

PLANNING POLICY & POLITICS

Professor: Elizabeth Strom

[MUSIC PLAYING] Hi. I'm Elizabeth Strom. Welcome to Planning, Policy, and Politics. I bet you're wondering why we're standing here in a garden, next to an interstate highway as a way of introducing this class? I chose this site because it says so much about what we study when we study about urban policy.

We are here at the Tampa Heights community garden. You can see it behind me. It's lovely. It has a number of different garden plots. And I think what's really interesting about it is how it came to be and what that says about what we study when we talk about urban policy.

Tampa Heights is known for having a very engaged, active group of citizens. They've been involved in planning for a long time. They're one of the first neighborhoods to have their own community plan that they did with the planning commission. And today, a decade or more after they've done the plan, it still shapes development in this area.

Because they were so active, and so well organized, and so politically astute, they were able to negotiate a lease with the Florida Department of transportation. And they have this wonderful garden that's been now thriving for about five years.

And so I think the elements here tell you a lot about what we're studying this semester. It talks about government actions. It talks about community mobilization. It talks about being able to leverage expertise and influence to get important things done within the context of local politics.

Unlike things like land use or theory, this is not a course that you find in every other planning program. And let me tell you a little bit about how I came to teach this course because it grows out of my own experience. When I was a planning student, I had fabulous classes with inspiring teachers. And they would give us all kinds of examples of times when planners would work with communities and come up with wonderful ideas that were culturally sensitive and aesthetically gorgeous. And then, kind of the end of the chapter, the professor say, yeah, but it was never actually built because, well, you know, politics.

So in my case, that led me to get a PhD in political science. And I taught political science for a while. But what I think is most important lesson here is that I think planners need to know how politics works. And so this class came out of the idea of what do planners need to know about the political system so they can be effective in making sure that their great ideas don't just end up on the cutting room floor.

I don't want to lose some of the camaraderie of a face-to-face class. So I will be having face-to-face office hours. I'll be emailing or posting on Canvas what those hours are. And I hope we might be able to have some face-to-face get-togethers, where we can discuss course readings, talk about

your papers. I'll be announcing times where we can do that. That will be voluntary. But I hope that we can use those opportunities to get together and talk.

So I'm really looking forward to working with all view the semester. We'll be talking via email, via discussion boards, as well as during office hours and in face-to-face meetings. I hope you'll feel free to get in touch if you have any questions. And best of luck.