LAR 525 - Operative Landscapes
Final Project | Case Study Research

Project Overview

Over the course of the semester we have developed an understanding of how natural, cultural and designed landscapes are an integral part of the city - not external to it - operating as part of the metabolism of communities while contributing to their economic, social and environmental vitality. Through this research project, we will develop and communicate an understanding operative nature of three landscapes that support the City of Knoxville:

1) The Urban Wilderness
2) Abbey Fields Urban Farm
3) Lakeshore Park

Though distinct in their scale, origins, and purposes, all three landscapes share a common attributes of providing economic, social and environmental benefits and performing networked functions that are fundamental to Knoxville's health, sense of place and community, and sustainability.
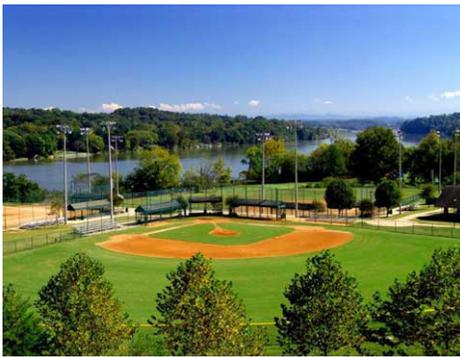
"Landscape urbanism aspires to build an understanding of urbanism in which the ecological forces and flows that support urbanism are considered as part of the city as opposed to external to it. This offers a response to and critique of older models of urbanism in which the city is distinct from the countryside or the continent."

 - Charles Waldheim

Infra Eco Logi Urbanism
RVTR
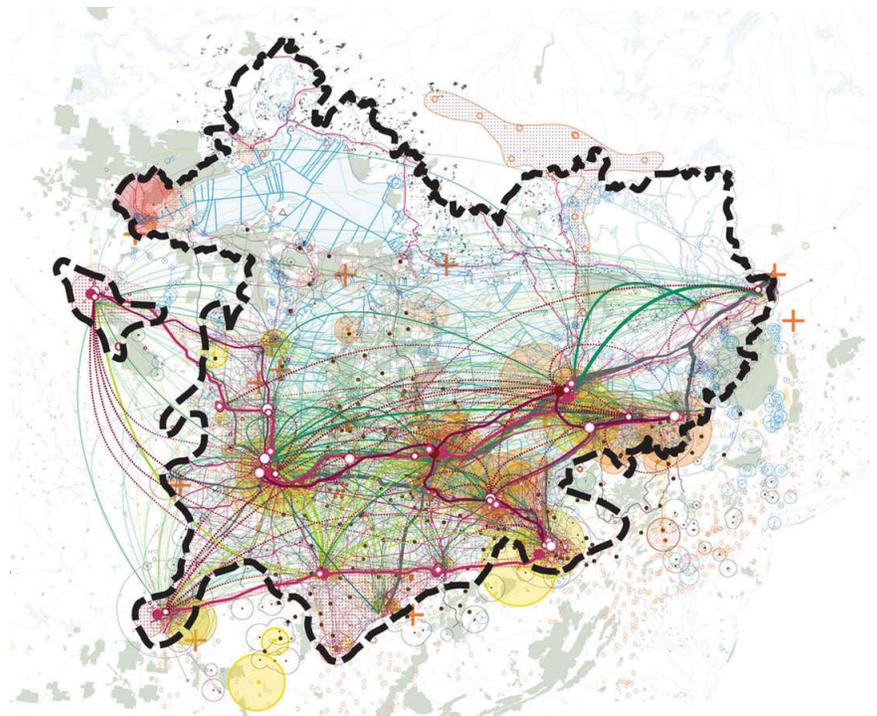
Team Approach

The class will be divided in to three teams - one team of four and two teams of three - to complete this research project. The composition of each team will be discussed strategically in class. Teams shall be strategically constructed so as to evenly distribute talents and knowledge bases required for the project. Time management, work flow planning, thinking strategically about personnel strengths when assigning individual responsibilities and communication will be required to successfully complete this project. Individuals who are observed to not be fulfilling their responsibilities to the group will receive a lower grade than the balance of the group. Individuals who routinely do not fulfill their responsibilities to the group in spite of verbal notices from the instructor will be required to work independently for the balance of the project.

Required Research Elements

Narrative Summary - A succinct 200-300 word explanation of the essence of the project and its operative benefits .

Performance Metrics - Students are to identify quantifiable economic, social and environmental benefits of each landscape that are relevant and fundamental to the landscape's performance. In some cases, existing research may have already quantify these metrics, in which case the research methods should be understood and the metrics may be reported.

For benefits where existing research does not include the desired performance metric, and for all metrics that would require interaction with human subjects (i.e. surveys, interviews of landscape users), students are to list the performance benefit they understand as factual (but not quantified) or have determined to be probable, and recommend a research method thorough which the benefit may be quantified if it were to be investigated through future research. In cases where a survey is identified as an appropriate research method, students are required to draft survey questions, identify target audience, and propose a method(s) for administering the survey.

A total of eight metrics should be identified with a minimum of two in each category: economic, social and environmental. Keep in mind that through the performance metrics, we are seeking to communicate what the landscape *does*, not what the landscape *is*.

Sustainable Features - A list of (preferably quantified) landscape characteristics, features and/or program elements that contribute to the project's operative purpose or processes. For example, total hectares under urban agricultural production, kilometers of trails, number of monitoring points.

Social Seduction - landscape moments, features, programs considered to be 'socially seductive' in nature

**Origins -** The history of a landscape relative to the origins of its operative nature

Networks - The systems, cycles, stakeholders and other contextual influences that affect the operation of the landscape

Logistics - Over dimensions of both geography and time, the places, processes, sequences of a landscape's metabolism: inputs, transformation, outputs, distribution, consumption, waste

Living Systems - The role of the living landscape, the ecological function of biotic material (macro and micro - ecosystems, plants and micro-organisms), as part of the landscape's operation

Maintenance - Practices that are employed to sustain the operative functions of the landscape. These may include, but not be limited to physical interventions and policy/regulations

Threats - Challenges posed to the sustainability of the landscape
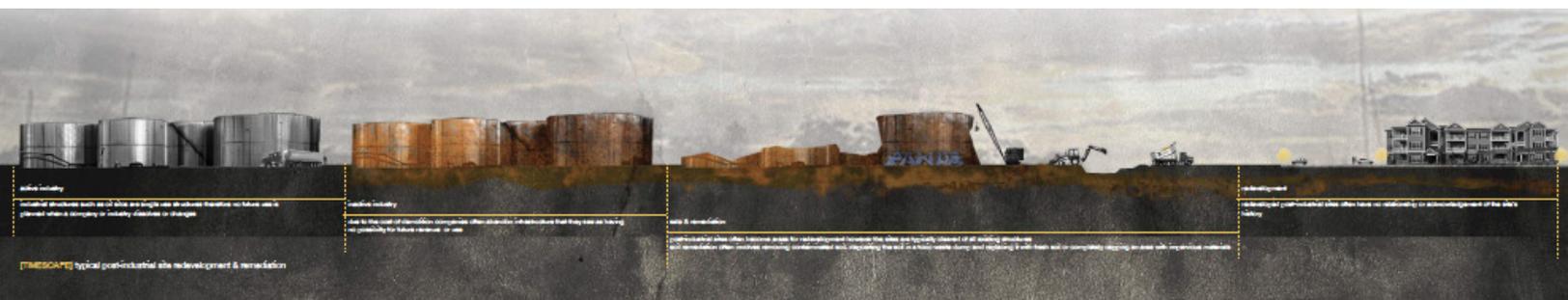
Project Deliverables:

Students will be responsible to present their research findings in two formats: as a series of digital slides, and as a single, graphically-oriented 30"x42" presentation board. Though both will be used simultaneously during the final review, both should stand-alone as complete and comprehensive presentations of the required research information. Digital slides should be a careful deconstruction and sequencing of drawings/elements from the project board, not a clumsy reorganization screen captures

Narrative (text) will be an important element of your final product. With few exceptions as determined appropriate by the project team, text should be incorporated only as a compliment to or integral part of the graphics that are developed to communicate research findings.

Students are encouraged to employ a range of drawing types to effectively communicate their research findings across the scales at which the benefits and functions are operating. These include datascapes, timescapes, diagrams, aerial obliques, section/perspectives, and other contemporary visualization approaches we have studied in class to illustrate landscape process, operations and performance across spatial dimensions and time. Student are encouraged develop visualization strategies that enable them to efficiently and effectively communicate multiple project dimensions/research requirements in a single drawing.

The project board must employ graphic concepts such as color and hierarchy, and be thoughtfully designed as an integrated composition of drawings - not a digital pin board for a series of separate graphics.

During the exam period, a date and a two-hour time slot will be collectively agreed upon for project presentations. Students will prepare a 15-20 minute oral presentation to a panel of department faculty. This presentation will be followed by 10-15 minutes of questions and discussion.

Suggested Resources:

landscapeperformance.org - As the project is roughly based upon the Landscape Architecture Foundation's Case Study Method, students are encouraged to visit this website as a resource to brainstorm potential performance metrics, develop proposed research methods. Students may also wish to research additional information relative to the project's development such as project team, role of the landscape architect (if applicable), consultation approach and influences, and other 'quick facts.'

Interviews - Students are encouraged to professionally communicate with project team members, agency staff, and faculty/researchers who may be able to fill research gaps or provide useful contextual information based on their own prior research or professional involvement.

Lectures - Students are encouraged to reference visualization strategies and drawing types that have been shared through course lectures as inspiration for their communication of research findings. Additional examples will be shared in the course dropbox.

Workshop - it is pertinent that a significant research effort is made between today and October 27 when we will be engaging with Meg Struder of siteations.com for a graphic design workshop. The workshop will include a visualization charrette and technical skills building designed to help conceptualize and make substantial progress towards your graphic approach and board layout for this assignment.
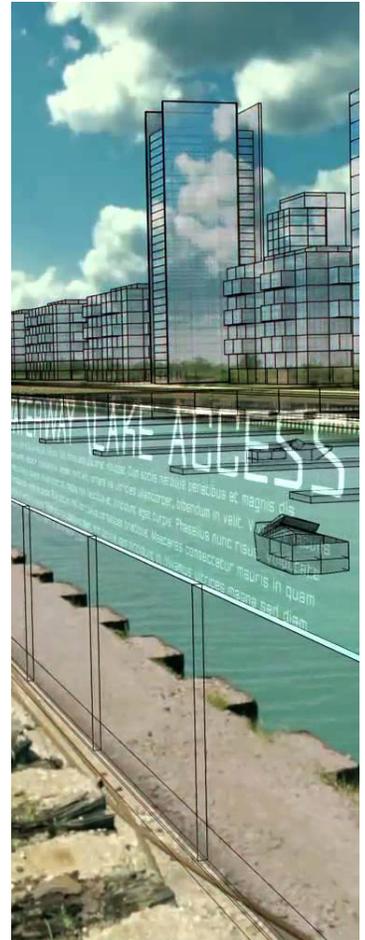
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