



Design Collaborative

2017 - 2018 ANNUAL REPORT





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The University of Memphis Design Collaborative (UMDC) is committed to increasing the capacity of planning and design to better serve communities. The Design Collaborative seeks to improve the relationship between citizens and the city (as a physical, social, and economic entity). This year's annual report provides a summary of the activities of the UMDC which was initiated in December 2014. This report covers our activities of fiscal year 2018, including the summer and fall semesters of 2017, and the spring 2018 semester.

The UMDC serves as an outreach arm of the University of Memphis focused on critical community challenges in urban design and community development. It is led by a partnership between the Department of City & Regional Planning and the Department of Architecture, however its collaborative initiatives include many other University and community partners. Through its interdisciplinary strengths, the UMDC connects design with community improvement in a comprehensive way. UMDC initiatives are:

- Built on collaboration, with interdisciplinary university partnerships, and partnerships between the University and the community (including grassroots organizations, non-profits, practitioners, philanthropists, and local government);
- Forward-thinking and focused on what we want Memphis to be; and
- Comprehensive, so that we're promoting public projects that complement each other and drive a common community objective.

When the UMDC was formed, it was recognized that one of the strengths of a University-based design center would be the ability to create and build on partnerships beyond the initial relationship between the University of Memphis (UofM)'s Departments of City & Regional Planning and Architecture. In a short period of time, we have seen this potential realized through collaboration with community partners and other academic departments at the UofM.

Initiatives for FY 2018

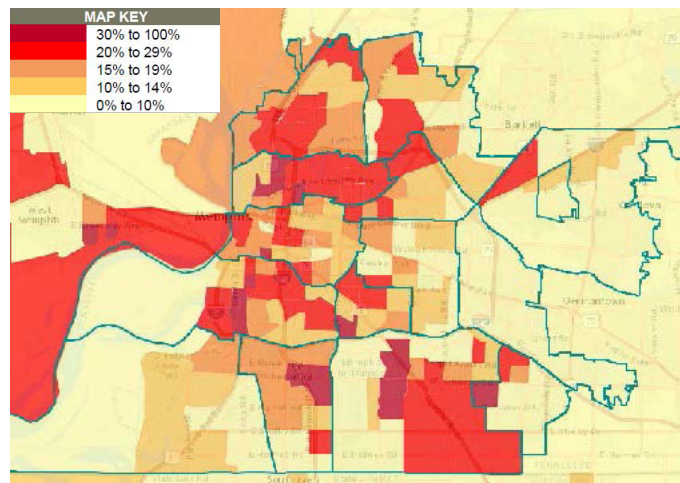
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Memphis 10K Housing Initiative

- A Collaborative Effort to Revitalize and Redevelop Memphis Neighborhoods

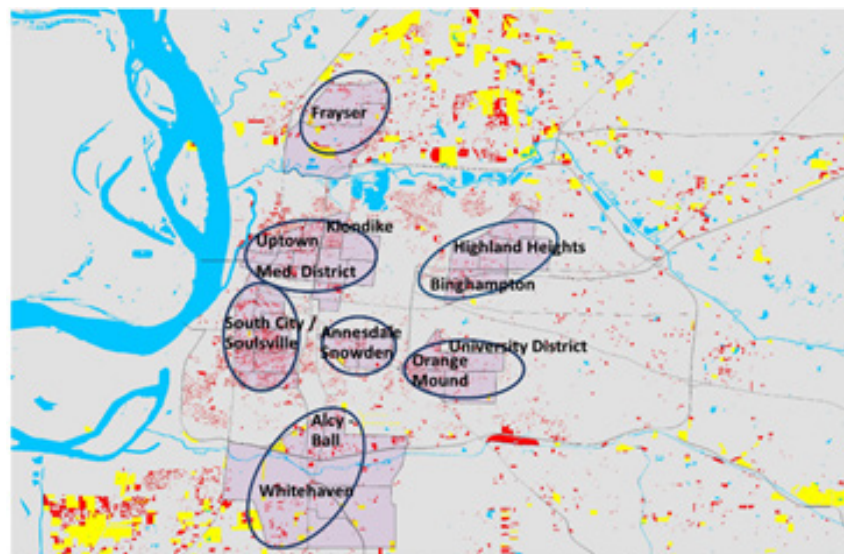
Guided by the vision of the late Tim Bolding and with funding from the Hyde Family Foundation, United Housing, Inc. convened a local executive committee to devise a strategy for the Memphis 10K Housing Initiative. Seeking to align private and public resources to reverse the decline of affordable housing in Memphis, the 10K Initiative's mission is to rebuild the local housing market and reinvigorate neighborhoods through homeownership support services.

The partnerships comprising the 10K Initiative steering Committee have a combined 23 years of servicing West Tennessee with a collective impact of over \$500 million into the local economy, \$20 million in down payment assistance and rehabilitation loans, and the participation in the sale of over 4,000 homes and housing counseling for over 8,000 home buyers. In addition to serving as an Executive Committee member, the UMDC facilitates the monthly meetings of the Steering Committee and in March of 2017, began researching national best practices in housing programs as well as an extensive analysis of locational data used to guide the initiative's strategy development.



Vacant Housing Units by Census Tract, 2016. Source: Esri; RCLCO

The national best practices report was completed and submitted in February 2018 and, under new leadership, United Housing, Inc. has been able to contribute to the efforts of Frayser CDC and BLDG Memphis' Tipping Point Neighborhood Plan (TPN). Similar to 10K's locational analysis, TPN seeks to identify ten Memphis neighborhoods where strategic investment can stabilize and reinvigorate long standing symptoms of distressed housing markets. The work of United Housing, Inc., Frayser CDC, BLDG Memphis, and a developing City of Memphis Housing Trust Fund are all being coordinated as a housing component of the Memphis 3.0 Comprehensive Planning efforts.



10K Target Areas and Census Tracts. Source: UMDC 10K Housing Report

Accelerating a Culture of Planning

– In partnership with the Memphis Chapter of the Urban Land Institute (ULI Memphis).

With Memphis at a turning point toward its third century, ULI Memphis and the UMDC established a partnership to play a more active role in the City’s effort to develop public and neighborhood capacity to engage in the planning process. The goal of the partnership is to build and support a culture of planning and implementation in our community through the following three objectives:

- Build community engagement and awareness around the value and benefits of planning and design,
- Leverage the UMDC with ULI members’ professional credibility to demonstrate neighborhood planning and ensure planning momentum during the comprehensive planning process, and
- Make planning and implementation a part of the local community conversation.

The first initiative of the partnership culminated in a lecture titled, “Why Comprehensive Planning is Good for Business.” Held in February 2017, this inaugural lecture of the partnership invited Mitchell Silver, Commissioner of New York City’s Department of Parks and Recreation and Tim Keane, Commissioner of Planning and Development in Atlanta, Georgia. Each commissioner stressed the importance of cities that plan and expressed that the most competitive and successful cities create a clear vision of growth and positive direction. These cities, they claimed, do not speculate but clearly state, with the public in mind, practical solutions for problems that need to be addressed with urgency. This original lecture was further developed into the Planning Matters Lecture series.

Planning Matters –

Planning Matters is a series of public events sponsored by the UMDC and ULI Memphis. In an effort to enhance the Memphis 3.0 planning process, the series seeks to demystify what comprehensive planning is and provide locals the opportunity to start a dialogue with national planning and development experts from around the country who bring their cutting-edge ideas and best practices.

The series kicked off in the fall semester of 2017 and will continue through the spring 2019 semester. The first lecture hosted Jeff Tumlin, current Principal at Nelson\Nygaard and former Inaugural Director of Oakland California’s first ever Department of Transportation (DOT). In his talk titled, “Planning as if People Mattered,” Tumlin highlighted his work at the DOT and their creation and use of the Equity Dashboard in aligning the mechanics of their local government with the values of the broader community.



Jeff Tumlin

Emily Talen

In closing out the fall semester, we were visited by Emily Talen, Professor of Urbanism at the University of Chicago. In her lecture, titled “Walking + Diverse Urbanism: The Complications of an Ideal,” Dr. Talen stressed the importance of work that can be done in our cities right now toward the objective of repairing sprawl. She asserted that while at least half the American populace may see the advantage of walkability, the most significant problem facing our cities is an inability to deal with social difference at localized levels.

While the goal of walkability may be easier to attain, without setting sights on the goal of diversity, the root causes of our intractable urban problems will persist.



from left to right: Jake Hodesh, Kevin Wright, and Joe Nickol

The series continued into 2018 with the creators and funders of the Neighborhood Playbook – a field guide for community members and developers in influencing physical and economic growth in their neighborhood. Kevin Wright and Joe Nickol, creators of the Playbook, presented “Economic Uncovery,” which highlighted the concept of demand creation as an initial strategy of sparking a longer-term vision and plan for development. Wright and Nickol were joined by Jake Hodesh of People’s Liberty - a Cincinnati-based philanthropic lab that helped to fund the Playbook – who kicked off the lecture with, “Investing in Place by Investing in People.”



Kristen Jeffers

The series rounded out the spring semester in March when we hosted Kristen Jeffers, founder and editor-in-chief of The Black Urbanist. Currently based in Baltimore, Maryland, Ms. Jeffers’ work is largely inspired by her parents and her experience growing up in Greensboro, NC. A native southerner her childhood interests in urban mobility and all-things-city grounded her choices through college and into her career as The Black Urbanist. Identifying foremost as a writer and storyteller, Jeffers uniquely posits her own cultural background and personal experiences to frame her ideas and theorize on issues that challenge the urban experience for many in our communities.

The Planning Matters Lecture Series will continue into the 2018-2019 Academic year and would not be made possible without the support of the Hyde Family Foundations.

UrbanPlan -

Developed by the Urban Land Institute, UrbanPlan workshops are hands-on, interactive, planning simulations that allow participants to experience a development process as they work in teams to respond to a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Elmwood District of the fictional City of Yorktown. Offered in three formats, for high schools, universities, or public officials, Memphis is one of nineteen District Councils that run the UrbanPlan program. With four trained instructors, ULI Memphis and the UMDc have hosted two UrbanPlan for Public Officials workshops beginning in May 2018.

With Legos, a map, and a financial spreadsheet the workshop’s development teams must decide how to build out a 5 ½ block area, whether to keep or move a homeless shelter, what type of retail is appropriate, and which neighborhood groups to keep happy – all while meeting the financial projections of the City and attracting outside investors. By taking on the role of developer, participants



UrbanPlan participants at ULI Memphis and UMDc's inaugural UrbanPlan for Public Officials Workshop held January 31, 2018 at Memphis Bioworks.

in the workshop get a chance to broaden their knowledge in the basics of a pro forma and funding of a complex project, the economics of different building types and community benefits, the different time horizons for the public and private sectors, and the risk associated with lengthy negotiations among all parties.

The program, while a mock simulation, addresses much of the site planning knowledge and financing skills needed in real world development and, as part of ULI Memphis and the UMDC's Accelerating the Culture of Planning programming, gives participants new perspectives of how they can contribute to Memphis' 3.0 planning process.



ULI Memphis staff, and local UrbanPlan instructors, and community advisors. January 31, 2018 at Memphis Bioworks.

Over the next twelve months UMDC, serving as two of the four trained local instructors, will partner with ULI Memphis to host up to twelve UrbanPlan Workshops to reach a diverse audience and continue to accelerate the culture of planning in Memphis. For more information about upcoming UrbanPlan Workshops please visit: <https://memphis.uli.org/events/>



Memphis 3.0 District Planning

— Memphis will Build Up Not Out.

In the fall of 2017 the UMDC, in partnership with local architect and urban designer Ray Brown, was selected as one of three local consultant firms to assist in the development of the 3.0 process' district plans. These smaller area plans build upon the plan's existing vision and goals to develop district-based strategies toward a future land-use vision and community character. The 14 Planning Districts are an update to the 1970s county-wide planning districts and in amending the boundaries, the Office of Comprehensive Planning considered neighborhoods, natural and man-made barriers like highways, major streets, water bodies, and railways, and census tracts.



Students enrolled in the UMDC Studio course helped to facilitate the Community Asset Mapping exercise in Workshop #1 held on November 30th at the Bickford Community Center.

As a local consultant to Memphis 3.0, the UMDC team leads a three-part series of district workshops that consist of community asset mapping, stakeholder-led district tours, and the development of an implementation strategy suited to the area's character. Workshop #1 - Community Asset Mapping, assists neighborhood residents in identifying where change should occur, Workshop #2 – Neighborhood Tours, allows residents to describe in more detail what needs to change, and Workshop #3 –

Implementation and Strategy Creation, gives residents the opportunity to define how that change should happen.

In late November 2017, the UMDC kicked off the district planning process with the North District. In addition to the inaugural North District, the UMDC team is responsible for the district planning of the Core, University, Westwood, and Southeast Districts. Each district workshop series lasts a period of six to ten weeks and the planning for all fourteen districts is anticipated to wrap up in the summer of 2018.

The three local consultant firms have had the opportunity to work with Opticos, a Berkeley-based urban design and architecture firm and the lead consultant to the city in the district planning process. Opticos worked with the city's team of planners to define the place and community anchor types that exist in the city of Memphis and these are being used by the local consultant teams to guide the participants of the district meetings through exercises designed to help determine the type and level of change that is most desired throughout the districts.

UMDC Studio

The University of Memphis Design Collaborative is in the form of an advanced studio course designed to support its community engagement activities. Graduate and undergraduate students from the Department of Architecture and graduate students in City and Regional Planning participate in the studio whose interdisciplinary approach allows for deeper thinking and greater problem solving.

With a focus on urban design, the course introduces to students the art of community building using architecture, planning, and development within the context of an urban environment. The format of the class takes on that of an urban laboratory where discussion, environmental survey, precedent study, and project assignments form the structure. It is an applied field-based course where students work in teams and individually on various assignments and fieldwork activities.

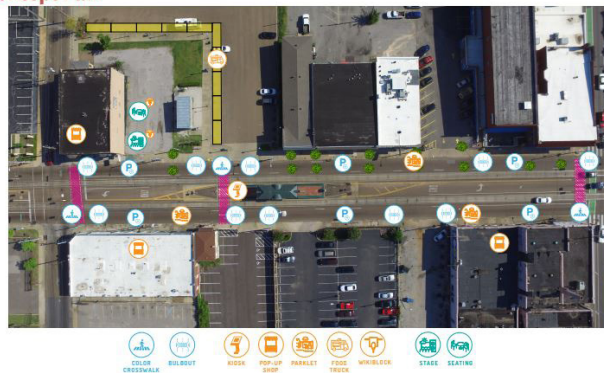
For the 2017-2018 Academic year the UMDC Studio corresponded with the Collaborative's Memphis 3.0 District Planning efforts giving students a unique opportunity to participate in and learn from the city's first comprehensive planning effort in over thirty years.

Fall 2017 - Memphis 3.0 District Planning, North District

Coinciding with the sixth MemFix event, held in the Madison Heights area of Memphis on October 13, 2017, the UMDC fall studio focused on the launch of Memphis 3.0's District Planning Process with an eye towards examining the role of Tactical Urbanism in comprehensive planning. Based on the concept that public/private partnerships help to facilitate change in neighborhoods, MemFix works with communities to redesign and temporarily activate, through tactical urbanism, targeted city blocks over a the course of a weekend hoping to demonstrate the "art of the possible."

The examination concluded that interventions through tactical urbanism can help to boost communities' confidence towards the overall planning process but that only the comprehensive plan itself can ensure

Concept Plan



MemFix Madison Heights Concept Plan developed by Team Better Block using their open-sourced process. The team conducted a community walk and talk on July 11th to identify core elements of identity for the Madison Heights area. For more information visit TeamBetterBlock.com

the funding structures and policy changes needed to generate a lasting effect of tactical urbanism events and interventions.

With a full review Memphis 3.0's Four Pillars and Working Group Issues, students set out to draft a full inventory of the district's existing conditions. In conjunction with the City and Regional Planning Department's Land Use Planning and Analysis for Community Planning courses, the combined coursework drafted a detailed analysis of historic and current conditions of the district.

Working with community involvement partners Klondike Smokey City, Uptown Neighborhood Association, and Vollintine Evergreen Community Association, the UMD Studio, in partnership with the Office of Comprehensive Planning, the Urban Arts Commission, and BLDG Memphis, hosted the North District's Workshop #1 on November 30, 2017 at the Bickford Community Center. At this inaugural district planning meeting stakeholders identified good places, areas of concern, and places of opportunity in a community asset mapping exercise. Students enrolled in the studio course were given the opportunity to hone their facilitation skills by leading the mapping exercises and other CRP students offered supportive data expertise from the information they gathered in their land use and demographic analyses. Meeting attendees envisioned enhanced employment and training opportunities, affordable housing, and blight remediation in a future North Memphis. Some of the good places identified were – Douglass Park, the Wolf River, Uptown, African American Museum, and Slave Haven. Areas of concern identified were – Velsicol Plant, intersection of Jackson and Hollywood, and Firestone Plant. Areas of opportunity identified were – Greenline, Douglass School, intersection of Chelsea and Hollywood for new retail, and St. Jude.

Data collected from the community mapping exercise was used to guide the development of the neighbor-led district tours of Workshop #2 held on December 12th and 13th. A total of four, two-hour tours covered the majority of the north district with focused discussions along major corridors such as Jackson and Chelsea, and walking tours at anchors in the Douglass, VECA, and New Chicago neighborhoods. The facilitated conversations centered on degrees of change and the type and level of change that neighbors envisioned could help accelerate, sustain, or nurture the places they identified as anchors. The additional input from Workshop #2 was utilized in the studio course to draft a vision for the District as well as planning objectives and more focused development strategies.

The additional input collected from the neighborhood tours was utilized to develop the map exercise for Workshop #3 held on January 9, 2018. In Workshop #3, participants dug deeper into developing a vision of the change they wished to see in their neighborhoods. The map exercises focused the 20-year visioning exercises around the community anchors and draft objectives identified in the previous two



Stakeholders of Memphis 3.0's North District visit Jackson Ave. to discuss their vision for the major corridor.



Stakeholders of Memphis 3.0's North District visit the Chelsea Ave. flood wall built by the Army Corps of Engineers in the 1940s. Across Chelsea Ave. to the north, the quonset huts, built in the same time period, are a source of environmental concern for district neighbors.

workshops. Neighbors were asked to, 1) prioritize the anchors they felt would have the greatest impact for effecting change throughout the district and, 2) select and refine the objectives they believed could affect that change for the district.

Spring 2018 - Memphis 3.0 District Planning, University District

The spring studio work continued the Memphis 3.0 District Planning process in the University District. The University District encompasses the majority of the University Neighborhoods Development Corporation's area of service and extends to the north and east of the University of Memphis' main campus. Recapping the Memphis 3.0 Four Pillars and Working Group Issues, students set out to engage University District stakeholders through conducting in-depth on-on-one interviews. Students also initiated a comprehensive analysis of the district's existing conditions including an extensive history of the area's urbanization, current and historic demographic profiles, and land use and economic conditions.



University District Stakeholders discuss points along Highland Row and the Highland Strip during Workshop #2 in Memphis 3.0's University (Mid-City) District.

Working with community involvement partners University Neighborhoods Development Corporation, the UMDC Studio hosted District Workshop #1 on March 1, 2018 at the University of Memphis Police Department – Highland Branch. Envisioning the preservation of neighborhoods, traffic calming measures such as bike lanes, and improvements in infrastructure such as sidewalk and street lighting, nearly forty district neighbors and stakeholders participated in the community asset mapping exercise. Some of the good places identified were – Summer Avenue, Audubon Park, Oak Court Mall, Pink Palace, Dixon Gallery, and University of Memphis. Areas of concern identified were – railroad crossings throughout the district, needed traffic calming measures throughout the district especially along Park Avenue and Highland, abandoned commercial spaces especially on Park Avenue, and industrial areas near the Liberty Bowl. Areas of opportunity identified were – Poplar Plaza, walkable business hubs along major roadways such as Park Avenue and Getwell, and improvements to the Davis Park Community Center in terms of facility upgrades.

Data collected from the community mapping exercise guided the development of Workshop #2's district tours held on March 21st and 22nd. A total of four, two-hour tours covered the majority of the University District with focused discussions along major corridors such as Poplar and Highland, and walking tours at existing anchors along the Highland Strip and potential anchors at Park and Highland Avenues, and Park Avenue and Getwell Rd.. The facilitated conversations centered on degrees of change and the type and level of change that neighbors envisioned could help accelerate, sustain, or nurture the places they identified as anchors. The additional input from Workshop #2 was utilized in the studio course to draft a vision for the District as well as planning objectives and more focused development strategies.

The additional input collected from the neighborhood tours was utilized to develop the map exercise for Workshop #3 held on April 12, 2018. In Workshop #3, participants more deeply discussed their vision the district by putting on their, "20-year goggles." Focused on the community anchors and draft objectives identified in the previous two workshops neighbors were asked to prioritize the anchors they felt would have the greatest impact for effecting change throughout the district and select and refine the objectives they believed could affect that change for the district.

Core District -

In partnership with the City of Memphis Office of Comprehensive Planning and Br3Gs Architects, UMDC staff facilitated the district workshops for Memphis 3.0's Core District which encompasses the city's Central Business District, Medical District, and Midtown area. Workshop #1 was held on January 25th at Mississippi Boulevard Church. Over seventy residents and stakeholders of the district envisioned improved pedestrian infrastructure and other public facilities, improvements in the physical condition of housing units, new affordable housing options, the beautification of neighborhoods, an implementation of streetscape improvements, and a strategy to address vacancies.



Memphis 3.0 Core District Workshop #2 Neighborhood Tour. District Stakeholders discussed traffic and mobility along the Poplar Ave. corridor.

Some of the good places identified in the mapping exercise were Overton Park, the Levitt Shell, the shops and businesses in the South Main District, Binghampton Park, and the Cooper Young neighborhood. Negatives identified were a lack of connectivity, blighted properties, a lack of pedestrian infrastructure, and traffic concerns on major roads such as Union Avenue. Participants also identified areas of opportunity for change. Those centered around improved connectivity, mobility, and transportation access, commercial reinvestment, increasing pedestrian infrastructure such as biking and crosswalks, and a revitalization of corridors such as Lamar.

Community Involvement Partners for the Core District included the Midtown Development Corporation, the Center for Transforming Communities, and the Memphis Medical District Collaborative. Workshop #2's community tours were held on February 13th and 14th and Workshop #3's exercises were held on March 13th at Memphis BioWorks.

Westwood and Southeast Districts -

District Planning for Westwood and Southeast began in early May 2018 and will continue through July 2018. Memphis 3.0's District Planning process is scheduled to wrap by the end of the summer when the Office of Comprehensive Planning will begin to finalize the city's 20-year comprehensive plan. The development of the plan will build on the foundation of the stakeholder-developed vision and incorporate the input and recommendations from the small-area district plans. The Memphis 3.0 plan implementation will begin in early 2019 following a vote to adopt the plan by the Memphis City Council.



Memphis 3.0 Westwood District Workshop #1. District Stakeholders identify and map district strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for change.

UMDC Focus and Priorities

The Design Collaborative's delivery process includes the following two components: the talent and experience of the research center staff as well as the UMDC Studio. The fall and spring studios serve to educate students through engaged scholarship while collaborating with the public on place-based solutions.

Our community engagement process has helped establish our direction and initial focus. The critical community issues that form our current work are centered around the built environment's effect on quality of life through public health, safety, and mobility of Memphians

Priority Initiatives:

To maximize the value of limited resources, it is important to focus on initiatives that closely align with the Collaborative's mission and that are most impactful. Characteristics of these priority initiatives are those that:

1. Have the potential for positive catalytic impact on the community
2. Establish and/or strengthen collaborative partnerships
3. Support the educational mission of the Collaborative and the University
4. Leverage the Design Collaborative's research focus
5. Provide an opportunity to share positive messaging

Selection Criteria for Project Initiatives:

1. Have a positive catalytic impact on the community at large
2. Engage citizens and stakeholders in the larger project area
3. Establish and/or Strengthen Collaborative Partnerships (non-profit focus)
4. Is a prototype that can be replicated (not a one off)
5. Provide an opportunity to share positive messaging to our target audiences
6. Maximize the value and strengths of the Design Collaborative
7. Leverage and advance the UMDC's multidisciplinary research focus
8. Provide the opportunity to add resource capacity to the UMDC
9. Provides educational opportunities for the center and the community
10. Is located in the Delta region with a focus on Memphis (priority in Core City)

UMDC Partnerships

New Partnerships

ASLA

In February 2017 the UMDC delivered a lunchtime presentation to the local chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). Centered on the district planning work being conducted in Memphis 3.0's North District, the dialogue covered UMDC priority issues, such as healthy places and walkability, and district specific issues streetscape improvements, and urban waterway and brownfield interventions.



The conversation was framed to identify areas where the fields of planning and landscape architecture can overlap and garnered additional interest in the comprehensive planning work being done in the Memphis 3.0 process.

Ongoing Partnerships

Community Partners

AIA Memphis
 Alcy Ball Development Corporation
 Binghampton Development Corporation
 BLDG Memphis
 Blight Authority of Memphis (BAM)
 Church Health Center
 Crosstown Arts and Crosstown Concourse
 Crosstown Community Association
 Edge Neighborhood Association
 Hyde Family Foundations
 Innovate Memphis
 Memphis City Beautiful
 Memphis College of Art
 Memphis Medical District Collaborative (MMDC)
 Memphis Tilth
 Midtown Development Corporation
 Neighborhood Preservation, Inc. (NPI)
 Pigeon Roost Development Corporation
 Rhodes College
 United Housing
 University Neighborhood Development Corporation (UNDC)
 Urban Land Institute, Memphis District Council (ULI Memphis)

Government Partners

Memphis and Shelby County Division of Planning and Development
 Memphis and Shelby County Economic Development Growth Engine (EDGE)
 Memphis and Shelby County Office of Sustainability
 Memphis Area Transit Authority
 Memphis Office of Comprehensive Planning
 Tennessee and Shelby County Health Departments


Regional Partners

American Institute of Architects (AIA)
 Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis
 Knight Foundation
 Nashville Civic Design Center
 Tennessee Chapter of the American Planning Association (TAPA)
 Tennessee Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

University Of Memphis Partners

Departments of Anthropology, Civil Engineering, and Criminology and Criminal Justice
 Intermodal Freight Transportation Institute
 School of Public Health





Thank you for being reading and learning about the UMDC and how it is working to make Memphis the best it can be for Memphians, and those all across the region. If you would like to help support the UMDC or learn more about our work, please visit our web page: <http://www.memphis.edu/umdc/>

You can contact the UMDC directly by emailing us at UMDC@memphis.edu to talk to us about various initiatives, our process, or working with us. We look forward to hearing back from you with any questions, comments, or concerns you have regarding the Design Collaborative. [Follow us on Facebook](#) for more updates and information about events.

Thank you for reading and we hope you are also working to make Memphis a strong, vibrant city!



The University of Memphis is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action University. It is committed to the education of a non-racially identifiable student body.

