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Planning Assignment Four: Final Report  
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## **Overpasses/Underpass**

### **Why did you select this project (4th year) and why you chose your study area?**

I selected to focus on the overpasses and underpasses because I saw them as being the most obvious mental and physical barriers along the corridor. They all had problems that need to be addressed, particularly along the lines of pedestrian and bicyclist considerations.

### **What were you trying to accomplish with your plan?**

I wanted to outline simple, straightforward solutions for changing overpasses and underpasses from barriers to connectors between neighborhoods.

### **What theory did you derive your approach from? (4th yr only- be specific on the theorist or theory involved and where you found it)**

When working on this project, I looked toward the Complete Street concept. Complete the Streets is an advocacy organization that campaigns to local and state governments to make transportation policy ensuring the needs of all possible users of the right-of-way are considered in the design and operation of roads. States such as Massachusetts have incorporated Complete Street design theories into their Project Development and Design Guide. It states: "A guiding principle of the Guidebook is that the roadway system of the Commonwealth should safely accommodate all users of the public right-of-way, including: pedestrians, people requiring mobility aids, bicyclists, drivers and passengers of transit vehicles, trucks, automobiles and motorcycles."

Cincinnati should design our overpasses and underpasses to embrace the Complete Street concept. Currently, only the needs of automobiles are completely met, but pedestrians, especially those with physical disabilities, cyclists and even trucks with some of the poorly lit and signed underpasses, are under-served by these underpasses and overpasses, not to mention the road that connects them. The community benefits from having Complete Streets in that mobility, safety, and aesthetics are improved. Complete the Streets does not lay out exact design guidelines, but encourages that the best and latest design standards be met and that the needs of all people who might use the road be met in all phases of a project - planning, design, construction, maintenance, and expansion. More information is available at [www.completestreets.org](http://www.completestreets.org). On the website, Complete the Streets presents projects, policies, and presentations that can help municipalities improve their transportation planning.



Bridgeport Way in University Place, Washington was transformed into a complete street. It incorporates auto lanes, bike lanes, sidewalks, bus shelters, crosswalks, a median, landscaping, and lighting for the road and the sidewalks. Photo: completestreets.org

I also looked at the idea of incorporating public art and murals into the urban landscape in these areas. The Social and Public Art Resource Center has produced numerous murals throughout Los Angeles. They hire local teenagers do painting under the supervision or area artist. Each mural is aimed at promoting diversity and understanding in the community, often highlighting local heroes, history, or the natural landscape. More information about SPARC can be found at [www.sparcmurals.org](http://www.sparcmurals.org).



One mural done by SPARC at an elementary school in L.A. This reflects on the area's natural heritage and the Native Americans that once lived there. Photo: SPARC

**What existing plans or ideas from stakeholders (e.g. recent city plans or plans as described by our city visitors) were you responding to and in what way?**

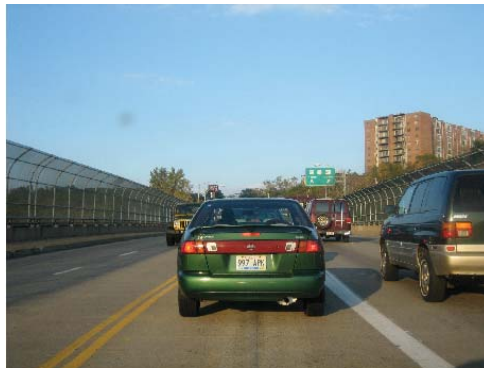
Along the corridor, there are currently plans being drawn up for the I-75 Hopple Street overpass and the underpass on Madison Road near the Milacron plant in Oakley. In the I-75 Hopple Street overpass design, there is currently nothing outlined for bikes or pedestrians, so I outlined some basic accommodations recommended by Complete Streets. This plan does call for wider sidewalks and reconfiguring the median to create a

gateway, enlargement of the sidewalks, and repositioning the traffic lanes for better flow, so I simply restarted that sidewalks need to be wide enough to allow access for all people, especially those in electric wheelchairs, lighting should be considered, and also linkages between the pedestrian bridges and area destinations should be improved.



In 1959, the B&O Railroad built the underpass. The city built two pedestrian bridges to connect Madison Road to the surrounding factories. Now the pedestrian bridges are rarely used, vegetation is overgrown, and debris covers the sidewalks. While the underpass and pedestrian bridges have potential to be interesting urban spaces and a gateway to Oakley, they are now more of a grey-painted, leaf-covered eyesore. Photo: Lauren Sullivan

The current stage of designs for the Hopple Street viaduct have not outlined bike and pedestrian considerations. The current design is uncomfortable for pedestrians and cyclists, so I proposed that the new design look to the Complete Streets concept to ensure it does not discourage pedestrian movement.



The Hopple Street overpass often has significant traffic, discouraging bicyclists and pedestrians from using Hopple Street. Sidewalk only on one-side causes pedestrians to pass through more intersections than necessary. Photo: Lauren Sullivan

In the area of public art, Cincinnati's ArtWorks organization has a program called MuralWorks. They are very similar to SPARC in LA, doing murals that represent the neighborhoods they are painted in. I looked at some of their designs and made the recommendation that they could paint some of the large concrete walls on the overpasses and underpasses.



A mural done by MuralWorks in Walnut Hills. The children in the photo worked under the leadership of local artists. Photo: MuralWorks

**What precedents did you learn from or use in your plan? (be specific with references)**

When working on this project, I tried to think of bridges, overpasses, and underpasses I have walked or biked over and found to be very conducive to those uses. Locally, I thought of the overpasses on Fort Washington Way and the Purple People Bridge. Nationally, the Brooklyn Bridge came to mind, along with some of the bridges near MIT and Harvard in Cambridge. But roads that make sense for all users, regardless if it is a bridge, overpass, or underpass, make for good examples to draw design ideas from.



The Golden Gate Bridge is both beautiful and functional. One side of the bridge has a pedestrian walkway, the other has a bikeway. Photo: Arving's Flickr



The overpasses across Fort Washington Way incorporate landscaped beds, wide sidewalks, and indirect lighting oriented to serve pedestrians and automobiles. Photo: Lauren Sullivan



Lighting on an underpass can be an outlet for creative design as seen here in Brooklyn. Photo: DumboNYC.com

### **What aspects of your plan did the engineering students contribute to?**

The engineering student I worked with explained some structure issues and legal issues with me, so in the end, I didn't include anything about modifying structures. His advise drove me to focus on simple modifications in the way of striping, lighting, and barriers because that is much more realistic.

### **How do you think that your design was successful in illustrating your intent? How not?**

I wish one of the transportation engineers had helped me with my project, because I would have liked to have been given more advise on new designs. I think I did an effective job of illustrating how to make simple upgrades to the designs, but I would have liked to go into new structures more. I think it might have been more effective that way.