University urban design centers in the planning and implementation of urban greenways.

Possible strategies for the UMass Amherst Design Center in Springfield, MA.

Frank Sleegers  
UMass  
Dept. of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning

Michael DiPasquale  
UMass Extension

Fábos Conference on Landscape and Greenway Planning 2010.  
8-11. July, Budapest, Hungary
1. UMass Amherst Design Center

2. Greenways in Springfield MA

3. Design Centers: Services and Organizational Structure

4. Design Centers and Greenways in the USA – Case Studies

5. Conclusions for the Mission and Work of the UMass Amherst Design Center

Umass Amherst Design Center in Springfield - Court Square
UMass Amherst Design Center in Springfield, MA

The Springfield Initiative:
“UMass plan to help revitalize the City of Springfield”

Support from:
• Graduate Dean John Mullin,
• LARP, Chair Elizabeth Brabec
• UMass Extension, Nancy Garrabrants

Major Collaborators

1. University of Massachusetts
• Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning
• Art and Architecture Program
• Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
• UMass Extension

2. City of Springfield
• Office of Mayor
• Department of Planning and Economic Development
2. Greenways in Springfield MA

Abandoned Highland Division Rail Line, at Mason Square, 2008
Various Stakeholders involved and interested in Greenway Planning in Springfield:

Department of Planning and Economic Development
Department of Parks and Recreation
Department of Public Health and Human Services (HHS)
Chamber of Commerce in Springfield, Massachusetts
Public Health Sector, Groups supporting active recreation
Partners for a healthier community, Inc. (PHC)
Neighborhood councils, Local politicians Advocate groups,
Springfield BID
Health Industry (e.g. Baystate Health)
Police Department
DPW
Rails to Trails Conservancy
National Park Service, Massachusetts
Springfield Health Coalition
Mason Square Neighborhood Health Center, Mason Square Senior Center, Mason Square Weed and Seed Coalition
Springfield Partners for Community Action/Total Health.
Local Colleges
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
Railroad representatives
Residents/stakeholders from other urban communities that can speak to the benefits of greenways (particularly residential abutters)
Abutters of proposed greenways in Springfield
Secretary of Transportation
Institutions and people with access to funding e.g. MASS Mutual
River Walk activists
Mass Highway

Survey Sleegers, DiPasquale, 2010
3. Design Centers: Services and Organizational Structure

Design Centers “provide an infrastructure to allow faculty and students to conduct research and projects that intersect with the practice of urban design and planning with the goal of improving the physical and consequently the social environment.

(Forsyth, 2006)

Trust, a result of process, led to the contribution of more resources, a physical outcome, which led to a higher level of participation and connectedness, a process outcome.

Hyland, 2000
Issues in Evaluating Neighborhood Change: Economic and Community Building Indicators.
Services of Design Centers

1. Education of students within university design studio settings.

2. Education, information and activation of the public about successful planning and design solutions elsewhere or visualizations of site specific solutions.

3. Facilitation of participatory processes (charrettes, envisioning workshops).

4. Generating general and site specific new knowledge through faculty research with possible research funding opportunities.

5. Development of strategies for funding opportunities for projects.


7. Coordination of efforts by non-profits, elected officials and city planning staff.

8. Increasing the visibility of community support through digital media.

Forsyth 2006; Forsyth and Lu 2000;
Condon, 2008 Design Charrettes for Sustainable Communities
Lindsey 2003, 2006; Public Choices and Property Values
Sleegers, 2007-2010: UMass Urban Design Studios
DiPasquale and Sleegers: Survey April 2010 „Potential services of the future UMASS Amherst Design Center”
Organizational Structure of university Community Design Centers

1. Research centers
2. University–based firms
3. Community advocacy centers
4. Extension oriented centers
5. Studios
6. Clearinghouses
7. Umbrella/convening organizations

Forsyth (2006)
Organizational models for the UMass Amherst Design Center

University–Based Firm

Pro: Organizes recent Springfield-based design and planning work more systematically and professionally than university studios
Impact on the physical environment of the city

Con: charges money than University design studios do

Studio

Pro: Focus on clearly defined topics and effective short-term efforts (like greenway implementation)

Con: Integration into bigger organizational schemes necessary
Does not reflect the richness of UMass research and already existing initiatives
Case Studies

1. University of Arkansas
2. Kent State - Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative
3. Chatanooga Urban Design Studio
University of Arkansas Community Design Center

Lessons learned:

Results:
Focus on visualization and presentation of planning and design.
Publications in prominent exhibitions and professional magazines. Awards.

Funding:
Funding from the Department of Architecture and a private foundation (Wal Mart).

Organization:
Professor leads the center with help from three project architect (recent graduates).
The Train Avenue Greenway Plan

CLEVELAND, OHIO
Kent State University – Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative
Train Avenue Greenway Plan
CONCLUSION
The Public had an unanimous vote in favor of Option 3: the All-Purpose Trail next to the road.

CONCLUSION
The Public was concerned about issues of maintenance and safety as well as had suggestions of signage and crosswalks.

CONCLUSION
The Public had an interest in learning more about Green Infrastructure and had unanimous support for greening & regeneration.

CONCLUSION
The Public suggested investigating naturalized bioswales, permeable paving and raingardens.

CONCLUSION
There was interest in preserving and redeveloping the historical buildings and looking at the corridor’s sense of history as a major thematic element to attract new residents, businesses & trail users.

CONCLUSION
The public was in support of signage and highlighting the history of the area. The public was intrigued with the idea of a “ghost” footprint to represent the mill pond & Walworth Run.
Kent State University – Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative
Train Avenue Greenway Plan

DETAILED PLAN OF CENTRAL SECTION OF TRAIN AVENUE GREENWAY

BEFORE & AFTER OF CENTRAL SECTION OF TRAIN AVENUE GREENWAY

DETAILED PLAN OF WILLEY/TRAIN INTERSECTION AT EAST SIDE OF GREENWAY

BEFORE & AFTER OF EAST SIDE OF TRAIN AVENUE GREENWAY
Kent State University – Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative
“Provides design services to clients who might not otherwise be able to afford them”

Lessons learned:

Results:

Implemented and non implemented projects.
Applied research rather than formal peer reviewed research
Strong “service learning” commitment.

Funding:
1. College Arch. and Environmental Design, Kent State University
2. Ohio State Board of Regents
3. Private philanthropy

Organization:
Professional staff and students work in the center.
Chatanooga Urban Design Studio
Tennessee Riverpark Master Plan
Chatanooga  Urban Design Studio
„Catalyst to the development of the Tennessee Riverpark Master Plan in 1985”

Lessons learned:

Results:
Specific projects e.g. 20 miles of greenways within the city.
Visualization tools rather than focusing only on zoning and regulations.

Funding :
1. City of Chattanooga
2. Lyndhurst Foundation ($33 million in private capital)
3. University of Tennessee at Knoxville
4. two-county regional planning agency
5. Non-profit agencies

Organization:
Studio runs under guidance of one director
5. Conclusions for the Mission and Work of the UMass Amherst Design Center

1. Implementation, public education, service learning experience reinforce each other.
2. Focus on applied research rather than academic research.
3. Public and private funds for staffing and physical implementation.
4. Strong visualizations of design proposals educate the public and encourages community participation.
5. Design center should have a clear focus on project implementation.
6. Interdisciplinary, inter-institutional collaboration leads to many benefits:
   - Funding
   - Design center is develops a collective vision which increases the potential for success
   - Brings together architects, planners, and engineers.
   - Increases the municipal planning capacity in the city
7. Strong leader to direct the Center
How do the “Lessons learned” complement Greenway Planning in Springfield:

1. Relatively low implementation cost
2. Multiple benefits of greenways for a variety of users
3. Comprehensive programs and plans already completed.
4. Support from non-profit organizations and planning officials
5. Design Center can help obtain funding
7. Integrate the research culture of UMass.
“Help the community develop a collective vision, to do solid planning, and to assist in the implementation of projects”

Karen Hundt, Director, Chattanooga Urban Design Studio, 2008