

Fall 2020 | LA 494/594 | Portland Green Loop Virtual Studio
1-4:50 MWF | 6 cr

Post-pandemic public open space in urban core: Designing hyper-functional Green Loop in Portland, OR



Image credit: UNTITLED STUDIO

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Project Partner

The City of Portland Planning and Sustainability Urban Design Studio

Studio Description

This studio will explore how cities and their public open spaces can respond to the post-pandemic world through urban design. In particular, we are interested in responding to the [Green New Deal Superstudio](#) call by exploring how post-pandemic stimulus such as Green New Deal can drive cities to address decarbonization, equity, and green jobs. The studio project will build upon [Portland's Green Loop](#) (a linear park of pedestrian and bike-friendly streets around the central city) plan as a platform and re-envision the enhanced role of public open spaces and place-making in the urban core for the (post)-COVID-19 era. We will integrate various types of green infrastructures, smart technologies, and public health measures along the Green Loop to address post-pandemic urban design for equity, jobs, and climate actions. We will explore how to design its vertical and horizontal surfaces to be more "hyper-functional" that can accommodate various land uses by increasing multifunctionality and land-use efficiency, which will allow the health and well-being of urban core residents in the climate-changing era.

Portland's Green Loop Project

The Green Loop is a six-mile linear park (including paths for walking, jogging, rolling and biking) that makes a loop through Downtown, Portland State University, the Lloyd District and the Central Eastside. It connects open spaces and finds opportunities for new open spaces where there are deficiencies. It is one of the big ideas that emerged from the community planning process for the Central City 2035 Plan. It's also part of a growth strategy that will allow us to keep moving people and commerce in and out of the city's core via a healthy web of connectivity throughout the city.

Why Central City?

The Central City is home to 60 percent of Portland's affordable housing units. It has the largest concentration of social services and care providers in the city, especially shelter facilities.

The Green Loop will support businesses and social services, improving access to places where people can get the staples and support they need. And it will reconfirm Portland's commitment to greater access to parks, nature, and active transportation.

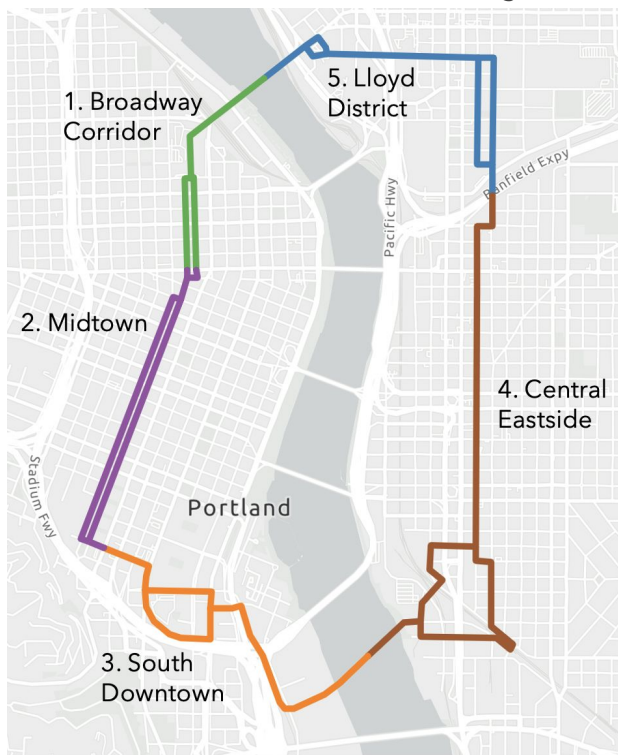
Plus, a third of Portland's jobs are in the Central City, and more than 50,000 new jobs are coming in the next two decades. Building the Green Loop offers a chance to harness opportunities for more people at all income levels to work in the Central City and call it home.

In turn, the Green Loop can become an iconic symbol of a city that values and supports all people: residents, workers, students, and visitors of all ages, shapes and sizes, origins, and incomes.

While the Green Loop will be in the Central City, it will serve people all over Portland and the region. Whether you live in Southwest, North Portland, East Portland, or the Inner Eastside, the Green Loop will connect to bikeways that can take you to the heart of the city and back safely and easily.

Project Sites

Students will choose one of the following sites.



1. Broadway Corridor - The Green Loop connects the Broadway Bridge to the North Park Blocks through the former Post Office Site, now known as the Broadway Corridor. While Prosper Portland has recently master planned this site, there is a big opportunity to envision an extension of the North Park Blocks from Glisan St to Johnson St along Park Avenue and beyond, connecting along the North Park Blocks to Burnside. The connection to the Broadway Bridge will require creative design solutions to overcome challenging topography. Park Avenue provides ample room to provide a loop connection, but needs to consider how to relate to the park blocks themselves and meet the needs of residents, workers, students of the Pacific Northwest College of Art, and users of the many adjacent social services.
2. Midtown - The Green Loop creates a much needed link between North and South Park Blocks through Midtown on narrow, urban streets with historic building frontages. It also connects Ankeny Park, Director Park, and O'Bryant Square, the latter of which is closed and planned for a re-design by the city. Ankeny Park is a miniature park block that has challenging building frontages but offers potential street space reimaged. There is has been interest in establishing a "Culinary Corridor" in Midtown, which could provide space for displaced food carts as downtown Portland develops.
3. South Downtown - The Green Loop connects the South Park Blocks to South Waterfront, through Portland State University campus and South Auditorium District. The South Auditorium District was Portland's first urban renewal district in the 1960s, which displaced Jewish & Italian neighborhoods, and included construction of the Halprin Sequence. This part of the corridor has challenging topography. Part of the trail was envisioned by an earlier Halprin plan, along a freeway. The loop then crosses two busy streets to arrive at a publicly owned site with opportunities for future development and open space.
4. Central Eastside - The Green Loop follows 6th Avenue in the Central Eastside Industrial District, a district which has an increasingly eclectic mix of uses and virtually no open space. The vision for the Green Loop here is to provide spaces for people to be and enjoy the unique character of Central Eastside while also accommodating the logistical needs of adjacent industrial uses and new ways to imagine traditional loading and transport of goods and services.
5. Lloyd District -or- Rose Quarter/Lower Albina - The Green Loop presents an opportunity to connect the Broadway Bridge to the planned ODOT Clackamas Bridge Crossing over I-5 through the Rose Quarter. This area, once the cultural capital of Portland's Black community, was razed in the 1960s to build the I-5 freeway, Legacy Emanuel Hospital, and Memorial Coliseum. An ambitious plan underway envisions the area rebuilding and re-stitching the urban fabric and community, "honoring the neighborhood's past by transforming what exists today into a socially and economically inclusive community of residents, businesses, artists, makers, and visitors."