Design in the Dynamics of Metropolitan Landscapes – Module 2

Syllabus

This course builds on Module 1, Fall 2017, in which you strengthened your knowledge of urban ecology, neighborhood social structures, landscape perception, and public health implications as a basis for design interventions in urban landscapes. In this module, you will use that knowledge to help you design a sustainable, resilient 2040 future for the Northwest Detroit study area that you examined last term (map attached).

This future should delineate “first step” 2020 design interventions that are attentive to current community concerns and values, current strengths of community institutions, current land market challenges, and infrastructure needs. The first step interventions should move toward the 2040 future you envision.

The plan you envision as fully implemented by 2040 should be plausible, imaginative and inspiring to current residents and decisionmakers. It should consider global changes (including climate, communications, transportation, water, energy, and food systems) as well as local cultural, social, infrastructure, housing, and environmental legacies and characteristics.

Making your plan, adopt this hypothetical assumption: The City of Detroit has identified the approx. 142 hectare (350 acre) study area as a key stormwater management innovation area, and will work with neighborhood representatives and developers to promote development that includes this stormwater management innovation. Note that your assumptions/story about innovations in transportation and communication systems adopted by 2040 could lead to very different spatial requirements for transportation (vehicles and parking) and commerce in 2040 than in 2018. Design to achieve a density specified in one of these hypothetical scenarios below. To gauge these densities, consider that, according to the US Census, in 2000, the study area had a population of approx. 2000 – a density of about 1550/100 hectares. Note that this compares with current approximate population densities of Paris: 21,498/100 hectares; Brooklyn, NYC: 35,300/100 hectares; Philadelphia: 7000/100 hectares; Detroit: 2650/100 hectares. Develop your 2040 plan based on one of these hypothetical scenarios:

1. **Efficient adaptation – resilient neighborhoods.** The City of Detroit has identified the study area as an urban services reconfiguration zone, with the population at the same level as 2000. The neighborhood landscape and infrastructure pattern should be reconfigured to more efficiently deliver city services and enhance quality of life in the neighborhood and its surrounding area while maintaining existing housing stock. **Designers: Chen Zhang, Jiayang Li, Xuehan Li**

2. **Suburban style city living without suburban style transportation systems.** The City of Detroit has identified the study area to be repurposed for many new single-family homes and duplexes on parcels larger than current parcels. Homes in 2040 include many existing in 2018 with reconfigured, larger parcels as well. The population of the study area is double that of 2000, but the urban pattern has been reconfigured to be successfully marketed to homeowners who want a yard for their own use in a walkable, attractive, relaxed, convenient neighborhood. **Designers: Tiantong Gu, Ya Cai**
3. **Focal growth around a multi-functional public green space system.** The City of Detroit has identified the study area for high-density mixed use development at an overall population approximately eight times greater than in 2000. The focal growth plan should accommodate residents from low to high income, and from school children to older people with special needs. The neighborhood landscape and infrastructure pattern has been reconfigured to be successfully marketed and sustainably inhabited by residents who will feel a sense of ownership for their neighborhood. **Designers: Shui Wang, Yifei Wu, Audrey Pangallo, Rachel Leonard**

Designs for every scenario should assume that at least 28 contiguous acres is dedicated to public open space that maximizes ecosystem services, including stormwater management and neighborhood recreation. The “design site” for your work is shown below. The “area of consideration” identifies a relevant intermediate context for your consideration.
Your 2040 plan should:

- Show how your plan fits into and complements landscape ecological patterns, transportation systems, and land use patterns across Detroit and the surrounding metropolis in 2040. Explicitly state your assumptions (in story and diagram form) about these patterns in 2040. What is the Detroit metropolitan landscape like in 2040? How does your plan contribute to Detroit 2040?
- Show how it complements its immediate context in 2040.
- Show how your plan contributes to habitat opportunities that could exist in Detroit 2040.
- Show how your plan contributes to the attractiveness and desirability of the neighborhood, and the health of its residents.
- Describe how you have anticipated human experience of the site, including encouraging human health, nourishing social capital, and respecting aesthetic and cultural values and social norms.
- Show how your plan manages stormwater including its context in Detroit’s grey/green infrastructure system. Consider the infrastructure installation and management costs and benefits of your design now and in the future.
- Describe relevant characteristics of the population you plan for the neighborhood to accommodate in 2040. Include number, age, family size, socio-economic factors.
- Describe the residential density (number and types of residential units (sq. ft./unit)), and commercial space (sq.ft.), and related parking spaces/facilities that the neighborhood will include, given your stated assumptions about 2040 transportation systems.

Each student will develop their own design, based on one of the three scenarios above. This is an individual project in which you can draw on your own work as well as that of your classmates in Module 1.

**Required course products:**

For the “design site” above, a neighborhood plan showing the overall landscape fabric of the neighborhood as it fits in its immediate context, as well as detailed delineations of landscape types within the fabric. This will include street and open space frameworks, development pattern (parcelization and lot types; typical building types and setbacks), stormwater management diagrams, and urban ecosystem representations (typical patch types and vertical structure for street, open space, and lot types). It will emphasize both the neighborhood as a distinct place, the neighborhood as it contributes to its context, and the neighborhood as a representative of conditions and possibilities in other parts of Detroit. It will emphasize the neighborhood in the urban dynamic of its immediate context, as well as its place in the city and watershed. This plan will include at least one representation at (200’=1” scale). The plan will probably require more than one representation, but some could be schematic or at a coarser scale than 200.

A focal street plan. This is a design of one or two blocks in the neighborhood to show the materials and sensual experience of one indicative part of the neighborhood landscape. This plan will be at (40-50’=1” scale).

Analyses of the broader context(s) for the neighborhood to explain the underlying urban ecological and transportation rationale of your neighborhood plan.
COURSE GRADES
Neighborhood Interim plan .10
Focal scale interim plan .10
Rationale for design and planning decisions as reflected in final project .20
Final project presentation .10
Final Project content .50
Total 1.00
Class participation, with particular emphasis on being prepared for board crits with new drawings for discussion every day, is required and may affect your grade by as much as one full grade level. Late work will receive a reduced grade. NOTE: Since Module 2 builds on work you completed for Module 1, you can raise your final grade in Module 1 if you receive a higher final grade in Module 2. If your Module 2 final grade is higher than for Module 1, your Module 1 grade will be retroactively raised. If your Module 2 final grade is lower than for Module 1, your Module 1 grade will remain unchanged.

Winter Course Schedule

January 3 – 12 – Neighborhood Interim Plan development. Plans will be due January 12 at 5 pm.

January 15 – Martin Luther King Day. Opportunity to participate in property improvement activities with Northwest Detroit Neighborhood Development Corporation

January 17 – Presentation of Neighborhood Interim plans.

Jan 19 – Begin focal scale interim plan development with tentative site selection

January 20 – 9 – 4 pm. Saturday Field Trip to review focal scale sites, and to exchange knowledge with community members.

January 22 – Feb 2 – Focal scale interim plan development simultaneous with neighborhood plan revisions. Plans will be due Feb 1 at 5 pm.

February 2 – Presentation of focal scale interim plans with revised neighborhood plans.

Feb 5 – 22– Development of Final Project and Final Project Presentation. Dues February 22, 5 pm.

Feb. 23 – Ann Arbor studio presentation by any student who is unable to participate in the Brightmoor Community Feedback Open House in Brightmoor on March 12 from 2 – 6 pm.

March 12 - Brightmoor Community Feedback Open House in Brightmoor on March 12 from 2 – 6 pm.