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Cover images (left to right): (1) Somerville, TN historic county courthouse, (2) Drawing from University District Shared Prosperity Open House, and, (3) Map of 303d waterway impairments from urbanized high density sources

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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. Initiated in December 2014, the UMDC seeks to improve the relationship between citizens and the city (as a physical, social, and economic entity). This '2019 Annual Report' provides a summary of the activities of the UMDC since the last annual report published in July of 2018, signaling a shift from a fiscal-year schedule to a calendar-year schedule.

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, fielding partnerships, both within university disciplines and with the community including grassroots organizations, non-profits, practitioners, philanthropists, and local governments;
- Forward-thinking and focused on what we want Memphis to be; and
- Comprehensive, so that promoted projects are complementary to each other and driven by common community objectives.

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, the center's potential has been realized through collaboration with community partners and other academic departments at the UofM.

Initiatives from July 2018 to present:

- Accelerating a Culture of Planning
 - » Planning Matters
 - » UrbanPlan
- UMDC Studio:
 - » Equitable Economic Development in South Frayser
 - » Shared Prosperity in the University District
- Somerville Town Center Redevelopment Plan
- MMDC – Linden Triangle Park Redesign
- Sustainable Urban Systems – Redesigning the Urban-Rural Interface

Accelerating a Culture of Planning

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

The UMDC's partnership with ULI Memphis continued in 2019, with additional capacity to adapt and facilitate nationally developed ULI programming at the local level.

Building and supporting this culture of planning maintained the following objectives:

- Building community engagement and awareness around the value and benefits of planning and design;
- Leveraging the UMDC and ULI's professional credibility to demonstrate neighborhood planning and ensure planning momentum; and
- Making planning and plan implementation a part of the local community conversation.

Supported through a partnership with the Hyde Family Foundations, the goals of the Accelerating a Culture of Planning initiative took shape through the curation and facilitation of both the Planning Matters lecture series and UrbanPlan workshops.

Planning Matters



Initiated as an effort to enhance the Memphis 3.0 planning process, Planning Matters sought to demystify the process of comprehensive plan development. The series, which began in fall 2017, provide an opportunity for local economic and community development practitioners to engage in dialogue with national planning and development experts around cutting-edge ideas and best practices. The fall 2018 and spring 2019 series hosted Maurice Cox of the City of Detroit, Shelly Poticha of the Natural Resources Defense Council, and Mick Cornett author of *The Next American City*.

Maurice Cox – Place and Economic Development

To kick-off the fall 2018-lecture series, the UMDC and ULI Memphis capitalized on energetic local conversations around place and economic development and partnered with Community LIFT and nearly a dozen sponsoring organizations to host a panel discussion with keynote speaker, Maurice Cox, then-Planning Director for the City of Detroit.



Learning from Detroit

On August 27, 2018, Mr. Cox, a well-credentialed urban designer, architectural educator, and public servant, addressed to a room full of planners, activists, non-profit leaders, and community members at Memphis' historic Clayborn Temple to impart lessons learned from his tenure in the Motor City. He described the heavy emphasis of investment into their downtown but also the reality that these activities failed to affect other parts of the city despite their great need.

In the face of this concentrated investment activity that stagnated within the Central Business District (CBD), the Detroit planning department made some radical decisions focusing on the concept of the "20 Minute Neighborhood," the practice of land banking, and increased

intention toward developing public space and improving connectivity. With the goal of creating a strengthened sense of place, the city earmarked \$3.5 million toward new walk/bike paths and improved sidewalks; and test cases for alternative development practices including “non-build options,” within ten neighborhoods. Mr. Cox concluded that Detroit is trying to build one city for its entire people and that the steps they had made toward that goal were due, in large part, to the full support and approval of those people. His recommendation for Memphis to improve the city was to learn from Detroit - to respect the history, the nature, the beauty, the work, the mobility, the youth, and the community voice of its people.

Shelley Poticha – Healthy, Thriving Communities

In 2017 Memphis was selected as one of six cities to receive a one million dollar grant through the Strong, Prosperous, and Resilient Communities Challenge (SPARCC), an initiative of the an initiative in partnership with the Natural Resources Defense Council. As a status update of Memphis’ progress with the initiative, Planning Matters hosted Shelley Poticha, managing director of the National Resource Defense Council’s (NDRC) Healthy People and Thriving Communities program.



Building a Strong, Prosperous, and Resilient Memphis

The NRDC has worked in partnership with communities across the country to ensure place-based neighborhood revitalization and healthy lifestyles through more comprehensive approaches to community problem solving. With extensive experience including work with Reconnecting America, the Congress for New Urbanism, the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, and the Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities, on September 21, 2018, Ms. Poticha shared her experiences as the NDRC’s Healthy People and Thriving Communities program director.

Presenting concerning trends of community change, she stressed the important role planners can assume to incorporate groups that have been traditionally excluded from planning and redevelopment conversations. To achieve success, Ms. Poticha recommended communicating technical planning issues to the public; balancing preventative health measures and economic opportunities; and reframing the exchange of information with community members who may be affected by changes in policy. Ms. Poticha concluded her presentation with an evaluation of Memphis’ 3.0 Comprehensive Planning initiative. Underscoring the core challenge of building trust between communities and local governments, she recommended that planners intentionally build the decision-making capacity of local leaders and highlighted the work of the North Memphis SPARCC project as an opportunity to place community stakeholders, the intended beneficiaries, at the center in order to effect meaningful change.

Mick Cornett – The Next American City

To close out the Planning Matters lecture series, ULI Memphis and the UMDL capitalized on the book tour of former four-term Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett’s, *The Next American City: The Big Promise of Our Midsize Metros*. Under Cornett’s leadership, Oklahoma City transformed its economy, achieved success in attracting millennial populations with high-ranking opportunities for employment and families, and successfully attracted investment for national sporting franchises.



Planning for the Knowledge Economy

On February 26, 2019, Mr. Cornett engaged attendees with ideas on the ways in which mid-sized metros can transform population and economic growth into citywide opportunity. A successful example he shared from Oklahoma City was the voter-approved MAPS (Metropolitan Area Projects) initiative used to fund major capital improvements including the construction of new and upgraded public facilities.

The successful implementation of these initiatives in Oklahoma City markedly informed Mr. Cornett's perspective on the planning and management of the mid-sized city of the future. In order to make the most of expected population growth, Mr. Cornett contends that urban leaders must strengthen and diversify their cities' economies, foster civic pride and social cohesion among city residents, create cultures of health and wellness, and develop their cities sustainably. He believes that the city of Memphis can improve both its image and quality of life by actively investing in itself and aptly stated, "we all live in cities that we didn't create."

While the Memphis' auto-dependent infrastructure will not disappear overnight, four-term Mayor Mick Cornett maintains that targeted capital improvements, a robust cultural identity, and a commitment to wellness and sustainable development can realize the vision of a city in which all Memphians want to live.

The full roster of Planning Matters Speakers is listed below.

	Speaker	Affiliation	Lecture Topic
FALL 2017	Jeff Tumlin	Principal at Nelson\Nygaard, former Director of Oakland Department of Transportation	<i>Planning as if People Mattered</i>
	Emily Talen	Professor of Urbanism at the University of Chicago	<i>Walking and Diverse Urbanism: The Complications of an Ideal</i>
SPRING 2018	Kevin Wright and Joe Nickol	Creators of the Neighborhood Playbook	<i>Economic Uncovery</i>
	Jake Hodesh	People's Liberty	<i>Investing in Place by Investing in People</i>
	Kristen Jeffers	founder and editor-in-chief of The Black Urbanist	<i>Practice of Planning & Development through a Black, Urbanist, Southern Lens</i>
FALL 2018	Maurice Cox	Planning Director, City of Detroit	<i>Place and Economic Development</i>
	Shelley Poticha	Managing Director, Healthy People and Thriving Communities Program, National Resources Defense Council	<i>Building a Strong, Prosperous, and Resilient Memphis</i>
SP 2019	Mick Cornett	Former four-term Mayor of Oklahoma City	<i>Planning Cities for the Knowledge Economy</i>

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. Memphis is one of nineteen District Councils trained to facilitate the UrbanPlan program and has been a leader in adapting the national-level curriculum toward more equitable and inclusive facilitation to meet the needs of local community development practitioners and leaders.

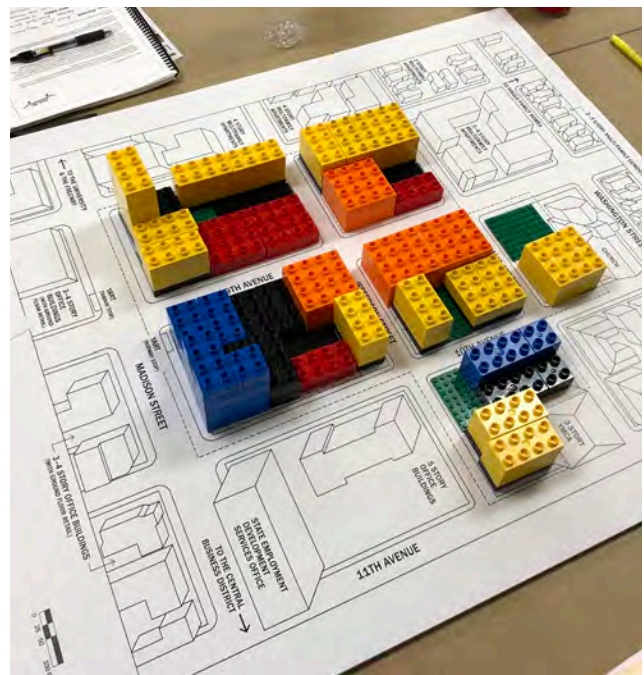
With four trained instructors, ULI Memphis and the UMDC have hosted over a dozen UrbanPlan workshops since May 2018. Offered in an adapted, half-day format, students, practitioners, nonprofit leaders, and community organizers work together to gain better understanding of how development decisions are made. While a mock simulation, the program 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 best contribute local planning processes.

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 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.

For more information about upcoming UrbanPlan Workshops visit: <https://memphis.uli.org/events>



UrbanPlan participants



UrbanPlan site plan

Design Collaborative Studio

The Design Collaborative Studio supports the community engagement activities and projects of UMDC.

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 2018 - Equitable Economic Development in South Frayser

The fall 2018 Design Collaborative studio course centered on aligning equitable economic development initiatives with one of the regions prominent natural resources, the Wolf River. This research initiative focused on the area of South Frayser through a collaboration with the Frayser Community Development Corporation, United Housing, Inc., and other Frayser-area developers, nonprofit leaders, other key stakeholders.

The research effort worked with a steering committee of Frayser stakeholders to define 'equitable economic growth in urban environments,' and then examined both how that concept has been applied in urban contexts and how it can be implemented in community redevelopment strategies in Memphis. Additional research examined issues of zoning, underemployment, affordability, displacement, gentrification and environment. In order to address the current inequities present in the historic development activity and practices present in the Frayser community, the research initiative also explored policy recommendations.



Proposed conservation area along Wolf River



Peachtree Apartments in Frayser

Identifying the Frayser Southern Investment Zone, the initiative aimed to strengthen connections between the area's potential investment activities with a focus on equitable development and community redevelopment strategies that focus on job creation through:

- Affordable housing—construction / management
- Environmental Infrastructure-(Wolf River Corridor Improvement Plan) restoration / recreation / management / education
- Commercial anchors/corridors—retail / service

The proposed redevelopment strategy identified focus areas for commercial mixed-use connected by a corridor of multifamily residential development. A future-zoning map delineates areas of south Frayser for Wetland Conservation providing an opportunity to create educational and recreational wildlife uses. The report provided a set of potential funding sources and mechanisms and recommended further exploration of establishing a South Frayser TIF District toward achieving the area's equitable economic development goals.

Offering both descriptive and prescriptive information, the report aimed to aid the Frayser community in coordinating the variety of planned and potential development and redevelopment strategies/projects within Frayser. With appropriate collaboration between investors and active stakeholders, communities like Frayser can achieve dramatic, positive, equitable change. To this end, a final recommendation of the equitable redevelopment strategy was for Frayser stakeholders and key players continue to gather in regular coordination meetings to share information for when planned changes begin to occur and to initiate a deeper exploration of the feasibility of utilizing the TIF District tool.



South Frayser Equitable Economic Development focus area map

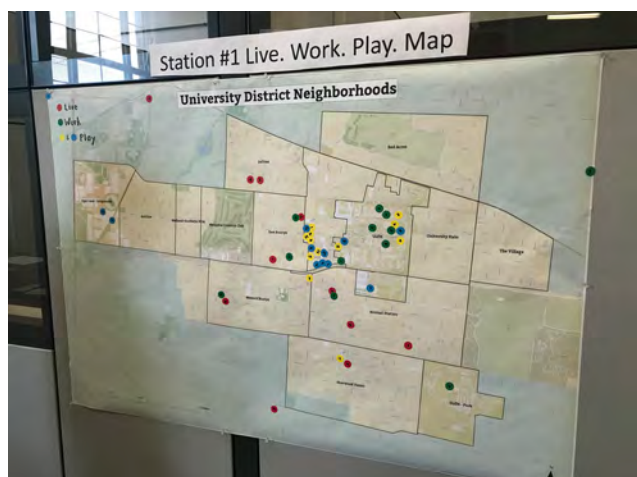
Spring 2019 - Shared Prosperity in the University District

In October 2018, the City of Memphis became the third city to participate in the Shared Prosperity Partnership - an initiative of the Kresge Foundation, the Brookings Institution, the Urban Institute, and Living Cities (the Partnership). Upon invitation from the Partnership, Memphis held a two-day convening of local community development practitioners and leaders from the Partnership's national organizations to identify and discuss existing challenges and imagine what a more robust community development ecosystem might look like in Memphis.

With the Kresge Foundation's demonstrated interest in resourcing new local approaches and frameworks for achieving shared prosperity, the University of Memphis positioned itself as a leading competitor for the resources available from the Partnership. In response to this opportunity, the Department of City and Regional Planning and its Design Collaborative (UMDC) worked with the Office of Government Relations (OGR) and the University Neighborhoods Development Corporation (UNDC) to position the University of Memphis (UoM) and its area neighborhoods as a "Launchpad" for Shared Prosperity.

The process to plan for the concept of a UoM Shared Prosperity Launchpad took shape within a combined, six-credit our, spring 2019 UMDC and Comprehensive Planning Studio. Collaborating with the UNDC, OGR, and a broad set of university stakeholders, the spring 2019 studio course prepared the background information and foundational research needed to populate a formal proposal to Kresge. Focusing on the UoM neighborhoods as a Launchpad for shared prosperity allowed the opportunity to leverage ongoing and emerging initiatives of the UNDC toward a shared vision of inclusive growth.

Additionally, the studio sought to expand upon the "Build Up Not Out," approach of the preceding 2-year period of engagement activities of the Memphis 3.0 comprehensive planning process led by the City of Memphis. Within this framework, the CRP and UMDC studio course took steps toward defining shared prosperity for the district, identifying anchor institution models that could carry that definition forward, and outlining strategies that could bring more equitable, measurable outcomes to the University District. Acting as consultants to OGR, UNDC, and the University District community, eight graduate planning students worked under the advisement of CRP Faculty and UMDC staff to define the approach, summarize the story of the district and its communities, and outline a strategy to drive the district's development agenda toward a shared, equitable vision.



Live Work Play map exercise, community open house



Investment priority activity, community open house



The report was organized in five chapters as follows:

Project Approach and Key Concepts described the approach that drove the studio's work. This approach sought to solidify a definition of Shared Prosperity for a specific geographic area and align the definition with best-practice approaches to Anchor Institution strategies.

Past Plans, Study Area Conditions, and Key Issues briefly described general characteristics of Memphis and the University District (UD), delving more thoroughly into the past and ongoing planning and development initiatives as well as the existing conditions of the district and its neighborhoods. These efforts helped to generate a current snapshot to begin identifying where efforts toward equitable community development could begin by identifying general neighborhood and community issues that rise to the top of this cursory comparative analysis. In conclusion, Chapter 2 identifies a baseline data metric from which shared prosperity strategies can be measured.

Community Involvement Findings detailed the community engagement strategies that were approached to more finely define and identify district and neighborhood issues and desired outcomes. Organized in multiple phases, these strategies focused on both district-wide and neighborhood-specific engagement, which then helped to inform an approach to a concluding, district-wide Open House event.

Compiled Strategies for the University District offered potential planning and development strategies for the district, focused on the themes of transportation, housing, institutional transparency, and educational equity. Chapter 4 concluded with a draft list of investable ideas based on an institutional anchor strategy carrying the theme of Live Local, Spend Local, and Hire Local.

Metrics, Indicators, and Recommendations detailed key indicators to track the progress of the Shared Prosperity strategies. Introduced with a brief literature review on developing indicators, Chapter 5 concludes the report by summarizing key outcomes and indicators related to strategic focus areas and recommends strategies toward improving institutional and community relations that focus on enhanced

Harnessing the momentum that the Kresge convening sparked, the spring 2019 studio provided a strategic plan and framework to position the University as a leader in achieving the goals of Shared Prosperity. Implementing a plan for shared prosperity, with the University District neighborhoods as a Launchpad, will help to frame a model that can be replicated both throughout Memphis, as the Memphis 3.0 plan moves toward implementation, and nationally, as a best-practice model of university- community partnerships. Securing recognition as a lead partner in shared prosperity will serve the UofM's broader goals within Carnegie Classification, both its elective Community Engagement and the Highest Research Activity that it strives toward.

Somerville Town Center Redevelopment Plan

Settlement began as early as 1820 in the area of Fayette County, TN. By 1836, there were enough residents to file for incorporation and Somerville was established as the county seat. Today it is one of the oldest towns in the area and hosts the county's courthouse and library. While the town's economy has historic roots in agricultural production, principally cotton and corn, more recent diversification has included soybean, beef cattle, dairy, and egg production.

The town remains primarily rural and agricultural and the Town Center's historic character and charm remain one of its most treasured assets. However, as larger, regional cities and towns grow in the pattern of suburban sprawl, Somerville finds itself in a period of transition and in need of a particular balance of solutions. There is a desire to both capture some of the economic benefit presented in the approaching pattern of rapid suburbanization and maintain their historic, rural character.

In recognition of its historical significance and the importance of an economically healthy and vibrant Town Center for the future of Somerville, the Mayor's Office and Director of Community Development in partnership with the University of Memphis Design Collaborative (UMDC) underwent a year-long strategic initiative for a Town Center Redevelopment Plan. Throughout 2019, the UMDC conducted existing conditions and comparative best practice research informed by monthly engagement activities conducted with a variety of Somerville stakeholders and guided by a volunteer steering committee.

An analysis of Somerville's Existing Conditions provided an informational base to outline the key issues subject to planning intervention. Through an preliminary analysis of historic, property, physical condition, and socioeconomic data, a framework of key issues was used to outline a strategy for community engagement activities. These defining key issues were organized into the following areas:

- Quality of Place
- Economic Opportunity
- Mobility and Connectivity
- Open Public Space and Recreation



Somerville stakeholders on walking tour engagement



Somerville, TN county courthouse

Seeking to reach the town's many diverse stakeholders, engagement activities took on multiple forms including community information sharing sessions, workshop activities, facilitated focus group conversations, an online survey, and a site visit walking tour. These activities were conducted under advisement from the redevelopment plan steering committee and successfully reached over two hundred unique perspectives on Somerville's issues and opportunities.

The Somerville Redevelopment Strategy was guided by the following vision for the town:

Somerville residents envision their Town Center as the Heart of Fayette County and the Soul of Somerville, which serves as a regional economic asset. At its core, the historic Town Square is a walkable mixed-use center with thriving businesses, active public spaces and strong connections to surrounding neighborhoods and assets.

A comparative analysis of town center built form complimented the multiple iterations of community input and helped to identify best practice cases as potential precedents for suitable recommendations for Somerville. The presentation of these precedents served to both highlight how other small towns have succeeded upon their charm or unique traditions and guide an inspirational future vision for Somerville stakeholders that was relevant to their expressed needs and desires. Examples were put forth both to highlight regional towns sharing similar characteristics to Somerville and to outline potential organizational structures or policy practices that successfully guided positive action in other communities.

Based on the desires of the residents living in and around Somerville, best practice cases and precedents were organized into topic areas to include:

- Historic Assets
- Arts and Culture
- Events and Tourism
- Parks and Recreation

Intended to highlight the many infrastructural and cultural opportunities present in Somerville's Town Center, the case and precedent studies served as a framework for town stakeholders to prioritize issues and guide the development of potential recommendations. Final



Somerville , TN historic architecture

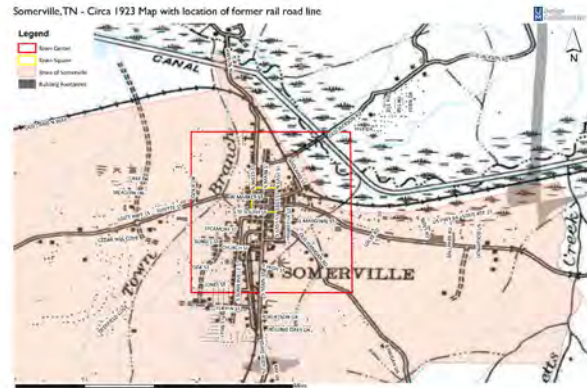


Somerville, TN potential for adaptive reuse

recommendations for Somerville introduce the concept of a Downtown of Main Street organization to oversee and coordinate multiple task force working groups for each of the previously identified topic areas. Framed in the general context of economic and cultural development, the pursuit of these topic areas was reinforced in the presentation of both the Redevelopment Plan's recommended implementation and funding strategies.

In addition to the general recommendations toward adopting a robust organizational structure to ensure successful implementation of the Redevelopment Plan, it was recommended that the town's leadership pursue solutions toward freight traffic management, expanded housing options, and open space preservation and restoration.

By commissioning this redevelopment plan, the Town of Somerville has exhibited the leadership and vision that is the necessary first step in repositioning its downtown. While advancing a broader economic development strategy for the Town Center, the recommended Downtown Main Street Organization and Task Force working groups will work together toward the desired vision for Somerville to ensure economic vitality in the heart of Fayette County. As adopted, the Somerville Town Center Redevelopment Plan serves as an official statement by the Town of its vision, intentions, goals, objectives, and strategies for future Town Square interventions.



Somerville , TN historic rail map



Concept plan for restoring Somerville, TN Court Square

Linden Park Public Space Enhancements

As part of the Quality Public Spaces programming of the Memphis Medical District Collaborative (MMDC), the UofM Design Collaborative spent the fall facilitating a redesign process for Linden Ave. Triangle Park. The initiative worked closely with the residents of City View Towers, a user group with the highest proximity to the underutilized park amenity. The design process coincided with the MMDC and City of Memphis-facilitated bicycle and pedestrian improvements along Dr. M.L.K Jr. Ave. at Linden Ave whose near completion was celebrated on November 8, 2019 with City View residents, IRIS Orchestra, and the Peabody Vance Neighborhood Association.

Similar to MMDC's 2017 Project, Edge Triangle, the Linden Park initiative contributes to the MMDC's Quality Public Spaces programming by serving as a next phase in the District's Placemaking and Mobility initiatives. The initiative also provided an opportunity to partner with the UofM Department of Architecture and tap the talent of students in the graduate-level Advanced Design Studio under the instruction of Jacob Davis of archimania, a nationally ranked design firm.

Like the EDGE Triangle, the Linden Triangle Park process utilized the design thinking process to prototype and test ideas to meet the needs of area stakeholders and a variety of user groups. These users included seniors, neighborhood employees, neighboring church congregants, adult residents, students, and children. Considering these different user groups, the design thinking process was able to analyze the existing conditions of the parkland and seek out potential solutions that could accommodate multiple users.

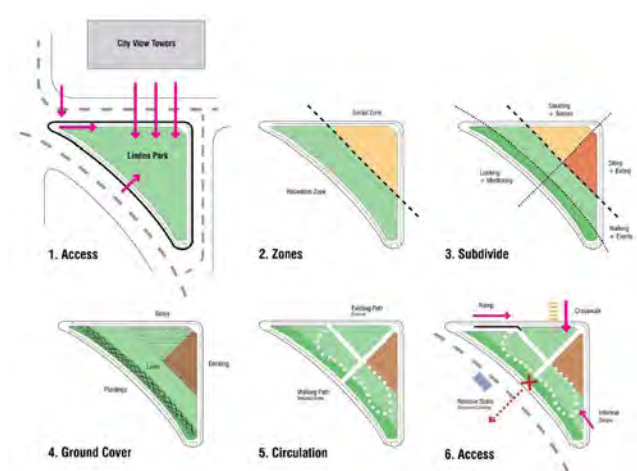
With these user groups in mind, the initiative was guided by the principles of active living by design and was organized into four phases:

- Research
- Community Outreach
- Design Development and Recommendations; and
- Final Presentation and Plan documentation

Aiming to make the public space more active, desirable, and usable, the research phase of the initiative included existing conditions and site analysis; and precedent and best practice



Linden Park study area



Concept diagrams for Linden Park activity areas



Linden park site conditions notes



Concept for new Linden Park landscaping and signage

research. Community outreach activities engaged stakeholders in a community survey, community workshop events, and focus groups. Serving as advisors to the architecture graduate students, the UMDc harnessed the community input to guide the design of temporary short-term interventions, and develop an implementation strategy for longer-term public space enhancements.

To align entryways to Linden Triangle Park with recent streetscape improvements to pedestrian safety, recommended design interventions include an ADA Accessible ramp at the park's northwest edge, removal of the steps along the south edge, installation of entryway steps at the park's south corner, and a crosswalk and curb ramp at the park's northeast corner. Student designers also based their recommendations on the concept of active and passive uses informed by noise and sun/shade maps. The enhanced design includes an activity lawn edged by a walking trail as well as a quiet/meditation zone nestled among some of the park's existing understory trees.

To both improve safety for users entering and exiting the park and enhance the park's signage, the recommended design incorporates native landscaping to both bolster the park's sloped southern embankment and flank a new, more visible park sign. To accommodate the users need for seating and other social spaces, the recommended design expands the stable surfaces of the park grounds with decking in the area of the park that receives maximum shade.



Final draft concept plan for redesign of Linden Triangle Park

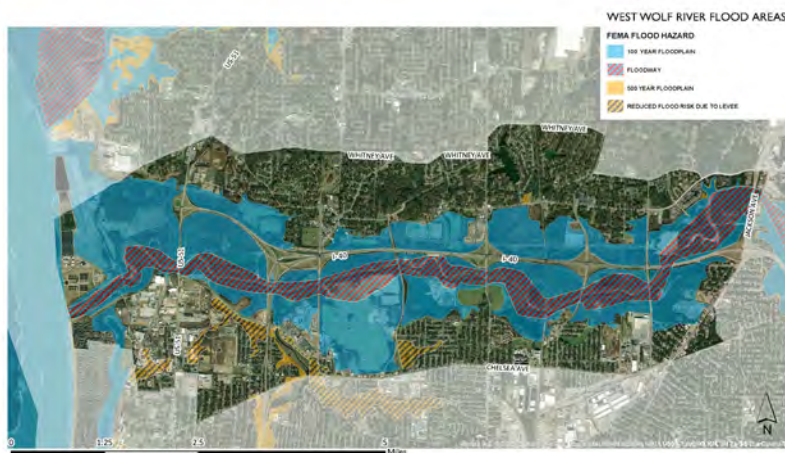
Sustainable Urban Systems

In early 2019, the UMDC was invited by colleagues at Iowa State University to join the organizing committee for a National Science Foundation conference proposal on the theme of, “Developing a Convergence Sustainable Urban Systems Agenda for Redesigning the Urban-Rural Interface (SUS—RURI) along the Mississippi River Watershed.” Over the summer of 2019, the UMDC prepared a summary of work around the Wolf River watershed from multiple initiatives including Memphis 3.0 North District Planning and Frayser Equitable Economic Development as well as from ongoing conversations and consultations with the North Memphis Collaborative for Resilience, Wolf River Conservancy, and the TN Department of Environment and Conservation.

The UMDC presented a developing research agenda toward urban environmental justice, which is said to occur when a disproportionate amount of negative effects are predominately borne by a minority or low-income population. Place, race, and class shape how well, and how long, people live but state and local governments have the opportunity to play a role in increasing life expectancies within their communities. As research shows, where local government spending is higher, life expectancies increase among those with lower incomes.

The Wolf River is a multi-faceted resource providing wildlife habitat, recreation, and historical and cultural connections throughout the Mid-South. Critical in protecting the regions drinking water, the Wolf River serves as a source of recharge for the Memphis Sands Aquifer though, the quality of water along the urban sections of the Wolf River is impaired by sedimentation and siltation from urbanized development practices. The three creeks flowing into this section of the Wolf have physical habitat alterations, dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, and alteration littoral vegetative cover from concrete channelization. A “do not consume” fish advisory indicates the presence of chlordane and other contaminants in fish flesh and more downstream areas such North Memphis add mercury as a parameter of concern in the “do not consume” advisory.

Critical community issues such as these have come to form the work of the UMDC around the built environment’s effect on quality of life with a focus on Improved Mobility Planning, Community Health, and Social Justice. As a member of the AIA Design & Health Research Consortium, the UMDC’s *Place & Health* initiative provides a framework to examine how the built environment can influence community health and how neighborhoods can approach restorative action.



Western terminus of Wolf River flood areas



Wolf River food waters in 2011

UMDC Partnerships

Community Partners

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

Government Partners

Fayette County, TN
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
Town of Somerville, TN

Regional Partners

American Institute of Architects (AIA)
Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis
Iowa State University School of Architecture
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: 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 www.facebook.com/UMemphisDesignCollaborative 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.