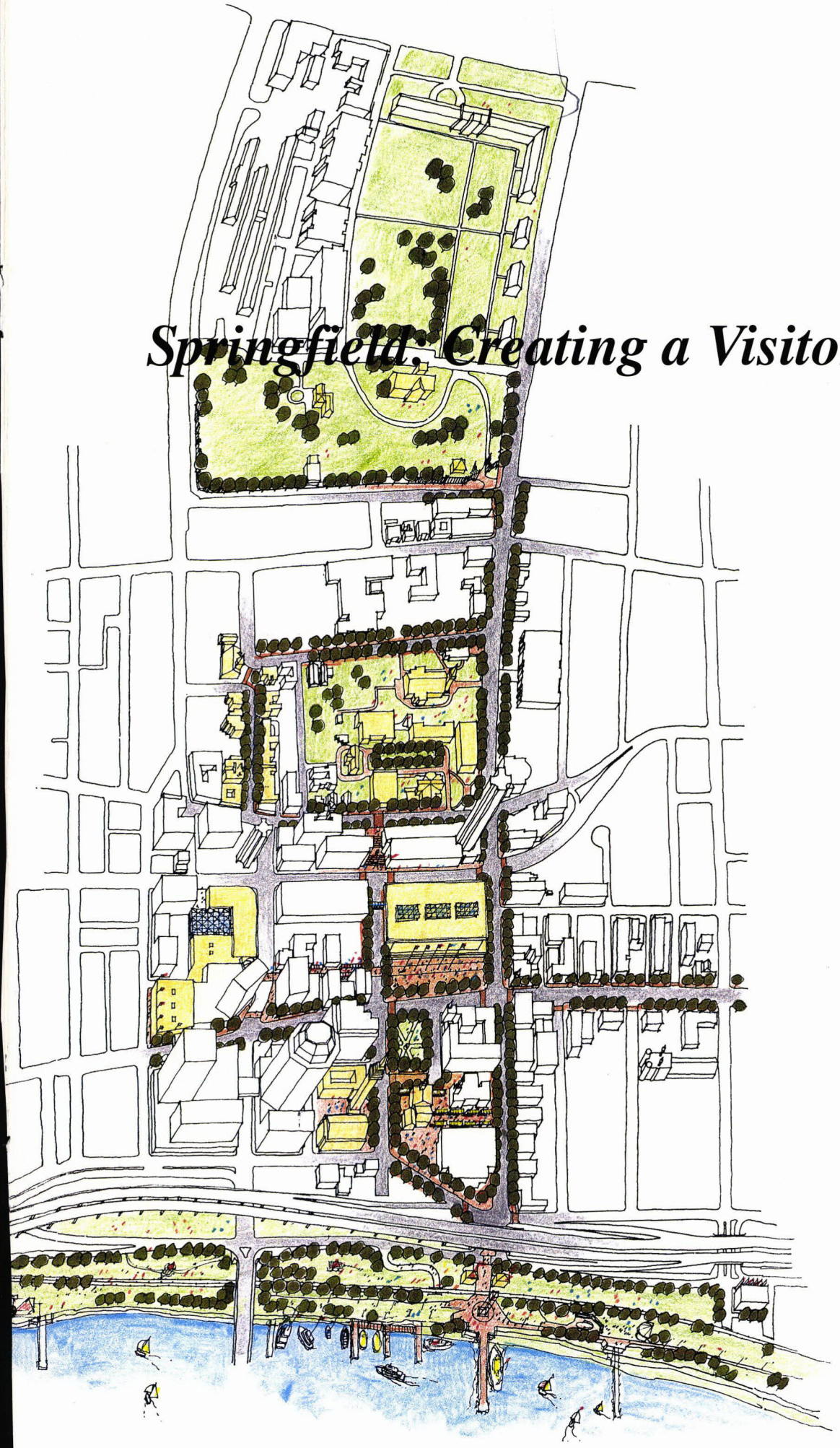
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*National Park Service*

*North Atlantic Region*

*Special Resource Study*

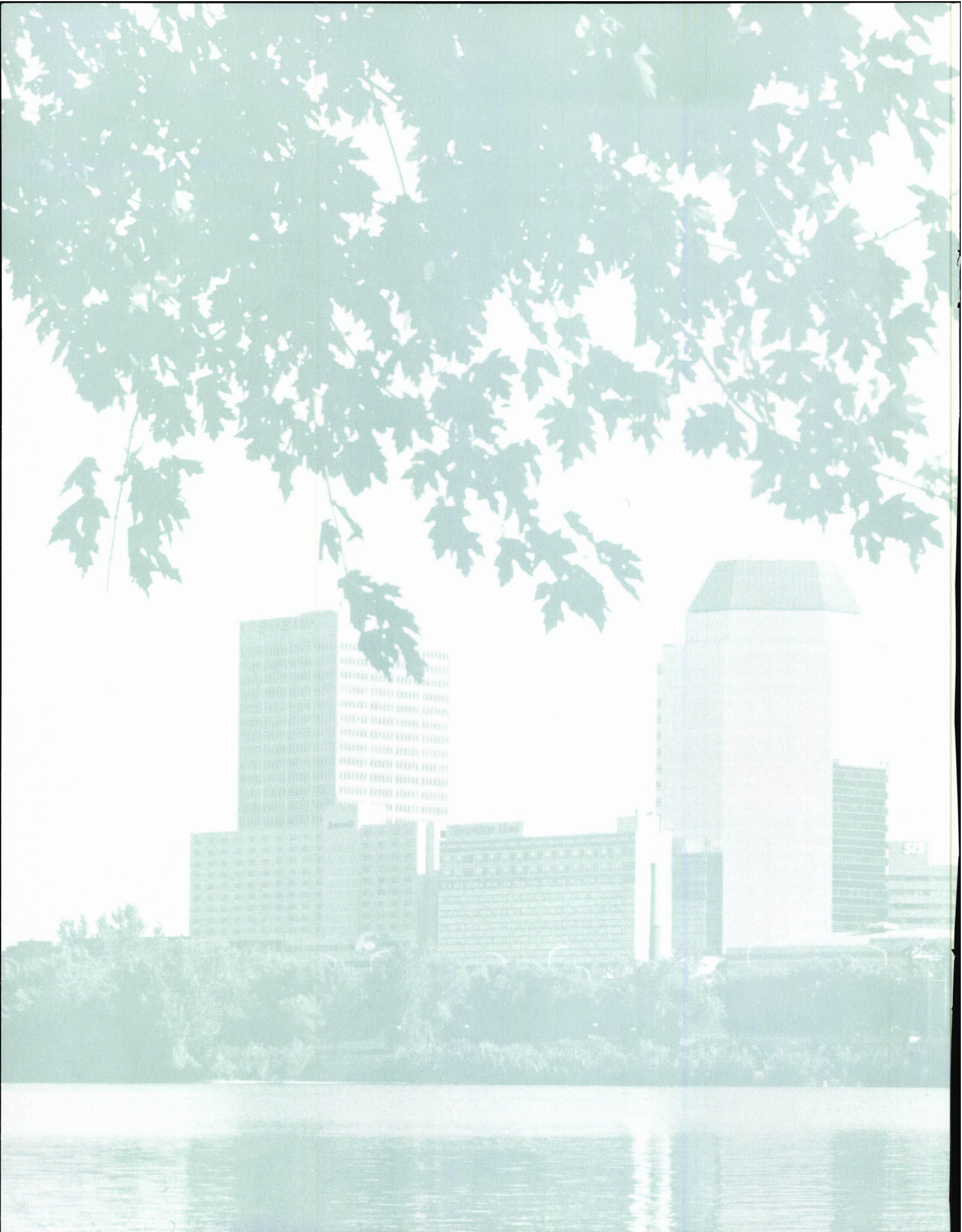
# *Springfield: Creating a Visitor Economy*

*prepared for:*

**City of Springfield**
*Robert T. Markel, Mayor*

**Springfield Central**
*Springfield, Massachusetts*

*October 1994*





*September 29, 1994*

*Greetings:*

*I want to thank all those who worked creatively in partnership, to produce* Springfield: Creating a Visitor Economy. *Special mention must go to Springfield Central, the National Park Service and the many City departments involved. This document, describing the basis for the community consensus on Springfield's future, is a valuable tool in garnering the needed support to make our plans for a regional "visitor economy" bear fruit in the near future.*

*The cooperation of the National Park Service and the work done by City Planning, Parks and Library and Museums people, working with very capable consultants, has given us a blueprint that will lead to a more prosperous economy, more exciting experiences for tourists and a better life for the people of Springfield and the region. The efforts of Springfield's public/private partnership in support of the regional, cooperative development of tourism in the Pioneer Valley are helping shape a brighter future for this region. I look forward to leading Springfield into its future as a vibrant destination for tourists.*

*The facts are now evident. The logic is there to see. The numbers work. Now is the time to move forward.*

*Sincerely,*

Robert T. Markel

*Robert T. Markel*

*Mayor*

*"I look forward to distribution of the Special Resource Study Report. Information from the Special Resource Study was used to improve linkages between museums and other attractions even before it was compiled into this final report. Now we will be able to share what was learned and the recommendations with the whole community. I expect visitors to Springfield will find the city a more comfortable and enjoyable place to visit as we begin implementation of Study recommendations."*

Steven Beatty, Superintendent, Springfield Armory National Historic Site
National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior



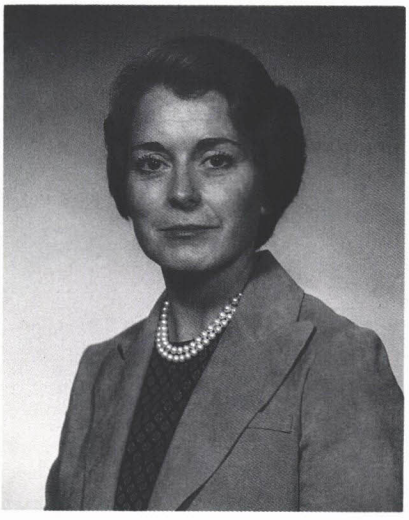
*"The research done during the Special Resource Study, as managed by Springfield Central, has provided invaluable information to the Springfield Library & Museums. This cooperative effort provides us with guidance both in the development of our exhibits and activities, and the strategies with which to market them to the residents of Western New England. The actions resulting from this information will help us to position the Springfield Library & Museums as a valuable player in Springfield's efforts to spur economic development through tourism. We were pleased to have an opportunity to be part of this project."*

Joseph Carvalho, Interim President,
Springfield Library and Museums, Springfield

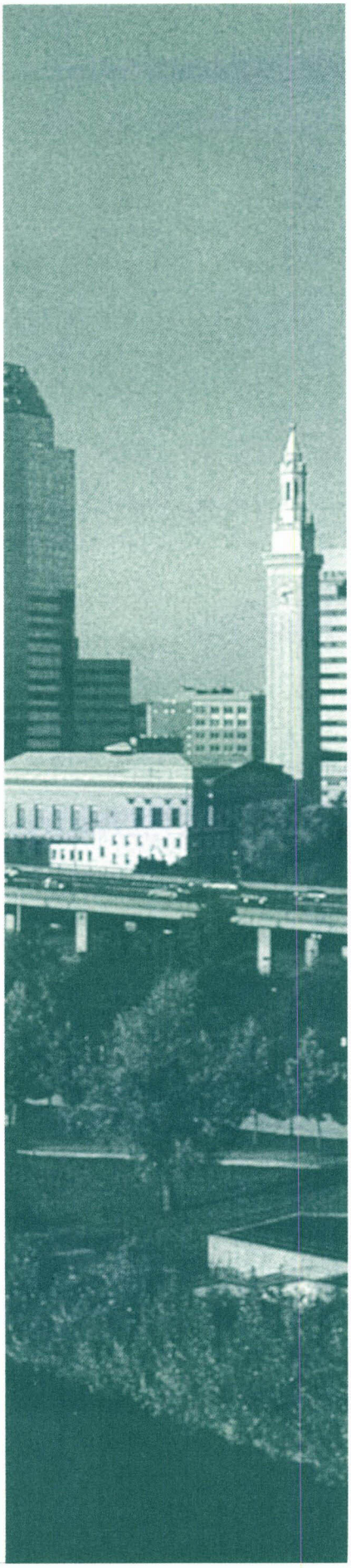


*"As an active volunteer with non-profit organizations in the City of Springfield I am grateful to see the realization of a cooperative effort such as the Special Resource Study. The project is timely and beneficial, providing excellent statistics during an economically difficult period. When the existence of a non-profit organization depends upon participation of local citizens and visitors, it is essential to know the characteristics of the impact market. Springfield Central is to be commended for spearheading this special resource study. It is refreshing to witness business representatives working together for the benefit of all."*

Rusty Roberts
Chairman of the Board, Forest Park Zoological Society
President of the Fine Arts Council, the Art Museum of the Quadrangle




BAYBANK
EXIT 6
Springfield
Center
NEXT RIGHT
TOWN FAIR TIRE
91
MILE
5



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# Overview

***Why should Springfield build a visitor economy?***

Springfield is moving forward actively to build a significant visitor component to its economy. The city possesses important resources for this effort: nationally important historic and visitor attractions; a Riverfront with strong untapped potential; ready access to a region rich in mountains and forests; and a highly accessible location at the center of New England.

A prosperous visitor economy will act as a catalyst for a more livable community, producing quality of life improvements beyond those which can be quantified financially, and meeting the needs of Springfield's increasingly diverse community.

This document has grown out of a cooperative partnership between the funding agency, the National Park Service (NPS), and Springfield Central. The NPS has a vital interest in improving the links between the Springfield Armory, a National Historic Site, and other Springfield museums and historic sites. Springfield Central's mission is to revitalize the city's central area. This report draws on both detailed studies of key visitor resources as part of this project and from other efforts underway that are closely related.

The core of Springfield's potential for a visitor economy lies downtown and at the riverfront - the two principal districts of Springfield's center. Other attractions of special interest, such as Forest Park and the Indian Motocycle Museum, are located nearby, and were included in the studies.

*Revitalizing Springfield's Center*

Despite its immense potential and rich history, the center area is perceived as lacking in the qualities and amenities that draw people: the recent sharp recession in urban service industries has placed the center in danger of losing the critical mass of jobs, shops, public spaces, restaurants, cultural facilities, and other urban elements which tie it into the life of the larger region. The challenge of making Springfield's downtown a competitive visitor destination is an important part of the larger effort to renew economic vitality and draw people to the center. Tourism creates jobs and enhances quality of life.

## *What does Springfield have to offer visitors?*

Springfield's existing visitor attractions - the nationally recognized Basketball Hall of Fame, the Springfield Armory National Historic Site, historic museums, vibrant performing arts - represent a strong base for building a new visitor economy. The heritage of the city's former prosperity is still very much in evidence.

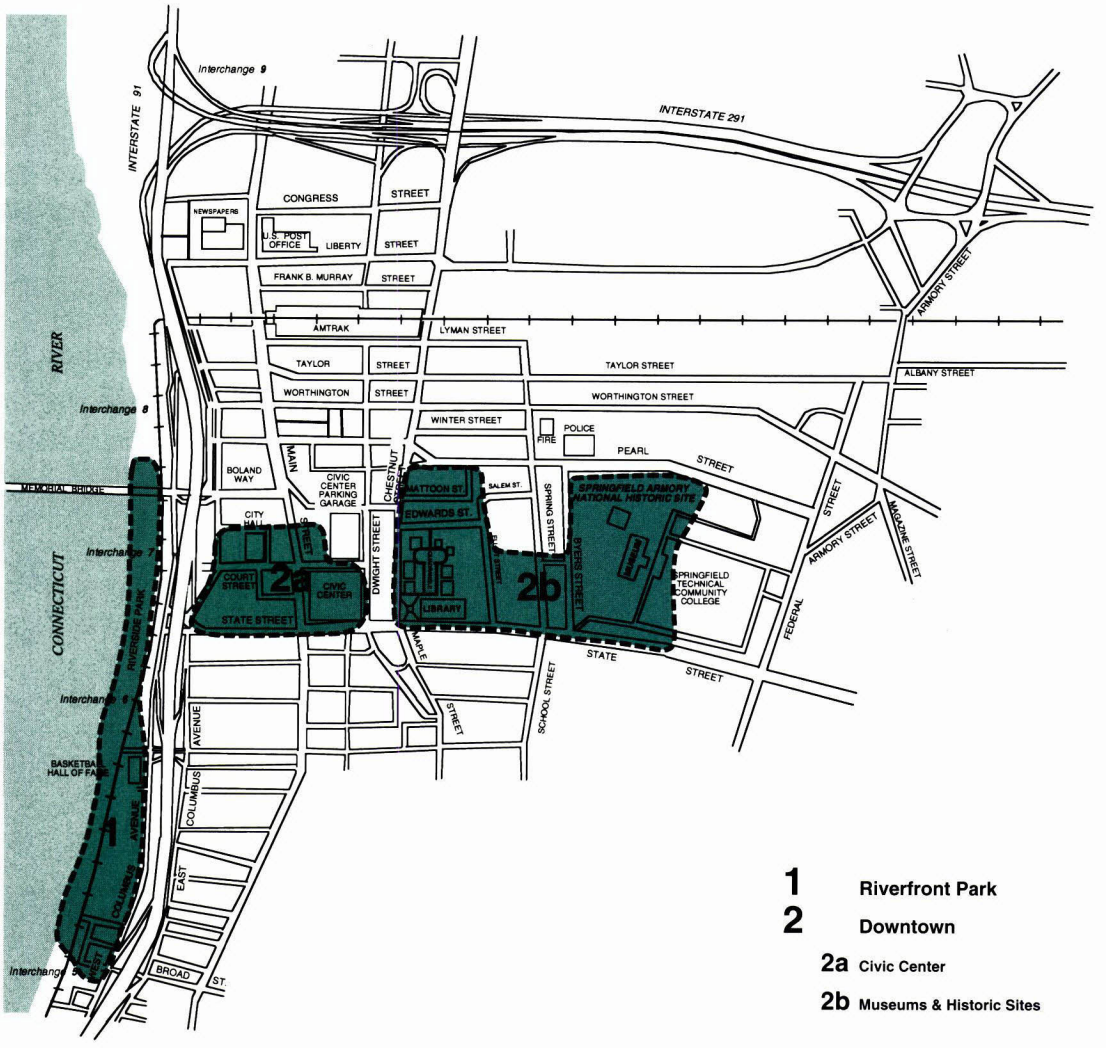
*Obstacles*

Springfield has not realized the full benefits of its resources. Imagination, energy, leadership and dollars will be required to overcome the problems which to date have blocked emergence of this visitor economy. The city's aspirations must be reawakened and broadened. There is a lack of awareness of the existing attractions, and often the impression that museums do not offer enough of interest. There are few physical or perceptual connections between cultural institutions. The riverfront is very underutilized. Traffic circulation to and through downtown is perceived to be difficult. Visitors voice concerns over safety.

*Directions for the Future*

Future strategy should focus on building the image and quality of both the center and the attractions it includes. Visitors seek attractive, inviting urban environments. They look for interactive exhibits, videos and virtual reality technology; families desire a suitable array of attractions; multicultural, natural history, and historical subject matter are of particular interest; visitors value the

***Key attraction areas in downtown Springfield***



availability of restaurants, visitor services, and convenient parking; These findings point to a strategy which emphasizes both the center and its attractions:

- The roster of Springfield's visitor destinations should be enhanced: plans already are underway for a renovated Civic Center, a new Visitors' Center, a new convention center, a presence for the British Royal Armouries, expansion of the Basketball Hall of Fame, improvements to the Science Museum, the creation of an expanded Riverfront Park and a new Riverfront sports stadium and increased collaboration with other Connecticut Valley cultural institutions.

- Efforts to improve the center's physical character and accessibility should continue in terms of streetscape improvements, enhancing and strengthening pedestrian routes between destinations, a handsome signage program, and clearer vehicular routes into downtown. New efforts should include art in public spaces and outdoor cafes.

Ultimately, the downtown itself can be viewed as an exhibit, supporting and connecting the events and attractions within it.

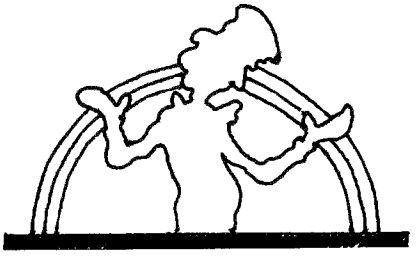
### *Next Steps*

In the short term, Springfield's community can take meaningful action on several key fronts. At the state level the designation of a Springfield Improvement District would enable the private sector to begin working with the public sector to implement improvements to the center's physical character, many of which were already called for in *Visions 1989, The Downtown Plan.* The public and private sectors, including local museums, must expand collaborative fund raising, marketing and public relations programs which publicize Springfield's attractions and new exhibits, and dispel negative perceptions of downtown. Restaurants, shops and hotels should promote their extensive services. Signage and other urban design initiatives need to be accelerated to overcome the image of downtown as unsafe and unclean, difficult to navigate and short of parking.

Over the longer-term, beyond five years, these efforts can be expanded to create a visitor destination of national significance, at the same time reaching out for new resources from state, federal, and institutional sources.

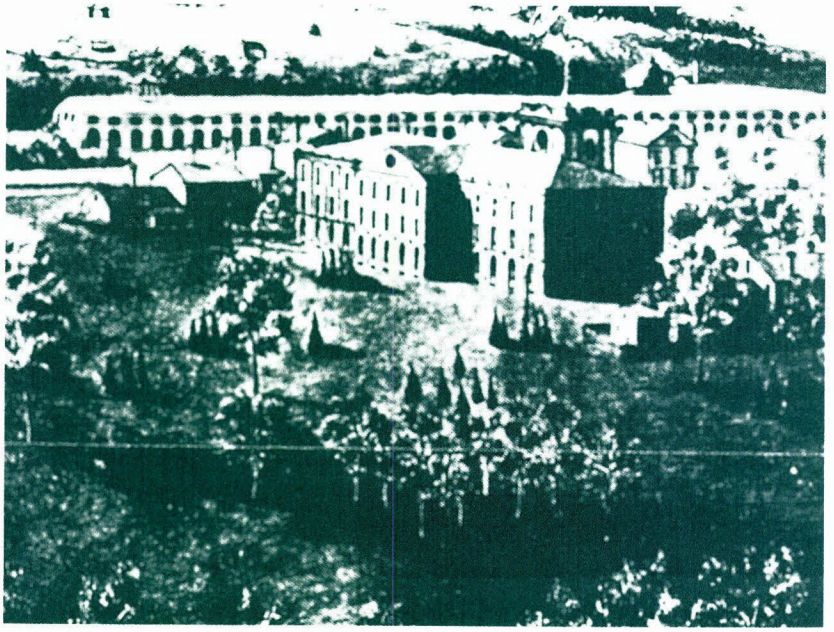
The following pages examine Springfield's location, history, and present conditions; discuss key participants who will be instrumental in realizing the strategies required to build a visitor economy; analyze current and potential visitors; and outline an implementation strategy. Appendices, available from Springfield Central, include detailed reports on the visitor market, traffic circulation, the signage program and the history of Springfield.

***New signage logo being developed to create a visible image for visitor-related signage throughout Springfield***



## Context: Springfield as an emerging visitor destination

***Springfield's past: Armory and invention***



*Springfield Armory, birthplace of Springfield's early industrial dominance, as seen in 1864. Due to its early prominence in industrial technology, Springfield has been referred to as the "Silicon Valley" of the early 19th century.*

Springfield's accessibility, provided by the Connecticut River, made it one of North America's earliest European settlements. Its inland location protected from British gunships offered General George Washington a safe location for the United States' first arsenal. The transformation of this arsenal into the U.S. Armory in 1794 brought some of the most skilled craftsmen and talented inventors in America to Springfield. The Armory became a center of innovation in manufacturing for the new nation.

By the 1850s the processes being employed at the Armory and in other manufacturing sites in the Connecticut Valley, characterized by early applications of technology, defined the "American System" of manufacturing. Springfield's precision armaments caught the world's attention at the Crystal Palace Exposition in London in 1851. During the 1880s this "system" was copied by Great Britain and other leading manufacturing nations.



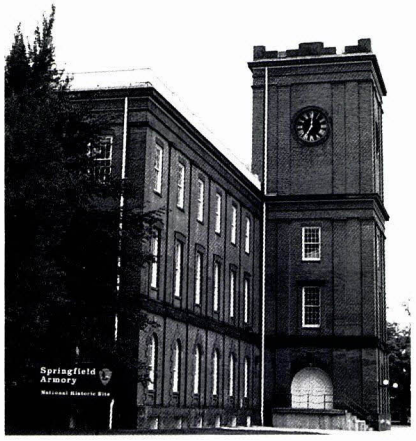
*The Armory factory: women ordinance workers during World War II - the Armory provided employment to 14,000 people, 40% of which were women*

By 1860, Springfield had developed into a major manufacturing center and the city's defense production made the critical difference in the North's Civil War effort. The city was a key player in both national and international trade. A local class of entrepreneurs reaped great wealth which they re-invested in the community, building and endowing churches, museums, hospitals, educational institutions, parks and charitable institutions. The prosperity from industry fostered the growth of leisure activities, as well.

*Main Street 1892: center of one of New England's major industrial centers*



Ethnically diverse from the founding of the Armory 200 years ago, Springfield has drawn upon the strength of that diversity to introduce new ideas in applied technology, social and political thought, product development and marketing,




*The Armory: Springfield's historic heritage is still present*

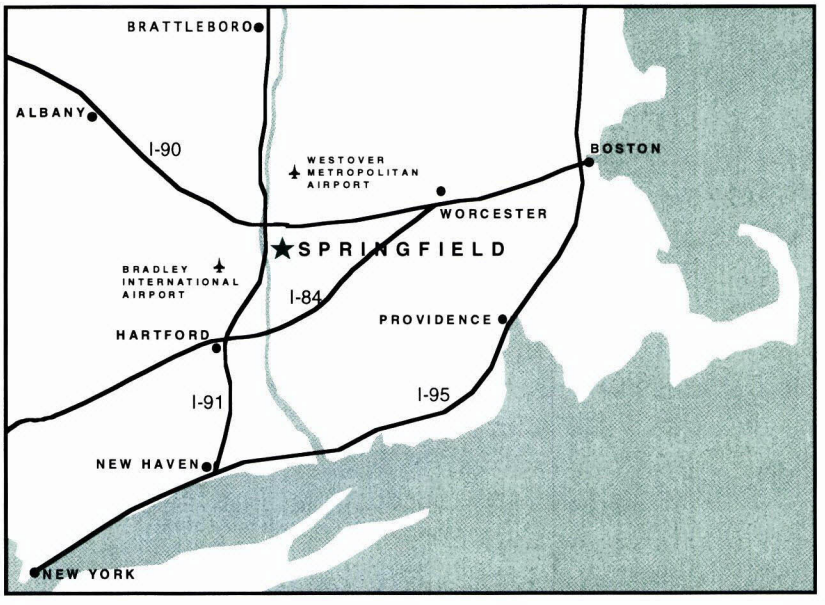
and the written word. The innovation and creativity of the craftsmen at the Armory and its collateral businesses are reflected in the impressive list of Springfield "firsts" including the first gasoline powered auto, the first motorcycle and the first friction match. From Milton Bradley to Smith & Wesson, from the Duryea automobile to the Indian Motocycle, from G & C Merriam to Theodor "Dr. Seuss" Geisel, from Barney and Berry skates to James Naismith's invention of basketball - Springfield has been and continues to be an incubator for innovation, invention and imagination.

***Springfield today: integrating past and present***

The closing of the Armory as a manufacturing facility in 1968 and the concurrent migration of other industry to southern and foreign locations has resulted in a shift in Springfield's economy similar to that experienced by many cities in the Northeast. The city is still undergoing that economic transition and redefinition. Perhaps the conversion of the Armory to a National Park Museum, in 1974, is a harbinger of the city's increasing role as a cultural and entertainment center.

As railroad, and then highways, replaced rivers, Springfield has continued to be a "crossroads" , with strong airport, highway, and rail connections. Its history and location have combined to facilitate its role as a government, business and financial center.

Within the region there are over thirty employers who each provide jobs to over 1,000 people. Six regional malls, indicative of the fundamental structural change in retail markets, are located within a twenty minute drive from downtown Springfield. While malls are definitely a force to be reckoned with, there is a daily influx of 18,000 people who work in Springfield's private and public sectors, complemented by up to 20,000 people who attend performances, and visit cultural institutions.



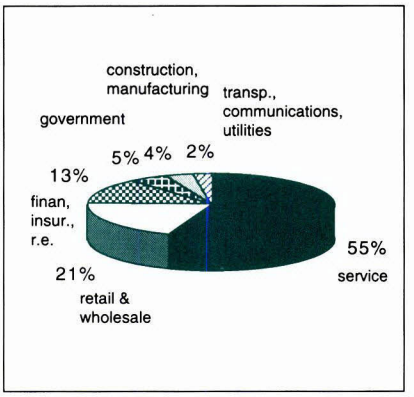

*Springfield lies at a crossroads of New England*

Nine hundred new housing units were developed in downtown before the recent economic slowdown, discernibly revitalizing four close-in neighborhoods. Many of these new units were in rehabilitated buildings, reinforcing a heritage of grand buildings which stand as testimony to Springfield's historic participation in the City Beautiful Movement and stabilizing the city's present population at 156,000.

The most visible loss to downtown, typical of most established older cities, has been the depletion of much of its retail base. While the recent downturn in the business cycle has resulted in some downtown office vacancies, the downtown is still a highly competitive location for office users.

This commercial loss  casts an inordinate pall over the downtown, masking a still strong role as a regional business center. This loss also emphasizes the need to nurture other roles for downtown, particularly the growth of a downtown visitor economy which in addition to jobs and economic activity, will also help restore the most favored urban past-times–window shopping and people watching. An enhanced visitor economy which would spur investment in support services like restaurants and specialized retail, would do much to enliven the downtown.

Springfield already has a proud tradition of downtown economic regeneration and the city is continuing to mount a broadbased effort to enhance the downtown's economy and vitality. New targets include Civic Center renovations, a new convention center and improvements to the public transit system. Although the recession has slowed down economic revitalization the

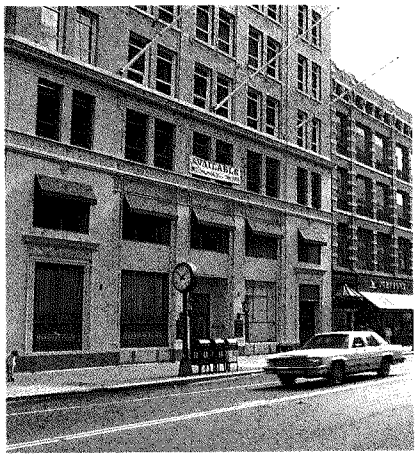



***Springfield's current business profile - like other major cities Springfield has evolved away from manufacturing to become a center for the service industries, one of which is building a visitor economy***




***Main Street today: downtown is evolving into a more diverse, vital regional center which integrates traditional Main Street (left) with new retail pedestrian passages like those at Monarch Place, a proud symbol of downtown's response to changing economic conditions which includes one of Springfield's three national chain downtown hotels***





*Large stock of handsome older buildings, some vacant, is an important resource for the revitalization of Main Street. Service industries have not replaced the amount of economic activity which once focussed downtown. This has been exacerbated by the recent recession. It is critical to expand this service industry base through initiatives such as building a visitor economy.*

aspirations expressed in *Visions 1989, The Downtown Plan* remain valid: "A decade of economic growth in the Northeast has saturated commercial and housing markets in the larger cities, escalated development costs and created incentives for developers to look elsewhere when starting new projects. Springfield and the Pioneer Valley are an appealing alternative, especially given the area's convenience and extraordinary quality of life."

### *Springfield's major visitor industry resources: actors & attractions*

Springfield's existing visitor attractions are extensive, in some cases of national significance and in all cases of regional significance, and all well established.

**Major attractions include:**

**Museums, attractions, and institutions** *which form the backbone of Springfield's tourist industry. Attendance for the 1994 fiscal year was 612,992 which exceeded Museum Wharf in Boston...*

Springfield Armory National Historic Site
Springfield Library and Museums - the Quadrangle
- Springfield City Library
- Springfield Museum of Fine Arts
- Springfield Science Museum
- George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum
- Connecticut Valley Historic Museum

Basketball Hall of Fame
Indian Motocycle Museum



*Augustus Saint-Gaudens statue, The Puritan, welcomes more than 200,000 visitors annually to Springfield's historic museum Quadrangle*

**Performing Arts** *venues for both traditional and contemporary genres draw large numbers from the region throughout the year...*

Civic Center
Stage West
Symphony Hall
Zone Arts Center
Paramount Performing Arts Center

**The Civic Center,** *containing 38,000 square feet of exhibit space and 7600 seats, will be renovated by the Commonweath over the next 2 years.*

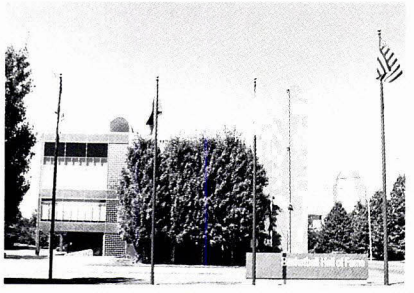
**Historic Districts and Public Spaces** *which the City Beautiful movement and early 19th century prosperity created, have left a legacy of architectural landmarks, including many examples of the work of H.H. Richardson, the first internationally recognized American architect...*

Court Square National Register Historic District
Mattoon National Register Historic District
Apremont National Register Historic District
McKnight Historic District
Maple Hill Historic District
The North Blocks
Stearn Square

***Springfield enjoys a mix of major attractions...***



***The Quadrangle***



***Basketball Hall of Fame***

***and historic places...***




***Stearn Square***

**In addition:**

**Annual Events** *draw increasingly large numbers to downtown including...* Springfield's Birthday - World's Largest Pancake Breakfast, Taste of Springfield, "Star Spangled Springfield" - 4th of July Celebration, Columbus Day Parade, Tip-off Classic, Winter Highlights Festival, Parade of the Big Balloons, First Night, Mattoon Street Arts Festival and Ethnic Festivals, i.e. Glendi, Gospelfest, Puerto Rican Cultural Festival, the UMOJA Festival..

*Springfield reinforced its position as a major regional center with extensive new development in recent years, building* **a new base of visitor services,** *including...*Springfield Marriot Hotel, Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place, Holiday Inn, Cityscape YMCA, BayBank Tower, Baystate West, and Market Place.

***The Connecticut Valley is one of the nation's centers for*** **Colleges and Universities,** *of which many are located close to downtown Springfield including...*Springfield Technical Community College, Western New England College, Springfield College, American International College, Elms College

*The greater Springfield area and neighboring communities contain a network of* **historic and cultural resources** *including...*Storrowton Village, Titanic Museum, Eastern States Exposition, Josiah Day House, Captain Charles Leonard House, Storrs House, Belamy Homestead.



***Mattoon Street***

*Springfield is a focus for regional* **open space and recreation**...Connecticut River, Forest Park and Zoo, Riverside Park, Mt. Tom Ski and Summerside Resort, Skinner Park.

**Significant new projects underway or proposed**

Visitors' Center at Broad Street:

The proposed Visitors' Center should be a priority project. The Center will act as a gateway into Springfield, combining the roles of "mini-museum", travel agency and tour desk. It is seen as being located near route I-91 and the highway interchange while tying into the greater Riverfront area development.

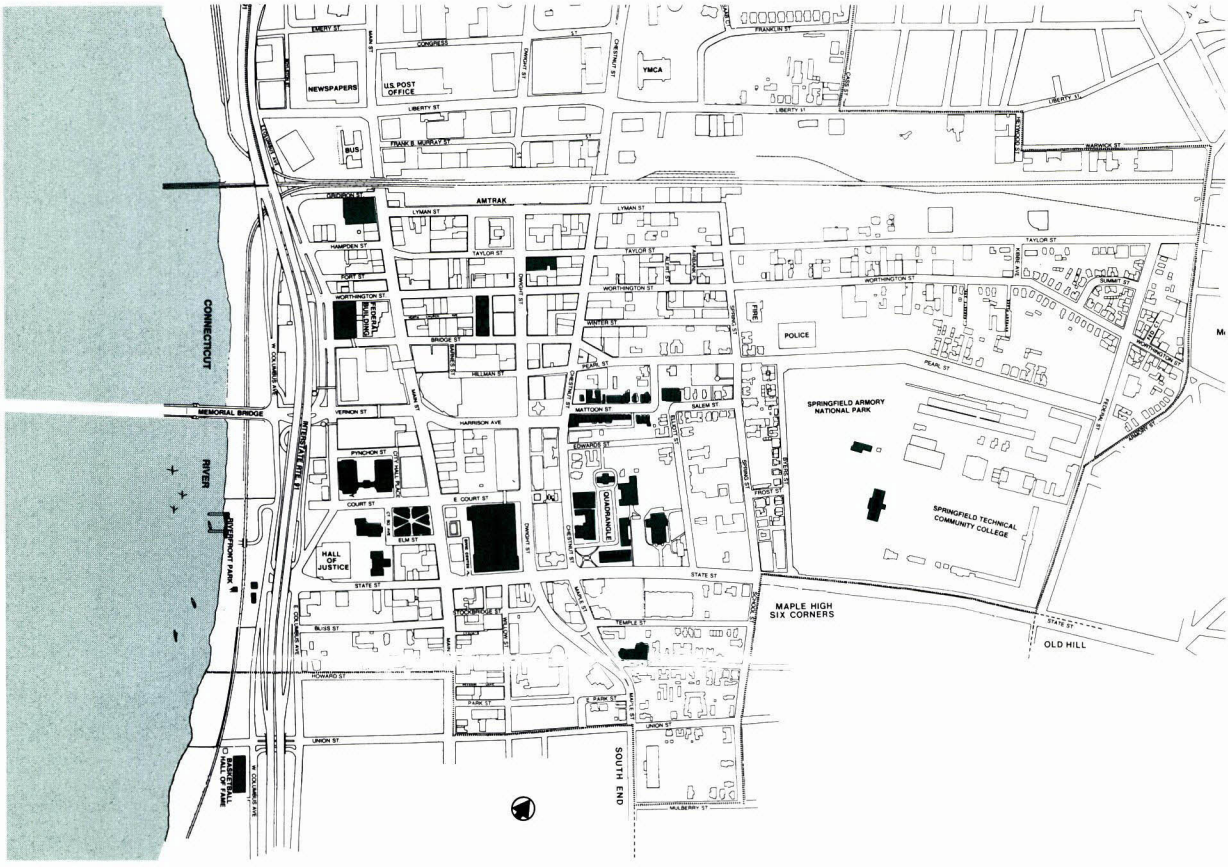
Civic Center Expansion Project:

The Civic Center forms an important focus downtown and it is expected that a variety of commercial and cultural enterprises will ensue as a result of its planned expansion. Its renovation will make it competitive with the arenas in Hartford and Worcester. Its configuration will extend the public realm of Court Square, providing an ideal space for civic festivities.

Convention Center:

A new Convention Center has been proposed for the Steiger's department store site, at Main and Bridge Streets. Its presence will support downtown hotel, restaurant and retail activity.

***Springfield center's key attractions***



Basketball Hall of Fame expansion:

The Basketball Hall of Fame is currently the destination visitors are most likely to visit. Expansion plans should include dining facilities and an enhanced gift shop. As well, there have been a variety of innovative suggestions put forth involving interactive international exhibits that would pull in even greater numbers of visitors and also encourage repeat visitations.

Springfield Armory National Historic Site:

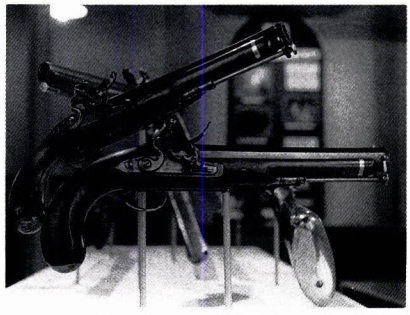
The Springfield Armory itself, as well as its actual site, hold unexplored potential. The actual entry to the indoor exhibition space could be improved through redesign of the steps and signage. There is a proposal to re-establish the historic gardens and greenhouses located behind the Commandant's house which should be realized. The Byers Street Gate entry should be opened to improve access for visitors between sites, and at the same time would bring the wonderful view of Springfield to their attention. There are also buildings on the Armory site that could serve as an exciting backdrop to special festivities, demonstrations and fairs. In general, more of the site and the building needs to be interpreted.



***View from the Armory grounds towards the city***

Royal Armouries Project:

The British Royal Armouries has announced that it is considering utilizing the vacant York Street Jail of Springfield as an American branch of its museum. This would provide yet another attraction in close proximity to the Basketball Hall of Fame and the proposed Visitors' Center.



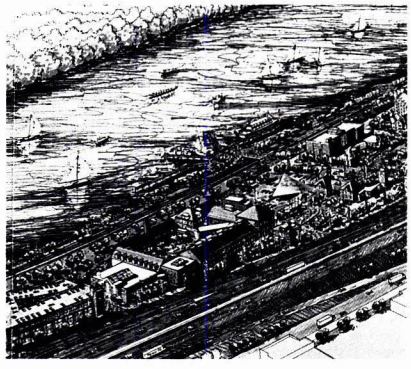
***First Royal Armouries exhibit in Springfield - May 1994; a major permanent presence is anticipated by the late 1990s***

Riverfront Park:

The Park is being examined at two scales: the river's edge as it exists at the end of State Street - opening into a small park area, playground, potential marina access and outdoor performance space, and, the four and a half mile long Riverfront Park trail. The proposed Visitors' Center, Royal Armouries, and the existing Basketball Hall of Fame are destinations accessible from this linear park. Steamboat excursions, rowing, sailing clubs, hydroplaning, fishing and regattas can all occur along the Connecticut River. The two existing Station Pavilions can mark a gateway to the Riverfront, and also house commercial activity. It will be necessary to "sanitize" Bondi Island to resolve the conflict between a waste site and a public park.

...and Riverfront Sports Stadium:

On September 15th, 1994, the ***Boston Globe*** reported that the Double A Red Sox will be "...moving to a state of the art facility in Springfield..." in a few years; a Riverfront sports stadium could add yet another dimension to the Riverfront Park.



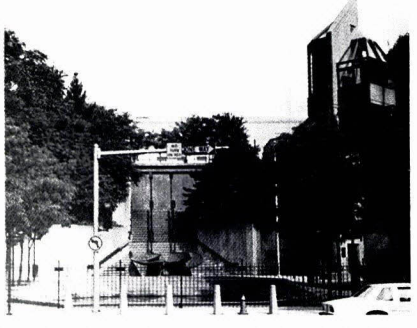
***Vision for a revitalized Riverfront created in 1992 by The Williams Group***



*The Campanile Bell Tower, flanked by the City Hall and Symphony Hall, marks the cultural and civic center of Springfield. A renovated 1912 Campanile will offer visitors a 360 degree view over Springfield to the Connecticut River Valley.*



*Market Street: an example of a successful pedestrian passage which introduces a level of streetscape amenity to downtown Springfield which is necessary to support a visitor economy*



*Pynchon Plaza steps, currently blocked off, can be reopened and redesigned to provide a grand gateway to the Quadrangle from the Civic Center*

Ecology-Natural History Exhibits:

Based on market research findings Springfield Science Museum is planning to expand its exhibits on the geology and ecology of the region; giving greater emphasis to Natural History themes. (Please refer to Appendix for details.)

Dr. Seuss:

Springfield Library and Museums Association is currently developing plans to create a Dr. Seuss commemorative work in a redesigned park area. A Dr. Seuss trail connecting major sites during Geisel's life in Springfield is also planned.

Campanile Bell Tower Renovation:

The Campanile, built in 1912, is a significant landmark in Springfield's architectural history. A renovation which would bring the bells back to life and allow visitors to ride to the top of the tower and look out over the city is likely to be a popular attraction.

Regional Connections:

Currently a bicycle path that links Northampton to Easthampton has been approved. It is conceivable that a system will eventually be charted that extends from Forest Park along the Connecticut River through Holyoke and towards Mt. Tom and Northampton, where there is a discussion of expanding the Norwottuck Rail Trail.

Pedestrian Passages:

Key to building a visitor economy is the provision of connections, both physical and perceptual, between visitor destinations. Although the Springfield Armory National Historic Site, Basketball Hall of Fame, and the Springfield Library and Museums Quadrangle each represent notable attractions on their own, they are isolated from each other and the rest of downtown; similarly there is no strong link between these sites and visitor resources like the Civic Center; the downtown center lacks a critical mass of restaurants and other visitor services; further, streetscapes and building facades do not always offer an appropriate ambiance. The steps which extend between Chestnut Street and Dwight Street, Pynchon Plaza, should be reopened and redesigned acting as a gateway to the Quadrangle. The seasonal farmers' market at Court Square, another example of a pedestrian oriented amenity, can be expanded, tying into the Department of Food and Agriculture's Bureau of Markets initiative. The Byers Street Gate entry route will provide an enjoyable walk and a view back towards the city which begins to integrate the Springfield Armory with the rest of the city. Historical elements, monuments and public art can act as markers, and points of interest in themselves, and may delineate narrative passages through the city.

**Key Sponsors and Actors include...**

Springfield Central:

Springfield Central is a private, non-profit organization established in 1976 to guide Downtown Springfield's development. The organization creates, promotes and coordinates programs to stimulate growth and new investment in the economic, social, cultural and environmental character of downtown Springfield. Springfield Central conducts surveys and studies and produces publications which provide marketing for the city. The Springfield Hospitality Council is a division of Springfield Central focusing specifically on the economic opportunities for the visitor industry. With respect to this report Springfield Central was responsible for the completion of the Historical Assessment, Interpretive Assessment, Market Research and coordinates the work carried out by the urban design, landscape architecture and transportation planning consultants.

The City of Springfield:

The City and Springfield Central were responsible for the production of Visions *1989, The Downtown Plan.* Integral to the Plan is the promotion of a visitor economy. The City endorses initiatives such as the National Register of Historic Places, vital to a city promoting tourism. The City's role in creating a visitor economy is critical in terms of implementation and in raising funds.

National Park Service:

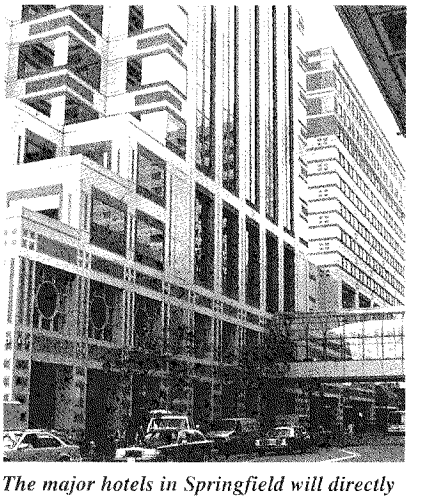
The National Park Service has entered into a cooperative planning effort with the City of Springfield and Springfield Central for the purpose of assessing the historic and cultural resources within Springfield in order to support the development of a plan for the recognition, interpretation, and protection of these resources.

Cultural Institutions:

Springfield Library and Museums, the Springfield Armory National Historic Site and the Basketball Hall of Fame have been cooperating with marketing research consultants in order to determine visitor profiles, exhibit response, the interpretation of historic themes and strategies for improvements and their implementation.

Hotels:

The four major hotels in Springfield can play a major role by collaborating in efforts to boost the visitor economy. They can act as disseminators of information about the city and also influence the quality of the urban streetscape through making specific programmatic and architectural decisions.



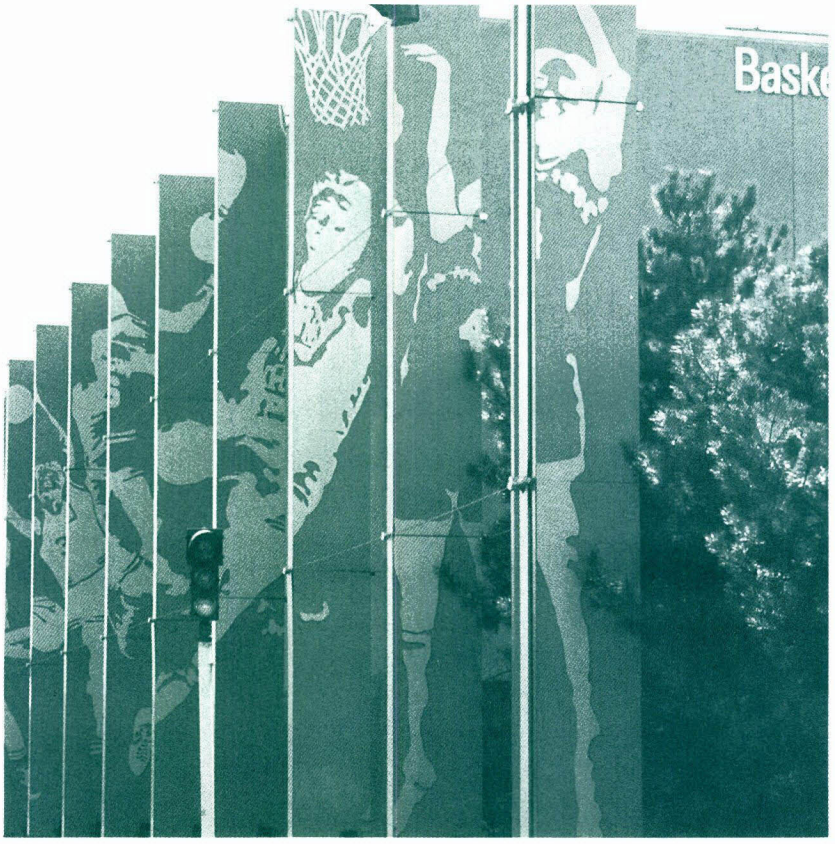
***The major hotels in Springfield will directly benefit from taking on an active role in building a visitor economy in Springfield***

The Retail Sector:

Baystate West is currently considering architectural and tenant modifications which would have a positive effect from an urban design perspective on its Downtown location. Similarly, smaller retail establishments must be given an understanding of the importance of their support of the initiative to create a visitor economy. It is beginning to be recognized that the introduction of urban design criteria, which may include storefront design guidelines, and the general maintenance of private property and its immediate surroundings simultaneously benefit the individual merchant and the city as a whole.

Major Industries:

Aside from providing the city with a base of potential visitors to the attractions of Springfield as employers, the major industries can and should explore how their various histories and stories can become integral to a visitor's experience of the city. As well, it is hoped that sponsorship for special projects, events and exhibitions would come from Springfield's industries. Companies that are indigenous to the Connecticut Valley may see it as advantageous in the near future to open one of a kind large retail outlets in downtown or by the Riverfront. This type of retail venture would act as a further draw to potential visitors.




***The Basketball Hall of Fame draws close to 200,000 visitors each year***

## *What is the current visitor market*

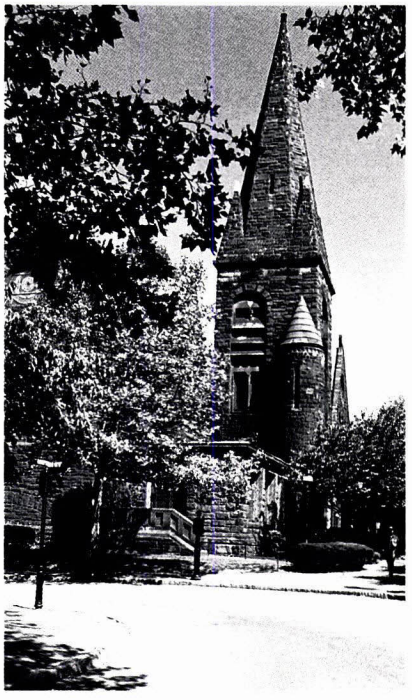
*The current market*

Springfield's museums attract affluent, well-educated people who often visit with children and other family members. Just over half of the visitors come from the New England area. Most others are visiting from elsewhere within the United States. A small portion come from Canada or overseas.

The Springfield Armory receives the most affluent visitors, generally men with special interest in armaments. The Quadrangle at present serves mainly the local community. Many who visit the Quadrangle do not venture to any of the other attractions. By contrast the Basketball Hall of Fame, receives 200,000 visitors per year and tends to attract visitors with children who usually come from outside New England. The Indian Motocycle Museum's visitors are mainly a dedicated group of Indian motorcycle aficionados. This museum suffers from the fact that it is somewhat off the beaten track.

Visitors to the major museums rate them positively; however, while they would recommend these attractions to others they did not envision returning to them in the next year due to a general lack of interest, no longer having children of appropriate ages, or the lack of change in exhibits. These observations indicate a need to rethink and revitalize exhibits, and examine their duration.

***Hispanic Baptist Church by H. H. Richardson is an expressive example of the architectural heritage of Springfield***



Festivals also act as a considerable draw to the center of the city. The highest ratings were given in descending order to the Medieval Renaissance Festival, Sporting Festivals, Winter Lights Festival, Antique Car and Motorcycle Festivals and ethnic festivals.

*The future market*

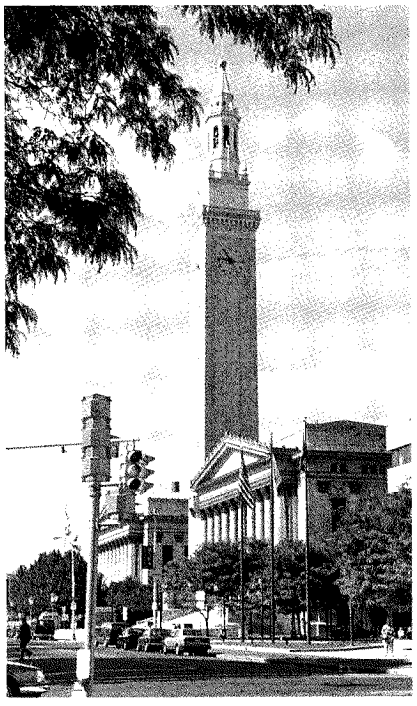
With a greater diversity of attractions, Springfield has the potential to attract new types of visitors - particularly to increase its draw of both existing and new types of visitors from other parts of the U.S. and foreign travelers; to establish itself as a mid-point destination for the large visitor flows travelling north and south on route I-91 and east and west on route I-90; to appeal to a broader range of income groups and travellers without children.

## *What factors would draw visitors to Springfield*

The establishment of a Visitors' Center is one of the key strategies in the Strategic Tourism Plan. It can serve to pull traffic off the Interstate highways into Springfield. Currently there are in excess of 50 million automobile passengers per year on both Interstates. Most of these drive past Springfield without stopping - due to a lack of awareness of what Springfield has to offer.

The Armory must enhance the interpretation of its building and site, and strengthen its connection to the rest of the city. The Quadrangle museums are in need of greater visibility: off-site signage; outreach; and marketing programs that may be coordinated with other Connecticut Valley Museums. Outdoor exhibit kiosks, sculpture and an information pavilion on-site can give the Springfield Library and Museums greater presence and provide enhanced knowledge of the quality and content of the museums. Associated teaching facilities would also raise the profile of these museums.

***City Hall, the Campanile and Symphony Hall represent important civic symbols from the City Beautiful Movement which characterized American cities of the 19th century***



The Basketball Hall of Fame competes with other Halls of Fame that are supported by their respective sports. The Basketball Hall needs to further develop ties with its basketball constituencies and increase marketing efforts so that the public will be kept abreast of its expanding features.

In addition, attractions within Springfield can only flourish if visitor services and amenities exist nearby. Visitors to Springfield will frequent more attractions and spend more time in the city if an "infrastructure" of streetscape improvements and increased commercial activity is in place to supplement their stay - e. g. shops and places to eat.. Business is being lost to North Connecticut and Northampton. Restaurants draw people off the Interstate.

## *Matching resources with the visitor market: themes and expansion*

Responding to market study findings involves three key areas of effort: better meeting the needs of visitors, increasing awareness of Springfield's museums

amongst those currently uninformed, and establishing new themes and exhibits which broaden Springfield's appeal to new markets and deepen it within existing markets. To this end it is useful to learn that women respond positively to themes related to history, natural history, Dr. Seuss, and art. Men prefer themes related to history, arms, manufacturing, and industry. Young adults are attracted to exhibits which feature interactive participation.

The Springfield Armory should try to build on those themes which appeal more to children and women. Themes which relate to the development of the Connecticut River Valley, such as the history of precision manufacturing and automobiles, are recommended areas of expansion, whether they occur at the existing Science Museum or in a new Natural History Museum.

The Quadrangle Museums can introduce special exhibits which, for example, build on the ethnic diversity of Springfield and its visitors. Acknowledging that visitors to the Basketball Hall of Fame travel in groups, and that international basketball is growing, this museum could incorporate a restaurant, gift shop, and a gallery devoted to international players. The Indian Motorcycle Museum would do well to seek a more visible location and associate itself with other transportation-related exhibits.

The use of interactive exhibits, more films and videos, and other uses of the latest technology in exhibit display will increase the popularity of each museum. Tours or participatory activities involving the production of crafts or objects could be introduced.

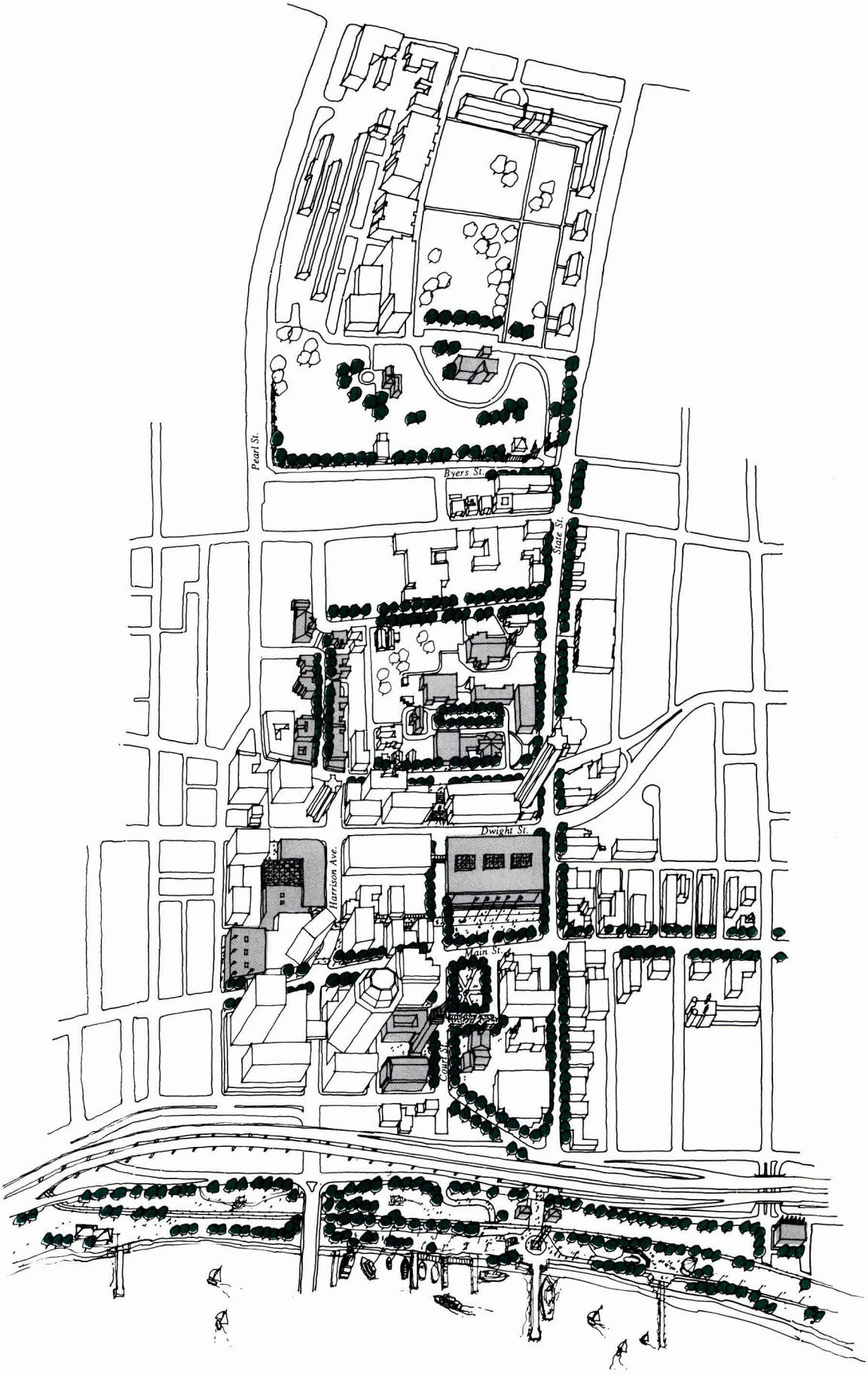
In response to a suggested list of proposed museums the Natural History and Native American Museum was rated highest by area consumers. A Dr. Seuss Museum would have a regional and international draw, appealing especially to children, women and families.

Attractions pertaining to similar themes should engage in cross promotion and suggested "hit lists" for visitors might be developed.

Riverfront Park should be exploited both in terms of passive and active recreational opportunities and through recognition of the development potential of historic buildings situated along the riverfront.

Springfield needs to engage in restaurant market analysis to determine how and where restaurant dollars are being lost and what market gaps Springfield can target. The city ought to capitalize on its rich ethnic heritage to expand its restaurant offerings. Retail might explore focussing on sporting goods, linking to the Basketball Hall of Fame thematically and to the large number of local sports-related apparel and equipment manufacturers.

*Overview of Springfield's potential visitor economy*



### *Shaping the visitor experience - a day in Springfield, 1999*

It is Saturday morning. Leaving the rush of cars traveling south a family of four exits off of I-91 to Springfield. They had read about several of Springfield's attractions, including the Basketball Hall of Fame, the Springfield Library and Museums and the Springfield Armory, in the New York Times Sunday Travel section focussing on New England weekend trips. Highway signage indicated to them that the Visitors' Center was easy to access and as they were considering making use of the shuttle bus they decided to stop in.

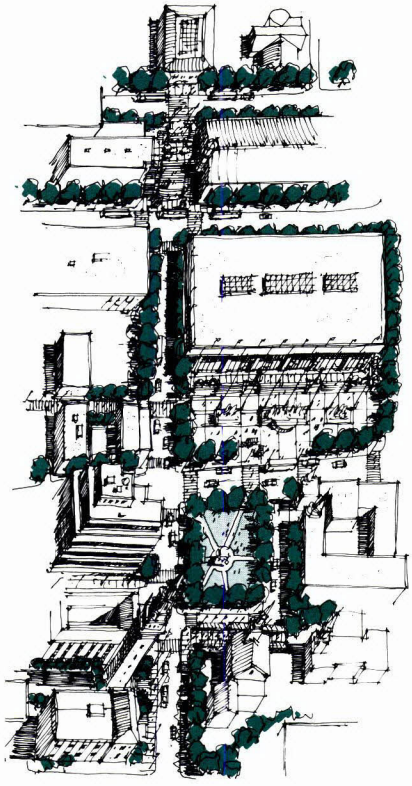
Not only were they able to get a taste of the variety of exhibits in Springfield through the "mini-museum" at the Visitors' Center, they were also able to purchase multiple admission tickets for the museums they wanted to see. They also picked up a shuttle bus schedule and various maps and promotional material, including the month's entertainment. It was in perusing this material that they noticed that a Broadway musical was going to be performed that evening at the Symphony Hall. Through the Visitors' Center they were able to purchase tickets, which luckily, were still available.

Everyone in the family wanted to go to the Basketball Hall of Fame, especially now that the enhanced interactive exhibits were in place. After spending a couple of hours at the Hall they decided, it being a warm and sunny day, to eat outdoors in the Riverfront Park. At the bottom of State Street, where it connects with the Riverfront, several small cafes and snack bars provided them with lunch. Sitting on benches in the park they were able to watch sailboats and other small watercraft on the Connecticut River.

After eating they wandered along the Park's pathways for a while, the kids being temporarily distracted by the playground facilities, and made their way to the new Royal Armouries. Subsequently they returned to the parking lot at the Basketball Hall of Fame where they all caught the shuttle bus. The bus took them through the center of the city, via Court Street, Dwight Street and State Street, stopping at the Byers Street Gate for those interested in visiting the Armory. At this point two of the family members alighted, agreeing to meet up with the other two at the yard of the Quadrangle in three hours. The bus proceeded and then next enabled those visiting the Museums to disembark on Chestnut Street.

The two visiting the Springfield Museum of Fine Arts and the George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum found they were ready to leave before three hours had passed. Since their admission tickets permitted them to visit all the museums they decided to spend time in the Springfield Science Museum which had recently expanded to feature special areas concentrating on transportation

***A series of handsome pedestrian connections, enlivened by cafes, kiosks and outdoor seating, will link the Riverfront, City Hall, Court Square, the Civic Center and the Quadrangle***



and industry. The other two were having no trouble occupying themselves as today medieval games were being performed on the Armory grounds.

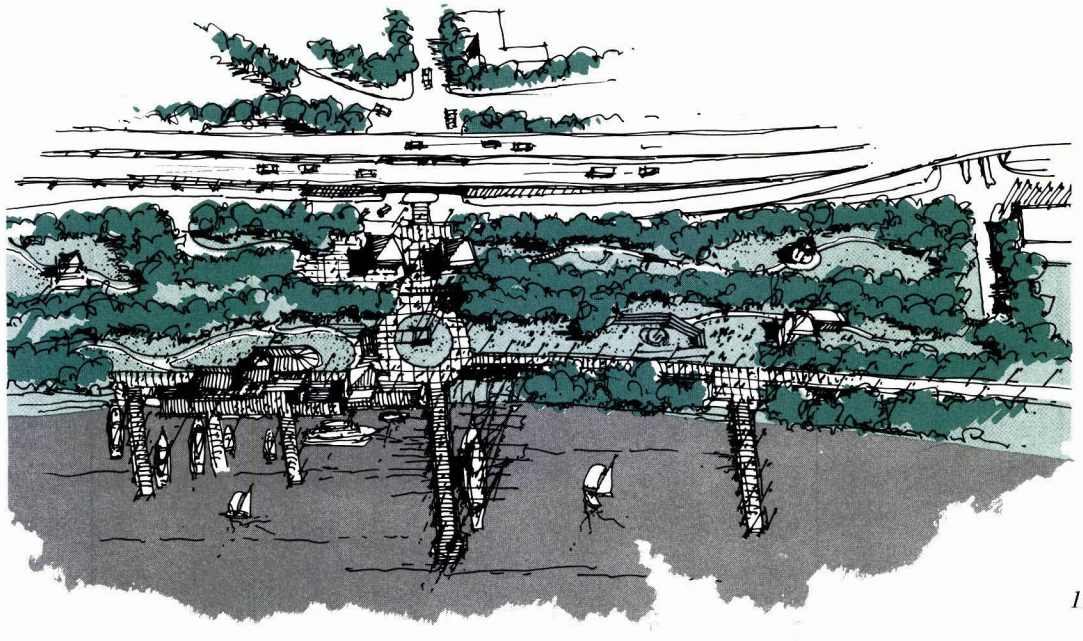
After reuniting at the Quadrangle, the group took a look at Mattoon Street and the impressive Baptist Grace Church. They made their way down Pynchon Plaza and encountered the bustling farmers' market. The sight of lots of fresh food triggered the usual family discussion about where to have dinner. They were aware of the many choices through the advertising they had seen both at the Visitors' Center and at their hotel. The decision was not an easy one as there are restaurants representing numerous ethnicities, and in all price ranges. Finally they agreed upon an Italian restaurant located on Main Street as it took them past many of the shops that had recently opened up south of State Street.

The musical was extremely entertaining. After the full day they were all ready to fall asleep once they had walked around the corner to their hotel.

They were awakened Sunday by the tolling of the Campanile Bells. This reminded them that they were able to take a ride to the top of the tower. It being a clear day the view from the Campanile was, in fact, wonderful. Looking towards the River they saw that not only was a regatta being held but steamboat tours were already underway. This, they decided would be a great way to end the day. First, however, the kids had requested a visit to the Dr. Seuss museum. The shuttle bus from Court Square delivered them to the museum where they spent a couple of hours, eating lunch in the museum's "Green Eggs & Ham" cafe, before heading down to Riverfront Park.

The steamboat cruise lived up to their expectations. A final stroll along the Riverfront's greenway lead them back to their car. Driving back along I-291 highway signage reminded them that they had not seen the Indian Motocycle Museum. This would just have to wait for another visit. Perhaps it could be combined with a ball game at the stadium...

***Riverfront improvements can finally tie the Riverfront to downtown, for example, a view of boats from downtown and a view of restaurants and information kiosks from the highway will mark the Riverfront Park as a close-by destination***



## Implementation Strategy

Achieving a vital visitor economy is dependent upon: (1) clear and appropriate delegation of responsibility for the coordination and fulfillment of the various initiatives and (2) securing financial and technical support over time to expand Springfield's resources.

### *Initiatives currently underway*

Development of Themes

Concurrently, the emergent concept that *Springfield has something to offer everyone* could be further explored and could form the basis of a marketing strategy. The currently disparate offerings can be tied together through urban design and public relations initiatives, streetscape improvements, signage and the introduction of design guidelines can begin to set an identifiable image for the city.

Market Street Research, Inc. identified potential themes for Springfield's museums. Theme suggestions were based on studies of what consumers most enjoy about current exhibits. Themes that received the most positive response were: the natural history of the Connecticut River Valley, Dr. Seuss, a science museum featuring interactive exhibits of Africa, the history of Springfield's settlers, and an enlarged Basketball Hall of Fame.

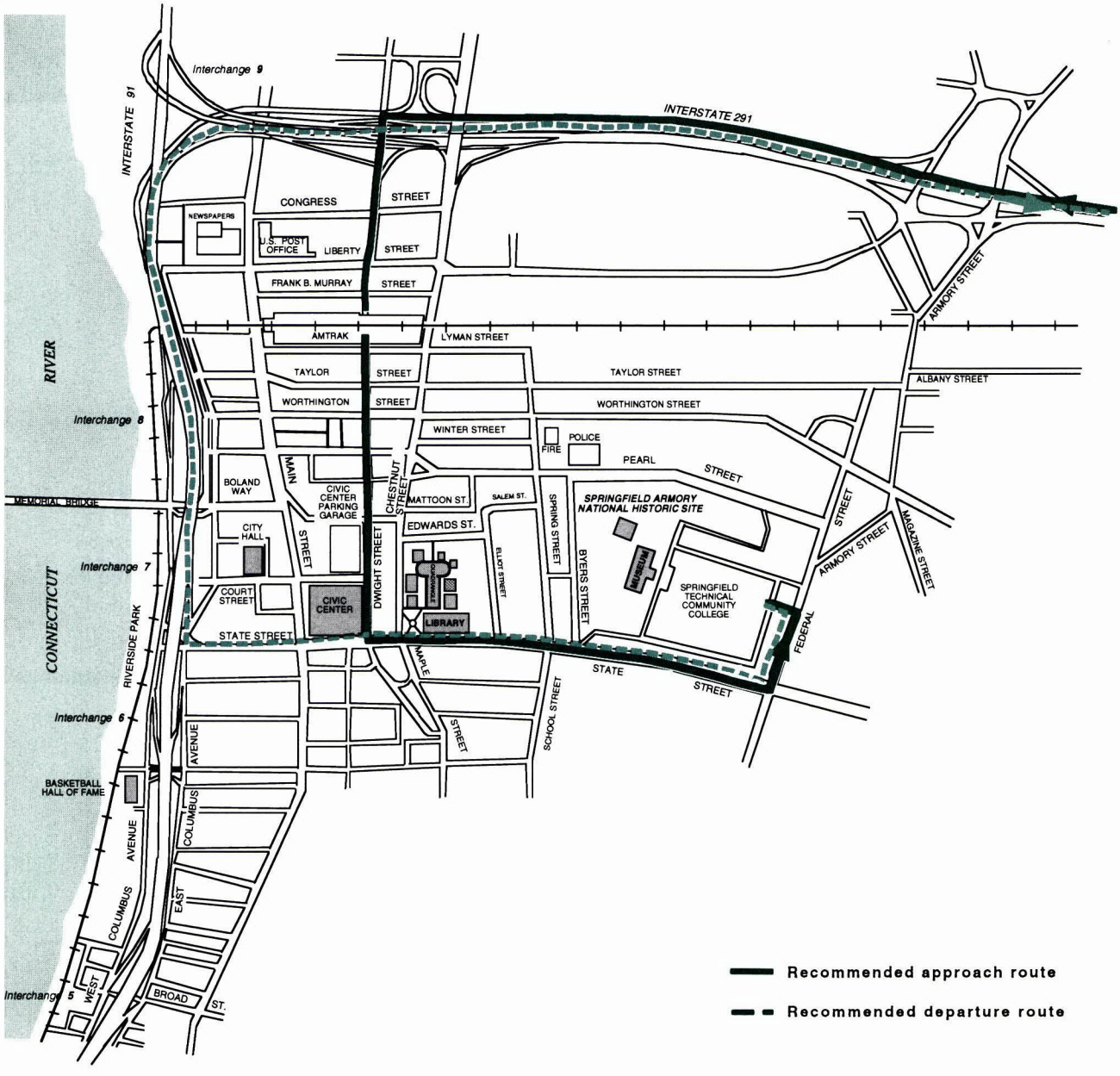
Infrastructure: Visitor Access, Circulation and Transportation

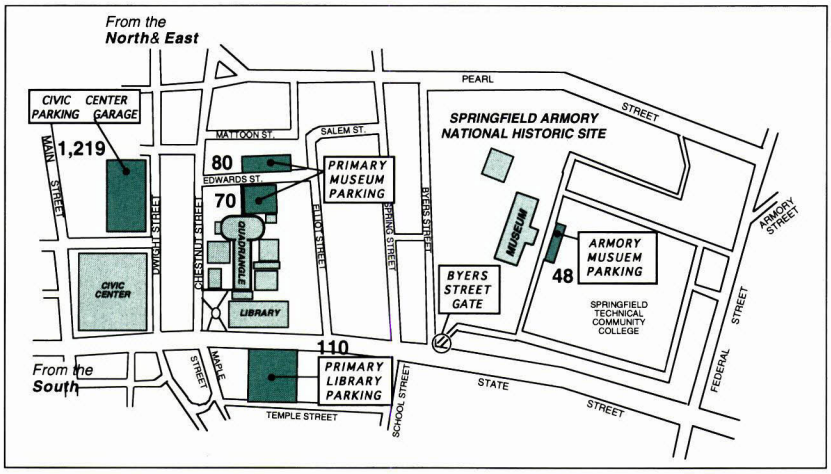
Springfield is very well situated with respect to regional access. Within approximately a twenty mile radius there are four airports: Bradley International Airport, Northampton Airport, Westover Metropolitan Airport and Barnes Airport. Highway access is also extensive, with connections from routes I-91, I-90 (Massachusetts Turnpike), I-291, and I-20 ( which becomes State Street within the City). Springfield is served by Amtrak rail system and is the home of the Peter Pan Bus Line, which is affiliated with Greyhound. Springfield is a three hour drive from New York City and one and a half hours from Boston. Consideration of an intermodal transfer facility, modelled on South Station in Boston, has been recommended.

Reaching the City of Springfield is not difficult, however, once there circulation through the City and accessing the desired destinations is less than evident. Fay, Spofford & Thorndike, Inc. Engineers evaluated a number of potential vehicular access routing options to the Springfield Armory National Historic Site and to Springfield Library and Museums. They examined both approach and departure routes and circulation between the two major destinations.

The approach from the east which takes Dwight Street to State Street and then onto Federal Street was recommended as optimum. Departure to the east was recommended via State Street and then I-91 onto I-291. The recommended approach from the north from I-91 suggests traveling east along I-291 until Chestnut Street, turning right onto Liberty Street and then south along Dwight until reaching State Street. Departure to the north was very direct, travelling along State Street the exit for I-91. Finally, approach from the south involves taking Columbus Avenue into town, turning right onto Court Street, south along Dwight and then turning left at State Street. The departure route to the south is virtually the above in reverse with the elimination of travel along Dwight and Court Streets since one can remain on State Street until reaching Columbus Avenue.

***Vehicular routes into downtown for visitors traveling along highways to the east of Springfield and must be clarified***






***Parking lots in close proximity to major attractions must be clearly signed***

It may be possible to form a link with regional tour buses ensuring that Springfield is part of the standard routing. Local tourist buses or trolleys, similar to those in Boston, could encourage people to see more than one attraction during their Springfield visit. Likewise, if the local bus were free or subsidized with admission to major attractions, cars would get deposited at parking lots and visitors would be more likely to see more of Springfield than simply a single museum. Studies found that visitors would park as far as a half mile away from their destination if provided with free parking and a shuttle bus.

Parking problems, like those pertaining to traffic levels, are often perceived rather than real. The *1989 Downtown Plan* brought forth evidence based on a 1988 study by the Parking Authority that concluded that: "Downtown Springfield's supply of parking spaces is adequate through 1993." (p. 33). Given the fact that during the last year economic activity has been minimal at best it is safe to say that parking remains adequate. Extensive signage will serve to overcome the impression that parking spaces are lacking.

There are five garages in the downtown area, each in close proximity to one or more of Springfield's attractions, with the Civic Center garage being the most central. Free off-street parking is located at the Quadrangle and the Armory. In addition there is metered parking along many downtown streets and several surface parking lots. The abundance of parking may, in fact, be working against the revitalization of downtown.

For more details about vehicular circulation, parking and potential shuttle bus service see the Appendix: *Springfield Access Study.*

Infrastructure: Signage

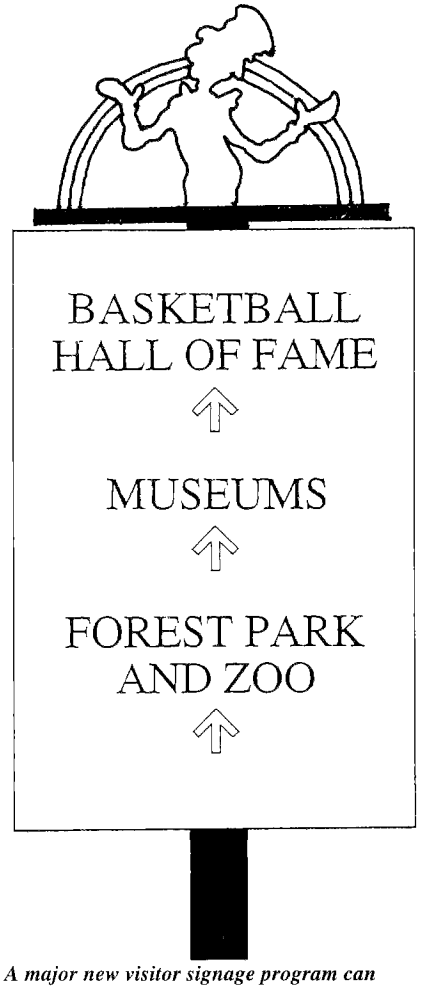
The provision of signage is perhaps the key component in the first stage of the creation of a visitor economy in Springfield. Its current absence permits the continuance of public perception of the city as inaccessible and, therefore, unwelcoming.

Carol R. Johnson Associates, Inc. has prepared a signage system for visitors to Springfield which includes three types of signs: "Trailblazers", "Markers" and "Visitor Service" signs. The Trailblazer signs will provide general destination descriptions such as Museums, Symphony or Theaters. Marker signs each indicate a specific destination, such as the Springfield Armory. The Visitor Service Signs will be placed close to many of the Trailblazer and Marker signs but are visually subordinate to these signs. They are used to direct people to the more common destinations such as the bus and train stations, hotels and the central library.

A number of icons were considered as an ornament appearing as a post-top on the Trailblazer signs. The icon themes that were favored in the market research studies related either to precision manufacturing or to Dr. Seuss. The "Cat in the Hat" character from Dr. Seuss was utlimately the preferred icon. Permission is currently being sought to use this character in the signage system. It is hoped the icon will convey a sense of identity for Springfield that speaks of it as a destination that offers both fun and history. In turn, it is expected that the repetition of this icon will aid the visitor's navigation as they start to recognize it from afar.

While the signage program once implemented will have a very positive effect in lending Springfield a degree of graphic uniformity, enlivening the streetscape and ensuring that people can easily reach their destinations, it should not be seen as answering the greater streetscape and urban design problems that Springfield faces. More funding is required in order to complete the signage system, the scope of which expanded as its necessity was more recognized.

Please see the Appendix: *Springfield Visitor Signage System* for details of the complete system.




***A major new visitor signage program can direct visitors, remind visitors of the city's rich attractions, and act as a new symbol of Springfield's pride in its visitor economy throughout downtown***

### *Future local initiatives*

For the creation of a visitor economy to be truly successful the local community must be dedicated to contributing to Springfield's revitalization through privately funded projects.

Springfield Improvement District (SID)

The recommendations that have been touched upon in this report and beyond require that the public sector's interest in Springfield's future well-being be matched by the community itself. The state wide initiative that awaits the passing of legislation to designate Springfield as a special Improvement District is key in this respect. It is hoped that a two-way street would evolve between urban design initiatives on public property and improvements to private property and those often less defined edges between the private and public.

Again public relations will play an important role as the SID would act as a catalyst towards developing a rigorous marketable image, employing slogans, brochures, designing special advertising supplements, holding festivals, forming linkages with educational institutions and ensuring that there is media coverage of Springfield's activities.

The SID would help to initiate streetscape improvement projects including public art, fountains, bicycle paths, tree and flower planting. The City project approval process would hopefully be re-examined, as would the safety and security programs, with the SID dedication.

In the meantime the City of Springfield is actively engaged in making improvements to the urban environment, such as sidewalk upgrading, the provision of attractive street furniture, the encouragement of sidewalk cafes, improved traffic signals and parking facilities .

### *Key Roles: management, resources*

Management

It must be recognized that there is a need for a single organization that has an overview of the various projects and proposals, and their scope, coordination and phasing. Each party involved in creating a visitor economy Springfield needs be kept on track with respect to understanding their scope of work and how they fit into the larger picture. This critical management role should be handled by Springfield Central.

Public relations and marketing should be jointly dealt with by Springfield Central and the City of Springfield, endorsing the Springfield Improvement District. Utilizing the results of the market research and the suggestions that emerged from it a thorough series of promotional tactics must be put in place.

The Visitor Center is integral in introducing people to the city. The exact siting and architectural and interior design of the Center will be a task requiring much careful attention. Once completed the Visitor Center must be employed to its fullest, distributing all marketing materials.

Presence in the Tourist Information Centers along the Massachusetts Turnpike should be continued and upgraded.

As well as printed material other venues for promotional information, such as an educational film about 18th and 19th century Springfield, could be produced. Similarly, there should be an increased use of annual events to draw visitors to the city. These could work with the further and ongoing development of themes.

General promotional material in the form of posters, maps and brochures should continue to be produced and should have frequent updates as exhibits or the city itself undergo changes.

Coordination and involvement with the state at all scales, from inclusion in regional tourist brochures to the exploration of funding opportunities and collaborative ventures between institutions should be managed by Springfield Central. For example, at the local level room tax needs to be reinvested back into the attractions and visitor amenities.



***Bronze "city art" relief map by LeFevre Studios, New York, features historic, architectural, cultural and geographic details to tell the story of Highland Park, Illinois - similar works would enrich Springfield's pedestrian connections between major visitor attractions***

Springfield can create a network of major visitor connections organized into three interconnected systems: the region - including the greater Springfield area, the downtown area, and the Riverfront. The provision of linkages between commercial, institutional, cultural and recreational amenities throughout downtown Springfield forging, for example, pedestrian "friendly" connections between the Springfield Library and Museums, commercial activity along Main Street and down to Riverfront Park will, over time, encourage greater commercial and cultural activity and create an urban center that feels safe and accessible to local residents and visitors alike. This concept is especially critical in relation to the concept of naming a Springfield Improvement District, where the private and public sectors must work together closely. The development and implementation of well-targeted urban design guidelines and improvements, both short-term and long-term, should be coordinated between Springfield Central and the City.

Resources: Cultural, Historical and Technical Institutions

Each of the cultural, historical and technical institutions have an important role to play in promoting a visitor economy. These institutions include the National Park Service, Springfield Armory National Historic Site, the Springfield Technical Community College, Springfield Library and Museums Association and the Basketball Hall of Fame.

The institutions should collaborate and coordinate with one another in terms of public relations, promotion and the creation of exhibits to provide mutual support between attractions. They must look at ways to maximize visitor duration in Springfield and extend Springfield's regional draw. Springfield must distinguish which of its historical and cultural attractions are exclusive, such as the Indian Motocycle Museum and the Basketball Hall of Fame, as well as which share themes or complement one another. Establishing links between recreational and historical/cultural activities would also help to this end.

The interests, demographic characteristics, levels of education and affluence of visitors to the museums elsewhere in New England region are similar to those that come to Springfield. Springfield would, therefore, clearly benefit from coordination of mutual support. Ultimately a Connecticut Valley Museums organization, linking some twenty art, historical and research institutions, would establish a critical mass capable of drawing national recognition and interest.

The Market Research Report: *Consumer Awareness of and Attitudes Toward Museums, Historic Sites, and Attractions in Springfield* should act as a guide in the development and management of programs and thematic approaches. (See Appendix for full report.)

### *Drawing the community into the process*

The City of Springfield, Springfield Central, Residents' Associations, and specific educational institutions are all included under the broad heading of community. Community members must continue to think innovatively about ways to build the visitor economy.

The types of initiatives that could be introduced or expanded upon include a percent for art program, public art competitions, festivals based on historical, seaonal or ethnic themes, programs involving schools at all levels, and special children's and senior's events.

Springfield's citizens, in adopting a positive and optimistic attitude towards their city should start to feel confident about investing in it through patronage or business ventures. This can occur at a variety of scales, from the remerchandising of Baystate West to the opening of Bed & Breakfast Inns.

The community must also work together to dispel negative images regarding safety, cleanliness and maintenance of public amenities, and accessibility and circulation to and through the city.

## Appendices

The appendices listed below may be obtained by request from Springfield Central.

- The Industrial Legacy of Springfield, Massachusetts - *by The Connecticut Valley Historical Museum, Springfield Library and Museums Association and Prof. Michael F. Konig*
- Consumer Awareness of and Attitudes Toward Museums, Historic Sites, and Attractions in Springfield - *by Market Street Research, Inc.*
- Historic Themes of Springfield - *by Jeff Kennedy Associates*
- Springfield Access Study - *by Fay, Spofford & Thorndike, Inc. Engineers*
- Springfield Visitor Signage System - *by Carol R. Johnson Associates*
- Strategies to Enhance the Tourism Economy of Springfield - *by The Collaborative, Inc.*
- Management Plan - *by Springfield Central*

## Special Resource Study Participants

***Special Resource Study Project Core Group***

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Neta Bolozky

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Thomas Costello, Former President, Springfield Library & Museums Association
Daphne Hall, Research and Program Development, Springfield Central
Carlo Marchetti, President, Springfield Central
Robert McCarroll, Principal Planner, City of Springfield

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Neta Bolozky, Springfield Central
Daphne Hall, Springfield Central
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Clay Jackson, Vice-President, Basketball Hall of Fame
Charles Manthos, Indian Motocycle Museum
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Thomas M. Belton
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Eleanor Cress
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William T. Foley
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Dick Garvey
Juan Gerena
Michael Graney
Gail Hano
Cathy Heft
Parker E. Hodgman
Jean Jinks
Roy Jinks
Brian J. Long
Paul Johnson
J. David Keaney
Candice E. Lopes
Mayor Robert T. Markel
Judith Matt
Elizabeth Middleton
David Moriarty
Christopher J. Moskal
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