

University of Washington

Department of Urban Design and Planning

URBDP 507

General Urban Planning Lab

Varsity Village Studio

DRAFT Course Syllabus

Spring Quarter 2021

Monday, Wednesday 1:30 p.m.- 4:20 p.m.¹

Friday by appointment (remote)

Gould 236

5 Credits - Graded

Instructor:

Rick Sepler, AICP

e-mail sepler@uw.edu

Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

The intent of the General Planning Lab is to introduce the “plan-making” process. URBDP 507 is an intensive learning experience that seeks to meaningfully cover this complex subject in a relatively brief period of time. Due to the time constraints associated with a quarter-based academic calendar, all of the participants in this course have previously completed URBDP 506 Planning Studio Prep. The prep course provided time to develop skills in background research, issue identification, community involvement and preliminary analysis. This quarter, URBDP 507 will facilitate a series of focus group meetings (agency staff, neighborhood association) and an open house (residents) that will preliminarily identify potential infill and/or redevelopment opportunities for the Bellingham Housing Authority’s (BHA) Varsity Village property.

Prior to facilitating the focus groups, the studio will prepare a regulatory and site analysis that includes an assessment of current land use regulations as they apply to the subject property as well as applicable Neighborhood and Comprehensive Plan goals and policies. In parallel, studio participants will also identify and research applicable case studies to help inform the development of future alternatives for the Varsity Village site.

Ultimately, after careful consideration of the interests and issues raised during the focus groups and open house, the studio will prepare a professional recommendation on next steps for presentation to the Bellingham Housing Authority’s Executive Director and Director of Asset Development.

¹ Class schedule will vary to accommodate meetings and field trips

You will have the opportunity in this studio to:

- Work directly with Housing Authority and City staff, community members and elected officials
- Facilitate focus group meetings, an open house and a final presentation to the sponsoring agency
- Prepare a detailed analysis of issues and opportunities
- Develop alternatives
- Develop recommendations for next steps.
- Present your recommendations to the BHA Director and staff.

The planning materials that you will be preparing are timely as the obligations for the Varsity Village property will expire in 6 years (2028). Considering the lead time necessary to obtain necessary land use and environmental approvals and secure funding commitments, the development of preliminary alternatives and initiation of a review process is ripe at this time.

This course will be highly participatory. Its success will rest on your participation and involvement in teams as well as individually. The goal of the course is to identify alternatives for future exploration that will best meet the needs of all stakeholders.

The studio addresses 5 main questions:

1. What is the regulatory context for the subject property and the surrounding neighborhood?
2. How have other communities and housing agencies addressed the redevelopment and/or infill development of older public housing properties?
3. What are the interests of the various stakeholder groups?
4. What are the range of alternatives that should be investigated?
5. How can the results of the planning process and assessment be best presented to the BHA and what will be recommended?

Objectives of Course

This course aims to accomplish the following objectives:

Note to Reader: *This document is intended for the informational use of UW students and BHA Bellingham staff. It is one part of a set of documents being used to guide the preparation of materials for the housing authority. For a more complete understanding of the intent and purpose of this course and/or the planning process, please contact **Rick Sepler** at sepler@uw.edu*

1. Serve the residents of Bellingham and the Happy Valley neighborhood
2. Develop functional skills culminating in the preparation of a recommendation to the BHA
3. Develop and gain hands-on experience in facilitating public involvement
4. Develop professional-level analysis skills
5. Develop professional-level presentation skills

Required Texts

None.

Participation and Assignments

The course is based on your active involvement. Each participant is expected to work in teams and individually to complete assignments in a competent and timely manner.

Expectations and Grading

You are expected to:

1. Attend and actively participate in scheduled classes and events.
2. Contribute to the effectiveness of your team.
3. Prepare and submit assignments in a timely manner.

Grades will be based on:

1. How regularly and actively you participate in class discussions and activities.
2. Your effectiveness as a team member.
3. Completion of all assigned tasks.

Grades are distributed by:

Class Participation and Attendance	30%
Public Participation and Presentations	15%
Preparation of Assigned Planning Materials	40%
Leadership, Teamwork and Initiative	15%

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