This quarter, the Niehoff Studio students took a look at the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood from a unique perspective and saw visions for its future from the eyes of individuals much different from themselves. Many students chose to focus on Vine and Main Streets. This is partially due to the recent emphasis on the area and the sense of urgency to save it from destruction. The overarching goal of this studio was to make Over-the-Rhine a safe and livable place for its residents, visitors and business owners.

During the last two years, the City of Cincinnati has been promoting the revitalization of Vine Street as a special district with the potential to combine entertainment, art venues, and housing. In addition, Main Street is a unique urban district with some strong indication of becoming a regional destination (urban entertainment district). Restaurants, bars, cafes, bakery and other shops on Main Street, that are devoted to food production and service, have become magnets for visitors. In addition, existing grocery and convenient stores continue to service the residents in the area. This is occurring without any explicit City policy and planning. The relationship between Main and Vine Streets as mutually supportive corridors of a revitalized district is weak and needs to be clearly defined. Overarching the potential for reinvestment are the serious concerns with the preservation of the historic resources and character of the area, and the need for redevelopment to be a positive catalyst for opportunity for the residents and their local businesses and support.

Students in this studio addressed questions through the “lenses” of 12 specific social groups that include single mothers, young professionals, small scale developers, police, along with others. The studio addressed the following questions as they applied to each lens group:

- How can we understand and define the concept of shared/negotiated space to uniquely address our area in OTR?
- How do we use the knowledge gained to establish design plans and strategies?
- Can we establish a shared/negotiated environment with long-lasting promise for livability?
- How do we integrate the studio recommendations with the OTR and city basin area? What type and form of integration is desirable?
- How can plans and strategies for a shared/negotiated space become a catalyst for revitalization? What type of an urban design plan/strategy is possible?
- What type of policy is necessary and how do we explicitly address gentrification within the redevelopment strategy?
- How do we integrate redevelopment and revitalization with historic preservation within an economic development strategy?
- How may we inform ourselves for more effective urban design by understanding the negotiated space as a "place" through the lenses of the stakeholders?

The students explored the answers to these questions with varying degrees of complexity as shown in their recommendations.

In addition to these designs, individual groups have completed connectivity and park plans to create a more comprehensive planning effort.
This diagram displays the location of each of the proposed areas and how each of this quarter's student proposals is connected to each other through pedestrian pathways, vehicular routes and green spaces. These proposed projects include Parks and Green Spaces, Housing, Mixed Use, Light Industry, an International Market, a Homeless Village, and a Kid's Zone. These proposals are connected through a system of pedestrian and vehicular pathways to promote use of each and to create easy access to all. The pedestrian routes are not completely restricted to the use of pedestrians yet they have been altered to create a safe environment while sharing the space with the vehicular traffic. These pedestrian routes will be paved in brick to slow traffic, and encourage a more friendly environment. The green spaces are another form of connection between the proposed areas. These serve as green patches that connect the pedestrian routes, forming a scenic walkway through Over-the-Rhine. To encourage individuals to make the journey through these green pathways, the routes will provide inviting amenities such as colorful buildings, flower boxes, and small café's and boutiques. Within and on the periphery of the proposed areas, gateways are included that represent areas of focus, activity and entry.
The Long Term Elderly Residents of Over the Rhine do many of the activities of any regular elderly person does. Activities such as shopping, seeking medical help, staying home and socializing, utilizing the Over the Rhine Senior Center, going to bars and restaurants and also going to church. But there are also issues that set apart seniors from Over the Rhine. Issues such as getting to and from places dealing with a crumbling infrastructure such as sidewalks and stairs, a lack of shopping choices and also dealing with a high crime rate. All these things contribute to creating a difficult living environment. Though Over the Rhine has some assets such as Metro Bus Stops, Kroger, Findlay Market and the Senior Center it still needs help in catering to its older population. Some elderly live in fear and rarely come out. Others go on with their daily activities regardless of what is going on around them, they are determined to live in Over the Rhine whether there is crime or not because they have pride in where they live because it has been their life-long home. We interviewed Virginia from the Over the Rhine Center and she discussed these issues with us. The fact is, the elderly want to live in Over the Rhine even with these difficulties. She discussed some things the elderly would like to see done with the neighborhood. Like having a store that would have a broad selection and discounts and activities with reasonable prices, such as Music Hall and the Aronoff Center. Even though they are close, they prove to be too expensive. Our goal will be to address the social, mobility, accessibility, historical character and safety issues of Over the Rhine in order to cater to the long term elderly residents who live there.
Washington Park will be redesigned in areas to meet the needs expressed in the community’s focus group.

13th Street will be transformed into a pedestrian friendly street, known as “The Avenue of the Arts.” The sidewalks will be widened on each side, fixtures such as lampposts, trees, planters, and benches will be installed. It will also allow for the seasonal display of street art.

Ziegler Park will be redesigned to include a modern summer aquatic facility. The pool area will be refurbished and expanded with a children's play area. A small community garden will be located in the park as well. The existing dry playground at Ziegler will be maintained, and will a pedestrian corridor will pass through the open area of the park to connect 13th Street with the playfield.
The art community in Cincinnati, while thriving, is disconnected and spread out across the city making it hard for a real creative hub to form. Over-the-Rhine is the perfect opportunity for artists because of the great living spaces that could be available including loft spaces, studio spaces, and alternative housing and apartments. OTR is also the center of the city making art exhibitions easily accessible from all around the tri-state. A diverse amount of commercial is already moving into the neighborhood giving it a good start’ however, much more would be needed to sustain a larger population than what is already there. The housing stock is already there as in the potential. Displacement would not be an issue with market rate housing and the vast majority of vacant buildings already. Artists are already all-embracing and would be great to revive the struggling OTR community and economy.
This project uses the vacant Hussman Potato Chip Factory. This space would provide enough room to obtain our design goals of creating a campus style cluster that is appealing to the eye yet very functional for its intended purpose.
**Our plan is to develop a homeless village with the necessary amenities and services to assist the homeless and rehabilitate the drug addicted. Once they have fully recovered, we will provide them with job training and return them to society as contributing members instead of needy panhandlers and vagrants.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
<th>Availability</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Proximity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals/Ownerships</td>
<td>Centralization of Resources</td>
<td>Desire to centralize housing, treatment, education, job training</td>
<td>3 Centralized Buildings: Housing, Treatment, Job Training</td>
<td>Block North of Liberty where Houser is currently located</td>
<td>Drop-in shelter to hold 300 people; treatment facility to hold 200 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creation of Goals and Incentives</strong></td>
<td>Fresh Start Program allows for easy integration into society</td>
<td>After rehab, people are relocated based on job placement and availability of resources</td>
<td>Large lot allows for adequate allocation of space to accommodate needs</td>
<td>Rehab has rooms for 3-5 people per room; Job training has rooms for 2 people per room</td>
<td>Start out in main facilities, then move to halfway houses and independent living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration Into Society</td>
<td>Job placement after a certain period of time in program</td>
<td>Ideally given choice of being placed in Cincinnati or elsewhere</td>
<td>Dependent on overall economy and availability of jobs</td>
<td>No immediate restraints on size</td>
<td>Start out in main facilities, then move to halfway houses and independent living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving Individual Health, Safety and Welfare</td>
<td>Improved living conditions overall</td>
<td>Main facilities in OTR; low income and independent housing located off-site</td>
<td>Drop-in shelter to hold 300 people; treatment facility to hold 200 people</td>
<td>Improved living conditions for more people than current shelters hold</td>
<td>Centralized facilities and independent living remove negative aspects of homelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Combination of private investors, public funding, and philanthropists</td>
<td>Allocated throughout multiple sectors of the program</td>
<td>Must maintain all facilities and programs</td>
<td>Support all programs and allow for possible expansion</td>
<td>By centralizing facilities, maintenance and funding are more feasible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Statistics**


*Increases by app. 1,250 people per year

**App. 51 homeless resource services in OTR**

**Recovery Cycle**

Typically, a homeless person starts out at the drop-in shelter, where danger is always an issue and security is minimal. The drop-in shelter has a rehabilitation program, but it only holds 20 people. If a homeless person is trying to change their life around, they will most likely enter the City Gospel Mission's recovery program, which assists in living and in rehabilitation. There are also other ways of improving themselves, such as the Lord's Gym, support groups, churches, and the Library.
Light industry plays an important role in Over-the-Rhine. It is a valuable part of the community because it employs many of the residents who live inside the community and provides a very valuable tax base for the community. We see our district as providing an economic development opportunity for Over-the-Rhine by providing personal and career development oriented job training as well as incentives for businesses to come and prosper within our area. In the future these jobs, and possibly worker owned companies, will house many desirable positions for those living in and around OTR. Also, the utilization of the assets OTR possess will help to provide economic stability as well as neighborhood pride. Moving businesses in that will maintain their buildings will help create a better atmosphere for the entire community. Attracting business to the area will require incentives and new ways of encouraging growth.
Any redevelopment plan must employ, educate, and engage the youth of OTR if it is to be successful. Five major points are identifiable:

1. **Provision of Economic Opportunities**
   Any new development shall apprentice local youth as part of the work force. To avoid displacing or income sorting locally within OTR, new developments shall offer a mix of income rental units: high, middle, and subsidized.

2. **Improve Environment**
   The city shall litigate against property owners that are allowing their buildings to deteriorate, enforcing minimum standards of exterior appearance. The appearance of the blocks between main and vine shall be improved with new trees, lights, flower boxes, and artistic murals - to be executed with local talent.

3. **Provide Education Necessary to Redevelop**
   To aid in the rehabilitation, a trade and craft school will be founded in OTR that will educate youth on techniques of rehabilitation and renovation of historic structures. The goal will be to have students acquire a building and renovate it upon graduation. The city shall provide low-interest loans.

4. **Secure Household Life**
   The youth of OTR need a more stable family life to support them. The welfare system shall cease to reward single mothers with multiple children, and instead shall provide more aid to households with two parents and some income. This will reduce the need of youth to turn to drugs as supporting income.

5. **Recreational Opportunities**
   Currently Young African American Males are under served recreationally in OTR. We propose new businesses to support them, including, but not limited to: A poolhall/restaurant, a weightroom/basketball hall, and a dance studio/night club.

### Improvement Map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources &amp; Plans</th>
<th>Existing Resources</th>
<th>Resource Improvement</th>
<th>New Policies</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
<td>Social Workers</td>
<td>- After school Youth groups (festival, school fund)</td>
<td>- New ways of dealing with crime (juvenile community court)</td>
<td>- Grants and increased budget for the police and city run programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Neighborhood Watch groups - religious institutions</td>
<td>- Public clean up (filter control, inspectors)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Quality of Life</td>
<td>Parks, Schools - Cultural Institutions and destinations - Architecture</td>
<td>- Facade improvement projects</td>
<td>- New property Court - tax incentives to increase development</td>
<td>- City investigating new property court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>existing schools - after school activities - school board - Universities</td>
<td>- New school - employment training at schools - GED program</td>
<td>- Apprentice programs for youth through local business and construction projects</td>
<td>- Find location and funding for new training school - Business involvement in training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>Large potential labor force - large amounts of cheap property</td>
<td>- Buy and renovate property - employing local labor.</td>
<td>- Low-interest loans so locals may become property owners - Attract industry to vacant industry</td>
<td>- City shall provide loans to local youth wishing to buy and renovate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Improvements</td>
<td>Facade improvement fund - private investors - local artists</td>
<td>- street sweeping - clean up crows - paint artistic murals over abandoned storefronts</td>
<td>- Property court to attack vacant property owners</td>
<td>- City to aid community groups in litigation against property owners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IMPROVEMENT MAP**

- OTR Family Center
- Race Courts & Weights
- Vine Pool Hall and Restaurant
- Streetscape Beautification
- Attract light industry
- Trade and Craft School
- Culinary School Restaurant
- 2/3/5 Gallery
We have selected Findlay Market as an anchor for an international market. The international market will pick up where we feel Findlay Market has left off. Our plan is to bring in an opportunity for ethnically diverse dining and shopping experiences. With this implementation we feel that not only Findlay Market will be helped, but the entire neighborhood.

We plan three sections, or districts, surrounding the Findlay Market development, each devoted to a different international culture. The three districts will be Asian, Middle Eastern, and European themed.
Today's empty-nesters are more active, healthy, and romantic than previous generations. While they miss their children, they seem delighted to be getting on. More and more, they are going out to play now that the kids are away. They can be described as adventurous, sophisticated, have money, appreciate good food, wine, and eating out, want to travel and have fun.

Over the Rhine currently offers amenities that could attract empty nesters to invest in the neighborhood. This includes the concentration of restaurants, bars, lounges, Music Hall, Findlay Market as well as the proximity to and Downtown.
This plan's goals are to fill in vacant lots with the addition of new mixed-use buildings to go along with the current mixed-use. These new buildings will create an enhanced street environment along Vine Street. Also some of these vacant lots will be utilized as surface parking lots located behind buildings facing Vine Street. Pedestrian pathways will be created to lead from these lots to the street front. We also considered the area around Vine Street, including 12th and 13th streets, to further activate foot traffic throughout the neighborhood.
Concept Statement:
We are proposing for this area an integration of Main Street and Vine Street with the surrounding area to create a cohesive and viable business district, this will be done by creating more retail, housing, and food services and changing 14th Street into a pedestrian only environment.

Vine Street Proposal:
By increasing the aesthetics on Vine, we propose not only to allow a certain number of units made up of restaurants, ethnic cafe’s, multi-cultural stores to be allocated within the region, but also to increase the complexity of the region with the addition of mixed use housing. Overall, a higher density percentage would put those business with a likely advantage to succeed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Proximity</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Amenities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Increase available parking to businesses on Main and Vine</td>
<td>Disperse small lots to cater to the adjacent businesses</td>
<td>Within a 2-3 minute walk to corresponding businesses</td>
<td>Well lit parking lots</td>
<td>Tree lines lots, lighting medians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Increase the number of restaurants on Main and Vine</td>
<td>Majority on Main and Vine providing access to the area</td>
<td>Have restaurants in close walking distance to the business district</td>
<td>Have a variety of restaurants, ethnic cafes, corner stores</td>
<td>Interesting facades, enticing atmosphere, outdoor patios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Increase police presence</td>
<td>Have police patrol assigned blocks on a regular basis</td>
<td>Patrol the surrounding area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Provide more retail in the surrounding areas</td>
<td>More retail on Main and Vine, creating more distinct sense of place</td>
<td>On Main and Vine within walking distance</td>
<td>Clothing stores, music stores, jewelry, boutiques</td>
<td>Interesting storefronts, appealing aesthetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Increase the amount of housing around Main and Vine</td>
<td>On the streets between Main and Vine</td>
<td>Within a 1/4 mile walk of Main and Vine</td>
<td>Loft apartments, family apartments, studios</td>
<td>Restore existing buildings, fit into the area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policies
• Unite OTREC under one vision to include all business within the Main and Vine Street district. This would provide these businesses to have the power to thoroughly discuss and convey their ideas, presenting the finished ideas with more force to get funding for lower end businesses.
• Increase the presence of the Police enforcement in this area by assigning individual beats to specific officers that are patrolled on a consistent basis.
• Restore the vacant buildings by locating businesses and housing within while creating more attractive storefronts.
• Create awareness program of OTR area. By educating people on the area, the perception that OTR is not safe to be in will be extinguished. If people are educated, then they will feel more comfortable coming downtown to shop, eat, and even live.
• Create a network of street vendors that cater to the main and Vine Street district. They will be concentrated on 13th and 12th Street, but will also be dispersed throughout the area providing easy food for the business owners and hungry shoppers.
Improved Housing

To the bystander's naked eye the current condition of the neighborhood appears to be run down and vacant. Although some of it is true, the neighborhood posses many great qualities including a thriving market and magnificent park.

There are many vacant properties in Over-The-Rhine, including the neighborhood from Green St. to 14th St. Many of these properties appear to be dilapidated and not worth restoring. But many of these buildings hold tremendous potential for restoration. We proposed a mixture of new infill housing and mixed use housing between 1,200 and 1,500 Sq. Ft. per residence in this area. Also we have identified a new potential landmark to help anchor the community. We also wish to keep the amenities that are already in place such as the existing playground and community garden.
African American Single Mother Goal/Achievement Matrix

**Assets**
- Strong community ties
- Rich history
- Urban character
- Proximity to downtown

**Liabilities**
- Crime and safety
- Underfunded schools
- Dilapidated housing
- Litter and debris

**Activities**
- Grocery shopping
- Laundry
- Restaurants
- Working

**Challenges**
- Home ownership
- Efficient transportation
- Escaping poverty
- Finding time to relax

**State of Mind**
- Working vs. parenting
- Retirement not feasible
- Children’s safety and education first.

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**The Creation of Positive Public Space**
A mother’s protective instincts are not supported by the current state of urban fabric and public space in Over the Rhine. Public spaces are carved out by the physical surroundings. The formation of space gains character and becomes a living center, a “shell” formed by the walls, light, trees, and many other objects of space. The black and white silhouette to the left illustrates the present day conditions of urban space in Over-the-Rhine. The lack of recognizable boundaries and defensible spaces is directly related to the feelings of insecurity felt by African American Mothers in Over the Rhine.

**Restoring the Urban Fabric**
The Creation of Public Space: The continuous improvement of the shells of public space which make the human community. This to be done by a committee of professionals, acting in concert with community members, within very carefully agreed verbal agreements of the general patterns to followed. Nodes and shells are easily recognizable in this spatial arrangement of buildings. Public spaces can also be formed by the social uses that are harder to see.

**Identifying the Inner Spaces**
The green areas on the left are individual shells, each with their own unique character created by both the residents who occupy the space and the physical characteristics that define it. Typically, the spaces would be occupied by community gardens and courtyards. Their enclosure within the buildings implies their defensibility.

**Identifying the Main Public Spaces**
Public spaces are less defensible based on enclosure and accessibility but these spaces are equally safe due to the amount of “eyes on the street” that comes from a high volume of people traffic and commercial businesses. It’s important to keep a sense of scale present in public space so the larger public spaces should be divided into smaller areas within.

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African American Single Mother Goal/Achievement Matrix
The Mercer Street Kid's Zone, between Vine and Walnut Streets, will become the area’s epicenter of child activity. The buildings will be retro-fitted to house arcades, learning centers and community centers, and will be painted a vibrant color scheme. The remaining area around these buildings be set aside for green space that can be used for outdoor activities of any kind. The overall aim of this zone is for Over-the-Rhine to have a child friendly, child centered district within walking distance of where the youths live. The "Kid's Zone" will be the safe and entertaining place that youths desperately need.