

CLASS INFORMATION

- Planning Studio, 86970, 6055, AU1, Fall 2026
- Planning Studio, 86182, 6055, AU2, Fall 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Aaron Fortner

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GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Description

The Fall 2026 Auburn Avenue Strategic Plan in the Planning Studio is an exciting opportunity to serve multiple City of Atlanta stakeholders and agencies to create a master plan for the historic Sweet Auburn community of Atlanta. Working alongside community development organizations Sweet Auburn Works and Historic District Development Corporation in conjunction with the City of Atlanta, this studio will formulate a comprehensive master Strategic Plan focused on senior housing, affordable and mixed income housing, and leverage the resource of the historic buildings and character to guide future development. The studio planning process will leverage public engagement meetings, interviews, and presentations to capture the desires and input of community members and stakeholders.

Course Learning Outcomes

The studio will progress from data assembly to analysis, to consideration of alternatives, to suggested courses of action, to a final report and presentation. Community stakeholders will review each stage of the work throughout the process. As a planning/urban design framework exercise, the studio will cover issues and opportunities across the full spectrum of our specializations, all relevant to our scope.

Students can expect to strengthen their skills in data management, recordation, analysis, visualization and presentation in a cross-disciplinary and community involved process. The studio will provide the opportunity to test what students have learned, their experience in team settings, their future career options, and preparing themselves for that future.

Required Course Materials

No course materials required.

Grading Policy

Grades will be based on the following criteria:

- Active participation in group discussions
- Completion of assignments on time
- Group collaboration and ability to work well together as a team
- Individual contribution to group projects
- Individual contribution to the studio report / final product

Description of Graded Components

- Active participation in group discussions – 10% of final grade
- Completion of assignments on time – 10% of final grade
- Group collaboration and ability to work well together as a team – 10% of final grade
- Individual contribution to group assignments and tasks during the semester – 20% of final grade
- Individual contribution to the studio report / final product – 50% of final grade

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance and/or Participation

This studio is a group project and as such priority is placed on studio attendance to maximize working time together as a group. If it necessary for students to miss studio class time, students must coordinate with their studio team to obtain all studio lessons or information that they missed during the class time. The instructor is to be notified of any plans for a studio time absence. Students should not miss any scheduled group presentations or community interactions during the studio.

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review [Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the student [Code of Conduct](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Core IMPACTS

[Core IMPACTS](#) is the University System of Georgia's General Education curriculum. If you are teaching a course that counts towards Core IMPACTS, you should include a syllabus statement about the Core area and associated [career competencies](#). [This resource](#) developed by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and Online Education at Georgia State University includes template syllabus statements for each of the Core IMPACTS areas that you may adapt for your course.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Optional Course Expectations, Policies, and Resources

This studio is a group project. Students should thrive in team environments and are expected to be available during course hours to work with their studio team. While all city planning skill sets and specialties are appropriate for the studio, the focus of the studio will

be in the area of urban design with a focus on developing a plan focused on shaping the built environment.

Pre- &/or Co-Requisites

Pre-requisites are not required however students should have an interest in urban design and shaping the built environment.

Collaboration, Group Work, and Use of Generative AI

Students will collaborate on a group project and in the creation of a document with contributions from all students. Tools such as Generative AI, various design and mapping programs, and hand-generated graphics are all appropriate for this studio.

Extensions, Late Assignments, & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams

This studio does not utilize any tests or homework assignments. Grades are reflective of participation and a final planning document submitted at the end of the semester. Students who miss any time during the semester must make up that time with their group to ensure that they are contributing to the overall group assignment.

Inclement Weather and Digital Learning Days

The studio will schedule digital learning days throughout the semester in coordination with the overall schedule for in-class meetings. Additionally, off-site visits to the study area community will be scheduled in accordance with the availability of each student.

Student Use of Mobile Devices in the Classroom

Students may use mobile devices in the classroom during non-lecture times.

Additional Course Policies

None

CAMPUS RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Graduate Student Academic and Professional Success Resources

A list of resources for graduate students is given on the [Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Education](#) website. Specific information for [current graduate students](#) includes

- Academic Resources such as the Communications Center, Language Institute, Library, Catalog, Registrar, resources for conducting research, Advocacy and Conflict Resolution resources, and how to manage unexpected situations that may impact your academic performance;
- Student Resources such as Campus Services, Child Care/Family programs, Health & Wellness, Career Services, and the Student Resource Guide; and
- Professional Development such as the programming from the Career Center and other professional development resources and events”

Student Well-Being

At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A comprehensive list of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being ([student-resource-guide \(gatech.edu\)](https://student-resource-guide.gatech.edu))

Prior Studio Work

- (2019) – Lindbergh Area Plan
- (2020) – Covington Downtown Plan
- (2021) – Chatt Hills – Rico Roads Crossroads
- (2022) – Atlanta Faith Based Housing Plan
- (2022) – Habersham County Sustainability Plan
- (2022) – Home Park Neighborhood Plan
- (2023) – Midtown Public Realm Activation
- (2023) – Thomasville Heights Neighborhood Plan
- (2024) – Allatoona Community Plan
- (2024) – Rome Infill Housing
- (2025) – Douglasville (Arbor Place Mall)
- (2025) – Berkeley Lake (Peachtree Ind Blvd)

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/kerk0kx39quoklg3nmaq/h?rlkey=nmibqlfcuo1aqc3nzfcuraea0&dl=0>

STUDIO DELIVERABLES

Existing Conditions

- Documented summaries of previous plans and studies
- Documented existing conditions
- Documented existing zoning/development patterns, proposed changes

Community Input

- Documented stakeholder interview input
- Documented community feedback throughout the process

Recommendations

- Conceptual recommendations presented to community stakeholders for feedback
- Renderings, graphics, sections, site plans, sample photos, maps
- Final work and recommendations in the following document deliverables:
 - Existing Conditions Assessment
 - Demographics
 - Zoning/HD District/Development Patterns
 - Documentation of blighted properties
 - Inventory of public parks and open spaces
 - Inventory of sidewalks
 - Inventory of bike infrastructure
 - Inventory of public transportation infrastructure
 - Inventory of public streets
 - Senior Engagement Toolkit
 - Institutionalized methodology for obtaining feedback from seniors
 - Pilot for city-wide application
 - Senior Focus
 - Design standards for the community to be more viable to attract senior residents
 - Public spaces - Love Our Places
 - Housing Strategy
 - Affordable and mixed income housing strategy
 - Zoning/HD revisions (if needed)
 - District Development Strategy

- Comprehensive plan that lays out how large-scale mixed use development can be facilitated
- Economic status and projections for what the future might hold
- Historic preservation
 - Recommendations to strengthen the historic and social fabric of the community
 - strategies to ensure new development gels well with the historic anchors of our community
 - Art and placemaking - including all ages and stages of life
- Transportation
 - Identify areas of focus and opportunity in support of a future Sweet Auburn Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (SAPSAP) – Sidewalks, Biking, Transit, Streets

Baseline Studies, Plans, Materials

- GIS files
- Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan
- MLK Jr Historic District / Zoning 2.0 draft
- Previous area plans/studies
- Plans of submitted/approved developments

STUDIO SCHEDULE

Week 1 **Process Overview & Urban Design Principles**

- M, Aug 24 Schedule, Data Collection overview
- W, Aug 26 Document overview, Interviews prep
- F, Aug 28 Working Group meeting

Week 2 **Baseline Research & Site Visit**

- M, Aug 31 Existing Conditions, Site Visits prep, Document outline
- W, Sep 2 Interviews, Site Visits, Data Collection, Document outline
- F, Sep 4 Interviews, Site Visits, Data Collection, Document outline

Week 3 **Stakeholder Interviews**

- W, Sep 9 Interviews, Site Visits, Data Collection, Document outline
- F, Sep 11 Interviews, Site Visits, Data Collection, Document outline

Week 4 Stakeholder Interviews

- M, Sep 14 Interviews, Site Visits, Data Collection, Document outline
- W, Sep 16 Interviews, Site Visits, Data Collection, Document outline
- F, Sep 18 Internal Team presentation of findings

Week 5 Concept Development

- M, Sep 21 Generate initial concepts
- W, Sep 23 Generate initial concepts
- F, Sep 25 Generate initial concepts

Week 6 Presentation Prep

- M, Sep 28 Generate initial concepts
- W, Sep 30 Generate initial concepts
- F, Oct 2 Generate initial concepts

Week 7 Presentation Prep

- W, Oct 7 Presentation prep
- F, Oct 9 Presentation dry run

Week 8 Presentation, Plan Revisions

- M, Oct 12 Presentation prep
- W, Oct 14 Working Group presentation
- F, Oct 16 Plan revisions

Week 9 Plan Revisions

- M, Oct 19 Plan revisions
- W, Oct 21 Plan revisions
- F, Oct 23 Plan revisions

Week 10 Presentation Prep

- M, Oct 26 Plan revisions
- W, Oct 28 Plan revisions
- F, Oct 30 Plan revisions

Week 11 Presentation Prep

- M, Nov 2 Presentation prep
- W, Nov 4 Presentation prep
- F, Nov 6 Presentation prep / presentation dry-run

Week 12 Presentation, Plan Revisions

- M, Nov 9 Presentation prep
- W, Nov 11 Working Group presentation
- F, Nov 13 Document production

Week 13 Plan Revisions, Document Production

- M, Nov 16 Document production
- W, Nov 18 Document production
- F, Nov 20 Document production

Week 14 Document Production

- M, Nov 23 Draft document due for review/comment

Week 15 Document Production

- M, Nov 30 Working Group comments, Document production
- W, Dec 2 Document production
- F, Dec 4 Document production

Week 16 Final Document Deliverable

- M, Dec 7 Final document deliverable
- F, Dec 18 Document sent to Working Group

WORKING GROUP

NAME	ORGANIZATION	ROLE	EMAIL
Nate Hoelzel	City of Atlanta	Team Lead, DCP City Studio	nhoelzel@atlantaga.gov
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