

Epidemic Urbanism Initiative Design Competition



Call for Submissions | Deadline: September 6, 2021

Designing for Health and Equity: Supporting Vulnerable Communities in the Post-Pandemic Age

A. Mission statement

The goal of this design competition is to provide a setting for collaboration between students, teachers, designers, thinkers, architects, artists, and practitioners from a range of disciplines and fields in order to create and discuss conceptual design ideas that explicitly promote healthy places for vulnerable communities.

B. Description

The novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, like other epidemic illnesses and natural disasters that preceded it, has disproportionately affected vulnerable communities across the world including older adults, racial and ethnic minorities, and low income communities. The incidence of COVID-19, death rates due to the disease, and access to medical care were and are patterned along pre-existing social inequities and often aided by inequities in the built environments in which people live and work. Recognizing the role that everyday built environments play as both primary places of vulnerability and exposure as well as resources for health promotion and intervention, **there is an urgent need to rethink architecture, urban design, and the built environment toward more critical, just, and equitable solutions in the post-pandemic age.**

Undoubtedly, the cities, schools, homes, and spaces of recreation we inhabit will undergo large and small changes in the wake of the COVID-19



pandemic, and as we anticipate the inevitable next epidemic or pandemic. What might these changes look like? Or, more to the point, what *should* they look like? In other words, **how might we use this time of rebuilding and rethinking to envision, design, and inhabit built settings that are more just and equitable? How might we re-center health in all design practices and processes?**

This design competition seeks to address these questions by creating a venue to promote collaboration across global and disciplinary networks and by bringing together students, academics, and practitioners from across the world to imagine design solutions that:

- Deliberately center health, equity, and social justice in a range of different typologies and
- Foster resilience in anticipation of future outbreaks of epidemic illnesses and other natural disasters.

This design competition will seek submissions in four categories: senior housing, community clinics, neighborhood schools, and public parks. Each design category will be reviewed by three jurors consisting of faculty and professionals from various countries and disciplines. Shortlisted projects will be announced on October 1, 2021 and will be discussed by the jury and guest commentators in final review meetings for each topic on:

- Friday, October 8, 12-1pm US Eastern Time: Senior Housing
- Saturday, October 9, 12-1pm US Eastern Time: Community Clinics
- Friday, October 15, 12-1pm US Eastern Time: Neighborhood Schools
- Saturday, October 16, 12-1pm US Eastern Time: Public Parks

C. Schedule

- **September 6: Submissions due to epidemicurbanism@gmail.com**
- October 1: Announcement of shortlisted submissions
- October: Final review meetings with shortlisted groups, according to schedule in Part B above

D. Design topics and questions

Submissions should address **one** of the following categories:

Senior housing - aging resiliently in community

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed significant problems in the design and structure of facilities designed for older adults (also known as senior housing, housing for aging communities, retirement communities, and assisted living facilities); and the elderly population was among the communities most significantly impacted by the pandemic. There is an urgent need for a new paradigm in senior care. How can we design senior housing that is open to adults from a wide range of backgrounds and income levels? How can we design more just and affordable housing for seniors that promote a healthy life-style and encourage intergenerational relations?

Design problem: Use the criteria above to generate urban senior housing ideas in your community for adults older than sixty. The proposed design can be at any scale but must serve at least 40-50 users. The proposed designed residence should support wellbeing and boost an active and independent life among old adults while emphasizing different levels of care. Develop a design proposal that focuses on fostering health, encouraging the sense of belonging and the sense of wellbeing: emotional security, privacy and intimacy, expressing personal creativity, and enabling different modes of expression while maintaining social cohesion. Design entries should reflect the purpose of senior housing both in its capacity to implement these holistic programs of care and as an instrument for shaping the living environment, while creating responsiveness to all the stakeholders.

Community clinics - increasing healthcare access for underserved communities

Community clinics can play a vital role in supporting vulnerable and underserved communities, especially during times of crisis. The recent



COVID-19 pandemic has put into stark relief the inequities that persist in access to healthcare. Recognizing the value of community clinics in supporting underserved and vulnerable populations, how can we work with and for communities to design community health care facilities that are more effective in urban neighborhoods and rural contexts? How might we ensure such clinics are affordable, inclusive, and welcoming to clients from various backgrounds? How can we design neighborhood clinics that promote community health through an equal emphasis on disease prevention and treatment?

Design problem: Use the criteria above to design a community healthcare facility in your city, town, or village. This patient-centered community health center will bring together a range of medical services under one roof in order to serve individuals, families and children and improve health and wellness outcomes in an underserved community. The proposed design can be at any scale but must provide spaces for physical and emotional healing as well as for education and community outreach. It should explicitly serve at least one underserved community. The design must consider ongoing healthcare needs in the community and what additional services or functions might be necessary in the event of a future outbreak of epidemic illnesses like COVID-19. Design entries should consider the clinic's public image and visibility within the community as well as the connection to healing and the patient experience.

Neighborhood schools - building community among diverse groups

Primary and secondary schools play a vital role in communities: they provide essential access to education and in many communities they also offer a range of services for the local community, from play areas to food distribution to health services. In many countries, the recent COVID-19 pandemic disrupted this community-building function of schools as learning moved to remote delivery, school grounds were closed, and face-to-face interactions were significantly changed to maintain safety for students, teachers, and community members. This lack of community took a significant toll on students' mental health. How might we envision post-pandemic school designs that explicitly foster community building and



belonging? How can school design promote equity while creating a healthy and positive environment for students and staff? What role might schools play in the broader communities they serve?

Design problem: Use the criteria above to design a primary or secondary school in your city, town, or village. The proposed design can be at any scale, but must consider at least two different social groups and how each can feel a sense of belonging in the broader school community. Proposed designs should also provide opportunities to foster intergenerational relations within the broader neighborhood community, create a sense of community within the school, and/or create strong connections to the urban neighborhood around them through the provision of services, resources, or other amenities. Design entries must consider opportunities for community-building and inclusion in usual times as well as how those functions might continue safely during future epidemics or other natural disasters.

Public park - promoting equitable access to shared, open spaces

The role of public spaces, especially urban parks, in promoting health has received renewed attention in recent months and years. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, public parks were lauded as essential services for urban communities who used parks as sites of recreation, physical activity, and community gathering. Yet how *public* are these parks? Who has access to these spaces, and who doesn't? Whose needs do these spaces serve--and whose needs are neglected? Considering parks as essential services in and of themselves--and as places that house a range of services (from recreational areas to restrooms to farmer's markets)--how can we design a public park that is welcoming to and supportive of a wide range of users? How can the park design bring communities together and encourage social interactions, healthy lifestyles, and happiness among users from a range of ages, backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, and cultural groups? What services might these groups need?

Design problem: Use the criteria above to design a neighborhood park in your city, town, or village to serve the local community. The park can be at



any scale but the submission must present a clear rationale for its size and location. The park might be designed in a vacant lot or may simply replace, repurpose, or adapt existing structures. The proposed design must feature natural elements and deliberately engage and provide essential services to at least two different groups who are currently underserved by public parks in your context. Design entries should consider key issues such as accessibility, sustainability, public health, seasonal change, evolving notions of community, and the cultivation of place.

E. Submission Guidelines

General criteria

1. **Context:** We encourage submissions from five continents. In order to foreground local issues, needs, and contexts across the globe, each group will choose their own site context for their design proposal, as noted in Part D above.
2. **Site selection:** Choose a site in your city, town, village that is vacant, or underutilized, or otherwise ideal for reimagining and propose a design for one of the four topics described above: senior housing, community clinic, neighborhood school, or public park. Your choice of typology and scale should be the result of your design statement.
3. **Scale:** The scale of your proposed design is up to you and may be dictated in part by the needs of the community or communities you are designing for and/or the limitations and affordances of the site context you choose.
4. **Teams:** In the spirit of this collaborative endeavor, teams should consist of at least two people, with a minimum of one student or recent graduate and one faculty member or practitioner/professional. We encourage international and interdisciplinary collaborations. Students, faculty, and professionals from medical fields, urban design and planning, landscape design, medicine, social work, public health, and art are especially encouraged to collaborate. Teams can include participants from multiple universities.



Submission format

1. In order to foreground the context, user needs, and processes and intentionality behind proposed designs, **submissions will take the form of narrative slides that include words and images** to convey your ideas.
2. **Submissions should be no more than 10 slides, submitted as a PDF.** Teams whose submissions are shortlisted for the design prize in each category will be invited to create a 2-minute video based on these slides for presentation at the October meetings. We welcome a range of media to create these designs. Hand drawings, collage, computer drawings, and all other media welcome, but the final version must be submitted as PDFs.
3. All submissions must address the guiding questions below and also must include:
 1. Title of your proposal
 2. The category of your submission (e.g., public park)
 3. Team member names and affiliations
4. **Submit all materials to epidemicurbanism@gmail.com by September 6, 2021.**

Guiding questions

All submissions must address the following questions in some way:

1. Each design prompt asks teams to identify a vacant or underused site in your city, town, or village. This in mind, in what geographical location (country and city, town, or village) do you plan to site your proposed design?
2. What are the local (or broader societal) needs are you responding to?
For example:
 1. Lack of access to healthcare or other resources
 2. Isolation or segregation from broader community connections
 3. Inequitable access to basic, essential services
 4. Community health issues (e.g., physical health, mental health, social health)



3. What community/ies of people are you hoping to engage and/or support through your proposed design?
4. What are the specific needs, strengths, and/or interests of this community with respect to the broader local or societal needs expressed above?
5. What site have you selected to redesign? Why?
6. What ideas do you have for the redesign of the site? What designs or other interventions do you propose in support of the community needs and interests described above?
7. How are these designs in service of user needs? How do they respond to the context of the site and the broader neighborhood, village, town, or city in which it is located?
8. How does this design promote the following?:
 1. Health, broadly defined, including and beyond in times of crisis. Special attention should be paid to the progressive destabilization of the existing living and health conditions in the event of the COVID-19 outbreak;
 2. Equity, inclusion, and/or belonging, including a sense of community for vulnerable populations and minorities.

F. Jury members

Confirmed jurors for each category are as follows:

Senior Housing

- Lead: Katarina Andjelkovic, Serbia
- Jury members: Lynne Dearborn, USA; Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss, USA; Ruzica Bozovic, Singapore
- Commentator: Debajyoti Pati, USA

Community Clinics

- Lead: Louisa Iarocci, USA
- Jury members: Rolf Haarstad, USA; Andrea Möhn, The Netherlands; Lusi Morhayim, Israel
- Commentator: Thomas Fisher, USA



Neighborhood Schools

- Lead: Irene Hwang, USA
- Jury members: Melinda Silverman, South Africa; Stefanie Eberding, Germany; Claire Latane, USA

Public Parks

- Lead: Bud Shenefelt, USA
- Jury members: Renelle Sargent, Trinidad and Tobago; Anna Grichting, Switzerland; Johann (Hans) Sagan, Norway
- Commentator: Naomi Sachs, USA

G. Awards and recognition

1. Submission date: September 6.
2. Shortlisted submissions will be announced by October 1, 2021.
3. Recognition: All shortlisted teams will receive a certificate of honorable mention from The Epidemic Urbanism Initiative and will participate in their assigned review session on one of the following dates:
 - Friday, October 8, 12-1pm EST: Senior Housing
 - Saturday, October 9, 12-1pm EST: Community Clinics
 - Friday, October 15, 12-1pm EST: Neighborhood Schools
 - Saturday, October 16, 12-1pm EST: Public Parks
4. Awards: The winning team from each category will earn a prize of \$500 USD, courtesy of the competition sponsor, CRGA Design.

The EUI would like to thank CRGA Design for their generous support of this design competition.

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