

Title: "Walkable Urban Development; a Discourse on Research and Trends "

Presented by Dustin Sommer

4:00pm February 17, 2011

Abstract:

Current economic and demographic trends have presented large unsatisfied demand for walkable urban environments. The development of these livable walkable places is very complex and calls for an integrated design methodology that challenges standard development practice. The roles of engineers, architects, and investors in the evolution of the built environment are poised for redefinition and it is the opportunity of the next generation of researchers and practitioners to advance the practice.

In my graduate study, I am working to see how my engineering background can be synthesized with architecture and business to advance the practice and strive to produce these walkable and livable urban communities. The work focuses on transportation as the physical mechanism spawning development and following the research of Christopher Leinberger and Richard Florida I am looking to combine architectural design, history, and theory into a synthesis. Through case studies the presentation will illustrate the trends and drivers of walkable urban environments presently or recently built and throughout I hope to posit my ideas on the synthesis of the three fields towards a more sophisticated real estate development role.

Bio:

Dustin holds a B.S. of Civil Engineering with a focus in transportation from Michigan Technological University and is currently at the University of Michigan studying Architecture as a Graduate Student while simultaneously earning a Graduate Certificate in Real Estate Development. During his first year and a half at Michigan, Dustin has taken coursework most notably from Chris Leinberger in his two walkable urbanism courses in Washington, D.C. and Toronto. As an active board member of the Real Estate Club, Dustin has also traveled to both New York City and Chicago to meet with companies in the Real Estate Development industry and was selected as one of the winners of the UM/ULI Real Estate Forum Essay Competition this past fall for his writing on what Flint, Michigan has to do to draw him as a resident and how the city can accomplish it. He is pursuing a special interest in his own work to synthesize his engineering background with real estate development practices and architectural design to advance the discipline of developing walkable urban places.