ATP Final Report

“Village of Cuba Master Plan”

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May 4, 2011

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Final Report Narrative

Name of Project: Cuba, N.Y. Master Plan
Grant Period: January 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011

Grantee Name: Alfred State College
Project Director: Craig R Clark

William Dean, A.I.A., Professor
Rex Simpson, A.I.A., Professor
Jeffrey Johnston, Assistant Professor
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Description of Project:

This project was designed to continue a community based approach to urban design studies in the Department of Computer Imaging and Architectural Engineering Technology. As the first step in our collaboration with the Village of Cuba, the CIAT 7306 - Urban Design Studio at Alfred State College used the charrette process to analyze and re-present ideas generated during the Cuba Comprehensive Economic Development Planning Project (completed earlier by a professional planning group). This analysis provided the platform for students to develop a conceptual vision for returning Cuba to a level of prominence reflective of its historic past.

Objectives:
1. Educate students and demonstrate the ability to work individually and as part of a team in analyzing the existing conditions of, and generating ideas for, the revitalization of the Village of Cuba.
2. Teach students to research and document the subject area, analyze and synthesize the material generated, and respond to site context variables and community needs in creating a conceptual master plan that illustrates development in phases.
3. Train students to present their ideas in a public forum including faculty, design professionals, and community residents.
4. Teach students to use multiple graphic methods to document the physical environment of Cuba through the use of three-dimensional physical and computer models to educate the public and demonstrate concepts.
5. Develop college and community partnerships that contribute to the revitalization of Cuba.

Activities:

Site Analysis Phase:

1. Students were assigned a site context variable to document and research individually as part of a Site Analysis Report. The report included an approach to the documentation (places), research (sources), and presentation (ideas) of your assigned site context variable on the scheduled site visit to Cuba as part of a coordinated studio effort.

2. Students visited Cuba on September 29. An introductory presentation was made by the Mayor and several members of the Village Board at the Cuba Village Hall. A tour of the several historical buildings key to the revitalization effort and municipal buildings, libraries, and the Historical Society.

3. Following the site visit, each studio worked together to refine and coordinate the collected information into a seamless Site Analysis presentation of Cuba, NY. This included additional research of the site and the project. This presentation graphically addressed the following questions:
   • What municipalities, districts, or neighborhoods exist within Cuba and what positive neighborhood context (or other man-made features) can be drawn upon for inspiration in the future design development of the area? Is there neighborhood context that should not be taken into consideration?
- What are the most compelling aspects of Cuba’s geographic location, demographics, and history (up to present day) that might influence future design decisions?
- What is the Development Density of Cuba and its relationship to surrounding municipalities in the county? How would you describe Community Connectivity relative to residences, basic commercial services, and pedestrian access between the two?
- What natural, physical features in Cuba are most prominent and should be taken into consideration?
- How do the sun patterns, wind direction, and overall climate affect Cuba at different times of day and at different times of the year?
- How do vehicles (public and private) and pedestrians move around, on, and through Cuba and its municipalities/districts/neighborhoods? What options exist for public transportation and parking?
- What sensory experiences (sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures) are unique to Cuba and might be drawn upon for inspiration during design?
- How might the local zoning ordinance affect the physical characteristics of future site use and municipal/district/neighborhood development?
- Are there any locally, nationally, or internationally recognized interventions that can be studied as examples of urban design excellence on a similar scale?

4. The Site Analysis portion of the master plan was presented at the college on October 8, 2010.
5. Based on a review of the site analysis information, each group conducted a mini-charrette between October 8 and 11.
6. On November 5, 2010, the final master plan was presented to a jury of peers, faculty, and community guests.
7. The presentation in Washington DC was a highlight of this community based project.

Project Outcomes:

The project was very successful; the Cuba Village Board has had numerous discussions about the project. The student posters were on display in Cuba and at the Rochester Regional Community Design Center (RRCDC). The Urban Design Studio at Alfred State and the RRCDC have partnered previously on several similar master planning efforts in the Rochester area.

1. A community partnership was developed through the development of a master plan for the community.
2. Students learned how to work with a community and respond to their needs as a client.
3. A network was developed, and future projects will develop, based on this relationship.
4. This type of project is a model on how to work with local communities through a local academic institution.
5. Working through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and being allowed to present at the conference in Washington DC exposed the students to other communities and how the ARC integrates in other communities.
6. The project will allow the Cuba community to further develop avenues to obtain funding for improvement to the community using the master plan.
7. This model will be used to develop a relationship with other communities in the region.
8. This project and other such planning projects will be shared with Southern Tier West (STW) so these types of plans can be incorporated into the STW planning process for the region.

Problems Encountered:

Physical / legal documentation of property lines and accurate building information was difficult to obtain.
Project Continuation and Sustainability:

Discussions with Cuba have continued and during the current spring 2011 semester and Professor William Dean has involved additional students from Studio 3 in the project. The Urban Design Studio is scheduled revisit the Cuba master plan during the fall 2011 semester.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

The study was a success in building stronger relationships in the region. The master plan will be useful to the community to focus on grant opportunities to improve the community and to focus on specific improvements within the community. Planning is the first important step in many small rural communities. But, without assistance, most small rural communities lack the resources to fully plan. This model of academic and community involvement will be used in other communities. Faculty and students are continuing to work with this community and will expand to other communities as well.