Course Description and Objectives

I. The Experience

The Gateway City of Brockton seems poised for substantial growth: the city has zoned downtown properties for redevelopment; several tracts of developable land are designated opportunity zones, and the city has created a development prospectus circulating to prospective developers. DUSP students have completed two major studies for the city in the last two years, more than five in total over the previous decade. Recent projects identified options in the areas of life sciences, logistics, health services and transportation-oriented development. While jobs and new firms are certainly to be welcomed to the city, there is little assurance that these investments will change the life of existing residents.

The question of equitable growth remains central to the addressing myriad of social and economic challenges across the US and in Brockton, but methods for ensuring inclusive prosperity continue to vex local, state, and national policymakers. In this practicum, the third of three that focuses on Brockton, students will interrogate existing models of equitable development and create new approaches to ensuring that growth benefits low-income-low-
wealth communities. Brockton is the ideal, even critical case: after decades of stagnation, trends suggest that the city is almost sure to attract active business and residential investment in the coming years. If Brockton can succeed in incorporating planning approaches that are capable of spreading benefits while reducing inequities that often accompany contemporary development, the city will serve as a test of the adage, “doing well by doing good.” The near term provides a brief window of opportunity in which to direct investment and policy frameworks to create equitable outcomes.

Our proposal takes the theme of equitable and inclusive economic development seriously. Students in the practicum will learn about and assess the applicability of practices that identify steps to distribute the gains arising from the types of investments being proposed or are underway in the city today (Goal 1). We will work with residents, public officials, employers, and institutions to adapt where possible, transform where needed, and create where missing methods, practices, and strategies that move development toward more equitable outcomes (Goal 2).

We will launch the class by undertaking a close examination of the emerging field of inclusive economic development (Objective 1). From this assessment, we will subject the current development projects either planned or currently underway to an assessment of their compatibility with actions that operationalize concepts of equity and opportunity on behalf of the citizens of Brockton who’ve been rendered vulnerable through historically unjust policy (Objective 2). In this way, we use Brockton as a testbed to identify what works or can work given situational constraints and long-term impediments that have otherwise been holding back efforts to pursue equitable development practices in cities around the Commonwealth. Students will experiment with how to retrofit conventional economic development practice to new experiences, and where necessary, to propose new solutions to problems of inequity that otherwise impede change in communities that otherwise fail to thrive given new development thrusts (Objective 3).

A. General Approach to the Class

The class consists of four sections. In the first section, students will review the literature on and practice of inclusive local economic development. Using the literature on IED, the first task will be to create an analysis scheme that can be used for comparative purposes. This analysis scheme will be utilized in task two. In the second section students will familiarize themselves with current conditions and trends in the City and the policies and policy language found in documents about economic development practices in the city and the state of Massachusetts. In the second task, students will then use the IED analysis scheme from task one to evaluate the policies and practices reported in economic development materials of Brockton and the state of Massachusetts. In the third section of class, students will be introduced to new measures and approaches that support inclusive economic development. In the fourth section of the practicum, students will work directly with constituencies--city government but also residents and civic organizations--in Brockton to engage IEDs to form an economic development strategy.
In the last part of the practicum, students will write-up the results of the course exercise and present their findings to stakeholders for possible adoption.

B. The Client Group

This is the third in a three-part practicum. In the first two practica, the primary client was Mass Life Science Corporation (MLSC) with additional guidance provided by MassDevelopment (MassDev) and the City of Brockton Mayor’s Office and the Department of Planning and Economic Development (Brockton DPED). In this third practicum, the primary client will be Brockton Department of Planning and Economic Development.

Throughout the work, our sponsors have provided valuable information and contacts. Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC), is a quasi-public entity founded in 2008 to implement the state’s Life Sciences Act, which committed the state to invest $1 billion in life science innovation and job creation. While no longer our sponsor, we will be in contact with and consult the MLSC leadership based on their continuing interest in the city of Brockton. MassDev, the state’s premier development organization “works with businesses, nonprofits, financial institutions, and communities to stimulate economic growth across the Commonwealth.” We also have former students in leadership positions who work at MassDev and the city of Brockton.

C. Past Engagement with the Community

Over the last two years, we have been in contact with and interviewed members of the Brockton 21st Century Corporation (B21) and Brockton Redevelopment Authority (BRA), the Metro South Chamber, The Brockton Area Workforce Investment Board (BAWIB), and the MassDevelopment TDI Fellow. Also, we have been in contact with and have discussed our work with the Cape Verdean Association of Brockton and the Brockton Interfaith Community. Our sector partners include Healthcare anchor institutions in Brockton, Good Samaritan Medical Center, Signature Healthcare Brockton Hospital, and the VA Hospital, and the Brockton Neighborhood Health Center (BNHC). The Greater Brockton Health Alliance also is a part of the network which is mainly active around coordination of grants involving multiple healthcare organizations. We have met with several other major private employers in Brockton including the headquarters of W.B. Mason, the city’s largest private employer and the third largest office supply company in the U.S.; Crown Uniform and Linen, and HarborOne Bank. We are aware that several businesspeople recently convened an informal group called The Brockton Partnership to advance policy goals somewhat independently of City Hall and local politicians.

We interviewed all the major education organizations in the city including teachers at Brockton High School (BHS) Massasoit Community College (a two-year college in Brockton proper), Stonehill College (a private four-year college just over the border in Easton), and Bridgewater State University (the nearest university, eight miles south of Brockton).
Thus, this year’s practicum starts with a significant leg up in understanding the context, being able to identify the actors, and leveraging the organic elements of the city.

II. Distinct Qualities of the Practicum

A. Policy Problem-based Practicum

As an MCP practicum, students are expected to use their experience working on the client project to develop an executable plan and deepen their ideas about what constitutes good planning practice. Consequently, there are some assignments designed to promote thinking and reflection based on a student’s work and experiences around the client planning project. The class will have a bi-weekly reflection period to identify progress and to forge ongoing pathways. We also will focus on leadership skills as this has become an area of continuing development opportunity.

Ours is a policy problem-based practicum. We aim to develop and deploy a new economic development approach that identifies practical solutions to problems that stand in the way of formulating inclusive economic development plans in economically-distressed communities. Our approach is to enable communities to identify and promote their best opportunities, including engagement with the life sciences cluster, the health sector, and industrial logistics. In the previous two years, our focus was on determining the geographic mobility of firm operations in the life science sector and to identify factors that would enable Brockton to attract investment out of the industrial core.

B. Skill Development

Students will learn how to conduct key informant interviews and focus groups to create broad-based understandings of employment opportunities that reflect both regional, national, and international market inclinations. Further, students will analyze how these influences can couple with the city’s to encourage investments in development opportunities that reflect principles of inclusive economic development.

As an MCP practicum, students are also expected to use their experience working on the client project to develop and deepen their ideas about what constitutes good planning practice. Consequently, there are some assignments designed to promote thinking and reflection based on collective work and experiences around the client planning project.

C. Course Objectives

The objective of this course is to provide students with the following knowledge, experience, and skills:

1. An introduction to theories of inclusive economic development.
2. An understanding of the major components of and contributions to local economic development through the lens of projects, programs, and practices that emphasize inclusion.

3. Knowledge of existing (and creation of new) strategies to distribute the benefits of economic growth to targeted geographic areas and populations.

4. Familiarity with data sources and analytical techniques used to undertake a strategic assessment of a proposed project/proposal that is designed to distribute the benefits of development to underserved populations.

5. Familiarity with the policies and programs that state and local governments and public-private partnerships use to encourage employment creation and economic inclusion.

6. Practical experience in managing planning processes including: (1) integrating varied data to understand and analyze a local or regional economy, develop an agenda and communicate the case for the agenda to stakeholders; (2) serving as an intermediary between different stakeholders and interests; and (3) preparing a professional plan that summarizes the process, analysis, plan elements and implementation of strategy development.

7. An understanding of the organizational capabilities needed and options for implementation of economic development strategies.

8. An understanding of practical issues and challenges involved in preparing and gaining institutional support for plans and development of personal ideas and approaches for addressing them.

This course builds on others offered at MIT including economic development theory, economic development tools and techniques, urban and regional economics, urban labor markets, Main Streets, economic impact analysis and modeling, and economic development finance.

III. Course Requirements

In addition to the completion of all reading assignments and participation in class discussion, students are required to participate fully in research, analysis and formulation about economic cluster dynamics and the ability of policy to generate inclusive economic development.

At the start of class, there will be an introductory one-half day road trip to Brockton. In addition, students are expected to organize their own engagement and travel to the Gateway city. At the end of September there will be a second group trip to Brockton to meet with stakeholders. We will hold labs on Friday to talk over lessons learned, problems encountered and share reflections on the distinct nature of state policy-led economic development strategy.
and practice. Reflection discussions will also emphasize the challenges facing professionals working in cities that have limited resources to undertake planning.

A. Reading Materials and Assignments

Reading assignments are specified for each class in the course syllabus. All reading assignments are posted on the course Dropbox. The stellar site is reserved for communication and assignments. Additional readings and web resources are provided on the Dropbox site to assist students in exploring topics of interest and to provide resources that can be utilized on the class project. A commentary on how to read the material will be provided by the professors.

Expectations

Readings – Required readings and the Discussion Leader System: This class heavily relies on the discussion of class participants. To encourage discussion, we will use a “Discussion Leader” system in the seminar. At the end of the first class, students will sign up as a discussion leader for the days we have readings. Discussion leader duties are to provide an overview for a specific day in class and to coordinate the discussion by peers of individual articles or groups of articles assigned for that day. This means everyone contributes something on days where we are discussing reading materials. In other words, in one of the classes, as well as the discussion session, particular students will be asked to briefly summarize one reading for that class and lead class Q&A discussion on it. How this works: Discussion Leaders are usually organized in peer panels. Discussion Leaders are asked to carefully read over the day’s readings used in each class (provided to the class in advance). Discussion peers will briefly summarize the main points of their assigned readings and offer questions that lead the in-class Q&A on their one article/reading. (The Stellar site lists the particular readings for each class.) Depending on the number of students in the class, the student-led discussion will involve 3-5 students. Expect to participate each day we are discussing readings.

In summary, for each of the classes, all students in the seminar will be asked to read one or a group of related-required readings, as background for the issues being discussed in that class – these are noted under each class. Doing this will help your understanding a great deal.

B. Writing Assignments

There are several assignments, referenced in the syllabus, and listed on the Stellar site. Assignments relate to the class project and provide a means to complete analytical tasks and draw conclusions to facilitate the final formulation of strategic recommendations to the client team. At least two types of written materials are relevant: task-oriented data products; written reflection documents based on student professional experience and intellectual development.

C. Tool and Analytics Development
Students will develop tools and techniques as we work together to develop approaches to measurement and analysis of inclusivity.

IV. Logistics

1. The class will meet twice a week, a class period and a lab. The formal class period is once per week, for three hours, and consists of a combination of lectures, discussions, outside speakers, and reviews. A weekly Friday laboratory period of two hours will bring students together to share knowledge, engage in collective learning in skills development and reflect on experiences associated with the class. Fridays will also be utilized to focus on emergent issues of theory and practice as well as for field work (visits, interviews), including class trips after completion of the first third of the class.

2. Research and analytical work on each plan component will be undertaken by student teams who will present their findings and recommendations for class review and discussion. A student project manager will be selected to both coordinate work across the teams and support communication and coordination with the stakeholders and the client. A student will be identified who wishes to assume a leadership role in a professional planning context (an experience that can be listed on a resume). We prefer that a student self-selects and ideally will be someone who is interested in gaining experience managing a team. The manager will receive explicit training from the faculty on how to manage teams on economic development projects.

3. A final report incorporating the analysis, key findings and recommended strategies and plans will be written by integrating the work of the teams. Writing assignments will be made explicit early in the class and students will writing up analysis as the course proceeds. The final draft plan will be presented to the client and other stakeholders at a meeting to be scheduled at the beginning of December. A final report will be completed by the last day of the grading period.

4. Two group field trips are planned. The first is September 14th. We will take a van and drive around Brockton to get a feel for the city. We will use the neighborhood change analysis as our guide. A second day long field trip will take place on Friday September 27th at the end of the first quarter of the class. This second trip will focus on stakeholders, public officials, and we plan to hold several meetings with the client and other stakeholders to review phases and to gain feedback on plan proposals. A final presentation of the plan will occur during the semester on dates to be determined with the client.

5. Student travel to the field site. In addition to the two group field trips, students are expected to organize themselves and identify stakeholders, organizations, and groups that are important potential contributors to our understanding of the situation and the actions we might propose as part of our investigation and final plan. All students are
expected to take the COUHES training as part of their preparation for the course. COUHES is the entity that offers training in respectful and ethical research practices.

The workshop final report will be handed in December 20, 2019.

V. Grading

1. Grading will be based on each student’s demonstration of their knowledge of the course material and capacity to apply this knowledge to economic development assessments, research briefs, client interactions, and the final product, as well as their creative contributions in terms of strategies, project framing, development of new data sets or metrics, analyses, etc. Students will receive individual grades and grades based on their overall contributions to the course. The two grades will be totaled.

2. The intermediate work products (assessments and classifications, analytics, and briefs) will contribute 25% to the class grade; and the final project for 50%. The other 25% of each student’s grade will be based on class participation and contributions to the in-class discussions of course content, the work experience, and client interaction.

VI. Institutional Expectations of Ethical Behavior

A. We expect everyone will act responsibly and honestly in completing all coursework. We expect no cheating, plagiarism, deliberate interference with the integrity of the work of others, fabrication or falsification of data, or other forms of academic dishonesty. Consequences of such actions can be: disciplinary penalties that may include a failing grade for the class, and possibly suspension from the Institute. Term project deliverables reflect group effort based on collaborative work among team members; sharing ideas is expected and will be the subject of observation during periods of presentations. Everyone is expected to make a significant contribution to the final project and that of the final product (a professional quality report). The final report must be completed by the end of the term December 20th. We will keep you on task and provide warning signals when the class is falling behind, and we will reset schedules where required to keep pace in order to complete the final project by the end of the term.

B. Use of electronics—phones, laptops, tablets—for other than note-taking and presentations is not allowed during class time or when off-site and in the presence of clients or other stakeholders. We all need to be “present” during these critical times and respectful of colleagues’ and clients’ time and commitment to this project.
VII. Overview of Course Schedule

Initial Session

At the initial class session on SEPTEMBER 6 (THE FIRST LAB SESSION WILL BE EXTENDED TO THREE HOURS), we will discuss course objectives, content, readings, assignments (including discussion leader roles), and the client project. We will discuss key definitions (economic development, community development, inclusive economic development), the nature of state and regional economic development planning and practice, and the concept of inclusive economic development strategy underlying the class. Orienting readings are assigned on Tuesday September 3, and will be discussed on Friday during lab. Review the state programs for economic development, the backgrounds of the target city, and the economic development of the state over the last 50 years. Students will begin to get a handle on how states undertake economic development and how this intersects with local development planning.

Rob May, Director of Planning and Economic Development of the City of Brockton, will join the class by phone to discuss the work of the city around life sciences and new economic development activities and his hope for the practicum project. Noah Koretz, Director of Transformative Development at MassDevelopment (possible), will also join us as part of the course introduction.

Part I: Setting the Stage: Fundamentals of Inclusive Economic Development

In this section, we will devote three weeks to establishing a vocabulary and analytic approach to solving the key problem addressed in this practicum: how to ensure that as Brockton transforms to become a more dynamic Gateway City, and how can the city extend the benefits of development to its resident population. We will examine three sets of literature: economic development theory utilized to address lagging regions and their specific circumstances. We will draw upon work from Europe, primarily because the research in the U.S. predominantly focuses on applications of conventional economic development theory, absent the necessary contextualization of locations suffering from long term decline and an inability to reignite local economies. A quick review of conventional theory will be presented. Readings will direct students to a consideration of perspectives that take into account lagging region conditions.

To aid in this section of the practicum, as part of the first three weeks we will conduct in-class engagements with professionals currently working in the field of economic development and who are applying an approach based in IED practices. Leading edge professionals will engage the class in conversations about the practice of IED across fields (real estate, innovation, workforce, entrepreneurship). This section will result in a handbook on inclusive development practice based on examples from the field. Our objective is to provide a detailed accounting of projects, their design and operation, and the formation of critical partnerships. Details will include the underlying metrics used to assess the efficacy of projects and practices of inclusive
development. This analysis will rely upon a classification of examples of IED applications accompanied by mini-case studies developed by students in the class utilizing a list of locations of IED practice.

PART II: Identifying and Measuring Opportunity in Brockton
The second part of the class will focus on how to identify and evaluate opportunities for inclusive growth. As a nascent field of inquiry, there is little direct guidance in the literature on economic development methods or strategies. Instead of simply applying existing techniques, students will be asked to create methods of inquiry and measurement that get to the core factors in inclusive opportunity, which tend to be hyper-local (and this subsumed in datasets created for larger geographies) and focused as much on the distributive impacts as on traditional growth measures. This section utilizes Sakia Sassen’s notion of “before method,” as well as recent real-world examples of new approaches to creating, measuring, and capturing value creation for inclusive outcomes.

PART III: Field Work, Client Planning Project, Final Presentation
This practicum is designed for the students to provide high quality, actionable advice to key local and state practitioners and policy makers, including Mass Life Sciences Center, MassDevelopment, the City of Brockton, life sciences firms in Greater Brockton, and other local economic and community development stakeholders. The work quality is expected to blend the creative and empirical standards of academic quality research and policy development, the community engagement standards of the planning discipline, and the presentation and client engagement standards of high-quality consulting (see Fall 2017 Final Report as a case example of what can be done). The intention is to provide local economic development stakeholders in Brockton with engaged and committed partners who can help them identify economic and community assets and opportunities and galvanize the private and public sectors to create investment and policy supports to realize these opportunities.

Part IV. Report write-up
Throughout the course we will be focusing on writing the final report as we complete sections of our work. The objective is to have a final draft report completed by December 20, 2019. We will keep the class on track as we go to enable us to hit the desired deadline of the end of term.

VIII. Background

Brockton Context: Opportunities and Challenge

The city of Brockton, a mere 20 miles south of Boston, was initially developed in the late 1800s around the shoe manufacturing industry (Thomas Edison’s first electrified downtown). By the mid-1900s, most of the industry had disappeared. The city grew again in the 1960s and 70s to over 90,000 people, due in large part to suburbanization following a new highway (Route 24) and a later influx of immigrants (mainly from Cape Verde and Haiti). Not far from the core, the
city splits into two. The old urban center sits pock-marked by empty spaces that once held grand buildings including a theatre, opera house, and related businesses such as a local department store, as well as overlapping industrial districts serving the shoe industry. Abutting the core’s original urban boundary is the city’s sprawling suburban threshold, where remnants of 1950s commercial strip developments give way to early suburbanization comprised of tract homes, low buildings, and fading malls.

Today the downtown is a regional center for healthcare and social services but has little evidence of traded clusters and is on a different trajectory from the rest of the local economy. Opportunity resides in the potential to knit together the city's health care, and budding life sciences sector with the area's articulated transportation infrastructure by expanding the southwestern edge of the Boston metro technology conurbation into a northeast-southwest crescent of life sciences activities linking Boston to the City of New York. However, this will only benefit existing residents by discovering how to ground the gains in proximity to the city’s under-resourced communities.

The city is full of promise and challenges. Brockton's local workforce—residents who are employed or seeking employment—perform worse than the state average in terms of unemployment and wages, both overall and within each industry sector. Their circumstances reflect the types of jobs found locally. Brockton's schoolwide educational attainment levels lag behind the state. Nonetheless, the school district is known nationally as a leader in urban education. The International Center for Leadership in Education, which each year recognizes 30 schools across the country that have met or exceeded the demands of No Child Left Behind Act, named BHS a Model School for a record 12 straight years. With a 90 percent attendance rate and only a two percent dropout rate, Brockton graduated 1016 students in 2018, and 91 percent of them received acceptance to college.

Still, many residents face substantial obstacles to finding stable housing, furthering their education, and securing good jobs. Brockton is known as a hub for social services as well as healthcare, and many local assistance organizations serve residents with the greatest need. This very local employed workforce stands in contrast to Brockton’s exceptional potential access to jobs and workers as part of the Boston metro area. Here is the key. Brockton's multimodal transportation connections to Downtown Boston—by car on Route 24, by commuter rail via three stops on the MBTA Middleborough/Lakeville Line, and by local bus (the Brockton Area Transit Authority) and rapid transit (the MBTA Red Line) offer needed access to incite worker mobility. These connections provide Brockton residents with excellent physical access to employment centers in Boston. These vital connections to the rest of the Boston area are visible in commute flow data, which shows that about half of Brockton's workers commute at least 10 miles away to the north or northwest of Brockton.

IX. **Background MSLC**

MSLC is currently pursuing multiple goals simultaneously: sustaining the overall competitiveness of the world-class regional cluster (principally located in Boston-Cambridge-
Route 128) and retaining vibrant life sciences nodes and corridors (e.g., Kendall Square, Route 128). MSLC also aims to create new opportunities for cities and towns that have historically not benefitted from the state’s strength in life sciences through significant capital investments in the state’s higher education system and business enterprises.

**Industry’s Role in Economic Development**

In the context of the life sciences cluster in Massachusetts, the practicum will examine the interplay between market pressures, regional and sub-regional geographies of life science activity, and the availability of supply factors such as industrial land, residential housing stock, transportation assets, and skilled labor. The practicum will examine the development and operationalization of firm-level strategies within these market and institutional settings. Once we have completed the first part, students will start to configure programs and policies to operationalize recommendations from economic development strategies. This is key for practitioners—bridging opportunity/strategy identification with actual tools to operationalize strategic objectives.