

11.360 COMMUNITY GROWTH AND LAND USE PLANNING PRACTICUM
M.I.T. DEPARTMENT OF URBAN STUDIES AND PLANNING
FALL 2015

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Tuesday – Thursday 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM
3-0-9 (H) Units
Room 10-401 lectures/discussion
Room 3-401/403 studio space

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“The successful city will be led not just by political and business leaders but by a host of concerned citizens who believe in the value of civic involvement. The developer, the planner, the architect, the lawyer, the preacher, the doctor, the banker, the broker, the baker, the seniors, the boomers and the X-ers will all practice the art of ‘city-ship’.... Those who answer the call that went out as long ago as the Tower of Babel—‘Come, let us build ourselves a city’—will hold the city in their hearts and their hands.... It may seem idealistic, in our hard-edged, competitive world, to discuss community building and participation in community affairs. But there seems to be a growing consensus that this indeed is important.... That applies to all professions... and especially to the talented individuals in the land use/built-environment business, where men and women make decisions day in and day out that affect the health, safety, welfare, and happiness of communities in this country.”

William H. Hudnut III, 1998

This class explores the techniques, processes, and personal and professional skills required to effectively manage growth and land use change. While primarily focused on planning practice in the United States, the principles and techniques reviewed and presented may have international application. This class is not for bystanders; it is designed for those who wish to become actively involved or exposed to the planning discipline and profession as it is practiced today, and as it may need to be practiced in the future.

The fundamentals of the land use planning and growth management system are explored. Discussion and review of both traditional and innovative approaches to land use planning and growth management will occur, with emphasis on participatory processes and performance-based systems. Examples of the tools and techniques utilized at the local, regional, and state level of government will also be presented and evaluated.

A major focus of the class involves student work on a client-based land use planning project in Brookline, Massachusetts. The project will enable students to draw upon and apply a variety of approaches and interventions explored in the classroom and readings.

Class sessions employ lectures, discussions of readings, case materials, role-playing exercises, and student presentations. A reader (posted on the class Stellar web site) containing journal articles, papers, and other written works relevant to contemporary planning practice and the evolution of the discipline supplements class session topics and discussion. Where appropriate to specific topics, guest speakers will present to the class and join in our group discussion.

No prior training or experience in physical planning or urban design is assumed, although it is advantageous. Some exposure to imaging software and GIS is helpful. There is no final examination required for completion of the course. In addition to classwork, each student will be required to participate, as a project team member, in the preparation of a project for an actual client.

Student evaluations will be principally based upon their contributions to the community planning project, including the preparation of the final plan report, participation in mid-term and final presentations of the plan to the client and others, and submission of a short, individual “synthesis paper” about the planning project, and their specific contributions to the plan. Participation in class discussion will also be a significant factor in final grade evaluations.

Academic Integrity

For information on MIT’s rules on academic integrity, also applicable to this class, please go to the MIT Website:

<http://web.mit.edu/academicintegrity>.

Students with Disabilities

This class follows the MIT rules on the accommodation for students with disabilities, details for which are at: <http://studentlife.mit.edu/dso/students>

Instructor Office Hours

By appointment

CLASS OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

PART I: FUNDAMENTALS: LAND USE PLANNING, REGULATION, AND SMART DEVELOPMENT

Week 1: September 10.	INTRODUCTION Course Introduction
Week 2: <i>September 12.</i> September 15. September 17.	PROJECT INTRODUCTION AND START-UP <i>Saturday Class Site Visit (optional but encouraged) 1 – 5 pm</i> Community Planning Project Introduced (Clients in Class) Discussion of Client Project - Project Teams Formed
Week 3: September 22. September 24.	NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING: OLD & NEW; VISIONING The Planner's and Urban Designer's Tools: Approaches and Principles Visioning the Future of Places <i>Ron Mallis, guest speaker</i>
Week 4: September 29. October 1.	MAKING A PLAN: WHERE TO BEGIN? Plan-Making at the Community Level Envisioning the Route 9 Gateway – Teams Present Preliminary Findings in class for discussion
Week 5: October 6. October 8.	PLANNING FOR GROWTH AND ZONING CONTROLS Zoning Controls – The Basics Land Use Planning, Regulation, and Property Rights
Week 6: October 13 October 15.	LINKING SMART DEVELOPMENT & TRANSPORTATION Holiday – Monday schedule of classes to be held due to Columbus Day The Mobility Challenge for Planning; Transit-Oriented Development, transportation choices, parking considerations, traffic calming and streetscape design <i>Ralph DeNisco, Principal, Nelson Nygaard, guest speaker</i>
Week 7: October 20. October 22.	LINKING SMART DEVELOPMENT & TRANSPORTATION (continued) Urban Design for TOD Development and Infill Development, Development Constraints <i>Ted Tye, Principal at New England Development, guest speaker</i> Project Work Day
Week 8: October 27. <i>October 27 or 28.</i>	ZONING INNOVATIONS, MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT, AND INCENTIVES TO BROADEN HOUSING AFFORDABILITY Project Work Day and Dry Run of Public Meeting Presentation <i>Evening: Class Presents Preliminary Findings (1st Public Meeting)</i>

October 29. Debriefing of Public Meeting
Incentive-Based Techniques, Mixed-Use Development, and Methods to
Broaden Housing Affordability

PART II: PLACE-MAKING: TRENDS, METHODS AND APPROACHES

Week 9: AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
November 3. Area Economic Development Planning: Tools and Prospects
*Kara Brewton, Economic Development Director for the Town of Brookline,
MA, guest speaker*
November 5. Project Work Day

Week 10: COMMUNITY DESIGN, PLACEMAKING, FORM-BASED CODES
November 10. Community Design, New Urbanism, and Alternative Regulatory Approaches.
What's Applicable to the Route 9 Gateway study area?
November 12. Project Work Day

PART III: PLANNING AND DESIGNING RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Week 11: LANDSCAPE PLANNING & THE GREENING OF PLACES
November 17. Landscape Planning, Resiliency, and Sustainability
Guest speaker TBA
November 19. Thwarting Sprawl; Smart Growth and the Evolution of Suburbia

Week 12: SPRAWL AND SMART DEVELOPMENT
November 24. Thwarting Sprawl; Smart Growth and the Evolution of Suburbia
November 26. Holiday (Thanksgiving)

PART IV: INTEGRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Week 13: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION
December 1. Client meeting with project teams (tentative)
December 3. The Role of Planning and the Planner in Society: Class Wrap-up and
Synthesis

Week 14: FINAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION
STRATEGIES – AND SYNTHESIS!
December 8. Project Work Day and Dry Run of Public Meeting Presentation
December 8. Evening: Class Presents Final Plan Recommendations (2nd Public Meeting)
December 10. Final Plan Work Day – Report drafts discussed and edits underway
December 12. Submission of Final Plan Report PDF via email by 10pm

Route 9 Gateway East

The Town of Brookline has engaged the Community Growth and Land-Use Planning practicum workshop in the MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning to develop a vision for the Route 9 East corridor in the town, explore several land use scenarios, and submit a recommended plan and associated implementation strategies to make the vision a reality.

Brookline is a town of 6.8 square miles with approximately 59,000 (2010 Census) residents in Norfolk County, Massachusetts. The Town borders six of Boston's neighborhoods and the study area borders Mission Hill and Jamaica Plain as well as the Fenway neighborhoods. The City of Newton lies to the west of Brookline. The Town was first settled in 1638 as a hamlet in Boston, but was incorporated as a separate town in 1705. The northern part of Brookline, roughly north of the D-line tracks, and also including the portion of the Town just south of the D-line at the eastern end of the town in our study area, is urban in character with good access to transit and highly walkable with numerous commercial centers. The population density of this part of town is nearly 20,000 inhabitants per square mile (8,000/km²), on a par with the densest neighborhoods in nearby Cambridge and Somerville (the densest cities in New England), and just below that of central Boston's residential districts (Back Bay, South End, Fenway, etc.). The overall density of Brookline, which also includes suburban districts and grand estates south of the D-line, is still higher than that of many of the largest cities in the United States, especially in the South and West. (above adapted from Wikipedia and Town of Brookline Web Site).

Brookline Village is one of the town's commercial centers and it is served by two MBTA transit stops on the D line – Brookline Village in the heart of the district, and Brookline Hills at the western edge of the study area. The Village is adjacent to State Route 9 – a major artery connecting Route 128/I-95 and the western suburbs with Boston.

Brookline Village is poised for a revival, but what is the vision for its future? With two major commercial redevelopment projects in process and a major overhaul of traffic and circulation patterns scheduled for the intersection of Washington Street and Route 9, Brookline Village has significant potential. Both commercial projects will not only bring an influx of day-time foot traffic to existing businesses, they may also serve as catalysts for unlocking the redevelopment potential of the eastern portion of Route 9. This section of Brookline Village has long been the subject of redevelopment discussions; however, small parcels, fractured ownership, an unpleasant pedestrian environment, strict zoning and limited available parking have all combined to limit creative development proposals.

THE OPPORTUNITY:

Continued interest by developers and the political will to see the two most recent projects through to completion are perhaps indicators that the time has come for Brookline Village, and more specifically Route 9 East, to realize their full potential. However, with the exception of traffic and circulation improvements related to the Gateway East plan, the Town has not undertaken a planning and visioning process to identify and guide appropriate future development along the corridor. The

Town now has an opportunity to continue to transform Route 9 from a dividing line between neighborhoods into a vibrant, connected gateway to the rest of Brookline. The visioning process should engage stakeholders in addressing the challenges mentioned above, while building on the components of current projects that will provide significant public benefits to Brookline beyond tax revenues.

TOWN GOALS:

The vision shall evolve from the fundamental goal of creating a dynamic environment that builds upon redevelopment projects that are planned or currently underway and addresses new opportunities for future redevelopments. The student team shall identify the tools necessary to balance compelling and sometimes competing demands for an expanded tax base, increased commercial and retail activity to respond to consumer demand, and an expanded housing supply, while building upon the pedestrian, vehicular and bicycle improvements and public amenities that are either under construction or in the planning stages.

SCOPE OF WORK

Working under the direction of the class instructors and connecting with Town officials, neighborhood residents, property owners, and business owners and leaders, students will prepare a vision and land use plan for the study area.

The guiding questions for this study include:

1. What is an appropriate vision for Route 9 East?
2. What steps should the Town take to convert that vision into reality?
3. For those steps that are considered public improvements, how could those improvements be financed?
4. How can private investments be encouraged?

To address these questions, the following tasks are part of the scope of work for this project:

- Identify and evaluate the build-out potential of key properties.
- Examine the degree to which such properties can be re-shaped or combined to encourage alternative, sustainable and financially feasible design and development.
- Conduct a detailed zoning diagnostic to determine if current codes and guidelines (including use, and dimensional and density allowances) are appropriate and sufficient for the area given project goals.
- Identify opportunities to re-classify existing properties to alternative zoning districts with new or different uses, density and dimensional regulations and design guidelines.
- Identify specific interventions (e.g. pedestrian, bicycle, wayfinding, and parking improvements; modifications to or expansion of public and private green space; introduction of traffic calming measures, etc.) that can be made in order to encourage appropriate projects and streetscape improvements.
- Illustrate (conceptually) the redevelopment potential of catalyst properties.
- Examine possibilities to reduce Route 9's impact as a divider between neighborhoods, (recognizing that Route 9 is a State highway).

- Recommend regulatory tools the Town can use to achieve the goals of the proposed Route 9 East Plan.
- Identify the costs, added value, and risks involved in implementing the aforementioned interventions.

The students will prepare for and conduct two public meetings during the course of the semester:

1. A Preliminary Findings and initial ideas presentation to the public and Town staff in late October 2015.
2. A Final Plan Report near to the completion of the semester (early December 2015).

In addition to these two public meetings, the students will conduct extensive outreach to include: public officials, members of the community, local business and property owners, and other interested parties. Students will conduct field work at the beginning of the semester and representatives of the Town will attend the class to discuss the project background and goals. Students will have the opportunity to coordinate interviews with members of these groups as well as area business owners, local residents, and other interested parties.

PROJECT VARIABLES:

The vision should consider variables including, but not limited to: zoning, land-use; transportation; parking, bike and pedestrian access; timelines; and project funding mechanisms. The fact that Route 9 is a State highway is an additional variable that should be considered.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES:

The major deliverable shall be a written report and analysis outlining a baseline vision, proposed solutions and implementation strategies with respect to the development challenges and opportunities mentioned above. The vision should be the end result of exhaustive research, including two community meetings, and should integrate the goals and plans of all relevant Town Departments. Additionally, the vision should identify and prioritize both short and long term goals. An executive summary of the final plan report and recommendations will be submitted to the Town for distribution and review before the final meeting.

A camera-ready copy of the final plan will be submitted to the Town, along with three printed copies. An electronic copy shall also be provided as a pdf, for posting on the Town's website and on the DUSP website.