

**“Visualizing a New Town Center
in Southport, New York”**

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Title of Project: Visualizing a New Town Center in Southport, New York

Grant Period: February 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016

Grantee Name: Alfred State College

Project Director: Dr. Craig Clark

Description of Project:

In Fall 2015, Professor William Dean, instructor in the Architecture and Design Department's senior Urban Design Studio selected the Chemung County Town of Southport, New York, as the subject for a semester-long community visualization study. Working individually and in small groups, 12 students researched and documented the subject area and completed a Neighborhood Development Analysis which included a visual survey of the defined physical characteristics that represent urban design excellence and design linkages in the neighborhood pattern and design of the community. The reports also took into consideration conversations with area residents and local officials and a recently-adopted comprehensive plan that outlined the municipality's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The information generated during these initial efforts was used as a point of departure to illustrate and explain a positive vision for sustainability and growth of Southport through community engagement. Students attended public meetings intended to identify sites within the community which are underutilized, have future development potential, or are being promoted for future development by local officials. The studio then completed a study focused on visualizing suggestions for the appropriate development of a new town center five, 10, and 15 years in the future. The community visualization study included action items for implementation and was presented publicly by the students to community residents.

Activities:

1. Students were assigned a project to document and research aspects of the town in preparation for completing the community visualization study. This phase included the documentation (places), research (sources), and presentation (ideas) of the assigned *project* as part of a coordinated studio effort.
2. Students visited Southport on September 4 and had the opportunity to interview Supervisor David Sheen and Town Councilwoman and Deputy Supervisor Kathy Szerszen during a guided tour of the town. Also present to offer her expertise was Nicolette Barber, Planner at Hunt Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors who prepared the town's comprehensive plan. The students walked/drove around the town's commercial districts, residential neighborhoods, and public parks, and toured several sites key to the revitalization effort.

3. Following the site visit, the studio group worked together to refine and coordinate the collected information into a seamless Neighborhood Development Analysis of Southport. Students shared this information to the faculty and each other on September 18 in a presentation which included additional research of the site and the project using LEED ND criteria that graphically addressed the following issues:

- Walkable Streets
- Compact Development
- Connected and Open Community
- Walkable Streets
- Compact Development
- Mixed-Use Neighborhoods
- Housing Types and Affordability
- Reduced Parking Footprint
- Connected and Open Community
- Transit Facilities
- Transportation Demand Management
- Access to Civic & Public Space
- Access to Recreation Facilities
- Visitability and Universal Design
- Community Outreach and Involvement
- Local Food Production
- Tree-Lined and Shaded Streetscapes
- Neighborhood Schools

NPD CREDIT 2: COMPACT DEVELOPMENT (0 OUT OF 6 POINTS EARNED)



INTENT
To encourage development in existing areas to conserve land and protect farmland and wildlife habitat. To promote livability, walkability, and transportation efficiency, including reduced vehicle distance traveled. To improve public health encouraging daily physical activity associated with alternative modes of transportation and compact development.

LEED Requirements
Residential:
-Must have a minimum of 11 dwelling units per acre.
Commercial:
-Must have a minimum of 0.75 FAR.

SUMMARY
The town of Southport does not meet the LEED prerequisite or the credit for compact development. This has to do in part because of the lack of high density housing and multi dwelling unit complexes for the residential aspect. The commercial zone is measured by calculating the floor area to lot size ratio. This also does not meet the minimum requirement but could be solved rather easily.

Residential Density (DU/Acre)	Commercial Density (FAR)	Points
> 10 and ≤ 13	> 0.75 and ≤ 1.00	1
> 13 and ≤ 18	> 1.00 and ≤ 1.25	2
> 18 and ≤ 25	> 1.25 and ≤ 1.75	3
> 25 and ≤ 38	> 1.75 and ≤ 2.25	4
> 38 and ≤ 63	> 2.25 and ≤ 3.00	5
> 63	> 3.00	6



4. The students held an in-studio design charrette on September 21 to generate ideas for future development. The studio was divided into groups based on areas of focus to review the village's comprehensive plan, brainstorm ideas, and begin the visualization process. At the end of the day each group presented their work for discussion.



5. Based on a review of the Neighborhood Develop Analysis information and ideas generated during the design charrette, the initial community visualization study concepts were presented in Alfred State's Student Leadership Center on October 9. The audience included students and faculty along with Supervisor David Sheen and Town Councilwoman and Deputy Supervisor Kathy Szerszen, and Nicolette Barber, Planner at Hunt Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors, who provided feedback to the students.



6. On November 11, Professor William Dean accompanied 12 fourth-year architecture students to the Southport Fire Hall for a public presentation of their Community Visualization Study of the Town of Southport. Participating from Alfred State were Elizabeth Deuell, Stacy Duink, Clayton Lounsbery, Serif Hajdarevic, Shane Joyce, Chiharu Kamioka, Eric Lipes, Brady Morrison, Elizabeth Parker, Jayson Perrine, Andrew Scott, Kodie Tompkins. Students presented their designs, which were based on the town's newly-adopted comprehensive plan, to an audience of town officials and interested residents. The event was sponsored by the Town of Southport.



7. At the conclusion of the project, student work was placed on display at the Community Design Center of Rochester gallery where it opened as part of the center's "First Friday" open house on December 4. The work was on display through January 2016.



8. The presentation in Washington DC, in December 2015, was a highlight of this community based project.
9. The Town of Southport is actively seeking an Alfred State intern to assist them in creating additional images to attract potential developers for strategic locations identified in the community visualization study.

Project Outcomes:

A successful community partnership was developed with the Town of Southport through the development of the community visualization study.

1. This project developed a partnership between the Chemung County Town of Southport and Alfred State in serving the Appalachian area of New York State. The project was presented to the elected officials and residents on November 11, 2015.
2. This project served as a model for creating sustainable communities in Chemung County by capitalizing and highlighting their assets through the community visualization study.
3. This project is consistent with the goals of the ARC strategic plan developing a plan for the sustainability of Southport.
4. This project developed a network of students and faculty across the region who may continue research and service partnerships beyond the current project – expanding this project to include grant-based funding for future classes using the study that was developed.
5. This project developed leadership and civic engagement opportunities among students involved in the project by working with the local and rural communities.
6. 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 is integrated into other communities.
7. The project enhanced the ability for the Southport community to further develop avenues to obtain funding for improvement to the community using the master plan.

Problems Encountered:

Participation by the public officials in Southport was excellent, and town business owner and resident participation was relatively strong. There were no significant problems encountered that necessitated a deviation from the original project proposal.

Program Continuation and Sustainability:

Short-term impact – This specific project in Southport is complete. However, the Supervisor has indicated the desire to carry some of the student ideas forward in the near future.

Long-term impact – The program has had inquiries from nearby communities regarding future projects. Next year the Urban Design Studio will select another municipality in an adjacent county to assist with a community visualization study.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

The project has been a success for both Alfred State students and the residents of Southport. The public officials involved with the Southport comprehensive plan have expressed that they will be using the student work as a stepping stone to more detailed project exploration, and for pursuing grants to achieve some of the objectives set forth in the project. We expect that architecturally-related student engagement activities in New York's Southern Tier will be ongoing for the near future. Professor William Dean committed 60% of his time in the fall semester design studio class for this project which is well in excess of the of the required total match of \$1,500, which fulfills the committed cost share for Alfred State College



Presentation On Southport's Commercial Future

Alfred State students present their suggestions

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Alfred State College students are helping Southport officials plan for the future.

The college's architectural students gave a presentation this week of their vision of the town's commercial districts for the next five, ten and fifteen years out.

Alfred State Design Studio student, Clayton Lounsberry said, "We're working in Center Southport, Universal Hill District and the Lower Mount Zoar District and we have a little bit of combination between commercial and residential. So our commercial plan is to basically increase density, walkability and connectivity between the different shops."

Examples of that include putting walking trails behind Southport Plaza along Seeley Creek to increase access to those stores.

The presentation also talked about having shops downstairs and housing upstairs in buildings in bulkhead.

Their project was one of several efforts to implement the town's 2014 comprehensive plan.

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