

## *Class Project*

The class project will consist of a three-stage process: inventory and analysis, detailed research in priority areas, and formulation of a final plan. This three-stage process will occur within an overall environment of reflective practice. The reflective framework for the practicum will center around two issues. First is the issue of identity construction through design and the way that a design process is tied as much to the designer's own identity construction as to the community's. Second is the issue of interaction with the community and what it means to incorporate community knowledge into a planning process. Students will keep a journal of their experiences in the class and will respond to assigned reflective exercises in this book.

The class will begin with individual students completing tasks on their own to build a familiarity with the community and confidence in their ability to process the material. Early phases of work will be shared by all students and will be divided by task. In the second half of the semester, the class will be divided into two teams of six to eight students, depending on enrollment. Each team will be asked to develop its own proposals for the community. Throughout the semester, the teams will present their work for discussion and commentary by the entire class with client input.

The North End Campus Committee's role as client will include:

- Facilitating student research by providing background material, serving as liaison to community members and organizations, and integrating student work into their planning process;
- Providing guidance on the community's goals and priorities;
- Providing feedback on team ideas and products; and
- Assisting student efforts with community volunteers if necessary.

The three stages of the class project are the following:

**1) Inventory and analysis to document existing conditions and identify priority areas for detailed planning.** In this first phase, students will collect and analyze data to better understand existing physical and social conditions in the community, local visions and goals, existing activities and plans, and key future opportunities. This work will include: (a) reviewing existing data, regulations and studies; (b) reviewing work done to date by students and the CRCP; (c) surveying and mapping existing environmental/physical conditions; and (d) conducting a community needs assessment and capacity analysis.

Based on the findings from this preliminary analysis, students will recommend priority opportunities and issues to address in their plans. This work will also include a site selection/evaluation process that investigates key opportunities for the creation of a community "center" and/or "campus." After reviewing these findings and recommendations with the client, students will select priority issues for more detailed research and planning.

**2) Detailed research and analysis in priority areas.** In this second phase, students will undertake more in-depth research and analysis of priority areas and issues to better understand the requirements needed to realize goals and opportunities, assess existing resources and assets, identify critical obstacles and resource gaps to address, and define other factors that shape effective strategies and interventions to achieve urban design and capacity goals of the community.

While specific research tasks will depend on the priority issues chosen, they may include conducting interviews with key stakeholders, researching applicable zoning and regulatory obstacles, investigating design options, identifying best practices and case studies used in comparable neighborhoods, and analyzing potential resources for implementation. Based on this detailed research, students will develop findings and recommendations for their final plan.

**3) Formulation of recommendations and preparation of the final plan.** In the final phase, students will work in assigned teams of six to eight students. Each team will review the results of its analysis and research and integrate them into a draft overall master plan regarding the desired community campus and other interventions. After a review of this draft plan with the faculty and the client, the student team will revise its plan for a final public presentation and written report. Students will present final plans to the client and an invited audience sometime during the final two weeks of class. The final reports will be due the day after the last class session. Each master plan will consist of design; programming and process recommendations; potential implementation strategies; and documentation.