

University of Kentucky **students** are using empty lots in Mayfield as a canvas to imagine hypothetical future parks and recreational areas as a part of their capstone senior year project.

Students from the Landscape Architecture Department at UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment are looking at Mayfield's downtown area, which was mapped out by Mayfield Rebuilds, and drawing up designs for potential city projects. The **students** are developing design concepts for downtown **green spaces**. They have an opportunity of looking at certain lots of the city as a blank canvas, envisioning lush **green spaces** for residents.

Usually, landscape architecture **students** go into neighborhoods that are already completed, and have to work around what is already built.

"How often do you get to go into a **community** that has been leveled and start from scratch like that?" asked Jill Celaya, chair of Mayfield Rebuilds.

The landscape architecture **students** focus on six different areas, including Harmon Park, and **spaces** in the downtown area. Their project involves **community** suggestions to turn empty areas into **green spaces**. They set their individual projects up in the same spots that they envisioned for the **community**, causing local people to stop and reimagine the bald patches of land as a potential beautiful garden or park.

An urban planner identified that Mayfield lost 70-80% of the tree canopy around the court square.

"This will cause major problems," Celaya said. "People might think that trees aren't as important, but they are. So, that needs to be on our radar, planning tree planting campaigns in an area with no trees."

The **UK students** have visited Mayfield several times, meeting with residents at Mayfield High School and Graves County High School, giving them a broad range of people and opinions. The **students** had one-on-one conversations to get ideas from local people before they began outlining their plans. A month later, **students** had open meetings, taking suggestions from the **community** to show people the direction of their projects.

The Harmon Park area is the main focus of a project, in which the student will plan out a park that will attract businesses and grow the surrounding **community**. The **students** are looking at another area around the Purchase Players building, trying to imagine an artistic culture district.

The survey asks questions about what kind of pavilions, vegetation, walking paths and artwork that **community** members would like to see in shared **spaces**.

Celaya said **UK students** took information from Mayfield Rebuilds and Bell Engineering to formulate potential plans for the empty lots, and imagined what the areas would look like with ideas that the **community** suggested.

At the last of the meetings that **UK students** came to at the high schools, a tornado tore through the Freemont area, causing the **UK students** and high school **students** to seek shelter.

Celaya explained that most of the high school **students** from Graves County and Mayfield want calm **green spaces** with meditation gardens, and water features that would soothe **students** with anxiety and depression.

"It's fun to think about what could be here, and it's all hypothetical," Celaya said. "Every single bit is hypothetical. When people look at these projects, I really want them to understand that it's all hypothetical. It's a class for the **students** to learn."

Celaya told The Messenger that people are suffering mentally from the destruction of the tornado.

"It's not just the older people who want this addressed. It's the younger people too," Celaya said. She said the mental health and emotional health of people need to be addressed when building these **green spaces**.

"All these plans we're working on, this isn't an either/or," Celaya said. "We want homes and businesses to come back, and we want municipal buildings back, and we want **green** space. All of it is important. Every bit of it. It all plays one on top of the other."

The survey sent out by **UK students** is still open to feedback at:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdD_iQwN0VPrGuegw9TnbQFJ5wu-j2vDM8e_7jNsyv9rtKmeQ/viewform. According to the survey, all maps in it are for discussion purposes only and represent hypothetical projects.

CITATION (AGLC STYLE)

Emily Shepherd eshepherd@mayfield-messenger.com, 'UK students help community envision new green spaces', *Mayfield Messenger, The* (online), 29 Mar 2023 <<https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy.uky.edu/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/19090809A5A52178>>

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