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Reconnecting People to Springfield's Riverfront: from the South End to Forest Park

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Senior Urban Design Studio Fall 2011,

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Abstract

This report documents the work of the Senior Urban Design Studio on Springfield's southern riverfront. What is Springfield's riverfront of tomorrow? The primary goal of the project was to develop a vision to connect the neighborhoods of the South End and Forest Park to the Connecticut River. What are new imaginative ways to engage the southern waterfront of Springfield as a place for people? How can a landscape engage water-ecology with both functional and sensual-aesthetic values?

Our proposals offer new planning and design strategies for this great location in Springfield.

The studio articulated four major design objectives:

1. Improving and creating dynamic physical and mental connections to and from the riverfront in Springfield. Encourage accessibility to the River with attention to create a coherent pedestrian and bicycle system. Propose design elements that increase the visibility and experience of the River.
 2. Creating a new landscape experience along the Riverfront. A new path along the River engages the water's edge and ties into the larger network of the Connecticut River Walk and Bikeway.
 3. Restoring and redesigning the ecology of the rivers. The ecological functions of the Connecticut River and the Mill River have to be restored to minimize urban runoff and create new habitat for wildlife. This restoration is accompanied with an educational concept for visitors and residents to teach about the functions and beauty of the River.
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1. New economies on the riverfront have to support the ecology of the river.

Proposed public open spaces on the riverfront provide a long term framework and will guide crucial decisions for decision makers and the general public.