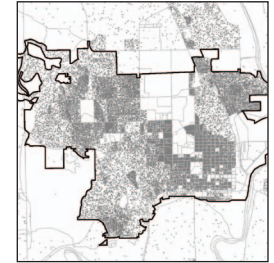
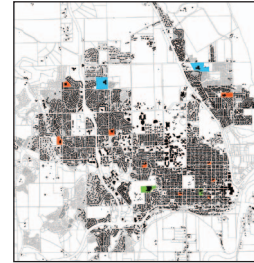
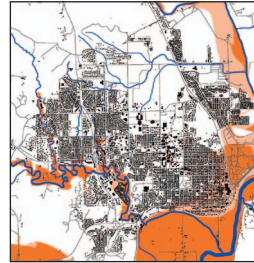
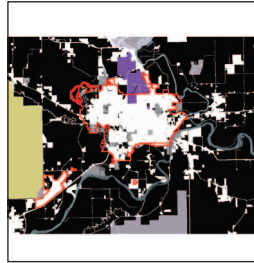
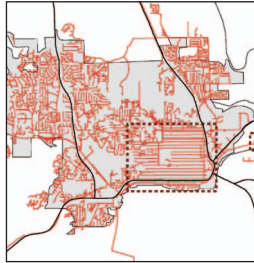
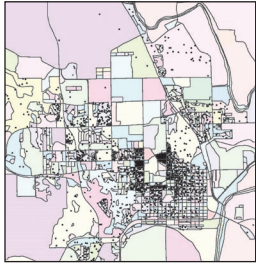


MKS*futures*

Maps and images from MKS*futures*. Full report available for free download at lulu.com.



After the Department of Homeland Security selected Manhattan, Kansas, to become the home of the National Bio Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) earlier this year, it became clear that the city was going to change. While the facility itself will bring many new jobs and families to the region, population growth will be amplified by the associated private-sector bioresearch industry. Simultaneously, a surge of new families will continue arriving in Manhattan and the surrounding communities as a result of the Fort Riley base expansion. How these changes will affect the people of Manhattan is the question on everyone's mind, and Kansas State University landscape architecture graduate students spent this past summer developing visions for Manhattan's future.

The Landscape Architecture Community Planning and Design summer studio, aptly called "MKS*futures*," focused on identifying the key issues and dilemmas facing Manhattan and developed visionary

strategies for moving the city toward positive new futures. Through the studio, the students had the opportunity to integrate coursework and service to their community in very tangible ways. The graduate design studio was comprised of students in the third year of the non-baccalaureate Master of Landscape Architecture degree (NBMLA) and students in the first year of the post-baccalaureate Master of Landscape Architecture degree (PBMLA).

The studio was taught through an interdisciplinary collaboration of Assistant Professor Blake Belanger, landscape architecture, and Assistant Professor Jason Brody, regional and community planning.

This summer was a particularly opportune time to engage in such work. While plans for the NBAF facilities themselves are well developed, planning for the anticipated private-sector research facilities and general growth within the community is only just beginning.

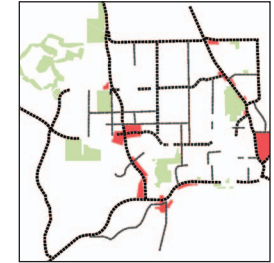
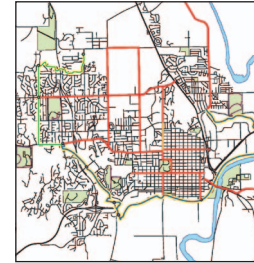
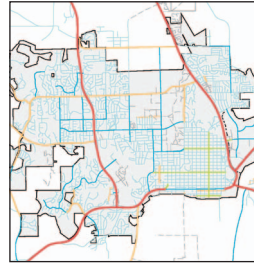
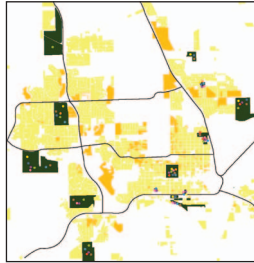
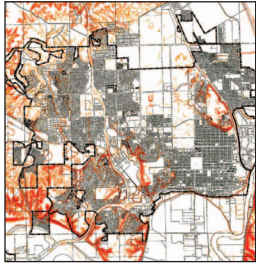
NBAF will catalyze growth in knowledge industries to an extent that has not yet been seen in Manhattan. The research and planning strategies proposed by students will be available to Manhattan's planning department as it evaluates the coming changes.

"This is an opportune time for our students to bring the planning and design skills they have shared with so many communities in our region home to Manhattan," said Stephanie Rolley, professor and head of the Department of Landscape Architecture/Regional and Community Planning. "We know that Manhattan is going to change, the question yet to be answered is what that change will look like and how our community will function in the future. The students have provided rich material for discussion."

Students were not given a formal program for the studio. Instead, they were called on to develop their own proposals, grounded in their investigation of all aspects of

Manhattan and their assessment of the critical dilemmas facing the region. Individual projects therefore stemmed from a unique framing of complex issues, generating a rich and substantiated set of ideas.

An important part of the process was a critical mapping sequence instituted by the studio professors. Critical mapping is a mode of inquiry that systematically relates conditions, dilemmas and design interventions toward strategic resolutions. It calls for processing and reassembly of new information in a rapid, iterative fashion. Students conducted a new cycle of critical mapping each week for several consecutive weeks. Each Monday, they began by exploring a range of focused research topics. By Tuesday, they were identifying critical considerations and opportunities for action, and by Friday they presented strategic design resolutions. They ended each week by editing their work to separate what was important from the rest. The following Monday would begin with new research



topics, thus building a layered body of work that integrated research and design.

“Linear design processes sometimes frame inquiry as a set of discrete tasks,” Brody explained. “We developed the critical mapping process because we didn’t want students to think of analysis and design as separate things. Analytical investigation involves critical design thinking, and design demands analytical inquiry. For us, design is less about sequences of analysis/design as much as it is oscillating between immersion and detached reflection. The students really embraced this challenge, and it shows in the way they were able to bring a designer’s way of thinking to planning and analytical parts of the project.”

The ten student projects included a variety of proposals that ranged in scope from regional plans to site or block-scale interventions. The projects were loosely grouped

into three categories: Connecting Networks, Intensifying Cores and Regulating Frameworks. The projects in Connecting Networks focused on stitching isolated parts of Manhattan into the urban fabric or proposing new forms of transit. Re-envisioning density, infrastructure and design of city or neighborhood centers were common threads defining the projects in Intensifying Cores. These projects proposed redeveloping underutilized sites and reimagining existing urban nodes. The projects in Regulating Frameworks included new policy planning defined by watershed, rethinking the way people value streets and establishing high-density communities coupled with conservation districts. Each project addressed specific dilemmas that the student teams identified as important.

The studio work was exhibited in Seaton Hall at the conclusion of the course. During the exhibit opening, the students helped to stimulate discussion and outside-the-box

thinking among members of the public and the university community, a goal set by the studio professors early in the course. “We realized immediately that in order to make a difference, the work needed to capture the imagination of Manhattan residents and decision-makers,” states Belanger. “Manhattan can go in many different directions from this point, so we encouraged the students to imagine a vast range of possibilities. We really pushed them, and they did a phenomenal job developing visionary strategies. This studio work has potential to influence the future of Manhattan.”

Members of the community attended the exhibit opening and spoke with students about their research and design proposals. “Their projects really helped clarify dilemmas the city will face or has been facing,” remarked Manhattan resident Scott Tanona. “They’ve developed some very nice examples of how planning ahead for the changes we’ll be seeing, instead of reacting to them,

might create an opportunity to reshape the space around us to serve a range of uses, and make a real positive impact on life in Manhattan.”

The “MKS*futures*” studio helped lay the foundation for a second community planning effort, Design Week, which took place in the department during the second week of the fall 2009 semester. Design Workshop, an internationally-based landscape architecture and urban design firm, will engage Kansas State University landscape architecture and planning students in a five-day design charrette to develop design proposals for “MORE MANHATTAN!”

Professors Belanger and Brody are co-authoring a paper entitled “Critical Mapping: Agency and Strategy in Landscape Architecture Studio” that documents the studio pedagogy and the students’ work. They will present the paper at The International Conference of Design Principles and Practices in Chicago in February, 2010.

Student Participants in “MKSfutures”

Lee Adams, St. Joseph, MO
Caitlin Admire, Evergreen, CO
Kirby Barrett, Winona, KS
Benjamin Carlson, Colorado Springs, CO
Felipe DeNarvaez, St. Louis, MO
Ryan Dietrich, Alliance, NE
Chadd Fuemmeler, Columbia, MO
Allison Gerth, Manhattan, KS
Jeffery Graham, St. Joseph, MO
Heather Grogan, St. Louis, MO
Rebecca Ingram, Omaha, NE
Emily King, Brentwood, MO
John Mahoney, St. Joseph, MO
Timothy McDonnell, Olathe, KS
Charles McDowell, Platte Woods, MO
Anthony Meyer, St. Charles, MO
Cory Murner, Custer, SD
Russell Ploutz, Hutchinson, KS
Scott Runde, Wildwood, MO
Jonathan Ryan, Winfield, MO
Krystal Schuette, Washington, KS
Christopher Simon, Garden Plain, KS
Daniel Smith, Twin Falls, ID
Scot Talbert, Provo, UT
Jaime Vickrey, Sweet Springs, MO
Kyle Ward, Hutchinson, KS
Laura Weatherholt, Tulsa, OK
Jordan Wilkinson, St. Charles, MO
Jane Winslow, Manhattan, KS
Shannon Yost, Olathe, KS

Faculty Participants in “MKSfutures”

Assistant Professor Blake Belanger
Assistant Professor Jason Brody

