

# Memphis Regional Design Center

## Urban Design 101

Creating a More Vibrant, Equitable, and Sustainable Memphis Region through Design

Fall 2011



French Fort Master Plan

### Course Introduction

Never before have so many people lived in the villages, towns, and cities of our planet's increasingly complex and ever-expanding metropolitan regions! Our approach to the physical design of these communities will fundamentally affect their economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and social stability.

MRDC's Urban Design 101 will examine the transformative impact that innovative physical planning and design of the "public realm" are having upon the quality and success of urban life. The course will introduce a cross section of our region's civic leaders – representing a mix of public, private and non-profit organizations – to the basic concepts, vocabulary, and techniques of urban design as reflected in a variety of contemporary place-making initiatives in Memphis and across the country.

Urban Design 101 has been created to introduce local leaders to emerging design concepts that are guiding our nation's most exciting neighborhood stabilization, downtown development, waterfront revitalization, new town planning, public spaces, historic revitalization, and mass transit projects.

### Course Structure

Classes will feature multi-media presentations by local and national faculty, class discussions, small group exercises and a neighborhood planning and design workshop. Participants will be encouraged to connect the urban design theories, concepts, and techniques being explored in class to current design challenges and opportunities confronting our local communities within our region!

Time & Location	Thursday evenings from 5:30 to 7:30 pm, October 6 <sup>th</sup> through December 15 <sup>th</sup> . Classes will be held at the UofM University Center. Parking is available in the Zach Curlin Garage adjacent to the UC.
Lead Instructor	Mr. Chooch Pickard, AIA, MRDC Executive Director and Chief Designer Officer, will serve as Lead Instructor for the Urban Design 101 course. Chooch is a graduate of the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and has completed several preservation reuse projects in Downtown Memphis including Court Square Center, the renovation of the historic Lincoln American Tower and Lowenstein Building. Chooch is Past President of AIA Memphis and serves on the MATA Board of Commissioners.  Joining Chooch this semester for individual classes will be a combination of Memphis-based lecturers.
Course Topics	<p><b>Oct 6      <i>Urban Design: What is it? Why is it important?- Part I</i></b>  <i>Frank Ricks, AIA, Founding Partner, Looney Ricks Kiss</i></p> <p>This session will define urban design, offer a compelling rationale for its importance, and provide several examples of local, national, and international “best practices” of relevance to citizens of the Greater Memphis Region.</p> <p><b>Oct 13     <i>Urban Design: What is it? Why is it important?- Part II</i></b>  <i>Frank Ricks, AIA, Founding Partner, Looney Ricks Kiss</i></p> <p>This session will continue to explore the basic concepts of urban design introduced during week one.</p> <p><b>Oct 20     <i>Differences in Urban Design approaches: a European Perspective</i></b>  <i>Laura Saija, Marie Curie Research Professor, Graduate Division of City and Regional Planning, University of Memphis</i></p> <p>Professor Saija will discuss the basic principles of urban design that have generated the European built environment, underlining different approaches and outcomes. She will also discuss, for each approach, what is the role of experts (designers and planners) and “lay-people” in creating public spaces that engender a strong sense of place.</p> <p><b>Oct 27     <i>Complete Streets</i></b>  <i>Michael Oakes, PE, Director of Engineering and Public Works, City of Russellville, AR</i></p> <p>“Complete Streets” is a term that embodies the need for our streets, boulevards and avenues to be designed for multi-modes; to effectively deal with walking, cycling and transit in addition to automobiles and trucks. This lecture highlights the problems of the present systems and discusses some safer, more neighborhood friendly alternatives and the transformative effect that such roadways can have on sustainability and livability.</p>

- Nov 3**      ***Tools to Pursue Innovative Urban Design Initiatives***  
*John Dudas, Vice-President & Director of Strategic Planning, Belz Enterprises*  
*Andy Kitsinger, Senior Vice-President of Development, Memphis Center City Commission*  
*Mairi Albertson, City of Memphis Division of Housing and Community Development*
- Mr. Dudas will lead a panel of experts who will introduce local leaders to available organizational, financial, and land use tools that can be used to encourage the success of neighborhood, district, city-wide, and regional-scale urban design initiatives.
- Nov 10**      ***Using Public Art to Create Memorable and Transformative Places***  
*Whitney Ranson, Project Manager, UrbanArt Commission*
- This session will present various examples of successful place-making in which artists, landscape architects, architects, and planners worked with citizens to re-design public squares, plazas, parks, and public buildings as networks of living rooms where the civic life of a healthy democracy can be recalled, pursued, and celebrated. Participants will be encouraged to re-imagine uninspired public spaces in their communities using innovative approaches to public art-making.
- Nov 17**      ***Transforming the Urban Landscape through Community Gardens and Farmers Markets***  
*Josephine Alexander, Grow Memphis and Curtis Thomas, The Works Inc.*
- Josephine and Curtis will describe how local residents and leaders are transforming abandoned lots into vibrant community gardens that are improving the appearance of our city's neighborhoods, building a sense of community, and supplementing the incomes of local residents. They will also describe how the city's expanding number of farmers markets are enhancing food access and security for residents of poor and working class neighborhoods and providing exciting new public spaces for social networking
- Dec 1**      ***Implementing Unified Development Code Tools to Create a More Livable Community***  
*Josh Whitehead, Director of Planning, Memphis & Shelby County Office of Planning & Development*
- This will be a working session using the new UDC Building Envelope Standards, applying them to Memphis neighborhoods. The UDC is a form of form-based zoning that is becoming increasingly popular throughout our region and nation.

**Dec 8 North Mississippi & Memphis Greenway Initiatives**

*Shelly Johnstone, Director of Community Development for the City of Hernando*

*Syd Lerner, Executive Director, Greater Memphis Greenline*

North Mississippi has been busy the last few years developing the foundations of a comprehensive greenways and blueways system. Ms. Johnstone will present an overview of their promise for enhanced livability in North Mississippi and offer a perspective on the opportunities presented for greater regional understanding and cooperation throughout the Mid South. Mr. Lerner will present the work of the Greater Memphis Greenline including the Shelby Farms Greenline and the proposed Harahan Bridge conversion.

**Dec 15 Preservation and Main Street in the Urban Environment**

*Nancy Jane Baker, Memphis Landmarks Commission*

Starting with a brief history of the preservation movement in America to set the context of where preservation fits within the Urban Environment. This includes the history of use of Federal Preservation Act and the creation of the programs involved with the Act such as National Register for Historic Places, Secretary of the Interior Standards, Investment Tax Credits, Section 106 and historic zoning. The Main Street Program is a nationally recognized program for the revitalization of Downtowns.

***(Please note that course topics are subject to change)***

**Costs** Enrollment costs \$200. Tuition for Urban Design 101 helps underwrite the course. A modest number of scholarships for those with limited incomes are available. Mail or bring your check to Memphis Regional Design Center, 114 N. Main Street, Memphis, TN 38103, Attn: Urban Design 101.

**Participation** Community leaders representing a broad cross-section of our region's business, government, labor, non-profit, faith, retiree, and civic groups are being sought to participate in Urban Design 101. Considerable effort is being made to assemble a class that reflects the age, race, ethnicity, gender, and income diversity of our community. If you are interested in participating in the Fall 2011 course, please email Chooch Pickard at [cpickard@mrdcinfo.org](mailto:cpickard@mrdcinfo.org).

**Optional Texts** The Smart Growth Manual, Andres Duany & Jeff Speck with Mike Lydon, McGraw-Hill Publishers (New York) 2010

The New Civic Art: Elements of Town Planning Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Robert Alminana (et al), Princeton Architectural Press (New York) 2004

City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village Revised edition, David Sucher, Self Published: City Comforts Inc. (Seattle), 2003

The American City: What Works? What Doesn't? Second Edition, Alexander Garvin, McGraw-Hill Publishers (New York) 2002

**Readings** Brief readings will be periodically distributed.

**Information** Memphis Regional Design Center  
114 N. Main St.  
Memphis, TN 38103

Chooch Pickard 901.491.3354 [cpickard@mrdcinfo.org](mailto:cpickard@mrdcinfo.org)

UD 101 IS SPONSORED BY THE MEMPHIS REGIONAL DESIGN CENTER AND IS FUNDED IN PART BY SUPPORT FROM HYDE FAMILY FOUNDATIONS AND PRIVATE DONATIONS.



Design can set Livable Communities in motion

Image by Goody Clancy

MEMPHIS REGIONAL DESIGN CENTER | EDUCATION COMMITTEE