

# THE NEHEMIAH STUDIO

RE 551A & URBDP 508 | AUTUMN 2020 | 5 CR

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Studio to meet TTHF 10:30-12:50 in Gould 416

*An interdisciplinary studio focused on developing, designing, and supporting real estate, urban design, and community engagement strategies in partnership with the Nehemiah Initiative for church-owned properties in the Central District.*

## Overview

The ill effects of rapid socioeconomic change have perhaps impacted the Central District (CD) more so than any other area in Seattle. Gentrification and displacement of the Black population has reached crisis levels as the percentage of African Americans living in the CD has declined from 73% in 1970 to less than 14% today. Seattle is losing the largest contiguous Black neighborhood north of California and, now, some of the most enduring institutions in the CD—the historically Black churches—face difficult decisions about whether to stay or to go.

Collectively, the churches own land throughout the CD. And, as a network, they could support each other in making more deliberate and strategic real-estate decisions. This vision is moving forward as the Nehemiah Initiative, led by the Goodwill Missionary Baptist Church and other members of the initiative work group. The Nehemiah Initiative is a multi-pronged anti-displacement initiative to explore means and methods to mitigate gentrification and displacement through the development of the significant real estate assets of historically Black churches. The initiative seeks to develop affordable mixed-use projects according to community needs and desires with the goal to retain, bring back, and attract new residents and tenants.

## Studio Focus

The Nehemiah Studio is an interdisciplinary studio formed to support the real estate and urban design and planning needs of the Nehemiah Initiative in their initial phase of scoping work and scenarios for future development, and the training of graduate students in the College of Built Environments. The studio will address some combination of the following:

- *Scenario development and comparison for different combinations of church-owned property based on different priorities such as: housing priority, commercial priority, mixed-use priority*
- *Strategies for reducing or mitigating constraints and maximizing opportunities*
- *Analysis of real estate market opportunities and site development opportunities and constraints*
- *Creation of real estate product program for selected sites*
- *Preparation of project schedules for sites and economic and financial analysis of sites identified as having significant potential for re-development*
- *Evaluation of options for ongoing ownership and/or disposition of sites*
- *Community design and development; non-motorized transportation studies*
- *Site and street planning and design*
- *Open space design*
- *Community-engagement support*
- *Research and work on land trust models*