RETOFITTING URBAN RENEWAL: CHATTANOOGA’S WESTSIDE
From 1949-1974, federally funded urban renewal projects had ambitious intentions for modernizing cities. Under the auspices of slum clearance and better accommodating automobiles, vast swaths of cities were bulldozed and replaced with urban freeways and modern public housing projects, office complexes, shopping malls and other single-use superblocks, in the name of progress. But, the process quickly became known as “negro removal” destroying established black communities and disconnecting the new housing from the rest of the city. Soon the majority of jobs, retail, and residents were in the suburbs and American cities post-urban renewal emptied out. Now, that the mid-century projects themselves are in need of repair, what are the lessons learned from urban renewal about how (not) to redevelop cities? How do we respect the existing community’s needs and fears while providing the benefits of urbanism and connectivity without the negative consequences of gentrification?

These questions will be at the heart of the studio’s work on the Westside of Chattanooga, TN. Working with the Chattanooga Design Studio, we will develop short and long-term proposals for the reconnecting and retrofitting various large properties that are the legacy of the Golden Gateway urban renewal project:
- US 27: a 4-6 lane highway, currently being expanded to 6-8 lanes
- MLK Boulevard
- 3 senior housing towers on a superblock
• 1940’s College Hill public housing complex and adjacent low-income apartments
• Recently closed Alstom industrial riverfront site
• Recently sold industrial site on Riverfront Parkway

This studio is open to MSUD students only