

UC San Diego

**DEPARTMENT OF URBAN STUDIES & PLANNING
RED SENIOR STUDIO CAPSTONE ORIENTATION
April 20, 2026**

RED SENIOR STUDIO CAPSTONE ACADEMIC PLANNING

- Comprised of USP 185A (4 units) in the Fall and USP 185B in Winter (4 units)
- Prereqs for 185A: USP 5, USP 15, USP 25, USP 50, **USP 124 (offered this summer with a waitlist of 2), USP 151 (offered this summer), USP 152A (offered this quarter, not in the summer), and USP 153 (offered this quarter, not in the summer)**
- Prereqs for 185B:
 - USP 185A and Technical Elective
- Prereq grades must be D or higher to be allowed to register for the capstone classes, if received a D in any major requirements will be required to retake for graduation

RED SENIOR STUDIO CAPSTONE ACADEMIC PLANNING

- Missing any prereqs? Prereqs are firm!
 - USP 124 (Summer Session 1) and USP 151 (Summer Session 1) are the only upper div prereqs being offered in Summer 2026.
 - Summer classes run IF minimum enrollments are met, otherwise subject to cancellation. If you need it - enroll early.
- Fall Enrollment: The Fall 2026 schedule of classes will be posted online in July.
 - Once it is posted submit a preauthorization request for USP 185A IF you have not completed the exact prereqs of USP 50, 124, 151 AND have senior standing. If you have senior standing and have completed the prereqs you do not need to submit a preauthorization request.
 - If you still need to complete USP 124 or 151 you will need to be enrolled/waitlisted for it during summer to be approved to enroll in USP 185A and we will also verify you completed the course(s) once Summer Session grades have been posted.

RED SENIOR STUDIO CAPSTONE ACADEMIC PLANNING

- Fall Enrollment:
 - If you have junior standing and are taking the RED capstone in what would appear as your junior year due to either double majoring or trying to graduate early or study abroad your senior year you will need to explain that in your preauthorization request.
 - All students eligible to complete the RED capstone will be guaranteed a seat in one of the USP 185A sections. If you have a strong preference for class times or instructors, you should first pass that section because while we will guarantee enrollment in 185A we can't guarantee you'll get a specific section or instructor.

RED SENIOR STUDIO CAPSTONE ACADEMIC PLANNING

- Course recommendations:
 - USP 152B in Fall 2026 concurrently with 185A (helps with financial modeling), USP 152B will count as an upper div elective
 - Technical elective: USP 175 Site Analysis
- The capstone culminates in the Urban Expo on Thursday, March 11, 2027
- Take 2 minutes to review your Degree Audit Report. Questions about general university requirements (AHI, DEI, gen eds, 180 units, upper div units, residency, etc) go to your college. Questions about your RED major requirements/academic plan should be directed to Dawn.

Tips to Succeed

- Prioritize these courses! Dropping or not passing results in graduation being delayed
- Be a good teammate - your reputation follows you
- Communicate if any issues arise both to your professor/TA and to your team
- These are excellent projects to showcase on your resume

USP 185A Overview

- This class is not:
 - Designed to teach you how to do the exercise or to teach you “new” material.
- This class is:
 - Designed to help you apply the skills you have learned and to think critically about a real-world project.
 - Refine your skill set.
 - Be a marketing tool for yourself to future employers/ graduate schools.
- Six assignments over the course of the quarter
 - 3 individual, 3 2-person groups
 - Covers Demographic Analysis, Site Analysis, Market Analysis, Financial Analysis

USP 185B Overview

- This course is the second of a two-quarter senior sequence capstone course for Real Estate and Development (RED) majors in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning (USP). The course is designed to leverage the knowledge and skills students have developed throughout their academic career in a collaborative environment on a real-world development site by analyzing the potential land uses, site constraints, financial considerations, and local market realities. The end result is a development proposal for a project that represents the highest and best use for the site.

Examples - Site Analysis (USP 124*, 175)

Zoning		
Ft/Du		200
CCHS	Tier 2	
Zoning	CC-3-10	
FAR		8
Max Units (Prebonus)		280
Floors (above podium)		9
Total Floors		10
du/floor		31
Max Height	None	

Table 5.3: 535 Robinson Zoning; ScoutRed 2024

Complete Communities Housing Solutions

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Allowances : December 13, 2022

- FAR Tier 1: No Limit on FAR
- FAR Tier 2: 8.0 FAR
- FAR Tier 3: 6.5 FAR
- FAR Tier 4: 4.0 FAR
- Coastal Zone and Coastal Height Overlay Zone: 2.5 FAR

Municipal Code - Chapter 13

[Chap 13 Art 01 Div 01, General Rules for Base Zones](#) PDF

[Chap 13 Art 01 Div 02, Open Space Base Zones](#) PDF

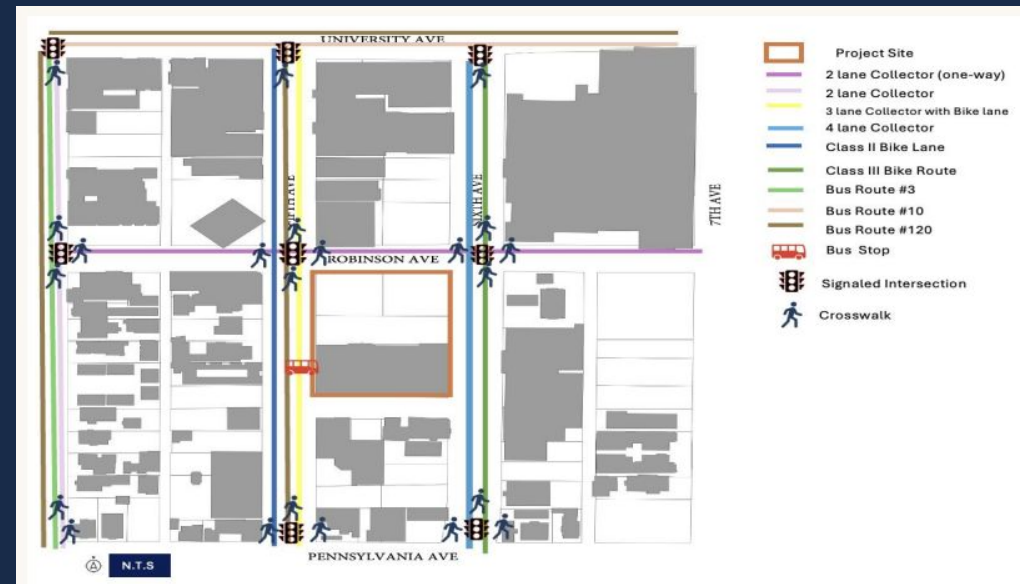
[Chap 13 Art 01 Div 03, Agricultural Base Zones](#) PDF

[Chap 13 Art 01 Div 04, Residential Base Zones](#) PDF

[Chap 13 Art 01 Div 05, Commercial Base Zones](#) PDF

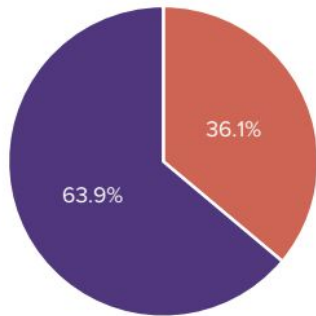
[Chap 13 Art 01 Div 06, Industrial Base Zones](#) PDF

[Chap 13 Art 01 Div 07, Mixed-Use Base Zones](#) PDF

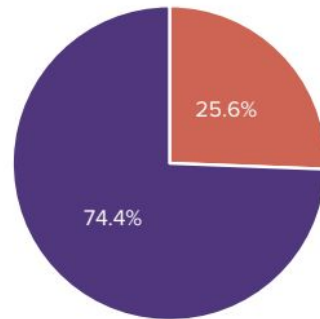


Examples - Demographic Analysis (USP 5*, 25*, 153*)

Housing Tenure

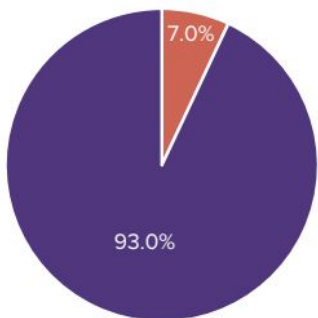


Household Composition

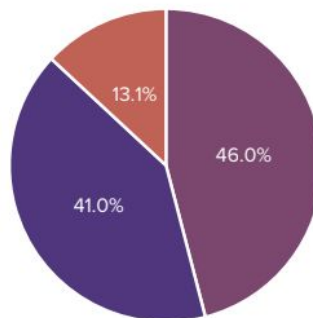


■ Owner Occupied ■ Renter Occupied ■ Family Households ■ Nonfamily Households

Children Presence (Renters)



Household Size



■ With Children ■ Without Children ■ 1-Person ■ 2-Person ■ 3 or More

 Social Explorer

Explore Maps

American Community Surveys (5-Year Estimates)

ACS 5-Year Estimates (available down to the Census Block Group geography) data plus Social Explorer tables which include easy reports with age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, household relationship, place of birth, education, employment status, income, tenure, cost and value of housing, year structure built and other data.

American Community Survey (ACS) 2019--2023 (5-Year-Estimates)

NEW

[Begin Report](#)

[More info](#)

American Community Survey (ACS) 2018--2022 (5-Year-Estimates)

[Begin Report](#)

[More info](#)

American Community Survey (ACS) 2017--2021 (5-Year Estimates)

[Begin Report](#)

[More info](#)

Examples - Market Analysis (USP 15*, 153*)

Comparable and market trends analysis

1 | THE EVOC - 3935 Normal St



Year Built: 2023
Vacancy: 1%
Parking Spots:

Unit Mix				
Unit Type	# of Units	SF	Rent	Rent / SF
Studio	0	0	\$ -	\$ -
1 Bed	77	575	\$2,727.00	\$4.74
2 Bed	5	800	\$3,601.00	\$4.50
Total	82	64,255		

Table 4.1 - Unit Mix for the Evoc

Source: CoStar

2 | THE WINSLOW - 4353 Park Blvd



Year Built: 2023
Vacancy: 8.5%
Parking Spots: 542

Unit Mix				
Unit Type	# of Units	SF	Rent	Rent / SF
Studio	142	546	\$2,577.00	\$4.72
1 Bed	112	770	\$3,272.00	\$4.25
2 Bed	125	1,214	\$4,520.00	\$3.72
Total	379	315,522		

Table 4.2 - Unit Mix for the Winslow

Source: CoStar

3 | THE NASH - 4135 Park Blvd



Year Built: 2024
Vacancy: 11%
Parking Spots:

Unit Mix				
Unit Type	# of Units	SF	Rent	Rent / SF
Studio	82	437	\$2,497.00	\$5.71
1 Bed	96	591	\$3,105.00	\$5.25
2 Bed	12	763	\$3,915.00	\$5.13
Total	190	101,726		

Table 4.3 - Unit Mix for the Nash

Source: CoStar

4 | THE MÖDE - 635 Robinson Ave

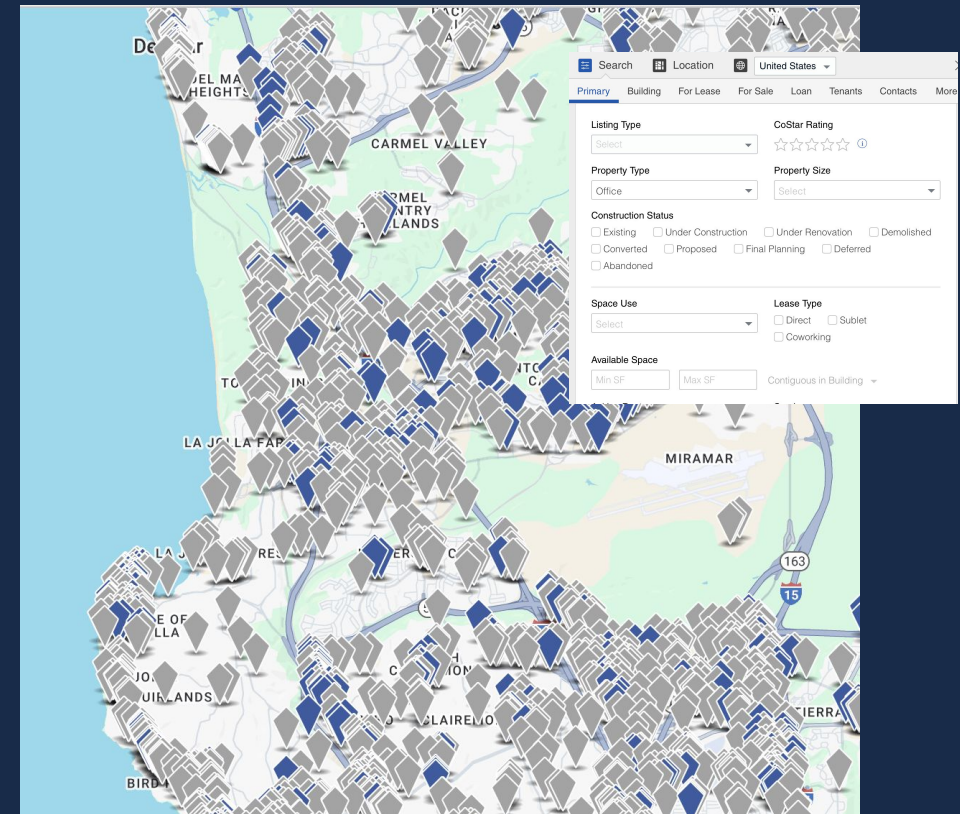


Year Built: 2022
Vacancy: 12.6%
Parking Spots:

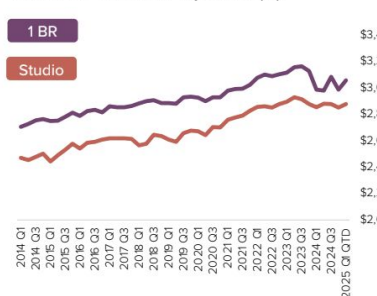
Unit Mix				
Unit Type	# of Units	SF	Rent	Rent / SF
Studio	24	592	\$2,472.00	\$4.18
1 Bed	43	786	\$3,071.00	\$3.91
2 Bed	44	1,194	\$4,227.00	\$3.54
Total	111	100,542		

Table 4.4 - Unit Mix for the Möde

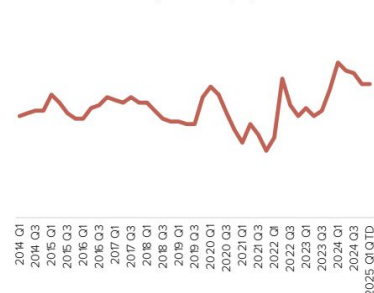
Source: CoStar



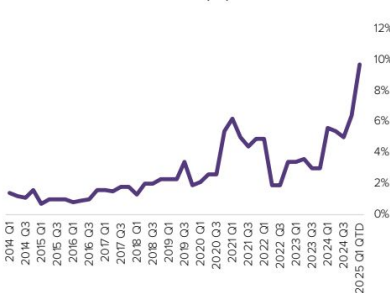
Effective Rents in Uptown (\$)



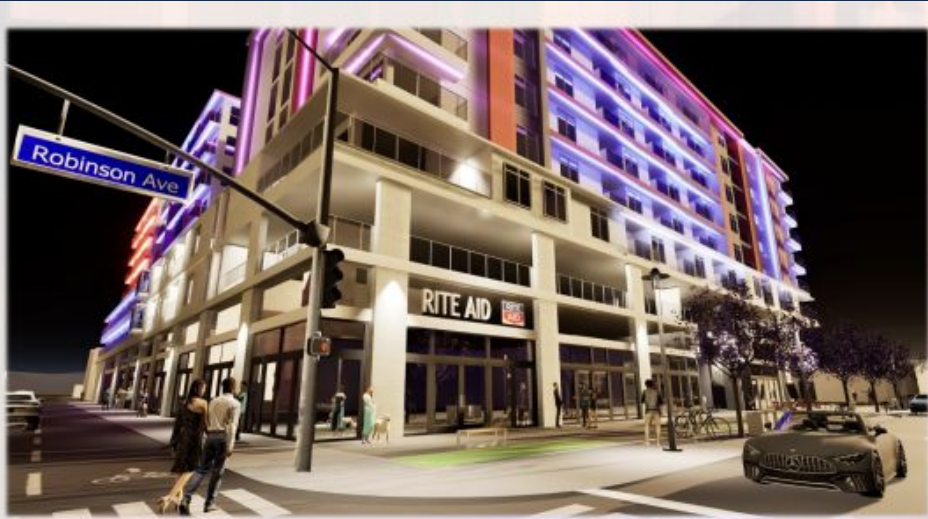
Overall Vacancy Rates (%)



Under Construction (%)



Examples - Architecture Rendering (USP 175, 177A/B)



Sketchup rendering of public space



Examples - Poster Design (USP 175)

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

LATE 1900s: Hillcrest originated as a middle-class residential area.

MID-1900s: Became a haven for marginalized communities and became a center for LGBTQ+ activism and culture.

1970s-80s: The San Diego LGBT Community Center was established in Hillcrest in 1973, strengthening local advocacy. The neighborhood played a key role in LGBTQ+ political activism, especially during the HIV/AIDS crisis.

TODAY: Hillcrest is known for its rainbow crosswalks, colorful murals, and inclusive atmosphere. It features local businesses, trendy restaurants, and unique shops. The town hosts the annual San Diego Pride parade, one of the largest in the country. Continues to symbolize creativity, inclusivity, and community.



CONTEXT MAP

- Legend**
- HOSPITAL
 - AIRPORT
 - PARK
 - RETAIL CENTER
 - BLUE LINE TROLLEY STOP
 - GREEN LINE TROLLEY STOP
 - FREEWAY
 - BLUE LINE TROLLEY ROUTE
 - GREEN LINE TROLLEY ROUTE



VISION & BRANDING

Inspired by the meaning of "Brio" and the bold colors from the flag for pansexual pride, BRIO: Hillcrest envisions a colorfully designed mixed-use development with ground floor retail and residential units above. The BRIO will offer market rate and affordable units embracing a diverse range of income and social groups, and it will feature a large public space that encourages social connection. Additionally, the project will promote more sustainable urban living and transportation with green space, electric vehicle chargers, and a bus stop renovation. At the BRIO, everyone belongs.



BRIO [bree-oh] noun
Quality of being active or spirited or alive and vigorous
Synonyms: VIVACITY | VERVE

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

MARKET RATE RESIDENTIAL	# OF UNITS	SF	AVG RENT	AVG RENT / SF
STUDIO	131	440	\$2,500.00	\$5.68
1-BEDROOM	112	550	\$3,100.00	\$5.64
2-BEDROOM	22	750	\$4,000.00	\$5.33
AFFORDABLE RESIDENTIAL	# OF UNITS	SF	AVG RENT	AVG RENT / SF
STUDIO	53	440	\$1,809.25	\$4.11
1-BEDROOM	48	550	\$2,066.83	\$3.76
2-BEDROOM	8	750	\$2,325.75	\$3.10
RETAIL	SF	AVG RENT	AVG RENT / SF	
URBAN FURNISH GROCERY STORE	15,000	\$64,999.95	\$4.33	
LOCAL PET SUPPLY STORE	3,500	\$15,166.66	\$4.33	
PHARMACEUTICAL STORE	3,000	\$13,000.00	\$4.33	
LOCAL BAKERY	3,000	\$13,000.00	\$4.33	
COFFEE SHOP	1,500	\$6,500.00	\$4.33	

OUR STORY

The Orchid is a thoughtfully designed living space in Hillcrest's LGBTQ+ Cultural District, inspired by the **adaptability and diversity** of orchids and the community itself. As part of San Diego's *Complete Communities* initiative, 40% of its units are deed-restricted as affordable housing, ensuring accessibility for diverse economic backgrounds. More than just a residence, **The Orchid fosters community, well-being, and inclusivity, offering green spaces, fresh food access, and a true sense of belonging**—reflecting Hillcrest's enduring spirit and commitment to holistic, accessible living.

NEIGHBORHOOD OVERVIEW

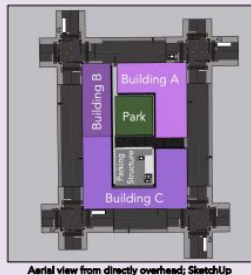


Site Address: 535 Robinson Ave, San Diego, 92103
APN: 452-063-52
Zoning: CC-3-10
Lot Size: 56,000 SF
Transit Priority Area (TPA): 10 bus stops with 1/2 mile
FAR: 8.0
Density: 1 dwelling unit per 200 SF lot area
Building Height: 70 ft.
Construction Type: 3

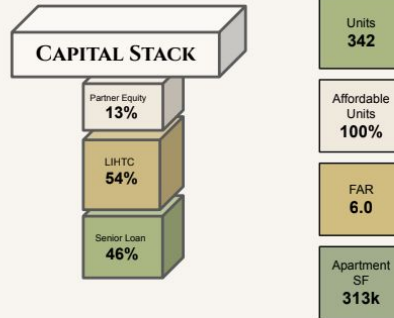


BUILDING DESIGN

- Building A**
- Floor 1: 12,223 SF Commercial Space
 - Floors 2-7: 56,104 SF Residential Space, (70 Units)
- Building B**
- Floors 1-7: 58,646 SF Residential Space, (84 Units)
- Building C**
- Floors 1-7: 112,420 SF Residential Space, (133 Units)
- Parking Structure**
- Underground Parking: 50 spaces
 - Parking Structure: 164 spaces



SEE WHY!



LIHTC: What is that?

Here's how it works:

- Developers apply for LIHTC funding based on eligible project costs.
- Tax credits are allocated at either 4% or 9% of project costs annually for 10 years.
- Developers sell these credits to investors, generating equity to finance construction and reducing loan reliance.
- In return, the housing remains affordable for at least 30 years, ensuring long-term community benefits.

This program lowers development costs, increases affordable housing supply, and attracts private capital while keeping rents affordable for low- to moderate-income residents.

Financial Metrics

Initial Investment	Equity Multiple	Sale Profits	Levered IRR
\$33.5 million	3.16	\$62.8 million	17.5%

Limited Partner Investment Classes

Investment of:	Class A	Class B	Class C
\$5,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$750,000	
Total Investment	\$5,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$750,000
Total Distribution	\$24,167,822	\$3,848,592	\$2,000,822
Total Profit	\$19,167,822	\$2,848,592	\$1,250,822
Equity Multiple	4.83	Equity Multiple	3.85
IRR	17.5%	IRR	14.6%
AAR	63.9%	AAR	47.5%
CoC	5.6%	CoC	2.8%

HUE

HILLCREST

VISION — Like different hues blending into something beautiful, communities thrive when they bring people together. With 395 residences and a thoughtfully curated mix of community driven retail, including a shared creative work quarter, a lifestyle & wellness space, and the beloved Rite Aid, HUE is more than a development — HUE is a bold statement of a place where every individual, every story, and every hue come together to form something truly remarkable.

Proposed Uses:

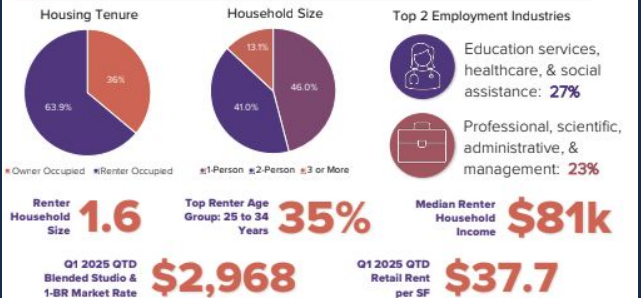
- 261K GSF of Residential (395 units)
- 12K GSF of Retail, F&B, Dog Daycare
- 4K GSF Urban Format Rite Aid
- 5K GSF of Lifestyle & Co-Working Space
- 9.5K GSF of Public Open Space (17%)
- 9K GSF of Private Open Space (15%)
- 258 Parking Bays (3/K SF Retail, 0.5/DU)

Featuring:

- HUE Haven:** 20 mid-term rental units for traveling nurses & patient families
- Robinson Promenade:** A pedestrian-first, retail-activated corridor serving Hillcrest's bustling daytime activity
- The Hues on Evans:** A curated mural walk celebrating Hillcrest's culture, people, art, and history

- H** Housing: A place to call home for all
- U** Unity: Celebrating Diversity
- E** Equity: Accessibility & Opportunity

UPTOWN DEMOGRAPHIC & MARKET DATA



- Strengths** — Highly accessible, well amenitized location attracting renter households
- Weaknesses** — The unhouses scene may discourage interested residents and customers
- Opportunities** — Thoughtful placemaking for retail visibility and appeal on the 4-sided lot
- Threats** — Economic downturns reducing consumer spending on retail and F&B

Examples - Sustainability and Health (USP 148, 151, 169)

Table 6.3: Success Benchmark for a Bus Stop Renovation as a Community Benefit

SUCCESS BENCHMARK	Community Benefit: Bus Stop Improvement	Opportunity Cost: Sidewalk	Difference
Economic Benefits			
Total Area (SF)	500(Bus Shelter and Waiting Area)	300(sidewalk only)	200SF for Bus Stop
Capital Cost	\$50,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$35,000.00
Operational Cost	\$2,500.00	\$500.00	\$2,000.00
Annual Revenue	0	0	No difference
Environmental Benefits			
Percentage of Pervious Surface	20%	5%	15%
	Green Space added Encourages alternative mode of public transportation	Concrete/Minimal green space	15% more pervious area
Public Transit		No Room for Transit Improvement	Increases Public Transit Presence
Health Benefits			
Walkability Score Increase	8 point increase	4 point increase	4 point increase
Community Benefits			
Area of Public Open Space (SF)	500(Bus Shelter and Waiting Area)	300(sidewalk only)	200SF



Image Source: Google Image



Existing Bus Stop



New Bus Stop Inspiration

Examples - Presentation (Written, Visual, Oral)

- We require a recording of your presentation

“When making investment decisions, one of our company founders always said, “prioritize the people first and the project second”. A great idea can only succeed with the right team behind it. I look for teams that have a strong vision, can articulate that vision and share their passion for the endeavor. My first ranking did the best job of introducing themselves and stating when they’ll be graduating and their future plans.”

- Capstone Jury

Tips from Previous Students

10 hr per week

33% feel prepared entering the class

Tips from Previous Students

Seeking Help and Using Resources

Take full advantage of faculty, TAs, peer feedback, and university resources.

Quotes:

“Go to office hours! It helps so much to get as much feedback as possible.”

“Don’t hesitate to seek feedback from professors, industry professionals, and your peers.”

“Reach out for help whenever needed—don’t be shy to ask!”

Tips from Previous Students

Time Management and Starting Early

Stay organized and avoid procrastination. Plan ahead, stick to a schedule, and start immediately.

Quotes:

“START EARLY, don’t leave it till the last minute.”

“Do the work. Put in the boring hours reading your data... even if it’s just a 10-minute call.”

“The week goes by fast and procrastination is your worst enemy.”

Tips from Previous Students

The Importance of Team Selection and Collaboration

The success (or failure) of the Capstone project hinges on who you work with and how you work together.

Quotes:

“Choose your teammates wisely because your graduation depends on your group effort.”

*“The most important thing is **finding a team that complements each other’s skills.** Make sure that you all share the same work ethic.”*

“Pick people with different strengths. This project is big. you do not have time to do everything yourself.”