

PPD 431 – Undergraduate Policy, Planning, & Development Studio

USC Price School of Public Policy
Spring 2021
Section 51133R

Tuesdays & Thursdays
4:00-5:50 pm
Online

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Office hours: Thursdays 12-1 pm

<https://usc.zoom.us/j/4956819793>

1. OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

One strength of the Price School is its training of students in specialized fields to systematically consider communities from multiple viewpoints. Urban planners, public policymakers, and real estate developers do this kind of work everyday: analyzing places, researching dynamics, engaging stakeholders, and proposing improvements to benefit residents, businesses, visitors, and others. One goal of this capstone course is for you to apply what you (as budding professionals) have learned in your studies to a real-world scenario. Another goal is for you to produce a work sample useful for demonstrating your capacity for professional work to potential employers.

- **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** At the conclusion of the course, students will have done the following:
 1. Learn fundamentals of comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances
 2. Examine the relationship between public policies and actual outcomes
 3. Apply methods of neighborhood observation, graphic documentation and analysis
 4. Learn fundamentals of public space and site design and land-use programming
 5. Work cooperatively in project teams
 6. Produce a complete and coordinated team report and presentation
 7. Apply lessons and skills learned in previous course work to a real-world setting, and produce a work sample useful for demonstrating professional competency.
- **FORMAT**
 - Online, remote instruction via Zoom.
 - This course is a studio or laboratory format, meaning that hands-on work using course concepts and techniques (individually and in groups) is sometimes part of class time.
 - The course meets twice weekly in sessions combining lecture, discussion, in-class work, and group presentations.

2. COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS

- Our class was originally scheduled to be part in-person, part online. However, due to recent concerns about increased Covid infection risks, the course will begin 100% online. If things change regarding campus access, I will let everyone know. For now, we should plan that the entire semester will be online.
- The last several months have been an unusual time for virtually everyone. Most aspects of life, work and schooling have been significantly altered. This certainly includes university education, and your patience is appreciated as we navigate this new instructional world together.
 - Because this is new territory, we're all still learning what works and what doesn't. Consequently, class policies and/or content may be updated or revised during the semester. If so, adequate notice will be given.
 - The pandemic and various responses to it are all ripe for discussion in a class about urban policy and urban life. We will take advantage of this topic when it makes sense for our subject material. If you personally feel overwhelmed by the subject at any point, drop me an email to let me know, confidentially.
- Synchronous (real-time) class meetings will take place on the Zoom platform at our assigned class time.
 - Every class day, log in to Blackboard with your USC ID; there, you'll find a Zoom link to each class meeting posted under the *Weekly Zoom Links* tab at left. This should verify your identity and enable automatic admittance to class, without having to wait me to admit you.
 - Your presence/screen in Zoom should show your first and last name based on your USC ID. Anyone attempting to join with unrecognized or partial names, nicknames, etc, will not be admitted.
 - Be aware that Zoom class sessions will all be recorded, and recordings made available to the class for review if desired.

- Courtesy guidelines for large Zoom sessions:
 - *Imagine yourself in a meeting with your new employer and colleagues—that’s the mindset to have in a Zoom class session.*
 - Log in on time. Better yet, start a few minutes before class to resolve any connectivity or device problems.
 - Remain in the meeting for the duration of class.
 - *Your camera should be switched on for the duration of each class meeting.*
 - Be aware of your on-screen environment. You may choose to use a virtual background for privacy or other concerns.
 - *Do not log in while driving.*
 - Mute (turn off) your mic except when speaking. This will help to reduce background noise.
 - Dress appropriately. We’re all at home and casual, but please be considerate.
 - Use the “raise hand” function to ask a question in class. You may be called on right away, or questions may be gathered together and answered in bunches.
 - You may also use the chat function to ask questions or make comments outside of formal discussion periods.
 - *All opinions are welcome, but only courteous behavior and respectful tone will be tolerated.*
- Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required
 - Due to the online environment shift, a laptop or computer with high-speed internet access will provide the best results with Zoom and Blackboard. You should have basic knowledge of both. We will be using chat, polling, and break out groups on Zoom. You will need to be able to submit assignments, download course materials, and participate in discussion boards, groups and forums in Blackboard. Zoom is accessible on phones and tablets, but apparently is not as robust or functional.
 - Get Blackboard support here:
https://studentblackboardhelp.usc.edu/?returnUri=%2Fwebapps%2Fportal%2Fexecute%2Ftabs%2FtabAction%3Ftab_tab_group_id%3D_1_1&tabId= 1_1&forwardUri=index.jsp
 - Get Zoom support here: <https://keepteaching.usc.edu/students/student-toolkit/classroom/zoom/>

3. COURSE RESPONSIBILITIES

This is an upper-division course for seniors readying to graduate; there is a correspondingly high level of expectation for performance. Everyone is expected to conduct themselves professionally; our (virtual) classroom is a genuine workplace, classmates are colleagues, and the instructor is a kind of supervisor or manager. Part of professionalism is juggling multiple responsibilities, honoring commitments, and communicating clearly. You’re expected to arrive on time and stay for the duration; to complete assignments on time; to actively and consistently participate in discussions, tasks and activities; and to treat your colleagues and instructor with courtesy and respect, regardless of setting. Course policies are largely intended to provide fairness to all—students and instructor.

- CLASSROOM CONDUCT
 - Attendance of all class meetings, on-time and for the full duration, is expected.
 - Once in a great while, missing a class may be unavoidable. If all other aspects of your class performance are satisfactory, then an unexcused absence will not damage your course grade (though you are responsible for catching up and obtaining missed material). Transportation troubles, missed alarms, job interviews, travel plans, work schedules, ordinary illness, and other routine parts of life affect us all from time to time. None provides an excused absence. Notifying me via email is appreciated, but does not constitute an excused absence.
 - Excused absences are rare, fully documented, and normally involve things such as team athletics or major medical emergency.
 - Distractions and disruptions are unwelcome, and to be avoided.
 - Side conversations are tempting to engage in, I recognize. But they break the focus of both the instructor and nearby classmates. Please save conversations for group work, discussion activities, or after class.
- BLACKBOARD
 - You are responsible for checking Blackboard frequently for updates and notices, at <https://blackboard.usc.edu>. Digital versions of course documents, announcements, instructions, required readings and other materials will be posted there.
 - You will upload your written assignments there.
 - Lecture slides will be posted, as well as Zoom lecture recordings.
- CONTACT AND CORRESPONDENCE
 - You are responsible for checking your USC email frequently; that’s the address to which course-related messages will be sent.
 - Email is the best way to contact me. In your email’s subject line, please include “PPD 431.”
 - In a course with so many students, details of conversations with me right after class may not be remembered later, so *do not expect this*. If you want confirmation, send me a short email of the details afterward.
 - Last-minute emails in the hours before due dates may not get a response, depending upon my other duties.
 - I’m regularly available during office hours, and can also arrange alternative times to meet by appointment.
 - Please communicate any concerns or problems you may be having as soon as you’re aware of them, rather than waiting until later—when solutions are few or no longer possible.

- TEAMS

- Part of the coursework will be done in teams, with membership assigned by the instructor (with an eye for diversity of majors).
- Full involvement by all team members is required at every stage. Each student will be given the opportunity to confidentially evaluate their teammates' levels of contribution.
- Parts of some class sessions will be dedicated to team meetings and work sessions, but not enough time for completion of team assignments. Team members should organize quickly and communicate consistently, and plan work sessions outside of class sufficient for completion of assigned work.
- Mirroring the real-world professional environment of group responsibility shared by individual members each doing their full share is a goal of this class. Hopefully everyone gets along and without conflict; this is another goal. But even if that's not the case, each person is responsible for performing at a high level and contributing substantially to team success.

- ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- The University takes academic integrity very seriously, and so do I. From *SCampus*, the USC Student Guidebook: "General principles of academic integrity include and incorporate the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Faculty members may include additional classroom and assignment policies, as articulated on their syllabus." For examples of violations of these and other university standards, go to <https://sjacs.usc.edu/files/2015/03/tio.pdf>. Penalties for violating ethical standards are suitably harsh; students will be referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. (See also the section at the end of this syllabus.)

- STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- For those registered with DSP ([USC Disability Services & Programs - A Division of Student Affairs](#)), I require written documentation in the form of your official Accommodation Letter, no later than Week 3. (An email with attachment is acceptable during the pandemic.) If you have questions on that process, call DSP at 213-740-0776, email at ability@usc.edu or visit the office in GFS 120.
- No accommodations can be made until you've sent me your completed, signed Letter of Accommodation. Note: some arrangements require advanced planning, so late requests may not be accommodated. The sooner your part is done, the better.

4. COURSE WORK

- PARTICIPATION & CONTRIBUTION TO CLASS (10% of course grade)

- Attendance and participation in class meetings is required. Participation can be *informal*—asking a question, making an observation, offering an example, describing your experience. Don't miss this opportunity to boost your points.
- Your course grade will reflect your level of participation and engagement—high, average, low, or non-existent.
- Online activities such as quick polls, break-out discussions, in-class responses, and others will provide opportunities to participate in our virtual class meetings. These are subject to simple scoring, and will count toward the participation grade.
- Discussion with me during office hours is another way to participate.

- READINGS

- There is no assigned textbook.
- All assigned readings are required, and will be posted on Blackboard; for web content, follow links and read the material online.
- Readings should be completed before the class meeting noted in the attached calendar schedule, to allow for discussion, and in preparation for a possible quiz. Always feel free to ask questions about the reading, either in class or elsewhere.
- Occasionally, readings may be added, updated or substituted, with sufficient notice given in Blackboard; you're responsible for checking Blackboard frequently for this reason.

- SHORT ASSIGNMENTS (10% of course grade, total)

- A small number of in-class discussion tasks, homework assignments, and/or occasional reading quizzes. These may be individual or team-oriented.
- Specific instructions will be provided when assigned.

- MIDTERM TEAM PROJECT & PRESENTATION (25% of course grade)
 - An organized, coordinated team effort producing a report that analyzes existing conditions, evaluates community priorities, and identifies opportunities for improvements to the subject neighborhood.
 - A short, illustrated team presentation of key elements made to the class; all team members will participate.
 - Specific instructions for the full assignment and required deliverables will be provided when assigned.
- FINAL TEAM PROJECT & PRESENTATION (20% of course grade)
 - An organized, coordinated team effort producing a master plan describing a range of proposed neighborhood improvements, including written and graphic descriptions, justifications, and implementation strategies.
 - A short, illustrated team presentation of key elements made to the class; all team members will participate.
 - Specific instructions for the full assignment and required deliverables will be provided when assigned.
- INDIVIDUAL PROJECT (25% of course grade)
 - A written and illustrated report elaborating on one proposed neighborhood improvement or intervention of the author's choosing.
 - The improvement can be a private or non-profit development project; a plan for open space, mobility project, community facility or other public work; or a policy, regulation, or program agenda. Each student's major and interests will guide the choice here. consultation with and approval by the instructor will be part of the process.
 - Specific instructions for the full assignment and required deliverables will be provided when assigned.
- GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS
 - Assignments will be submitted online: uploaded to Blackboard/ Turnitin on or before the stated due date and time. It is late if turned in after that date and time, and will be graded down accordingly; the grade deduction will increase until turned in.
 - You're strongly encouraged to talk with me to discuss any questions you have on assignments—the earlier the better. Last-minute discussions are not helpful.
 - None of us was born a good writer. But this skill set is crucial for professional success, and improving it takes time and practice. So, elements such as grammar, spelling, syntax, and clarity will be evaluated in grading written work. If you need help, I highly recommend visiting the USC Writing Center (<http://college.usc.edu/writingcenter/>) early in the term. (This year they offer services online.) It is an excellent, student-friendly resource. Also, this year the university is making available free licenses for Grammarly, the useful writing-assistance app. Students can sign up by accessing the [Grammarly License Request Form](#).
- FINAL EXAMINATION (10% of course grade)
 - A final exam will test on material from readings, lectures, presentations, and discussions occurring in class over the course of the entire semester. Exam format will mainly be essay, but could also include other short-answer types. No make-ups will be given.

5. GRADING

- The proportional weight for different coursework elements is as follows:

10%	Participation, Engagement & Contribution
10%	Short Assignments
25%	Midterm Team Project & Presentation
20%	Final Team Project & Presentation
25%	Individual Project
10%	Final Exam
100%	Course Grade

- The University standard for undergraduate-level grades will apply (*source: USC Catalogue*):

A	Work of excellent quality
B	Work of good quality
C	Work of fair quality
D	Work of minimum passing quality
F	Failure to adequately complete all course work

- Final course grades will be determined using this scale:

		87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+	0-59	F
95-100	A	84-86	B	74-76	C	64-66	D		
90-94	A-	80-83	B-	70-73	C-	60-63	D-		

6. SITE & PROJECT

The city of West Hollywood provides a worthwhile case study in shaping urban change for the better. Originally a small rural settlement slowly expanding with residents and businesses, its location outside of proper city limits eventually attracted an assortment of nightlife, underground activities and 'alternative' (non-hetero-normative) lifestyles shunned in neighboring Los Angeles and Beverly Hills. Over time, WeHo grew into a thriving urban district appealing to many Angelenos, including artists, designers, writers, performers and other creative workers, as well as gays and lesbians and Eastern European immigrants seeking to form community on their own terms.

Now with a population of over 36,000 in less than two square miles, WeHo is one of the densest cities in LA County. A variety of small and specialty businesses, and close proximity of residential areas to commercial corridors makes its neighborhoods very walkable. Municipally incorporated in 1984, the city has gained a reputation for progressive social and environmental policies. More recently, rising property values and regional housing demand have resulted in new, large mixed-use developments jarring what has long seemed like a small town surrounded by a big city. Add to all this the real prospect of a new Metro line extension (and station) better connecting West Hollywood to other nodes in the region, and this place's prospects for change and growth are significant.

The Eastside neighborhood is where we'll focus our attention. Over a quarter of the city's territory, this area has suffered neglect (in notoriety and investment) compared to other renowned places in West Hollywood, such as the Sunset Strip, Boystown, and the Design District. Not as racially diverse as some parts of the metropolis, the Eastside population is diverse in other ways that test policy, planning, and development efforts. Opportunities for positive change are many, but challenges persist affecting housing, open space, traffic, mobility, homelessness, small businesses, the environment, preservation, public safety and other factors. In recent years, community outreach and planning research has been conducted, with a range of local stakeholders identifying concerns needing attention from the city and its consulting professionals. The resulting Eastside Community Priorities Plan was adopted by council in 2017, laying the groundwork for planning then implementation of a slate of public and private improvements (physical as well as procedural) over the next several years.

Student groups will act as consultant teams hired by the city to study the neighborhood in some detail— how it functions, its built form, its micro-economy, its social make-up, its recent changes, and its strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. This survey and analysis will be put to use in devising the implementation of recommendations in the City's Eastside Community Priorities Plan. Teams may also propose additional priorities and add other recommendation strategies they find relevant.

(The Covid-19 pandemic has elicited a proactive, multi-pronged public policy response by the city, with measures aimed at protection of residential and commercial tenants and survival of local businesses, while emphasizing public health concerns. Such current conditions may be figured into analysis and proposals for student work, or considered a temporary state unnecessary to address in longer-range plans and programs.)

7. SCHEDULE

(Subject to revision during the semester; check Blackboard regularly.)

	Date	Topics		
Week 1	Tue, Jan 19	Introduction & Overview		
	Thu, Jan 21	L) Site Background & Context		
Week 2	Tue, Jan 26	F) Field Trip / Site Visit (actual or virtual)		
	Thu, Jan 28	L) Gen Plans, Specific Plans / Policies		
Week 3	Tue, Feb 2	T) Zoning Codes; Teams formation		
	Thu, Feb 4	L) Land Uses & Urban Programming; Housing		
Week 4	Tue, Feb 9	L) Stakes & Stakeholders		
	Thu, Feb 11	L) Public Realm, Public Space		
Week 5	Tue, Feb 16	Assign, discuss Part I		
	Thu, Feb 18	L) Mobility, Access, Transportation		
Week 6	Tue, Feb 23	T) Graphics & Visual Tools		
	Thu, Feb 25	L) Place, Identity, Branding		
Week 7	Tue, Mar 2	Team meetings; work sessions		
	Thu, Mar 4	Team meetings; work sessions		
Week 8	Tue, Mar 9	Team meetings; work sessions		
	Thu, Mar 11	Presentation prep; Check-in meetings		
Week 9	Tue, Mar 16	Midterm Presentations; Presentation & Report Due		
	Thu, Mar 18	Midterm Presentations; Wrap up; Next up		
Week 10	Tue, Mar 23	No class ('wellness day')		
	Thu, Mar 25	Debrief on Part I (lessons, successes, corrections)		
Week 11	Tue, Mar 30	Assign, discuss Part II		
	Thu, Apr 1	Assign, discuss Individual project		
Week 12	Tue, Apr 6	L) Financial Analysis (Guest: Prof. Loper)		
	Thu, Apr 8	Team meetings; work sessions		
Week 13	Tue, Apr 13	Team meetings; work sessions		
	Thu, Apr 15	Team meetings; work sessions		
Week 14	Tue, Apr 20	Presentation Prep; Final check-in meetings; Presentation & Report Due		
	Thu, Apr 22	No class ('wellness day')		
Week 15	Tue, Apr 27	Final Presentations;		
	Thu, Apr 29	Final Presentations; Conclusions, Wrap-up		
Week 16	Thu, May 6	FINAL EXAM @ 4:30 pm		

Selected Resources This list provides many good places to begin research into the City of West Hollywood and its municipal organization, policy areas, initiatives, and objectives. Do not consider this listing as comprehensive. Many of these link further to sub-links and reports, research, presentations, and outreach efforts. Other useful materials and important information (public, private, or non-profit in mission; federal, state, county, or municipal in scale) is not listed here but should be sought out, depending upon teams' and individuals' particular interests and goals.

CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD MATERIALS (Partial list only)

- Climate Action <https://www.weho.org/city-government/city-departments/planning-and-development-services/long-range-planning/sustainability/climate-action-plan/climate-action-and-adaptation-plan>
- Climate Action Plan <https://www.weho.org/city-government/city-departments/planning-and-development-services/long-range-planning/climate-action-plan>
- Covid-19 Information <https://www.weho.org/city-government/emergency-information>
- Clean Power Alliance <https://www.weho.org/city-government/city-departments/planning-and-development-services/clean-power-alliance>
- Eastside Community Plan Efforts <https://www.weho.org/city-government/city-departments/planning-and-development-services/long-range-planning/eastside-community-plan>
- Eastside Community Priorities Plan <https://www.weho.org/home/showpublisheddocument?id=35927>
- Eastside Community Priorities Plan, Technical Appendix <https://www.weho.org/home/showpublisheddocument?id=34833>
- General Plan <https://www.weho.org/city-government/download-documents/-folder-155>
- Green Building <https://www.weho.org/city-government/city-departments/planning-and-development-services/building-and-safety/green-building-program>
- Historic Preservation <https://www.wehopreservation.org/> <https://www.wehopreservation.org/designated-cultural-resources/>
- Historic Resources Surveys <https://www.wehopreservation.org/historic-resource-surveys/>
- Housing & Rent Stabilization <https://www.weho.org/city-government/rent-stabilization-housing/housing>
- Interactive Project Map <https://www.weho.org/city-government/city-departments/planning-and-development-services/infomap-interactive-project-information-map>
- Mobility <https://www.weho.org/city-government/city-departments/planning-and-development-services/long-range-planning/mobility-planning>
- Metro Extension Effort: Finish the Line! <https://www.weho.org/services/public-transportation-transit-options/finish-the-line>
- Metro WeHo Extension Survey <http://www.whamrail.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/320860WestHollywoodCommuni.pdf>
- Public Realm / Public Space <https://www.weho.org/city-government/city-departments/planning-and-development-services/long-range-planning/pilot-projects>
- Smart City <http://wehosmartcity.org/>
- Traffic & Mobility Study <https://www.weho.org/city-government/city-departments/planning-and-development-services/long-range-planning/mobility-planning/citywide-traffic-mobility-study>
- Zoning Code <http://qcode.us/codes/westhollywood/view.php?topic=19&expand=1&frames=off>
- Zoning Map <https://www.weho.org/home/showpublisheddocument?id=36958> (large file size)

OTHER MATERIALS (Partial list only)

- American Community Survey <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html>
- LA Metro Crenshaw Line Extension Study (2020) <http://metro.legistar1.com/metro/attachments/1a816598-27ad-47c4-93c4-e42dccb10935.pdf>
- LA Times Data Profile (2010) <http://maps.latimes.com/neighborhoods/neighborhood/west-hollywood/>
- West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation <https://www.whhc.org/>
- West Hollywood Advocates for Metrorail <http://www.whamrail.com/>
- West Hollywood Visitors Bureau <https://www.visitwesthollywood.com/>
- WeHO Daily News <https://www.wehodaily.com/>
- WEHoville <https://www.wehoville.com/>
- US Bureau of Labor Statistics <https://www.bls.gov/>
- US Census <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/westhollywoodcitycalifornia>

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [SCampus-Part-B-2.pdf \(usc.edu\)](#). For a short tutorial, see [Academic Dishonesty | USC Libraries](#). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](#).

Support Systems:

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call [engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](#)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](#)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention - (213) 740-9355, press ‘0’ after hours – 24/7 on call <https://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault/>

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086 [equity.usc.edu](#)

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421 https://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report/

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776 [dsp.usc.edu](#)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710 [studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](#)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101 [diversity.usc.edu](#)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost’s Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, *HSC*: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call [emergency.usc.edu](#)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, *HSC*: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call [dps.usc.edu](#)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

END OF SYLLABUS