CITIES IN A CHANGING WORLD:
QUESTIONS OF CULTURE, CLIMATE AND DESIGN

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Town-Gown 101: a new class of digital tools for engagement, growth and climate action

• Author(s) Name:
Darla Lindberg, Farzad Hashemi, Lisa Iulo

• University or Company Affiliation:
The Pennsylvania State University

• Abstract (300 words):
College towns enjoy a unique economic stability due to the consistency of an industry built around higher education. Stability of tenure, a strong public school system, readily available cultural, entertainment and recreation resources, along with a university-based health care system contribute to a college town’s vibrancy. This characterizes many college towns across the U.S. – State College, PA (PSU), Iowa City, IA (UIa), Austin, TX (UTx), Bozeman, MT (MSU), Fort Collins, CO (CSU), and the list goes on. Yet, while there are numerous economic and cultural benefits from a town-gown relationship, shared governance, planning and administration of these two cojoined entities is challenging. The inherent transience of students comprising 50% of a community’s population – often eight to ten months a year – exposes conflicting interests, low identity formation and a lack of community cohesion based on varying perceptions of social capital as compared to residents with more ascriptive identities. Compounding this difference, recent changes in city zoning to attract density development in town-gown communities are shifting student housing to off-campus locations. This has resulted in an uptick in 10-15 story mixed-used and owner-occupied housing within a 2-mile radius of their city core.
For most of these towns, this is an increase from a typical 1-5 story urban fabric, resulting in increased land coverage and impermeable area. A latent problem associated with urban densification at this rate is the creation of urban heat islands (UHI). Given college towns are poised to triple in size by 2050 more research is needed to understand strategies preventing UHI in city planning and land use management with density forecast modeling in mind. Therefore, gauging public opinion on everything from masks to markets can benefit from a systems approach aligning community engagement, density development and climate action for communities set to become the next generation of large cities.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Darla V. Lindberg is a Professor of Architecture in the Stuckeman School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, The Pennsylvania State University. She is the first woman to first be tenured and then promoted to Full Professor in the over 100-year history of the department. Her research is on design, architecture and systems science to explore complexity and systems influences on the built, behavioral, cultural, political and environmental factors impacting health and society around the globe.

Farzad Hashemi is a PhD student in the Architecture program at The Pennsylvania State University. His research, “Examining the impact of urban form and function factors on the UHI intensity inside canopy level of neighborhoods: A case study of the State College Region” is a study in partnership with the Centre Region CoG in support of the Centre Region Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.

Lisa Iulo is an Associate Professor in the Stuckeman School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, The Pennsylvania State University and is the Director of the Hamer Center for Community Design. Her research targets energy, sustainability, housing, ecosystem services and resilience in community design.