Niehoff Urban Studio

Academic Applied Research and Design since 2002

The Niehoff Urban Studio is a program led by the university and driven by the vision of our community stakeholders. The Studio facilitates the study and discussion of urban issues relevant to the vitality and sustainability of Cincinnati and other urban centers. It is the regional center for urbanism, where university and non-university participants can engage in events, symposia, and exhibits that explore these urban issues. The Studio is structured to provide a unique and innovative off-campus classroom to support interdisciplinary work among students, faculty, and engaged community stakeholders. The work of the Niehoff Urban Studio is intended to have a tangible impact on urban problems and contribute innovative research in this area.

The Niehoff Urban Studio is administered by the Community Design Center of the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning with oversight from the Office of the UC Provost. The Studio is administered by professional staff who work in collaboration with participating faculty. Undergraduate and Graduate assistants provide support for studio administration.

Community Design Center

Technical Service since 1986

The Community Design Center organizes collaborative interdisciplinary community university partnerships for the research and design of physical improvements which serve the University’s urban area. The Center provides assistance to community groups, non-profit organizations, and City departments that are representing underserved areas and underfunded projects within the area. The Center is administered by professional design staff with assistance from co-op students and graduate assistants from a variety of disciplines.

www.uc.edu/cdc

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In 2014, the Niehoff Urban Studio concluded a thematic cycle entitled, “Movement in the City” with a focus on Wasson Way, a proposed 6.5 mile Light Rail and Bikeway Corridor. The Fall Semester initiated work in “Building Healthy and Resilient Places” with a variety of coursework oriented around articulating a future vision for Burnet Woods and its Uptown context. Urban Planning and Civil Engineering led the studio with other disciplines integrated from four colleges participating in all academic, research, and technical service work. Studio work touched thirteen communities, and twenty-two public events were hosted to promote community learning, engagement and dissemination of findings.

Community Design Center

Food related technical service projects continued in 2014. Construction of phase I of the Rothenberg rooftop Garden was completed, which allowed elementary school students to have a short but productive fall growing season as a part of their science curriculum. The multi-year Healthy Corner Store program led by the Center for Closing the Health Gap continued with CDC architecture interns providing designs for the enhancement of three corner stores to facilitate the availability of healthy food in food desert areas of the city. As an extension of Spring Semester Studio work, CDC, in collaboration with AIA Cincinnati, assisted Ground Works – Mill Creek to conduct a community charrette for planning the West Fork Creek Bikeway, one of the few such efforts in the west side. Finally, the CDC assisted with a symposium and local applications for disaster preparedness and resiliency measures known as “Metro-Fitting.”
Who enters where and why?

Is the park pedestrian friendly?

Who uses the trails and why?

Do nearby institutions interact with the park?

How does signage of the park?

Do widely held perceptions about the park?

Who owns park infrastructure?

Are activities easily accessed & utilized?

Is infrastructure used in its intended manner?

amenities nearby parks?

Who claims the park and from what proximity away?

Benches are designed in a way that could encourage sleeping; restrooms observed as being used for other functions; gazebo lacks formal programming, which encourages alternative activities.

Students; dog walkers; resident cut-throughts; drug users; homeless camps

Hospitals; University of Cincinnati; Environmental Protection Agency

Some paths are hidden in the woods or restricted by trees

Types of parking people enter park & for what purpose

Inconsistent, signage and lack of signage

Lack of inviting signage

Perceptions of activities may discourage some people from visiting the park

Activities are not connected

Structures are underutilized from a programming perspective

No designed “hint” in landscape to point towards location of activities

Activities are “hidden;” lack of visibility can negatively perceptions

Nature center; picnic areas; gazebo; trails are unique to park

Lake; woods and tree cover; hills are unique to park

Some entry points are not visible & inviting.

Crime may discourage some people from visiting park.

The substantial tree cover is a unique element within the nearby park system that should be protected.

Entry points are not connected through a cohesive circulation pattern; point

Trail conditions may not be suitable for everyone

Perceptions of may discourage some people from visiting the park

Topography limits views into and out of the park; tree cover also limits such views Obstructed views may contribute to perceptions of fear, uneasiness

Ownership of park roads and paths may comes to designing park

Unique amenities and natural community’s idea of the park

Trails are used by a variety of groups; may not necessarily be used in manner intended

Academic Applied Research and Design

Niehoff Studio

Movement in the City
Wasson Way Light Rail - Bike Trail Corridor  Spring 2014

Building Healthy and Resilient Places
Rethinking Burnet Woods: Civil Engineering Capstone  Fall 2014
Rethinking Burnet Woods: Graduate Plan Making Workshop  Fall 2014
Rethinking Burnet Woods: Inquiry to Innovation Freshman Seminar  Fall 2014
Urban Land Institute Competition for Walnut Hills Redevelopment  Fall 2014
East End Green Infrastructure Seminar  Spring 2014
Research and Reconnaissance

Student research initiated in the Fall Semester 2013 was continued in a survey of innovative planning approaches to Bikeways and Light Rail Transit. Topics included safety, functionality, and pedestrian/bike connectivity of shared use trails, precedents in rails-to-trails conversion, and best practices in rails-with-trails design, transit oriented development, and green infrastructure applications. Substantial reconnaissance was conducted to fully document corridor conditions and stakeholder interests.

Urban Framework Plans for the Corridor

Before initiating specific individual urban design, engineering, or programming projects, interdisciplinary student teams developed urban framework proposals for both the corridor as a whole and each of five defined segments. The 6.5 mile long Wasson Way corridor contains a diverse land-use and neighborhood mix. It touches five different jurisdictions, five Cincinnati neighborhoods of contrasting demographic profiles, private and public institutional anchors, regional retail centers, office areas, manufacturing districts, as well as several parks and a national scenic river. The corridor is crisscrossed with interstate and state highways, regional arterial roadways, existing freight and future passenger rail, and current bus service, as well as forthcoming bus rapid transit lines. It was the objective of the student teams to tie these diverse elements, uses, and conditions together into a cohesive half-mile wide corridor. This corridor will provide enhanced live-work-play opportunities along an accessible bikeway with trailheads parallel to a future regional light rail line (LRT) that requires both large multi-modal hubs and smaller stops. Both trailheads and LRT stops provide opportunities to be a locus for stabilizing existing surrounding conditions, stimulating the creation of new amenities, or promoting higher and better use redevelopment including a mix of uses in more dense pedestrian friendly patterns.

Design Projects

Transit Oriented Development (TOD)/ Bike Oriented Development (BOD)

TOD is a key concept related to how transit affects city development. New development can be stimulated around transit hubs and bikeway trailheads to minimize walking distance by being more densely structured vertically, rather than horizontally. Interdisciplinary student teams developed TOD and BOD concepts with Real Estate development proforma for four such areas along the corridor. At these locations, around six proposed transit hubs and trail heads, teams envisioned commercial redevelopment opportunities at existing single use sites for high density mixed-use infill development. This promotes the revitalization of neighborhood commercial districts, the remaking of existing retail strip centers, new work destinations in the heart of the city, the conversion of highway zones into pedestrian friendly places, and the creation of additional diverse housing possibilities.
**Rail-Trail Integration / Transit Functionality**

Student teams addressed the technical challenge of accommodating a bike trail and light rail transit in a very constricted right-of-way. The functionality of one- versus two-track LRT configurations was considered against relative efficiencies. LRT stop/station location and design were studied along with a supplementary neighborhood bus/shuttle system. Two multi-modal hubs were proposed that integrated bike and rail use, established connections to future intersecting regional LRT lines, and accommodated pedestrians, parking, existing regular Bus service and future Bus Rapid Transit. In addition, multi-modal conflicts between auto traffic, rail movement, and biking were considered for innovative intersection design.

**Perception and Identity, Use and Impact**

Social, cultural, and economic considerations were given due consideration by Urban Geography and Urban Studies Students. A strong thematic area explored was the future identity of Wasson Way and how the corridor will be perceived by users and surrounding residents. An “imageability” study was undertaken with resulting place specific proposals for, interpretive signage, exhibits, and site-specific art and programming to complement the rich cultural heritage of the corridor communities. A notable identity concept proposed making the corridor understood as critical infrastructure, not only for recreation and transit, but also for environmental remediation and utility lines for energy, communications, and water. Other areas of interest included facilitating participatory planning for the corridor with attention to whether the success of a fully developed Wasson Way will result in displacement and gentrification in lower income parts of the corridor. Consequently, a study of the impact of the Light Rail Transit on surrounding property values was conducted, and a proposal for a “Trail Resource Center” was made to advocate for general public education about biking and provide programming that might serve to engage surrounding communities in the use and appreciation of the future Wasson Way.

**Green Infrastructure, Trail Design, and Public Amenities**

Students recognized the opportunity that the trail corridor represents in terms of providing best practices in environmental design. Innovative stormwater management practices were explored in the trail fringe areas. New connectivity among existing public parks and natural habitat area was exploited in a natural areas network for the corridor. The redesign and enhanced programming of existing contiguous public parks was provided and new trail connectivity to existing trail systems was delineated in student projects. Finally, innovative policies and procedures were proposed to insure the ongoing community ownership, maintenance, and safety of the bikeway.
Building Healthy and Resilient Places Theme

The Fall Semester of 2014 marked the beginning of a new thematic cycle for the Niehoff Urban studio entitled “Building Healthy and Resilient Places”. This theme derives from several sources. Chief among these is the well documented national epidemic of poor health associated with limited physical activity, which, in many cases, can be attributed to the inhibiting design of the built environment.

Locally, active lifestyle scenarios explored in the preceding Wasson Way study point toward the importance of planning and building our cities in ways that support a healthy population. Indeed, Wasson Way is just one of many bike trail efforts in our area. This allocation of attention and resources to bikeway planning is an indicator of the value that the community places on individual health, but also on the functional health of the city in terms of the environment, movement infrastructure, and community development.

Healthy living is a high priority for local organizations working with the Studio: Interact for Health and the local chapter of the Urban Land Institute have included the studio in their programs entitled “Building Healthier Communities by Design” and “Building Healthy Places”, respectively. In 2014, the studio collaborated with ULI to host a student competition under their program.

Finally, attention to the health of the city itself, and its resiliency in the face of inevitable incremental or catastrophic environmental, social, or economic events was the subject of an influential Studio workshop conducted by Australian designer Tony Fry in the Spring of 2014.

All of these interests and events have driven the formation of the current studio theme under which the design of the city can be directed to promoting health for individuals and adding resiliency for social and physical urban systems. Accordingly, the first project under this theme is “Rethinking Burnet Woods.” Undertaken in collaboration with the Uptown Consortium and the Cincinnati Park Board, this studio effort will involve seven classes and multiple disciplines during the 2014-15 academic year. It will consider the place and function that Burnet Woods can have in providing, in environmental, economic, and social terms, for the health, vitality, and resilience of the Uptown area and its residents, workers, and students.

Rethinking Burnet Woods: Civil Engineering Capstone

Civil Engineering Senior Design began their year-long capstone on “Rethinking Burnet Woods” led by Professors Miller and Devendorf. Students with specializations in Environmental, Traffic, Geo-Technical Engineering, and Construction Management reviewed the active 2006 Burnet Woods Concept Plan to develop research in the following:

Green Infrastructure stormwater management best practices for bio-retention, permeable paving, and green roofs.

Hydrology Science and Engineering for stormwater runoff retention and bio-filtration in wetlands and other low impact catchment systems.

Lake design and management for best environmental and recreational use, including researching fishing piers and bridges types that support diverse activities and functions, such as overlooks and concessions.

Connectivity within and outside the park, including gateway design, wayfinding systems, and other orientation devices. Accommodating bike paths inside the park and connecting them to a district-wide bike path system was also considered.

Various desirable parks improvements and programming elements were researched and applied including a dog park, a nature Playscape, an amphitheater, and a ropes course to appeal to extreme sports enthusiasts.

Engineering student research will be incorporated into Spring semester work to be conducted in collaboration with Urban Planning, Horticulture, and Architectural Engineering students.
Rethinking Burnet Woods: Graduate Planning Making Workshop

The Niehoff Studio hosted the School of Planning Masters of Community Planning Plan Making Workshop in the Fall Semester, which was led by Professors Mehta, Palazzo, and Russell with a focus on Burnet Woods. This applied workshop provided extensive reconnaissance and analysis of a variety of park and Uptown district elements. Students worked with the Cincinnati Park Board and the Uptown Consortium to identify key stakeholders and constituent groups and sought perspectives and preferences from them. Concept Plans were developed in eight team projects that ranged in scope from Uptown district wide applications to programming and operations concepts exclusive to the park.

Art and Ecology in the Park: This student team proposed an extensive program of interactive art installations and art programming for the park that would attract existing and new users to better interpret this important natural asset.

Envisioning the park as a productive landscape: Edible forests, tree guilds, gardens, a fish hatchery, and other food producing and processing components were envisioned for the park within a stormwater management strategy.

Improving Public Health through Burnet Woods: This team intended to use the park as way of motivating and supporting an active lifestyle for both individual health benefits and community cohesion. Proposed programming includes exercise programs, outdoor recreation with an emphasis on biking, providing access to healthy food in a farmer’s market, and other social programs.

Seasonal Fun: Likewise another group proposed extensive new seasonal programming throughout the park that would draw users to a fall farmer’s market, winter ice skating rink, and spring blooms. Administrative oversight is planned with a full time on-site park ranger.

Network Activity: Spreading attractions more evenly throughout the park was the goal of this team, by providing a distributed hierarchy of art installations, architectural follies, and programming in a variety of forms and functions. A key proposal was an articulated through-the-valley promenade that would link the UC campus ‘Main Street’ with the Ludlow Avenue Business District.

Soundscape: Mitigating the distraction of urban noise, while enhancing the audibility of natural sounds, was the goal of this team, who designed landscaping and pathways to accommodate this.

Epicenter of an Eco-District: This team chose to use the recognized environmental icon of the park as the center of an eco-district for all of Uptown that would promote district-wide best practices in stormwater management, bike/ pedestrian/transit movement, habitat reforestation, and food desert mitigation.

Great Streets: Also in a district-wide concept, this proposal sought to extend the greenspace of the park throughout Uptown along expanded roadway green buffers and eco-boulevards.
Rethinking Burnet Woods: Inquiry to Innovation Freshman Seminar

For the third year, the Niehoff Studio hosted a UC Forward interdisciplinary seminar entitled Inquiry to Innovation. The intent of this course is to provide an entry level experience for students who are interested in real-world problem solving. This course, also focused on Burnet Woods, introduces students to cross disciplinary work, team building, methods of research inquiry, and the design thinking process. Seventeen students from a variety of engineering disciplines, bio-medical, computer science, nursing, and others participated in this seminar led by instructors Cory Christopher and Frank Russell.

Six teams of students struggled to determine the best method of gleaning UC student perceptions of Burnet Woods and what improvements would be the most attractive to them. Methods ranged from observation and social media data mining to focus groups and in-person surveys. General findings indicated that UC students know little about the park, but expressed strong negative perceptions, especially in regard to safety. Entertainment and outdoor recreation were the generally requested offerings in the park. Studio teams recognized the value in having students express ownership for the park. Proposed first steps to realizing this outcome are to engage students in an activity which allows them to get to know the park by improving it. Accordingly, the final recommendation of the class was to create a permanent student organization dedicated to the collaborative preservation and programming of Burnet Woods.

Student Inquiry Process

5. Turning a New Leaf
To ensure that community engagement events are sustainable, a student organization with passionate and dedicated members should be established. The organization would also serve in Burnet Woods on a monthly basis as a favor to themselves and the community.

4. UC Branching Out
Hosting a community engagement event would introduce students to all Burnet Woods has to offer by allowing them to create fun memories while simultaneously bettering the park for the rest of the Bearcat and Cincinnati community.

3. Getting Stumped
Burnet Woods needs to be cleaned up before students will view it as functioning. Reframing the question: Why not have students clean and be an active part in the betterment of Burnet Woods?

2. “Growing” Forward
About 50% of students have a negative idea of Burnet Woods, according to the survey distributed by Christopher Stone and Luke Fetzer. These negative connotations need to be confronted and the students need to be informed.

1. The Root of it All
About 50% of students have a negative idea of Burnet Woods, according to the survey distributed by Christopher Stone and Luke Fetzer. These negative connotations need to be confronted and the students need to be informed.

Top Six Activities Requested by Students in Burnet Woods

Concerts - 56.8%
Hiking - 47.4%
Picnics - 51.9%
Outdoor Activities - 40.3%
Paddleboats/Canoes - 42.0%
Relaxing - 50.2%
Urban Land Institute Competition for Walnut Hills Redevelopment

An associated class conducted during the Fall Semester of 2014, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Competition Studio was offered at the Niehoff Studio as an Experiential Learning Collaboratory through the Division of Professional Practice and Experiential Learning (ProPel). The Niehoff Studio partnered with ULI and the UC College of Business - Real Estate Center and Program to create a for-credit class offering modeled after the national ULI Hines Competition and themed to align with the ULI “Building Healthy Places” initiative. This called for interdisciplinary teams made up of architecture, planning, and real estate students to compete in creating a design and proforma for a mixed use urban development.

The site and required program for the project were defined by the Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation for a multi-block area in their historic business district. Working with ULI professional real estate, architecture, and planning members, a request for proposals was developed, and a $5000 prize was offered to the winning entry by ULI sponsors. Each of the four teams were assigned three ULI professional mentors to advise them. Students also had the benefit of presentations made by other ULI members off-campus at their professional offices.

Student teams delivered final projects on October 27th for private review by a jury made up of 9 ULI members. The winning entry was announced in a reception that followed. While the applied outcome of the winning proposal on the specified site in Walnut Hills is unclear at this point, the scheme offered a clear alternative to conventional thinking about how site development should occur there. This studio offering is expected annually and participating students are supported to compete in the spring semester for the National ULI Hines competition.

This studio would not have been possible without the program organizers, mentors, and speakers listed in the credits of this report and on our web site.
During the Spring Semester 2014 the Urban Landscape III: Infrastructure Seminar was offered by the DAAP Horticulture Program at the Niehoff Urban Studio. Led by Professor Kelly Gregg, six students formed a team to address future development scenarios and green infrastructure applications for the East End Neighborhood. The seminar focus was derived, in part, from the 2013 East End Garden District Study conducted by the Community Design Center in collaboration with the East End Area Council.

Working with the same community stakeholders, the Seminar considered the East End Neighborhood in its entirety. Students conducted reconnaissance and analysis to document community demographics, land uses, circulation, development history, flora, and other aspects. A review of research sources that projected future climate change impacts to Cincinnati was applied to the East End area in particular, and predicted damaging future climate, weather, and flooding events that informed class proposals. Case studies were undertaken to highlight best practices in a number of relevant areas including green and affordable housing, eco-village examples, public space and recreation in natural areas, and green infrastructure measures including brownfield remediation.

Preparation work led the student team to propose two future scenarios for the neighborhood which would take into consideration most likely and beneficial future land use changes, settlement patterns, and community development.

In the first scenario, the East End capitalizes on assets that make it attractive to green industry, like its flat topography and proximity to the river, rail lines, and road networks. Students predict that under this scenario, the area will rapidly bring industry that will capitalize on riverfront access for shipping. Access to new jobs will be accommodated by the already planned Oasis rail transit. New housing development will occur in walking proximity. New residential development will be modeled with green practices. Recreational use areas may decrease in favor of more green industrial development.

In the second scenario, the East End again capitalizes on its proximity to the Ohio and Little Miami Rivers, and to the regional bicycle route already crossing through the neighborhood, to become a recreational destination. Strong environmental interests will drive a trend for creating a critical mass of new green housing in eco-villages with desirable communal amenities and shared spaces. Easy access through quick rail transit to downtown will serve commuters as well as those visiting for recreational or expanded entertainment options. Opportunities for outdoor recreation will proliferate as the community prioritizes providing open green space and the preservation of natural riverfront areas.

The East End would also develop a Transit-Oriented Eco-development to accommodate a mix of land uses and incomes. The East End Eco-development, shown in scenario two, includes a low impact development site plan with clustered housing to conserve green space and provide communal areas. The homes are oriented along an east-west axis for optimum passive solar energy. These newly constructed homes must be elevated due to flooding and include solar panels, rainwater harvest systems, passive solar opportunities and durable reused materials as shown in examples.

Under both scenarios, students proposed specific green infrastructure applications to mitigate the effects of flooding, severe weather events, and climate change. These included riverbank and slope stabilization, stormwater management, and methods of brownfield remediation.
Technical Service

Rothenberg Academy Rooftop Teaching Garden in Over the Rhine
West Fork Creek Trail Plan
Healthy Corner Stores Cincinnati
Metrofitting Cincinnati for a Resilient Future
Rothenberg Academy Rooftop Teaching Garden in Over the Rhine

Stemming from the vision of Pope Coleman, a Prospect Hill Resident and board member of the Over-the-Rhine (OTR) Foundation, the Rothenberg Rooftop Teaching Garden is an innovative green roof project intended to integrate with the curriculum of the existing public elementary school below. Students participate regularly in garden activity through their science classes to learn about biology and food production. The harvest of the garden is intended to supplement the school cafeteria. The project was made possible by the preservation of the historic school, once threatened with demolition, and the leadership of Mr Coleman in working with Cincinnati Public Schools to develop a partnership agreement through the existing CPS “Schools as Centers for Community Learning” program. The Community Design Center (CDC) collaborated with green roof experts Green City Resources and the OTR Foundation to provide design, specifications, and construction documents for the project which opened in the Fall of 2014.

This project outcome was the product of four years of planning and fundraising. Phase I work completed to date includes the installation of all 8500 sf of roof pavers and planting beds with a construction budget of $275,000. Although the rooftop had been originally designed as a playground, roof structural capacity would only allow concrete pavers and planting beds on half of the area. Other areas required lighter recycled rubber pavers and scattered planting pots.

Remaining Phase II work will include the design and installation of a shade structure and the placement of additional scattered pots and outdoor classroom furniture. Today, management of the rooftop garden is provided by a full time gardener and instructor Bryna Bass of the Rothenberg Rooftop Garden Guild.
West Fork Creek Trail Plan

The Community Design Center teamed with the Cincinnati AIA Urban Design Committee to provide technical assistance to the Mill Creek Restoration Project – Ground Work Cincinnati (MCRP) for visioning the West Fork Creek Bike Trail. This trail would serve the communities of Northside and South Cumminsville, and provide a much needed extension of the bikeway network from the existing Mill Creek Trail to Mt Airy Forest and Western Hills.

The West Fork Creek Trail and stormwater management plan was originally proposed by MCRP and the Metropolitan Sewer District in 2012. At that time, the concept was explored by one of the student teams in the Niehoff Studio “Movement in the City” theme. The trail plan benefitted from a professional charrette during the Spring of 2014 with CDC staff, AIA members, and community stakeholders. Following the charrette, CDC staff and AIA members developed the design concepts. In the Fall of 2014, independent study student Yuchen Ma completed the work with rendered models as shown.

While named for the West Fork Creek, the proposed trail alignment only follows a portion of the Creek edge due to complex topography and serial interruptions at grade, including multiple roadways and the divisive I-74. The proposed trail follows a branching route that would provide both pedestrian and bike travel and incorporates important new public amenities. These include overlooks, an art park, interpretive wetlands, public gathering spaces, expanded community gardens, and even new housing infill possibilities for the decimated and underserved South Cumminsville Neighborhood. In Northside, better connectivity would be provided for existing amenities, and additional recreation fields are planned along the trail. Creek daylighting and stream restoration are proposed as well along the length of West Fork Creek.

This work would not have been possible without the help of the designers listed in the credits of this report.
Healthy Corner Stores Cincinnati

Abstract:

The Healthy Corner Store program is an initiative of the Center for Closing the Health Gap, a non-profit based in Avondale. The CDC is providing technical services to this organization as it helps meet the goals of bolstering the capacity of existing corner stores to provide more healthy food, specifically fresh produce in underserved areas of the city known as “food deserts”. This program is modeled after similar projects in Philadelphia and other cities targeted at communities that have lost their full service grocer. In parallel to the architectural updates to the corner stores, the program also promotes the advantages of healthy eating to neighborhood residents.

Throughout the multi-year project, the CDC will provide documentation of existing corner store conditions and research in best practices for healthy corner stores, as well as provide design and programming proposals for making these stores more functional and effective in providing healthy eating options. The program plans to include more than a dozen stores over a three year period with capital financing provided by the City of Cincinnati Fresh Food Financing Initiative.

In 2014, the CDC, with architecture and design student interns, provided work for three different corner stores in Avondale and the West End. Although the stores varied in terms of appearance and functionality, each store owner worked enthusiastically with interns to enhance the design of their store to promote healthy eating. Much of the design work was focused on improving the exterior condition of the store in such a way that it would convey a message that it was an updated destination for fresh and healthy food. Design strategies included mitigating the negative visual attributes of surface parking with screening and landscaping, including providing green infrastructure strategies to manage pavement stormwater run-off. Structures for a weekly farmers market were proposed in one store parking lot. Enhancing the pedestrian entry sequence to the stores with safely separated and lit walkways was a priority. Maintaining transparency of existing storefront windows was promoted with interior adjustments that would permit better direct view. Facades and side walls were improved with awnings and murals respectively. And most importantly, messaging graphic communication about the availability of fresh food was proposed through super graphics and a bright exterior color palette.

West End’s Jet-In Market After Improvements

Avondale Food Mart and Car Wash Before and After

Lexington Market in Avondale Before and After

Avondale Food Mart and Car Wash Before and After (at left)

Proposed Interior Health Food Display

More info
MetroFitting Cincinnati for a Resilient Future

In February, the Niehoff Urban Studio hosted Australian designer and theorist Tony Fry. At a two day workshop organized by the Office of the University Architect to convene key area planning officials, Fry conducted an exercise in scenario planning for natural disaster and other catastrophes. Entitled “Metrofitting”, the goal of the exercise is to document projected risk that the city and its region face from climate change and prescribe how local planners and policymakers can take measures to insure a more resilient future.

Following the workshop, planning interns at the Community Design Center generated a series of diagrammatic maps that would communicate the range of potential considerations at the city scale. These included Bio-hazard and chemical spill events, landslides, flooding, pandemics, and even civil disorder that might result from a major catastrophe. This diagram set is intended to communicate the range of pertinent issues when addressing resiliency for future study.
AIA Vision Lecture Series: “Advocacy - Citizen Architect”

Roundtable Discussion “Advocacy - Citizen Architect” January 16th, 2014

Second Annual Vacant Lots - Occupied Workshop January 17th-19th, 2014

Modern Makers + The Cincinnati Ballet: Dance/Draw January 29th, 2014

Metrofitting Workshop with Tony Fry February 7th-8th, 2014

Niehoff Urban Studio + Modern Makers: Take a Seat February 21st, 2014

West Fork Creek - Design Workshop, Chase Elementary March 8th, 2014

Modern Makers: Masked/Unmasked with Visionaries + Voices March 28th, 2014

DAAP Cares April 1st, 2014

Niehoff Urban Studio Spring Open House April 17th, 2014

Pop-Up Cincy: Dubai April 21st, 2014

Documenting a Fashion Icon: Bonnie Cashin April 22nd, 2014

Modern Makers + Core Clay April 30th, 2014

Modern Makers: MAGENTA Show July 11th, 2014

Modern Makers: MOVEMENT x 3 August 29th, 2014

TINY LIVING September 19th, 2014

Modern Makers: The Big Dinner | AUTUMN EQUINOX
(with Nourish Cincinnati) September 23rd, 2014

Growing Cities October 24th, 2014

ULI Competition Studio Award Ceremony/Reception October 27th, 2014

“Eyes on the Street” - Panel Discussion (with Cincinnati Art Museum) November 5th, 2014

Modern Makers: ART + MART November 19th, 2014

“Celebrating an Urban Visionary” Fundraiser Event November 20th, 2014

Niehoff Urban Studio Fall Open House December 4th, 2014
The Niehoff Urban Studio hosted the AIA Vision Lecture Series including a panel on how Architects can engage with and impact local political discussions that affect our city development and quality of life. Roundtable panelists included Eric Kearney, Ohio Senate Minority Leader, District 9; Denise Driehaus, Ohio Representative, District 31; Charles Winburn, Cincinnati City Council; Wendell Young, Cincinnati City Council; and Andrew Goldberg, AIA Managing Director.

The Niehoff Urban Studio hosted the second annual Vacant Lots: Occupied workshop. The workshop was led by University of Cincinnati, DAAP Horticulture Program, with Keep Cincinnati Beautiful, City of Cincinnati Department of Community Development, and Building Value. The program challenges students and community representatives to think about long term solutions to vacancy in the City of Cincinnati. vacantlotsoccupied.com

DAAP and the Niehoff studio hosted the two day Metrofitting Workshop led by Tony Fry. Fry is a visiting scholar and head of the Design Futures Department at Griffith University in Queensland Australia. The workshop gathered city officials as well as faculty and planners from UC to map risks the city faces from climate change and discuss how the City of Cincinnati can reach toward a more resilient future.

The Niehoff Urban Studio partnered with Modern Makers for this educational event on Friday, February 21st. The event included a screening of People’s Park: a single-shot film by Libbie D.Cohn & J.P. Sniadecki. A discussion panel followed on Public Space/Art in Cincinnati and abroad. The panel was moderated by Conrad Kickert (Urban Designer), with Kate Creason and Megan Deal (People’s Liberty), Tanja Nusser (UC German Studies Department), and Kate Bonansinga (Director of the SOA-DAAP). During the screening Modern Makers led children in a group model making exercise for an ideal public space. peoplesparklm.com

The Niehoff Urban Studio partnered with the Northside and South Camminsville Community Councils, Groundwork Cincinnati/Mill Creek, the ASLA, and AIA Cincinnati to facilitate a design charrette to develop the community’s long-term vision for the West Fork Creek Bike trail, proposed to stretch from the Mill Creek to Mt. Airy. Three Teams of Designers and Community Stakeholders developed design concepts for three segments of the trail corridor to include a multi-use trail, recreation and park facilities, community gardens and housing.

The Niehoff Urban Studio hosted the The DAAP Cares annual event organized by SAID Professor Michael Zaretsky. The event featured projects undertaken by faculty, students, and alumni to improve the quality of life for individuals and communities in need through design and planning. DAAP Cares is a College program that recognizes the academic design institution as a resource for the innovative development of humanitarian design.
October 24th, 2014

Growing Cities

On October 24th, 2014, National Food Day, the Niehoff Urban Studio hosted the showing of the movie “Growing Cities.” This event was organized by Planning student Mark Carper, the Enright Ridge Urban Ecovillage, This Land, Waterfields, Green Umbrella Regional Sustainability Alliance and Price Hill Will. The movie documents the increasing need and trend of cities in accommodating urban farming amenities and efforts.

October 27th, 2014

ULI Studio Competition Award Reception

The Niehoff Urban Studio, the UC School of Business, the Urban Land Institute Cincinnati and the Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation partnered to give students a design challenge, a professional mentoring program, and a $5,000 prize for the design of an urban infill development in Walnut Hills. Among four interdisciplinary teams from Real Estate, Architecture and Urban Planning, the winning team was composed by Kyle Zook, Bahareh Rezaee, Yue Yan, and Rocky Grewal.

April 17th, 2014

Niehoff Urban Studio Spring Open House

The Niehoff Urban Studio hosted an open house to showcase the spring semester student work on the proposed Wasson Way bicycle trail and light rail corridor. A panel discussion moderated by UrbanCincy was conducted with representatives from City departments, Queen City Bike, and the Rails to Trails Conservancy. In addition to the primary studio, an associated course included a Horticulture seminar on Landscape Infrastructure in the East End Neighborhood. School of Planning Masters of Community Planning Capstone Projects in Transportation were also exhibited to complement the Niehoff Studio Theme, “Movement in the City.”

September 19th, 2014

Tiny Living

This event was hosted by the Niehoff Urban Studio in collaboration with DPMT7, PAR-Projects, UrbanCincy, and DAAP SAID. An exhibit of art and design pieces by the sophomore students of the SAID, DPTM7 and Par-Projects was followed by a panel discussion moderated by John Yung (UrbanCincy), with Prof. Leah Hollstein (SOP-DAAP), John Hedges (NKU), Natalie Hendricks (owner of a tiny house) and Brad Cooper (UrbanCincy), about process, implications of tiny spaces, and changing lifestyles.

October 24th, 2014

Growing Cities

On October 24th, 2014, National Food Day, the Niehoff Urban Studio hosted the showing of the movie “Growing Cities.” This event was organized by Planning student Mark Carper, the Enright Ridge Urban Ecovillage, This Land, Waterfields, Green Umbrella Regional Sustainability Alliance and Price Hill Will. The movie documents the increasing need and trend of cities in accommodating urban farming amenities and efforts.

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On December 4th, 2014, the Niehoff Urban Studio hosted another successful end of the Semester Open House for all of our students, community and friends. The three classes offered at the Niehoff Studio during the Fall Semester included a Civil Engineering Capstone, a Masters of Community Planning Workshop, and a UC Forward interdisciplinary Seminar, all focused on analyzing and improving Burnet Woods. The semester marked the beginning of a new thematic cycle entitled “Building Healthy and Resilient Places.” Four more classes will occur in the Spring Semester 2015 that will include: Urban Planning, Engineering, Architectural Engineering, and Horticulture.

Modern Makers has been an ongoing partner with the Niehoff Urban Studio. The studio maintains this partnership to support Modern Makers efforts to promote the arts and make them accessible to the public in the Uptown area. The events produced by Modern Makers, and the Uptown Consortium support street level activity on Short Vine St. and are synergistic with the studio’s mission of promoting urban vitality. This year the Niehoff Urban Studio hosted seven Modern Maker events.

November 5th, 2014

“Eyes on the Street” Panel Discussion

Inspired by the Cincinnati Art Museum exhibition “Eyes on the Street,” this lively panel discussion organized by Cincinnati Art Museum Photography Curator Brian Sholis, focused on the ways cameras and imaging technology influence our understanding of urban space and civil rights in the United States and Europe. The participants were Stan Corkin (History | UC), Todd Herzog (German Studies | UC), Stephanie Sadre-Orafai (Anthropology and Critical Visions | UC), Brian Sholis (Cincinnati Art Museum), and Jordan Tate (Art | UC).

November 8th, 2014

“Celebrating an Urban Visionary” Fundraiser Event

The 2014 Annual Studio Fundraiser honored Cincinnati Developer Tom Humes, an urban visionary and city builder who has sought to renew our region’s vitality and reshape our city center. Tom serves as President of Great Traditions Land & Development Company whose Village at Stetson Square in Corryville was named “Community of the Year” by the Cincinnati Homebuilder’s Association for 2006. Humes was recognized for taking the risk to develop a large scale residential project in the largely untested Uptown Area. His success ultimately attracted much more private investment in development that sprouts up around Uptown today. Humes’ efforts were celebrated in a feature video created by CCM Professor Kevin Burke and his students which was screened at the event.

More info

Video

Events

December 4th, 2014

Niehoff Studio Fall Open House

Modern Makers Events

More info

March 28th, 2014 - Masked/Unmasked with Visionaries +Voices
April 30th, 2014 - M.M. + Core Clay
July 11th, 2014 - Magenta Show
August 29th, 2014 - Movement x 3
September 23rd, 2014 - The Big Dinner

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Credits

Mehri Mohebbi, Architect, Urban Planner, WFCT
Sungik Kang, Urban Planner, Rothenberg, WFCT
Pooja Kashyap, Intern Architect, Corner Stores
Heather Kereluik, Graphic Designer, Corner Stores

Frank Russell, AIA
Director
Adj. Assoc. Professor

Terry Grundy
Resident Urbanist
Adj. Assoc. Professor

Kelly Gregg
Program Coordinator
Project Manager
2013 | 2014

Ana Ozaki
Program Coordinator
Project Manager
2014 | 2015

Graduate Assistants, Coops and Student Helpers

Emad Rashidi, Urban Planner, Video Production, Metropilfit
Jonathan Schmitz, Industrial Designer, Corner Stores
Stacey Todd, Urban Planner
Yuchen Ma, Independent Study, Urban Planner, WFCT

All non-original images in studio section are extracted from student reports and have been used exclusively for university educational purposes.

Community

Wasson Way Bike Trail Advocacy group
Queen City Bike
Cincinnati Dept. of Transportation and Engineering
Cincinnati Planning Department
UrbanCincy
SoapBox Cincinnati
Xavier University
Uptown Consortium

Cincinnati Park Board
LISC of Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky
Corryville Community Council
Mill Creek Restoration Project/Groundwork Cincinnati
Northside Community Council
Cincinnati American Institute of Architects
Clifton Towne Meeting
Over the Rhine Foundation

Cincinnati Public Schools
Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation
Gabriel’s Place
Urban Land Institute
South Cumminsville Community Council
UC Office of the University Architect
Department 7
ParProjects

Closing the Health Gap
Modern Makers
East End Area Council
Cincinnati Art Museum
Metropolitan Sewer District
Rothenberg Rooftop Garden Guild
Green City Resources
Interact For Health

Faculty

Dr. Richard Miller, Professor, Civil Engineering (Wasson Way S14, Burnet Woods, F14)
Dr. Danilo Palazzo, Professor, Urban Planning (Wasson Way S14, Burnet Woods, F14)
Elizabeth Devendorf, Adj. Asst. Professor, Civil Engineering (Burnet Woods, F14)
Dr. Cory Christopher, UC Forward (Inquiry to Innovation Seminar, F14)
Dr. Vikas Mehta, Professor, Urban Planning (Burnet Woods F14)

Frank Russell, Studio Coordinator-Adj. Assoc. Professor, Urban Planning (all Studios and Seminars)
Dr. Colleen McTague, Assistant Professor Geography (Wasson Way S14)
Mary Lynne Boom, Adjunct Professor Real Estate (Wasson Way S14)
Stephen Diko, Teaching Assistant Urban Planning (Wasson Way S14)

Dr. Shaua Bond, Professor Real Estate, Director UC Real Estate Center (ULI Competition Studio, F14)
Kelly Gregg, Adj. Asst. Professor Horticulture (Landscape Infrastructure - East End, S14)
Kevin Burke, Professor Electronic Media, CCM (Humes Video)

Collaborating Professionals

West Fork Creek Trail (WFCT)
Tim Jeckering, AIA, T Jeckering Architects
Heather Weilnau, ASLA, Bayer Becker
Joey Hood, ASLA, Human Nature Inc.
John Kornbluh, Burges and Niple Inc
Couper Gardiner, AIA, M.Arch Cincinnati
Ico Abreu, UC PhD

ULI Competition Studio
Dave Neyer, Al Neyer Inc
Steve Kenat, GBBN Architects
Phil Denning, Concordia

Dan McCarthy, Core Resources
Kim Fantaci, ULI Cincinnati
Greg Burrows, BHDP Architecture
Jason Chamlee, Port Authority
Jeanne Schroer, NKY Catalytic Fund
Bridget Graber, UC Real Estate Center
Students

Credits for student work can be viewed at http://www.uc.edu/cdc/niehoff_studio/themes.html

Press

02.22.2014  Seeds of success starting to grow in the East End | Cincinnati.com
05.07.2014  UC Students and Transportation Experts Pitch Their Ideas for the Wasson Corridor | UrbanCincy.com
05.08.2014  Lessons from Niehoff Urban Studio at the University of Cincinnati | Planetizen.com
05.19.2014  The State of Local Food Report | Green Umbrella
07.09.2014  Old-time shopkeepers corner market on loyalty | Cincinnati.com
09.16.2014  Dive Into the Topic of Tiny Living Spaces This Friday at the Niehoff Urban Studio | UrbanCincy.com
10.24.2014  UC students present final cases in the UC-ULI Urban Development Competition Oct 27 | ULI News
10.31.1014  Winners of ULI Competition Propose Bold Infill Development for Walnut Hills | UrbanCincy.com
11.20.2014  Healthier community builds innovative economy | Cincinnati Herald
2014/2015  Co-Op 2.0: Why Experiential Learning Matters | PresidentialPerspectives.org

Supporting Departments

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Horticulture Program, College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning
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Real Estate Center and Program, Lindner College of Business
Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement, Div of Professional Practice
UC Forward, Division of Professional Practice and Experimental Learning
UC Foundation, University of Cincinnati
Geography Department, McMicken College of Arts and Sciences
Electronic Media Division, College Conservatory of Music

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MaryBeth McGrew, Assoc. Vice President Campus Design and Planning
Robert Probst, Dean, College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning
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Rod Grabowski, President, University of Cincinnati Foundation
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