

UrbanPlan

Engaging Citizen Leaders in a Dialogue about Neighborhood Planning

What is UrbanPlan?

Developed by the Urban Land Institute, UrbanPlan workshops are hands-on, interactive, planning simulations that allow Memphians to experience a planning process as they work in teams with Legos, a map, and a financial spreadsheet to respond to a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the fictional City of Yorktown. This unique real estate development simulation provides participants with a realistic experience in developing land use solutions to urban growth challenges.

By taking on the role of developer, participants in the workshop get a chance to broaden their knowledge in the following areas:

- how the planning process can result in a stronger neighborhood;
- the basics of financing complex projects;
- the benefits of different building types (economically and to the community);
- how density and open space factor into a neighborhood plan; and
- the importance each team member plays and the role of compromise in a project.



Teams used color-coded Legos to create a “massing plan” and a pro forma for their development proposal.



Once the teams have a proposal completed, a ULI volunteer challenges their decision.



The challenge culminates with a presentation to a “City Council Selection Committee” that questions each team on its proposal.

Testimonials about UrbanPlan

“Building a city is a complicated process that requires many necessary tradeoffs and balancing a city’s equitable needs with the values and desires of multiple parties is no small feat. The UrbanPlan program trains how every party at the table plays a role in shaping a city’s fate. Non-profit professionals, policy makers, developers, architects, public officials, resident leaders, and young professionals should make every effort to engage in this simulation to learn these values.”

Leslie Smith, BLDG Memphis

“As a seasoned professional, I am always looking for ways to introduce planning and development concepts in a way that is not daunting. UrbanPlan is that tool! It is interactive and provides participants with the opportunity to actively engage in a simulated scenario that incorporates input from a variety of partners. Understanding how these partnerships work in the development process enables UrbanPlan participants to have a greater understanding of how each role in the development process impacts the potential outcome of a proposed redevelopment project.”

Chet Jackson, Memphis Medical District Collaborative

For more information, including dates of future workshops, visit:
www.memphis.uli.org/initiatives/urban-plan/

