



URBAN LIVE-WORK LINKAGE: WSU

OVERVIEW

Over the 2014 winter semester, Wayne State University (WSU) graduate students registered in State, Regional and Local Economic Development, led by Professor Robin Boyle, undertake applied research to assist implementation of selected recommendations in Detroit Future City.

To target and structure their work, two student teams form to address two key issues in this section of the Plan: profiling employer needs, and profiling workforce preparedness.

Students in this team undertake an asset assessment of the I-96 Secondary Employment District with a granular focus on employer needs. Business interviews are conducted with DEGC staff and additional stakeholders to assess current and future occupational needs of employers anchored in the district.

WSU leverages the existing efforts of the DEGC to create an employer profile methodology that complements a neighborhood workforce profile. Their field research is set into the contexts of national best practices in employment districts, but underpinned by real-time needs of existing employers.

To give focus to the topic of workforce preparedness, the student team addressing workforce preparedness studies the conditions, challenges and opportunities in the Brightmoor neighborhood. Data is drawn from existing reports on the neighborhood and from interviews with local agencies.

The final component of the study involves integration of the two studies, identifying programmatic steps that might assist businesses in the I-96 District find trained (or trainable) workers from nearby neighborhoods, with a case study of Brightmoor. While local characteristics and conditions shape the field research and recommendations, students are challenged to set their findings into a citywide context, with the goal of program replication.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

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| B | USE A PLACE-BASED STRATEGY FOR GROWTH |
| B3 | Encourage industrial business improvement districts (IBIDS) |
| D | IMPROVE SKILLS AND SUPPORT EDUCATION REFORM |
| D1 | "Hire Detroit": Strengthen local hiring practices |

OBJECTIVES

- Provide students with a meaningful capstone immersion experience in urban planning
- Outline a methodology for employer engagement to carry across to other employment districts
- Produce a report that will inform the work of SWOT City, the DEGC, and DFC in target districts
- Strengthen academic partnerships between DFC and Wayne State University

EVALUATION METRICS

- Final team presentations to stakeholders (DFC, WSU, SWOT City, DEGC)
- Recommendation report formed through combination of two studies (I-96 Job Center evaluation and Workforce Preparedness in Brightmoor)



SCHEDULE

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

2014

INITIATIVE VITALS

CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS:

Detroit Future City, Wayne State University, Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, SWOT City (TechTown)

DFC INITIATIVE TYPE: Partner

DFC REPRESENTATIVE: Kyle Polk

INITIATIVE SCALE: I-96 employment district and Brightmoor neighborhood

INITIATIVE DURATION: January – April 2014

RELEVANT PLANNING ELEMENT: Economic Growth

DFC APPROACH

The Detroit Future City Implementation Office acts as convener and project manager of the pilot project. It works directly with Professor Boyle's students to help form a methodology for employer engagement in the I-96 Employment District and advise students about strategic data collection in the Brightmoor neighborhood.

RESOURCES

- Detroit Future City leadership and staff
- Wayne State University Professor Robin Boyle and course students
- SWOT City staff
- DEGC staff



Image Source: Google Maps