

UrbanPlan: The Classroom, Volunteering & Training

What your colleagues say...

“Until you have done UrbanPlan training, you can’t grasp the power and sophistication of the program. Make a professional commitment to this training as if it were an Advisory Services Panel. If you don’t do the assigned prep - especially the written part – I guarantee that you’ll be embarrassed in the training and unready for the classroom.” John Walsh; IOPCRed; President & CEO, TIG Real Estate Services, Dallas, TX

“UrbanPlan volunteer training can stand on its own as a professional development class. It takes you back to the fundamentals of your business. I get more out of it every time. It makes me a more effective developer.” John D. Porter, III; Vice-chair, MFCBlue; Sr. VP, Charter Properties, Charlotte, NC

UrbanPlan in the Classroom

Objective: Students learn how market forces (supply and demand, free flow of capital, risk/reward expectations, etc) clash and collaborate with non-market forces (regulation, politics, advocacy groups, etc) to create the built environment.

Process: High School - UrbanPlan runs in high school **economics** and selected government/civics classes. Students form 5-person private sector, for profit, development teams that respond to a “Request for Proposal” for the redevelopment of a blighted site in a hypothetical community. Each team member assumes one of five roles: finance director, marketing director, city liaison, neighborhood liaison, or site planner.

Through these roles, students develop a visceral understanding of the various stakeholders in the development process and the challenge of reconciling their often-competing agendas to create a well designed, market responsive, financeable, buildable project. (**University** curriculum and process is identical. It is implemented at graduate level with land use focused students: MBA, architecture/urban design, city & regional planning

Facilitation: Over the course of the 15 class-hour project and prior to the presentations, land use professionals who have attended UrbanPlan volunteer training engage in Socratic interaction two times with the student teams.

Presentations: Addressing challenging financial, market, social, political, and design issues, students develop a proforma and three-dimensional model of their plan; and present their proposal to a “**City Council**” of ULI members that awards the contract to the winning development team.

The UrbanPlan Volunteers: Facilitator, City Council Member & Presenter

The Time Commitment

Your **one-time** participation in the **one-day UrbanPlan training**, which requires approximately 6 hours of preparation prior to the training session, qualifies for all volunteer positions at the high school level. Once trained you can elect to spend as little as **one hour per year** in the classroom.

The Volunteer Opportunities – Is it right for you?

1. **Facilitator:** *Biggest impact – biggest responsibility – minimal time commitment.* You are a change agent. Through Socratic interaction, **facilitators** challenge the students to think more critically about the UrbanPlan issues and the specific responsibilities of their “role” (finance, market, site, city goals & objectives, neighborhood interest group issues).

Effective facilitators have

- extensive development project experience
- the patience to question rather than advise or coach
- the time and willingness to learn the details of the UrbanPlan “case”

Facilitators visit the classroom twice during the 15 hours of the program; however, you only need to commit for one of the two visits. Classes are **45 – 90** minutes long depending on the school. The facilitator should work with one team for the entire class. Typically, you will spend approximately 35 to 60 minutes with each team. (More at the university level)

2. **City Council Member:** *Big responsibility-slightly longer time commitment.* You are the final accountability and reality check for the development teams. The 4-person city council hears student presentations, challenges their proposals as in an actual city council hearing, and awards the development contract to the winning team. Council ensures that the proposals are responsive to the RFP, grounded in the facts of the UrbanPlan case, and consistent with reality.

The most effective city council members

- have development project experience
- have presented to city councils, planning commissions, etc
- assume and maintain the “city council member” role and do not lapse into “academic advisor,” “kindly adult,” “design charrette jury” behavior.
- the time and willingness to learn the details of the UrbanPlan “case”

The length of a City Council session depends on the number of student teams presenting (typically 4-6 teams in a class) and ranges from approximately **2 ½ to 4** hours.

3. **Presenter:** *Visits class at teacher’s option depending on teachers goals and class time. Teachers select the discussion topic in collaboration with UrbanPlan staff/member. Training implication- Requires adding 30 minutes to standard volunteer training.*

A presenter is not a lecturer. Presenters visit the classroom after the students have completed their first development scenario and first facilitation session. Therefore, when you visit, the students are “junior developers.” Presenters create an **interactive** session with the students that relates to the issues, behaviors and decisions the students are struggling with in UrbanPlan. Topics can range from how to make an effective presentation to a client, working with neighborhood groups, a development project of yours, raising capital, market analysis, affordable housing, etc.

The most effective presenters

- consistently draw students into the discussion based on the UrbanPlan case
- avoid real estate/technical jargon
- have the time and willingness to learn major issues of the UrbanPlan case

A presenter session will last for most of one class period, 35-50 minutes.

Thank you again for your interest in UrbanPlan. Questions? Contact Sophie Lambert, ULI UrbanPlan National Director at sophie.lambert@uli.org or 202-489-1058.