

**Report on the short-term overseas study program
for KU Engineering students
Graduate School of Engineering, Kyoto University**

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Main body:			
<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>I stayed at College Park, MD for September 2022, thanks to the support of the Overseas Study Program for KU Engineering Students. During the stay, I joined the Urban Studies and Planning (URSP) program of School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, at University of Maryland (UMD), College Park, and worked with students and local planners in the class of “Community Planning Studio”. In addition, I visited nearby Montgomery County (MoCo) to study their ongoing Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP). In this report, I briefly introduce my experience during my stay, and discuss what I found out about the urban planning of the US.</p> <p>2. Activities in University of Maryland, College Park</p> <p>I stayed at UMD as a research scholar for a month. Being a faculty member, I had an opportunity to audit classes held for URSP students at UMD campus (Figure 1. shows how the campus looks like). Indeed, I attended two classes for a month long, which were “Community Planning Studio” by Dr. Irazbal, and “Recent development in urban studies” by Dr. Iseki, the latter was a supervisor in charge of my stay.</p> <p>Let us discuss a little about the school where I stayed. In Japan, urban planning is studied in the department of civil engineering (so is the case of Kyoto University) because the focus of the planning is often related to transport engineering. On the other hand, in the United States, planning is studied in a school of policies, or a school of architecture, which is the case of UMD, and the reason for this is, to tackle social issues rooted from the structure of a society with an idea of various disciplines. In the URSP program, some students work on community planning, which is the basis of planning, and the others study issues on a bigger scale such as land use, housing, or transport planning. They work in collaboration with students from other programs such as Architecture, Preservation, or Real Estate programs so that they can learn how to work with people from different disciplines in a project and what planners can bring to such a project.</p> <p>“Community Planning Studio” is one of the displays of how the planners are trained in the URSP program. We worked on the “restorative justice” project with Lakeland, a community near our campus. Lakeland is an African American community, which underwent a severe discrimination during and post the segregation era like other African American communities in the US. The area had flooding issues over years, which was addressed by the urban renewal project in the 1970s, where 2/3 of houses were demolished and residents were forced to leave the community, told that the city will build their houses again. The housing for these residents was never realized due the project's finance, and the once-established community of Lakeland was never brought back. Now the city acknowledged their mistakes in the process and apologized for their inhumane treatment towards Lakelanders. Planners are now working on bringing back the community of Lakeland in a way that its history is respected by the current community consisting of UMD students and a newly developed commercial area.</p> <p>In the class of “Community Planning Studio”, students from different disciplines investigated the history, planning, and people in Lakeland as well as the general concepts in planning. After the investigation, we will work on presenting our research to planners and residents of the area. The class took place twice a week, each 2 and half hours, and one of them was used for a weekly “dialogue” session (Figure 2.), where professional planners and scholars of diverse backgrounds share their insight about “restorative justice”. After the work in this semester, they will make scenario plans for Lakeland in the next semester to make the better version of this community.</p> <p>3. Investigation in Montgomery County, MD</p> <p>My primary goal of this month-long stay in Maryland was to investigate the ongoing PMP at MoCo, MD. The idea of master planning helps with better understanding of the current conditions for pedestrians' activity in the county and identify the area of investment. It also provides tools for different stakeholders to reach an agreement, which is a problem any planning organization faces.</p> <p>PMP in MoCo focuses on the equity as there is an acknowledgement from the county that the money was not invested in an equitable way when it comes to the improvement of pedestrian conditions. Although walking is a fundamental transport mode and a right for everybody, the investment was hugely oriented to car-traffic and the county wants to shift this trend. PMP involves multiple research projects to understand the</p>			

pedestrian conditions in the county and tries to clarify the area of investment under the agreement of locals. Therefore, the planning was operated in the way that they can integrate the opinions gained from the project's public outreach.

During my stay, I visited the PMP meeting (**Figure 3.**), where their lead planner explained about the draft policy to residents and got their feedback. In addition, I conducted an interview with the lead planner at the planning department at MoCo (**Figure 4.**) to ask the background and use of PMP in general. The meeting and the interview were full of remarks as it gave me a better understanding on how planning in general is operated in the US as well as the roles of the planning department, in addition to the ideas behind the PMP.

4. Discussions and Summary

Throughout my stay in Maryland, I learned the importance of “planners” in the urban management of American society. Once in the interview, I was told that the role of the planners in the US is to correct the mistakes happening over years in a more equitable and sustainable way. Planners are, therefore, somewhat independent from the implementation process as they are rather a source of the new ideas bringing the society forwards. I was lucky to be in a planning school and had opportunities to discuss with many forward-thinking planners about various social issues in the US. These experiences gave me a chance to think about how the planning should be, especially considering for whom the planning exists. As I will continue my research about PMP in my lab, my experiences in the US will help with understanding the bigger picture of “planning” in the US.

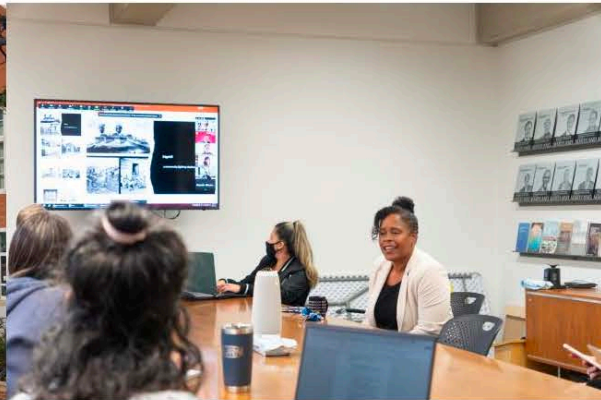


Figure 1. (Left) Campus of UMD, College Park **Figure 2.** (Right) Dialogue session in the studio class

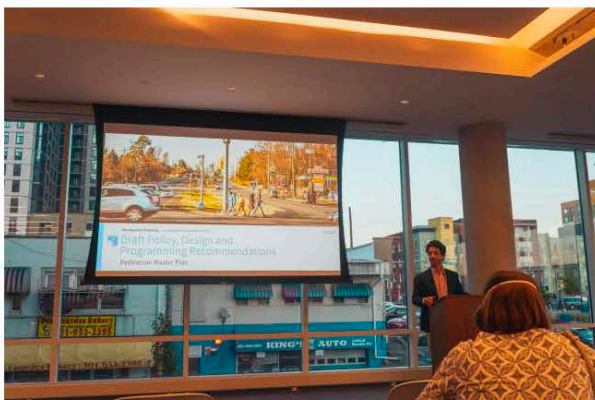


Figure 3. (Left) PMP meeting at the planning department of MoCo
Figure 4. (Right) Planning department of MoCo