Fall 2022
GRADUATE COURSE OUTLINE

COURSE CODE: URD1501HF
COURSE TITLE: Implementing the Missing Middle
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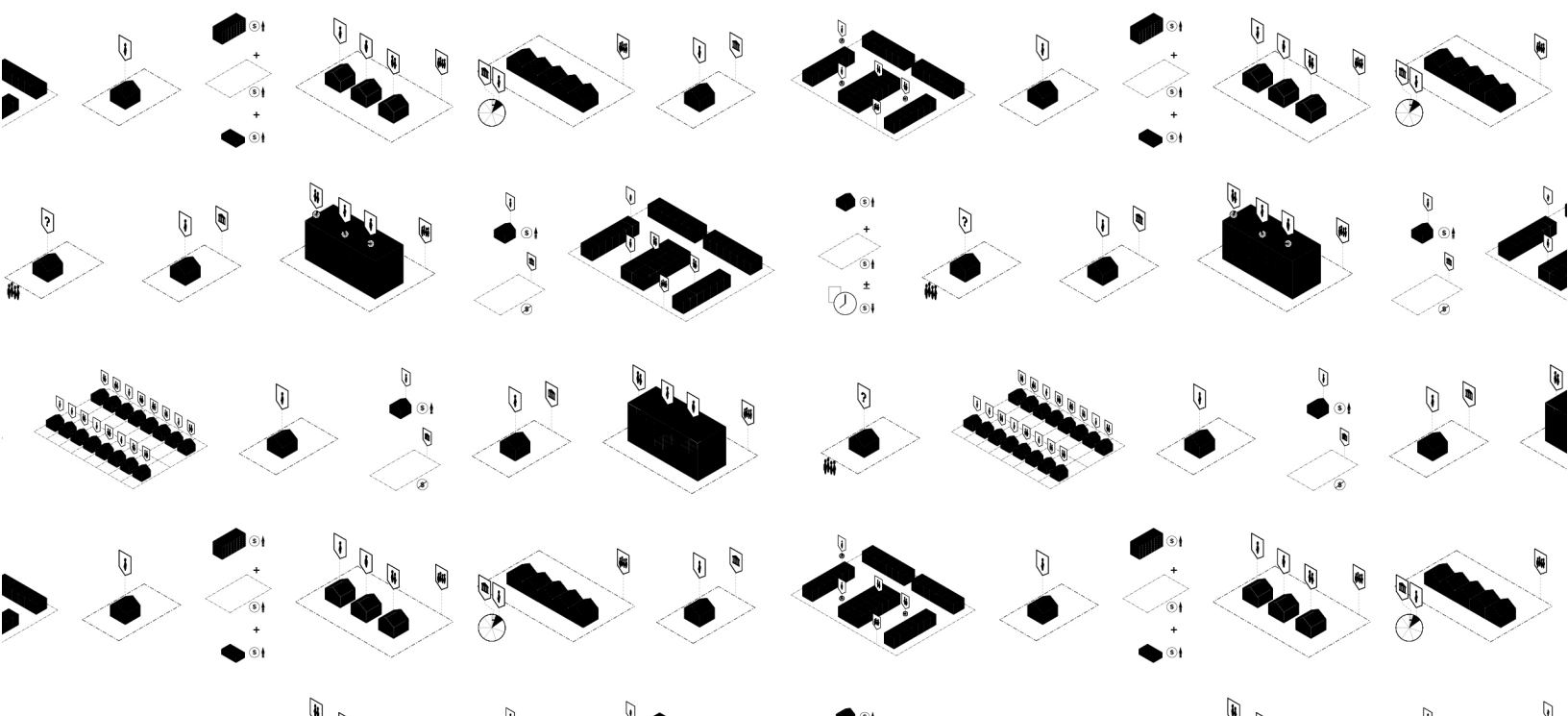**A GRADUATE MULTIDISCIPLINARY URBAN PROJECT (GMUP)**
Offered in Partnership with the School of Cities

SCHOOL OF CITIES

DRAFT: AUG 3, 2022

Implementing the Missing Middle

Image Credit: Home development and tenure models, Samantha Eby, 2018

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

About half of Toronto and much of the GTA consists of a "yellowbelt" of single-family detached homes protected by restrictive zoning rules. With a housing affordability crisis and the GTA expected to increase by three million new residents in the next 25 years, the region faces a pivotal decision. Can the GTA's municipalities open up their neighbourhoods in a way that is equitable and sustainable but also politically and economically viable?

Over the Fall term, this course will focus on transforming single family homes to multi-family housing through co-ownership and/or co-living strategies, for those who are being left out of the individual homeownership market. Given that practices such as co-ownership or co-housing are not mainstream, a number of new platforms and organizations have emerged lately to support 'citizen developer' types as they conduct feasibility studies, apply for unconventional mortgages, or negotiate complex approvals processes. Our goal for this course is to study these platforms, visualize scenarios for how they contribute to multiplex and garden suite creation, and develop a Guidebook for Citizen Developers that focuses on the nuts and bolts of development and implementation.

Working in alignment with the City of Toronto's Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) initiatives, students will partner with organizations that offer services/platforms for alternative development scenarios, e.g., community land trusts that take housing units off of the private market and hold it on behalf of the community, who then shares ownership and governance of those housing units, and co-ownership development advisors and partners who help individuals manoeuvre the legal and financial systems to co-own properties with family, friends, or strangers. Students will work in groups on 4 primary components: 1) researching the services and platforms offering co-ownership or co-living options, 2) partnering with a service provider to understand the nuances of the opportunities and challenges of co-ownership/co-living, 3) consulting with the EHON team at the City of Toronto to understand the development process, permitting framework, and approvals, and 4) visualizing design and implementation scenarios of different types of co-living and co-ownership.

This course is for students who have a strong interest in and passion for city-building and critical urban issues as they relate to the 'Missing Middle' of multiplexes and mid-sized developments in and around the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Image Below: Built form of the Yellowbelt, by Tuf Lab

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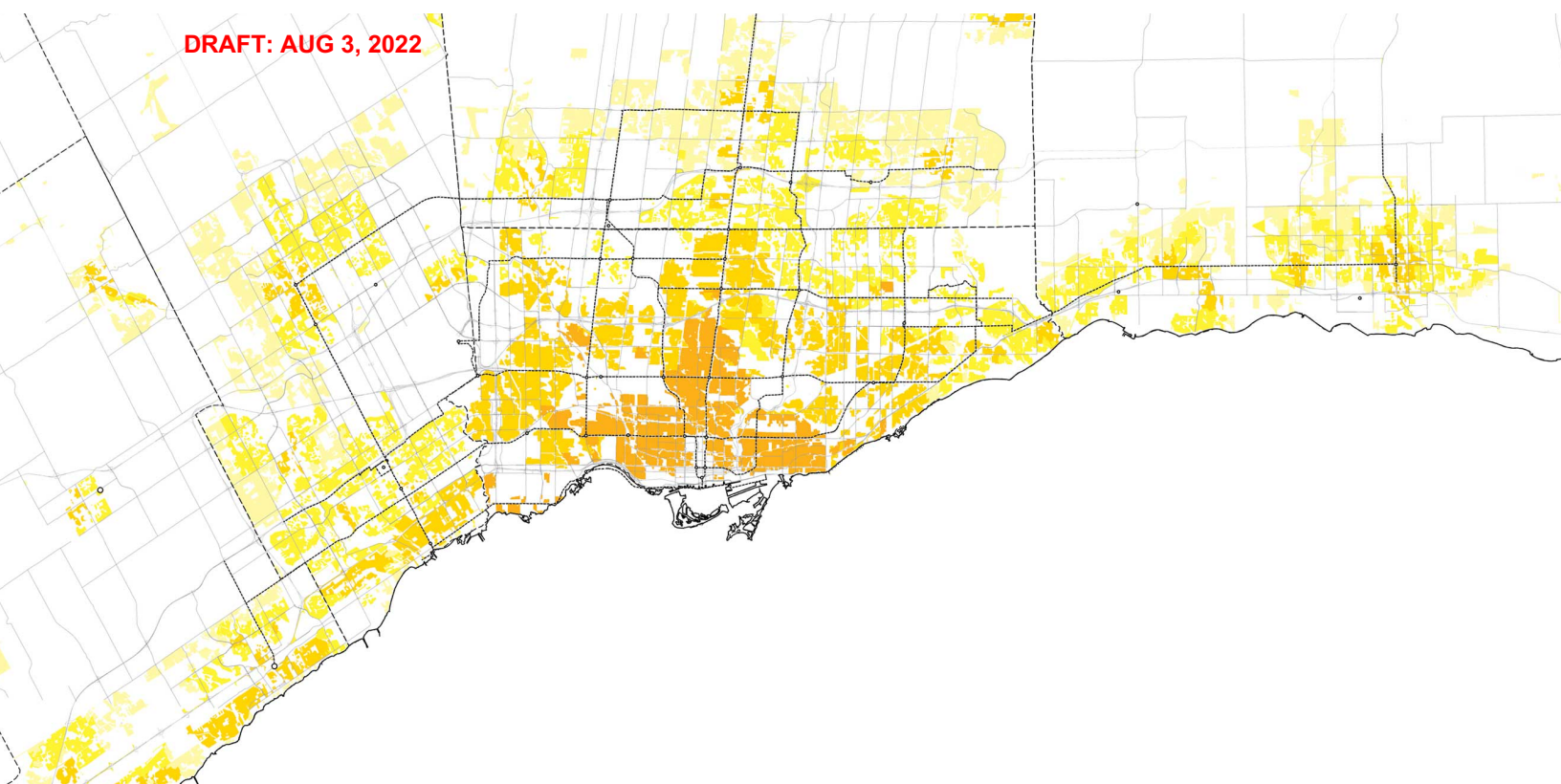
ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be asked to rank a set of topics based on shared ownership/co-living services and platforms that they would like to work on. For each topic, there will be a cluster of organizations whose work they will be expected to research. For example, GoCo Solutions is one of the service providers in the *Development Partner/Advisor* cluster. This balloting will determine a series of working groups for the following exercises.

The final deliverable for the course will be a presentation that visualizes the design and implementation scenarios of different types of co-living and co-ownership. For the final presentation, groups will be able to draw from the research from other groups in the class.

Exercise 1: Research Service/Platform (2 weeks)

Working groups will be asked to research and prepare a presentation on the service cluster they have balloted for. This should include both the organizations that have been provided, and those that the group has identified through further research. The presentation should critically access and present the services that are being offered by the various organizations in the cluster. This should include but not be limited to the following:

- How they assist, or could assist, a prospective *citizen developer* in the co-creation of housing on a single family lot, i.e., what their contribution to filling in the missing middle is or might be;
- What the stated goal/purpose of the organization is;
- Evidence of success in achieving the goal;
- A critical assessment of the success of a given platform.

Deliverable: A short essay and interview questionnaire.

Exercise 2: Engagement (5 weeks)

Working groups will be asked to engage with one of the organizations in their topic cluster. The goal is to to understand the nuances of the opportunities and challenges (e.g. legal, financial, regulatory) present for their organization and the needs and wants of their clientele, that are not evident through desk research. Groups will be asked to conduct interviews with members from the organization and to create a presentation of their findings.

Members from the City of Toronto Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) group will participate in an in-class discussion about the challenges and opportunities they see in the creation of multi-plex, garden suites, and other accessory units to address the missing middle crisis. To prepare for this discussion, each team will be asked to research how the city officials work with non-profits, home owners, or resident associations to create housing. This research should be from the lens of the topic cluster, informed by the previous exercise, and on behalf of their partner organization. This research should yield a series of questions to promote discussion.

Deliverable: A 20 minute in class presentation of engagement research.

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Exercise 3: Implementation Strategies / Final Presentation (5 weeks)

Groups are asked to synthesise research, outreach, and discussion into a final presentation that articulates how the organizations they have researched and engaged enable new modes of collaborative housing creation. Groups are encouraged to create scenarios with potential clients for each organization based on the research conducted during exercise 2 to help describe their ideas.

Deliverable: A twenty minute final presentation explaining research for a public audience through a clear graphic identity.

SCHEDULE:

Class meetings will be held as workshops. Course instructors will meet with each group on a weekly basis to review progress and work. Student groups are asked to provide content for each workshop discussion in the form of scholarly and news articles, diagrams, drawings, and images. Detailed feedback on the presentations for each exercise will be provided outside of class hours throughout the semester.

Note: There might be 1-3 sessions during the term where staff from the partner organizations will come to present the work of their organization to the larger class. These will be scheduled as we receive confirmations.

Week 1, Sept 12-16
Assigned: Exercise 1: Research Service/Platform

Week 2, Sept 19-23
Workshop: Review research for Exercise 1

Week 3, Sept 26-30
Due: In class presentation for Exercise 1
Assigned: Exercise 2: Engagement

Week 4, Oct 3-7
Workshop: Partnership Engagement progress.

Week 5, Oct 10-14
Workshop: Partnership Engagement progress.

Week 6, Oct 17-21
Workshop: Partnership Engagement progress.

Week 7, Oct 24-28
Due: In class presentation for Exercise 2 / Partner Engagement
Assigned: Preparation for Consult with City Planning and EHON

Week 8, Oct 31-Nov 4
In Class-Discussion with City Planning and EHON
Assigned: Exercise 3: Implementation Strategies / Final Presentation

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Week 9, Oct 31-Nov 4
Workshop: Implementation Strategies progress.

Week 10, Nov 7-11
Workshop: Implementation Strategies progress.

Week 11, Nov 14-18
Workshop: Implementation Strategies progress.

Week 12, Nov 21-25
Workshop: Implementation Strategies progress.

Week 13, Nov 28-Dec 2
Due: In class presentation for Exercise 3

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