

# ENGAGING CHANGING COMMUNITIES IN THE COMMUNITY DESIGN STUDIO

Nancy Rottle

---

## ABSTRACT

**This paper describes two recent Community Design studios at the University of Washington which engaged communities to help solve importunate problems. Based upon student and instructor evaluation and reflection, the paper presents pedagogical strengths and weaknesses of the studios and outlines the potential contributions of design service learning to communities in need. It proposes a set of guiding heuristics to optimize the community design experience for students and sponsoring communities within the context of engaged scholarship.**

## INTRODUCTION

Communities in the Western United States constantly face new pressures brought to bear by rapidly changing economic, environmental and demographic forces. Through interacting with communities to address pressing problems, students and faculty in the design studio can explore contemporary issues, practice participatory design and planning techniques, and provide services otherwise unavailable to unempowered populations. This paper describes two graduate landscape architecture studio courses that employed participatory methods in solving community design challenges. In the first, a small Alaskan community faced an impending influx of “big box” stores in their town center; in the second, a Western Washington agricultural town hoped to forestall sprawl threatening to destroy surrounding rich farmland, while simultaneously revitalizing their traditional business district. Lessons from both courses may inform the conception and organization of such studios and influence their success from the students’, communities’ and faculties’ perspectives.

## TWO CASES

### The Case of Homer, Alaska

The influx of large-store retail—“big box” stores—in small towns is causing rapid change in downtown cores across America and affecting community economies, environments and identities. The citizens of Homer, Alaska, faced with the prospect of a big-box store locating in an undeveloped center of their town, asked the Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Washington for assistance. They sought research on

outcomes in similar towns to inform their decisions on store size limitations, and design solutions that envisioned a new town center applying various store size caps and incorporating civic uses. Issues included impacts on existing businesses in the town of 5000, citizen attachment to the forested town center site as a result of five years of dreaming and ad-hoc use, the town’s reliance upon scenic and fishing-based tourism, a desire for a strong pedestrian-oriented town center, and lack of a planning tradition or official planning department. A \$10,000 grant covered our travel costs and printing of design posters and summary documents.

After reviewing literature on big-box stores in town centers and on small town planning and design, the class traveled to Alaska to conduct site and town analyses and to meet with town leaders, agency personnel, and concerned citizens. The students facilitated two workshop-oriented open houses, one for business owners and another for citizens at large. Information sessions and meetings during the week-long site visit were arranged and advertised by our primary contact in Homer, giving students a broad yet in-depth window into governmental structure, issues and constituency groups. Free time was used for our site and town analyses, including a day to explore the dramatic coastal landscape that draws tourists to its scenic and recreational opportunities.

With Homer’s qualities, issues and opportunities understood, the class worked together to conduct case study research on how twelve similar towns in western North America had treated impending invasions of large-store retail, analyzed common outcome patterns from the case studies, and synthesized a set of planning tools that towns could use to prohibit, control or produce mitigation benefits from big-box stores. As a class, we worked as a collaborative “think tank” to conduct, synthesize and present the case study research, and to develop a design approach that would also serve as a research process.



*Figure 1. Students designed two workshops with the Homer community to solicit ideas on town center improvements and opinions on large retail stores.*



*Figure 2. Six teams tested inclusion of large retail stores of varying square footages—20k, 40k and 66k—in a new town center. The six alternatives were compiled in a summary booklet.*

Six small student teams then developed alternative designs to test how well stores of designated sizes could be integrated with civic facilities, housing and open space on the hillside, 30-acre town center site. Each team worked with a given size of a 20k, 40k, or 66k square foot (sf) store, all considered by the Homer city council as a potential size cap in the central business district. A team returned to Homer near the end of the term to present results of the case study research in the form of a “design toolbox,” and to show the six alternatives, given in PowerPoint presentations in two community meetings. The case studies were collated in a binder and on CD and given to the City, and the six design alternatives with accompanying implementation guidelines were compiled in a full-color 11” x 17” booklet, with ten copies given to Homer. Several of the students’ designs were featured in a local newspaper article.

Informed by our work, the town’s debate on potential retail store size cap enlarged, with an ultimate decision by the city council to invoke a 20,000 sf limit in the central business district, and a 35,000 sf limit in a district on the commercial edge. Perhaps more important, citizens became aware of planning tools available to them and the City expanded the small planning staff into a full department. A project proponent summarized our influence, “Not a City meeting goes by where a “term” [from the student work] isn’t used, a “vision” isn’t referenced, or the action of one of the towns from the ‘case studies’ isn’t discussed.” A town center planning committee formed, using the students’ designs as a basis for their work. The students received an Honor Award from the American Planning Association/ Planning Association of Washington, and a Merit Award from the Washington Society of Landscape Architects. Additionally, two students were inspired to conceive and complete thesis projects in Homer.

### **The Case of Burlington, Washington**

A common development pattern is for towns to develop large retail on their edges, usurping valuable farmlands and draining

economic energy from their downtown cores. The town of Burlington, Washington is located in the Skagit Valley, one of the richest agricultural areas of the Pacific Northwest, and less than a two hour drive from Seattle. With its location adjacent to Interstate-5 and a connecting state highway, Burlington has grown a large number of outlet malls and large wholesale and retail stores on its edge, despite its population of only 7500. Farmers on the town’s outskirts have begun to request annexation in order to develop their lands, while the downtown’s main street is struggling to survive. Efforts to preserve Skagit Valley farmland have been active for the last decade, and Burlington’s urban edge is seen as an important containment to irreversible erosion of the valley’s critical agricultural mass.

Our Community Design studio was asked to explore how the town’s center might be revitalized through a transfer of development rights (TDR) program through which developers could purchase development rights from farmlands—thereby preserving those lands in perpetuity while compensating the owners—and apply them to a downtown core “TDR receiving area” to allow increased housing and commercial density in the designated district. Our charge was to work at three scales: 1) to create an open space infrastructure to ensure a high quality of living in the compact town, 2) to develop alternative scenarios for the 70-block town core and main retail street, and 3) to design individual projects that demonstrated how higher density and commercial use could enhance the town’s livability and sustainability.

Similar to the Homer studio, we began with a shared review of relevant literature, and students developed precedent studies of open space systems, medium-density housing types, and small town revitalization projects. These were presented to the class, and where possible we visited the projects during a field day. Though the distance presented somewhat of an obstacle, each student made at least three visits to Burlington for town, district and site inventory and analysis. We asked the city’s planner, our sponsor, to assist with setting up three sessions with citizens: an early open house to hear their concerns and ideas and learn about the community and context; a mid-way workshop to engage them in designing alternatives for denser massing for the downtown core; and a final presentation of and dialogue about the students’ plans and designs. Town planning staff also attended our mid-term and final reviews. The town funded the studio with \$5000 to cover van transportation costs, student time to create and maintain a website and to produce a color booklet of the students’ designs and accompanying recommendations at the three scales, and printing of the booklets given to the client. The class worked as a whole to develop the Open Space Plan, in groups of four to develop downtown core plans, and individually or in groups of two to design their proposed housing or commercial area projects.

# Learning from Small Towns

Community Character, Vitality and Large Retail  
Case Studies for Homer, Alaska

## There's no place like Homer...

Many of the communities studied have similar characteristics to Homer.

**Location:** at "the end of the road"

**Growth:** significant population growth experienced in the past few decades

**Economic base:** economies centered around tourism, fishing, art, and local businesses

**Nature:** natural surroundings considered to be vital community assets

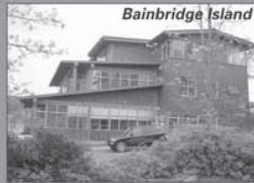
**Community:** an active community that seeks economic growth which will not infringe on "quality of life"

**Ashland, Oregon** is an historic town that is attracting new residents and is a popular tourist destination. The town has strict zoning ordinances, design guidelines and a retail size cap of 45,000 square feet, which together have been effective in preserving the town's character and economic health. No "big



box" retail exists within the city limits, though large chain stores are within seven miles.

**Bainbridge Island, Washington** has maintained its small town character by restricting retail size within designated zones (5000 and 14,400 in certain zones), promoting a mixed-use, walkable downtown through permit requirements and design guidelines, and limiting formula fast food restaurants. In the downtown core, parking is limited to the side or back of buildings, or on the street. Large stores are allowed in one zone, and must comply with detailed design guidelines.



**Bozeman, Montana** has several large retail stores but now limits retail size to 75,000 square feet unless the retailer pays large impact fees. Design and site development standards apply to buildings over 40,000 square feet, aimed at breaking up facades and addressing responsibility for empty boxes. Impact fees are used to develop the downtown core and to improve low-income housing.



**Cannon Beach, Oregon** has a unique small-town character that is cherished by both residents



and tourists. Its geographic setting, small lot size, design guidelines, zoning ordinances and design review process for specific zones have kept retail establishments small and preserved the community character. Some businesses may have been lost to large commercial stores in adjacent towns.

**Fairview Village, Oregon** is a new town that is interested in large retail to serve as anchors in the town center. The town has been designed with a clearly defined civic and retail center,



a variety of housing types, and pedestrian access to jobs, schools and shopping. One new 133,000 square foot store, which complied with maximum parking spaces, architectural standards, and restoration of wetlands, is possibly attracting smaller businesses to the area.

**Gig Harbor, Washington** has used strict zoning, detailed design guidelines and design review, and size caps of 35,000 to preserve



## Case-Study Town Comparisons

listed roughly from less restrictive to more restrictive

TOWN	Population	Size Caps	Big Box (miles)**	Zoning	Design Guidelines	Architectural Standards	Design Review
Soldotna, AK	4,200	none	■				
Ketchikan, AK	8,000	none	■	■			
Steamboat Springs, CO	9,815	none → 50k	■	■			
Bozeman, MT	32,000	75k	■	■	■		■
Nelson, BC Canada	9,300	none	■	■	■		■
Taos, NM	4,065	80k	■	■	■		■
Fairview Village, OR	850	none	■	■	■	■	■
Gig Harbor, WA	6,500	35k	■	■	■	■	■
Port Townsend, WA	8,400	75k → 40k	■	■	■	■	■
Bainbridge Island, WA	20,000	5-14k*	■	■	■	■	■
Ashland, OR	20,000	45k*	(7)	■	■	■	■
Cannon Beach, OR	1,600	none	(7)	■	■	■	■

\*In the most restrictive zone

\*\*Although some towns have no large retail, residents can drive the distance shown to reach a big-box store.

Figure 3. The class researched twelve small towns to learn the outcomes of their treatment of large retail stores. The

the character of the historic waterfront community. Larger commercial stores are restricted



Gig Harbor

to one 500-acre parcel just inside city limits, and impact fees are required in order to provide infrastructure and community amenities such as parks. Tax revenue has provided for community facilities, and there has been minimal adverse impact to existing businesses.



Ketchikan

In Ketchikan, Walmart opened a 61,000 sf store three miles from the town's downtown. While total retail sales rose, indicating that the new store was capturing sales previously spent out-of-



Ketchikan

town, sales of existing businesses dropped and several businesses have closed. The borough now requires shopping centers of more than 50,000 sf to be located in a commercial district zone, to submit plans, and to perform studies on traffic and economic impacts.



Nelson, BC

Nelson, British Columbia, is a popular tourist and arts town where a local activist group inspired private investors to purchase 12 acres to prevent Wal-Mart from building a 100,000 sf store on the waterfront. The community has produced a vision plan for the site, and has loose guidelines for commercial areas and their historic downtown. Wal-Mart and other large stores are seen as economic assets in



Nelson, BC

the town, although some businesses have needed to carry more specialty merchandise.

Port Townsend, Washington is a Victorian "Main Street" town on the Olympic Peninsula that has maintained a commercially vital historic district through plans, codes and design guidelines that built upon the town's existing qualities and that restrict parking locations, and through technical support and loan programs for small businesses.



Port Townsend



Steamboat Springs

The community is developing codes limiting building size to 40,000 sf, and encourages mixed use and housing on second stories.

Soldotna, Alaska, welcomed the 158,000 square foot store that opened in 1994, and no city codes restricted its size or design. Now, 48% of the city's revenues are dependent on Fred Meyer's sales tax and new jobs have been generated. However, small retail inventory shifts and business failures may be the result of the large-store competition, with 30 retail vacancies now in Soldotna and nearby Kenai.



Soldotna

Steamboat Springs, Colorado is a quintessential Western town near to a large ski resort with a growing population that relies upon both summer and winter tourism as an economic base. A Wal-Mart that opened in 1992 responded to community concerns by designing for inclusion of other retail and screening with evergreen trees. With pressure

from other franchises, the community is now considering implementing size caps and design guidelines.

In Taos, New Mexico a 75,000 sf Wal-Mart on the outskirts of town has brought substantial tax revenues and community contributions, but in the first 11 years there was a 30-60% loss of small retail businesses in this arts community. As a result, the town has stringent architectural requirements on stores over 30,000 square feet, and bans new stores over 80,000 square feet. Wal-Mart's 3-mile distance from



Taos

the downtown has helped to preserve the character of the historic district, but has encouraged chain stores and fast food restaurants at the town gateway.

## Lessons learned

Physical characteristics of box stores can be controlled through size caps, locational restrictions, design guidelines and an effective review process, architectural and site plan standards, restrictions on parking and signage, limits on certain types of establishments, requirements for screening, and stipulations on how empty failed stores must be treated. A combination of these mechanisms is usually required to make "big box" stores match small town character.

Economic impacts to towns can be mitigated by requiring impact fees, at construction and at regular intervals, to pay for infrastructure, security and fire services, and public amenities such as parks and pedestrian walkways. In addition, sales tax revenues often bring monies into the town coffers. However, impacts to small retail with similar products appear inevitable unless population growth or tourism is sufficient to offset business lost to the larger stores.

Overlay Districts	Incentives Offered	Community Opposition	Sm. Business Closures
	■		■
■	■	■	■
■		■	
■		■	■
■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■
■		■	
■		■	■
■		■	

This poster supplements the binder: "Learning From Small Towns: Community Character, Vitality and Large Scale Retail," a collection of case studies provided for Homer, Alaska by the Community Design Graduate Studio of the University of Washington Department of Landscape Architecture. For further detail on the case studies and analysis comparison, please refer to the case-study binder and associated documents.

case studies were compiled in a booklet and summarized on a poster (above). (Poster design by Laura Davis)

Burlington has since formed a citizen's task force to forge consensus on farmland preservation goals, who recently recommended that the town maintain a tight urban growth boundary rather than enlarging its city limits. The City will hire a knowledgeable consultant to further study feasibility and requirements to implement the TDR program. The City continues to heavily use the booklets of the students' designs, our model of the downtown core is on permanent display, and the planning department has fully adopted our Open Space proposal as their standing plan. Burlington's planner has been very satisfied with the studio outcomes, saying, "We could never have gotten to square one without your work. It's elevated our vision of our own community. We're now conscious of our potential, and we have higher expectations of the town's future."

### EVALUATION AND REFLECTION

Do Community Design studios equally serve communities in need and the students who are paying tuition to take the courses? Should this "engaged learning" model be continued in schools of landscape architecture, and how can it be conceived to optimally serve both educational and service objectives? To answer these questions, I asked students in both studios to

complete surveys asking about the benefits and drawbacks of the service-learning studio, and analyzed both the surveys and our standard open-ended course evaluation responses for thematic clues to strengths, weaknesses and possible improvements on the courses. For the Homer studio, nine surveys completed eight months after the course provided the majority of responses, while for Burlington, eleven responses from the end-of-term course evaluations and three completed surveys were the primary information source. Continued contact with the project sponsors, my own participation in community planning, and reflections on the design studios inform my conclusions about the advantages and disadvantages to the communities and the lessons for the instructor's dual role of professor and project manager.

### Advantages for Communities

"Engaged" or public scholarship, when directly involving community members in the inventory, planning and design process and in contemplating students' research, planning proposals and designs, can offer the following benefits to communities:

- The experience helps residents learn about, become interested in, and appreciate the real places in which they

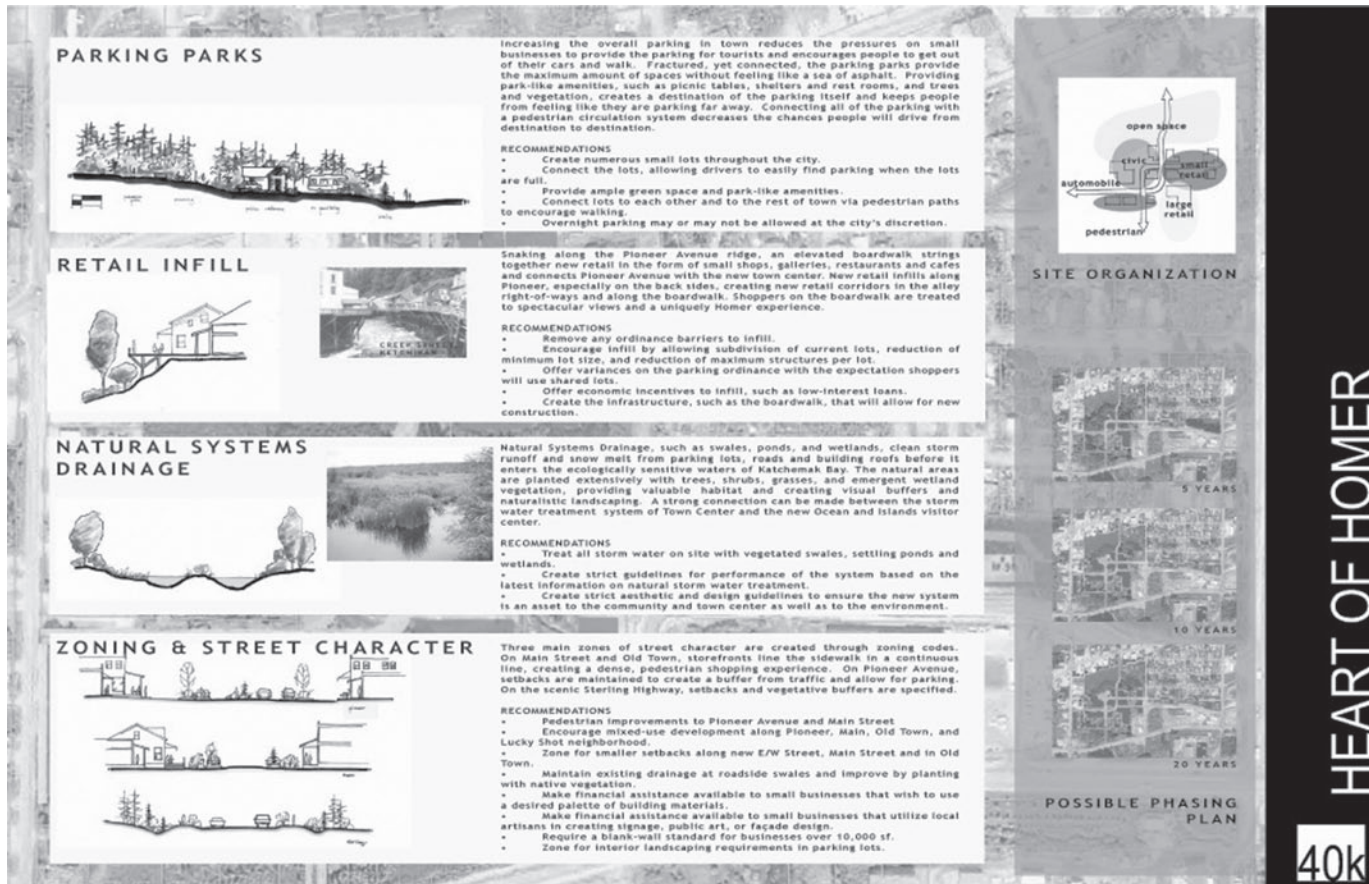


Figure 4. Each team annotated their town center plans with design guidelines and implementation recommendations.

live. The process can perhaps help to develop a new way of seeing—often experienced by students of landscape architecture—and an environmental literacy that is transferred to new situations.

- Participation in planning can empower citizens to take control of the destiny of their own communities, enabling them to counter the prevalent forces of global and national commerce. Participants can develop confidence by learning how other communities have coped with problems, through education about environmental and social issues, awareness of the tools available to them, and practice in engaging problems and trying on solutions.
- When residents actively participate in planning endeavors, they may be more motivated to support and advocate for the plan outcome and implementation.
- The design studio can give communities viewpoints, awarenesses, and tools they might not realize they need. For example the studio can take a broad overview and create a framework for the planning context (such as our open space plan for Burlington).
- Student explorations can help communities feel the edges of what they will consider, and perhaps push them further than would otherwise be possible. Because the work is not binding, students can explore options without generating polarization; because the work is not threatening, citizens may be more open to new solutions.
- The sheer work force in numbers, expertise, and intensity of a design studio can provide a project not otherwise possible within the budgets of small towns.
- The development of preliminary alternatives and visions by students can significantly advance the community participation process, which, while necessary, can be at times be unpleasantly contentious and overwhelming, requiring more time commitment than the common citizen can spare.

### **Limitations of the Studio Work**

No disadvantages from our work have emerged, but it is important to recognize that the Community Design studio does not necessarily offer the same benefits as an adequately funded professional firm. For example, the short-term involvement of a single studio project doesn't provide follow-through with community projects, which typically require a time frame longer than an academic term. This situation could partly be remedied by a longer-term grant and consistency of an instructor's teaching assignment. Funding for development into a master's thesis can also provide more depth and catalyze the community to keep a project going.

In addition to the limitations of less professional experience, some students may be more interested in developing their own ideas instead of responding to the realities of a particular situation. The usefulness of the design alternatives are typically greatest in stimulating broad thinking on the part of the participating community and for preliminary fund-raising, rather than providing specific design options that are further developed into built projects.

### **Students' Views: Advantages**

Both studios were rated highly by the students. They appreciated the problem sets and the solution approaches taken, and felt intellectually challenged. One student stated: "There was a real need for the work and that made it all the more challenging and educational." In the surveys and evaluations, positive responses common to both studios were:

- The opportunity to work on a real project, to serve real needs, and to encounter the kinds of problems and specific issues that are confronting communities today, incorporating political, social and ecological considerations.
- The opportunity to facilitate community design processes, to develop comfort and expertise with that role.
- The opportunity to interact with real people and receive response to their work from diverse perspectives.
- Most students cited the case studies (Homer) and precedent case study/field visit (Burlington) as valuable, though in both studios at least one student questioned the value of the time required to develop finished products.

The variation in the problem-sets and approaches for each studio stimulated differences in the student responses as well. Students frequently cited the value of learning about planning tools in the research process for Homer, whereas the design process was mentioned as a strength in the Burlington studio, which had a greater design and urban form focus at multiple scales. While some of the Burlington group questioned the value of every exercise, others saw the usefulness of them and appreciated the careful sequencing of projects that laid the foundation for final design. One student in the Alaska group also appreciated the opportunity to experience a different part of the world.

### **Students' Views: Disadvantages**

While the realness of the problem and the involvement with the community were appreciated, common drawbacks cited by both groups were:

- The work load demands of the studio.
- The internal pressure to quickly absorb information and perform to professional standards.



*Figure 5. Students built a model of Burlington's downtown core, which was used at the second community workshop to envision new densities and massing.*



*Figure 6. Students encouraged community teams to build their visions of Burlington's downtown, using wooden blocks, sugar cubes and clay.*

- Lack of time for site analysis and for design exploration and development.
- Design solution restraint in response to a real situation.
- The difficulty of integrating the community's timing and research requests with the academic schedule and interests of the students.

The latter three were primarily cited by the Homer group. One student commented, "The time frame given by our clients versus our quarter schedule resulted in some stressful crunch times," and another noted "Bold thinking about community planning were limited by honest evaluation of the economic needs and practices of the community."

As mentioned above, some students felt too much time was spent on the case studies, particularly in the Homer group, in lieu of more time made available for design. Several in this group suggested that the literature review and research component be offered as a parallel or preliminary course

with additional credits. Some felt we needed more time with the Homer community. Because students saw the immediate potential impact of our work on the community, two wished an economic analysis had been available to inform their design scenarios and recommendations. Some felt the design production of a publication that documented their work was yet another burden.

From students working in Burlington, the most commonly cited problem was in relation to the small group composition and dynamics, or the relationship between the group and individual projects in light of the time constraint. However some also cited the value of learning to work in groups.

Several students saw that the perceived drawbacks also provided valuable learning experience; this kind of comment was especially prevalent in the surveys, which asked students to evaluate the balance between positives and negatives. Despite the disadvantages, all respondents to the Homer surveys felt the benefits outweighed or balanced the drawbacks. One student in the Burlington studio summarized that "The benefits outweigh the drawbacks infinitely. I think real world scenarios are much more helpful to our learning process."

### **Challenges for the Dual Role of Professor-Project Manager**

From my own experience, I've found that teaching a studio that engages the community in order to solve their importunate problems presents significant additional challenges for the faculty involved. The instructor wears two hats, performing dual roles of professor and project manager. As professor, one needs to ensure that the students are gaining the essential theoretical understandings, learning about resources and existing solution prototypes, and practicing the complement of skills that will enable them to feel confident in planning and designing with and for communities. Translating a real problem into a course that brings essential learning about the complexities of planning and designing for communities but that feels manageable for the students within the constraint of a 10-week academic term—during which students are taking other courses and often have jobs—is a delicate act. Because the real issues may not emerge until the community is known well through site analyses and meetings, crafting an appropriate progression of applicable skill and knowledge-building exercises throughout the course without wasting students' time is especially challenging.

In addition, in the role of "project manager," one needs to ensure that the community is being served and that the agreed-upon products are completed and delivered. This role is a full time job in itself—making sure the work fits the (sometimes shifting) problem, that there are adequate resources, information, skills and processes for the students' work to be responsive to the problem and community, and that the work

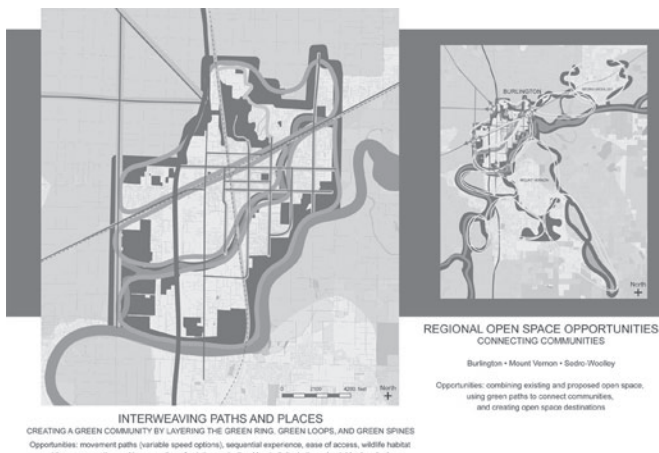


Figure 7. The studio developed a “green infrastructure” open space plan to afford livability in the compact town. Burlington has adopted the plan.



Figure 8. Student proposals for increased density include a “Mercado District” (above), conversion of warehouses to live-work housing, cottage housing, neo-traditional neighborhoods, mixed-use residential and commercial development, and an eco-commercial district. Team plans for the core area and individual design projects were annotated and documented in summary booklets given to Burlington.

is presented to the community and documented in formats that are ultimately useful. The interplay between the community’s and the academic schedule is yet another layer requiring tight management, since the academic schedule is inflexible; even a week lost during the quarter can have a significant impact on students’ ability to address problems, affecting student learning and satisfaction and the depth of the products delivered.

The instructor is expected to provide background expertise for the studio, to equip the students to address community issues. However, because the concerns of communities vary widely, and problems can be contemporary issues with innovative approaches, the instructor may be developing areas of scholarly expertise through the engaged studio. While such

opportunities have valuable benefits, the instructor may need to research the issues and resources and may not always have the specific expertise to guide the work in the most time-efficient way (for example, I knew very little about big-box stores or their control by communities before the Homer studio). This adds another time requirement to the instruction. To acknowledge this level of expenditure and potential learning, universities are beginning to recognize the “engaged scholarship” that results from courses that double as public service. (Rottle 2004, Rice 2003, Ward 2003, Huber 2000).

## HEURISTICS FOR THE COMMUNITY DESIGN STUDIO

From my experience with the Community Design and other studios involving community participation to solve real problems, and drawing from literature on engaged scholarship, I offer the following heuristics for university-community partnerships in the design studio:

- Define the problem clearly. Meet with the community sponsor and become familiar with the community and issues. This may require funding for a scoping trip if the project is remote. Narrow the problem set to feasibly fit the given academic term.
- Clarify expectations for product, process and schedule with the sponsor. The “scope of work” is a familiar format for most professionals, which can specify the number of meetings, the deliverables, and priority needs of the academic schedule. It should also note the expectations of the sponsor, and the specific time requirements of the academic term.
- Anticipate critical pieces of information needed from the sponsor or community, e.g. GIS files, aerial photographs, previous studies and planning documents. Advise the sponsor to hire consultants or consider a joint studio with another department if missing expertise or analysis is critical to solving the defined problem.
- Ensure there is a committed and available project manager from the sponsor/client group, who will be immediately responsive to requests for information, serve as liaison to the planning agency, and organize community meetings.
- Procure funding for a student RA to assist with tasks outside of normal studio teaching responsibilities, e.g. preliminary research of relevant literature and case studies, assistance with organizing and documenting community workshops, final documentation and publication of student work, creation and maintenance of a course website, and assistance with media translation and software use.
- Anticipate the expertise and resource familiarity faculty need to develop in order to guide students (e.g. big box issues, TDR, housing design, transportation systems). Allow time and possibly funding for this research.



- Clarify expectations to students regarding the level of design the studio will involve; if it focuses on a planning scale and requires time for community involvement, that these objectives may reduce opportunities for individual design iterations, but that it is a necessary trade-off given the time frame.
- Approach the studio as a scholarly endeavor. In the curriculum include the scholarly practices of: clear goals and problem definition; preparation through literature review and research; appropriate methods; assessment of results; effective presentation of the results; and reflective critique by the students, community and faculty (Rottle 2004, Ward 2003, Huber 2000, Glassick et al. 1997).
- Organize the curriculum to flexibly accommodate the amount of student time the Community Design studio can require. This may include adding a research seminar that accompanies or precedes the studio, or a two-term studio. While small communities typically don't have the resources to "purchase" an extra course in the curriculum, funding may help to offset departmental costs of creating an additional course.

## CONCLUSION

As citizens become aware of their potential roles in community shaping, and realize the useful services that landscape architecture students and faculty can provide, the demand for such involvement will increase. Successful and satisfying community-university partnerships will cultivate the ground for further professional landscape architectural work of helping towns and cities to envision themselves and to realize their visions. The Community Design studio can therefore be a catalyst for enlarging the profession of landscape architecture, while preparing students to fill these expanding professional and civic roles. Practiced expertise in teaching such courses can optimize the experience for both students and communities, and help to gain support in the Academy and a place in the curriculum for the engaged Community Design studio.

Through the Community Design studio, we can perhaps also restore faith that the landscape architecture profession can make a difference in the quality of places citizens share, in small towns as well as major cities. I recently received an e-mail from a practicing landscape architect from the US state of Colorado, who had seen our Homer project course website and had decided to move to Alaska to pursue his profession there. He wrote, "I just want to thank you and your students for restoring my vision and enthusiasm for Planning and Landscape Architecture. It was nice to read what others are doing with their lives and to know that some people are living alternatively to the commuter-computer jobs so prevalent around here." He just may find some important work and a willing community in Homer.

## REFERENCES

- Glassick, C.E., Huber, M. T., and Maeroff, G. I. 1997. *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Huber, M. T. 2000. *Evaluating Outreach: Scholarship Assessed's Approach* [online]. Pennsylvania: Penn State University. Available from: <http://www.outreach.psu.edu/News/Pubs/Monograph/eval.html>. Accessed January 2004.
- Rice, R. E. 2003. *Rethinking Scholarship and New Practice: A Central AAHE Priority* [online]. Washington, D. C.: American Association for Higher Education. Available from: <http://www.aahe.org/specialreports/part4/hm>. Accessed August 2003.
- Rottle, N.D. 2004. *Universal in the Local: Practising the Scholarship of Engagement*. *Landscape Review, A Journal of Landscape Architecture*, 9 (2), in press.
- Ward, K. 2003. *Faculty Service Roles and the Scholarship of Engagement*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report 29 (5). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.