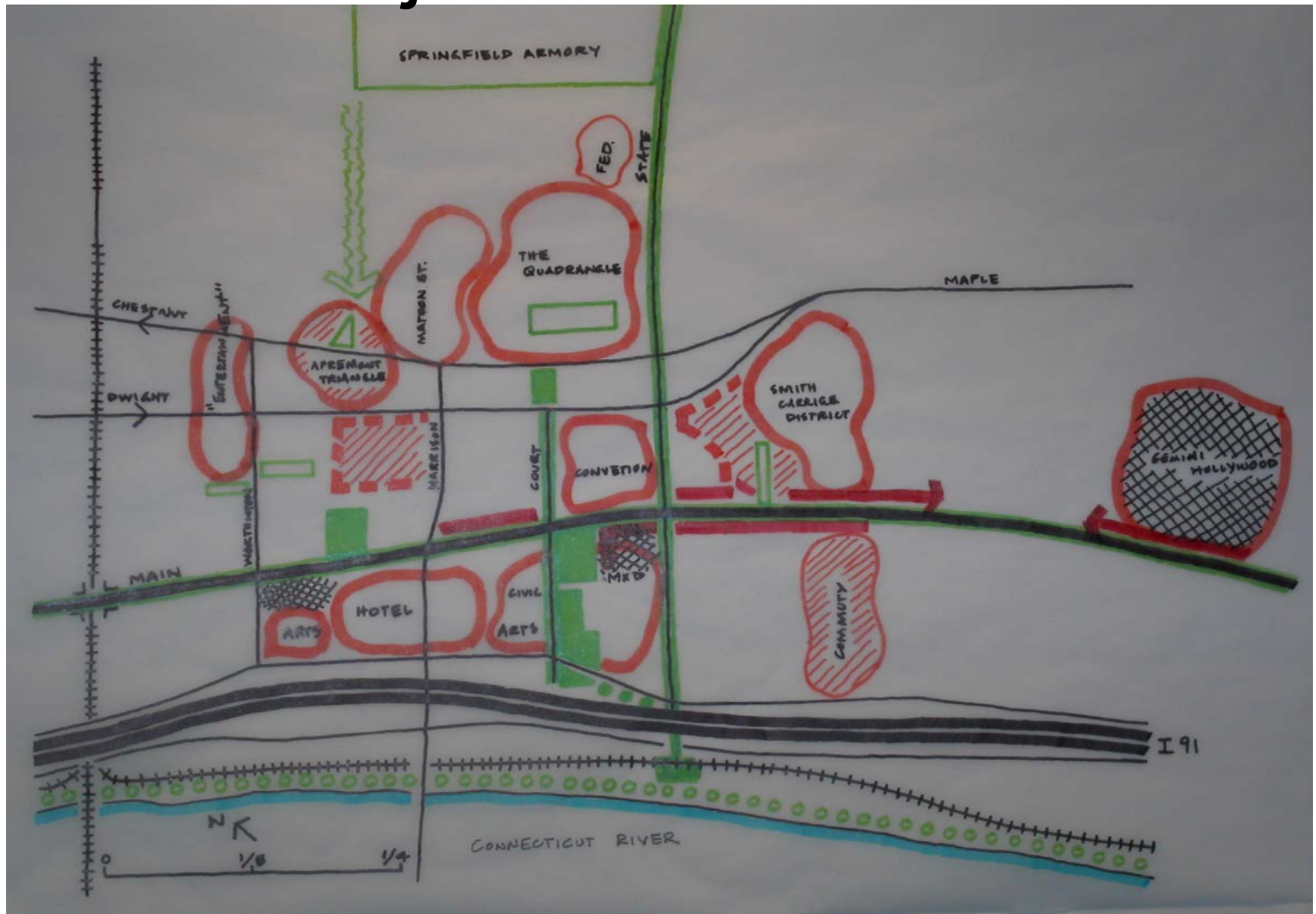
# Linkages



# Threshold Projects



# Future Projects of Interest



# Development Strategies





# Think Like a Master Developer

- Identify strengths and leverage them
- Inventory and classify vacant structures
- Secure strategic partners

# Goals:


- Reduce crime: in process
- Increase home ownership:
  - Bundle nearby vacant lots and sell to qualified builders
  - Sell City owned homes to qualified residents



# Be business friendly



- Partner with major employers
- Enforce regulations fairly and ethically



*Springfield must set clear goals  
and establish accountability*

# 8 criteria for use of scarce resources (both land and \$\$)

- Does it strengthen downtown?
- Does it provide skilled labor jobs or pay livable wages?
- Does it leverage private investment, generally \$3-4 private/\$1 public
- Does it improve the quality of life in Springfield?
- Does it increase home ownership?
- Does it positively impact real estate values
- Is it a catalyst for future, good development?
- Does it increase local tax revenues



# *Implementation, Making it Reality*

# Communicate Results

- Develop ongoing communications plan
- Publicize what has been achieved to date
- Develop active participation by community
- Develop feedback mechanisms such as call in shows and virtual town meetings
- Use the web site actively





# Tools and techniques for neighborhood improvements

- Develop enhanced neighborhood conservation strategy
  - Code enforcement strategy
  - Engagement with civic and neighborhood associations
  - Creative partnerships with other agencies
  - Repair condemned and tax delinquent property where possible
  - Bulk sales of vacant lots to small builders for infill housing
  - New Homesteading program: \$1 houses for owners
- Educate and regulate landlords thru licensing



# Planning and Zoning

- Processes need to be more predictable
- Master plans must be developed and adopted
- Full, qualified staff needs to be hired
- Special permit process needs to be revised and done by Planning Board
- Neighborhood plans must be updated and adopted



# Short Term Projects

- ❑ Old Federal Building
- ❑ Gemini & Hollywood sites
- ❑ Court Square
- ❑ Raze the York Street jail



# Mid-Term Projects

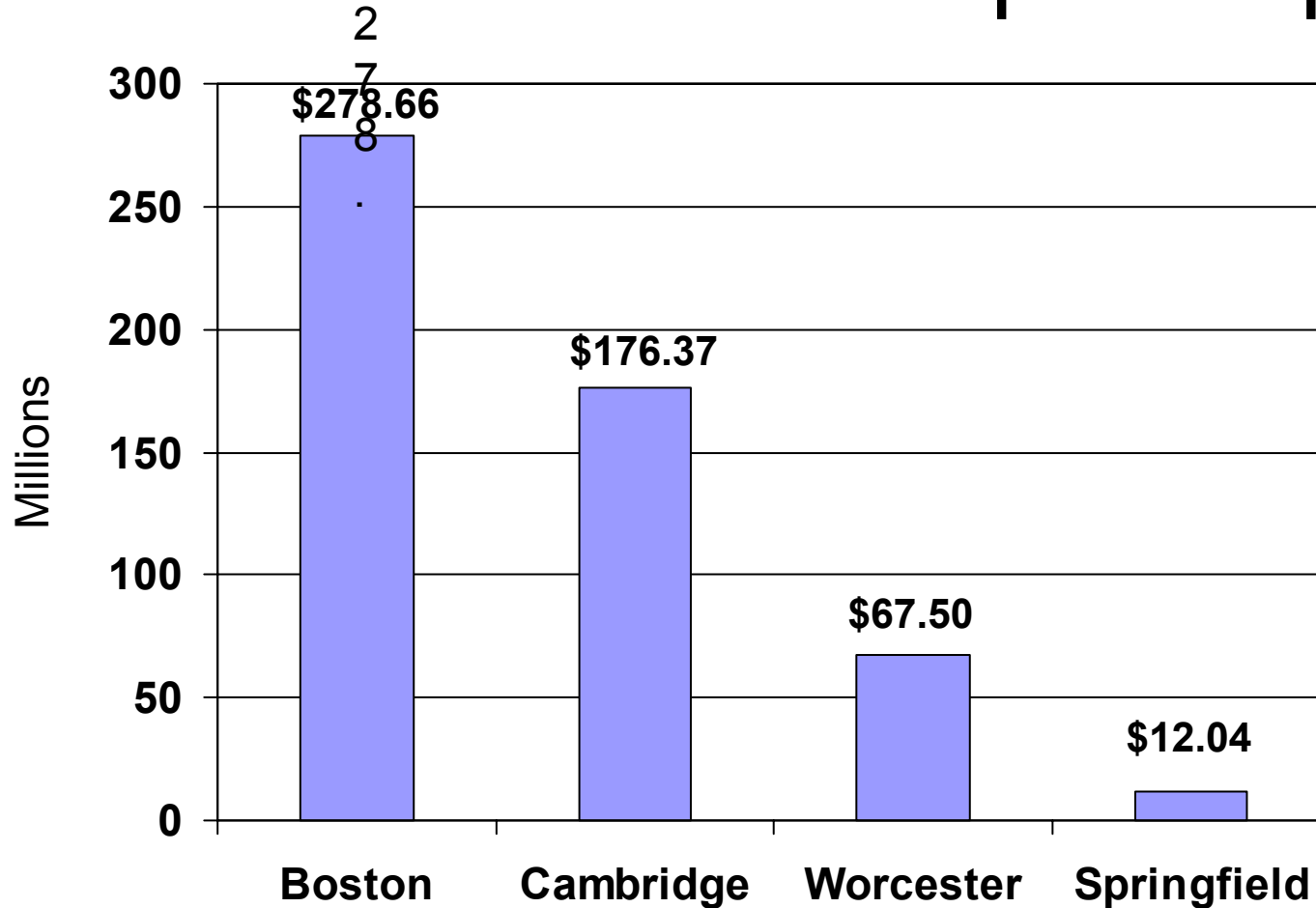
- ❖ Main & State St. corridors as well as Court St. improvements, including State Street connection to the riverfront
- ❖ Expansion of Springfield Carriage Co. residential district
- ❖ Introduction of additional retailing along Main Street at the Urban Core.
- ❖ Resolution of the Civic Center parking deck



# State Support must be Equitable

- Together the leadership must work at the state level to resolve inequities in the way Additional Assistance appropriations are allocated to cities and towns in the Pioneer Valley

# Additional Assistance per Capita





# Use of Funds

- Develop new sources of revenues
  - Rental property licensing fees
  - Sale of vacant land
  - More State Additional Assistance Funds
- Use HOME money for larger projects
- Focus some CDBG \$ on housing rehabilitation in neighborhoods

# Summary

- You are a Stakeholder
- Springfield IS the urban center of the Pioneer Valley
- ALL must get in the game and thrive
- Neighborhood strategies
- Key projects

