With the failing economy and changing demographics, vacant and defunct ‘big box’ sites are littered across the country. These building and site shells are often blights upon the local community and, because of their size and location, hold tremendous potential to re-cast and re-conceptualize the semi-urban and suburban fabrics in which they sit. Typically situated along high traffic areas and surrounded by single-family and multifamily housing, these derelict sites can be catalytic opportunities for area change.

This studio will focus on an actual redevelopment project on the 11+ acre former Waremart site in Springfield, Oregon. The studio is part of the 2011/2012 Sustainable City Year and we will be working with both the City of Springfield and the site owner to develop alternative visions for the site. These proposed alternatives will have to address the existing neighborhood, market forces, and the city’s desire for more vibrant and sustainable development on the site.

Of specific interest in the studio will be the definition and creation of the urban condition as well as opportunities for investigating and implementing sustainable urban and architectural design.

This studio is part of the 2011-2012 Sustainable Cities Year (SCY) organized by the Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI). Springfield is the partner city for SCY-2011/12 and this studio will be one of approximately 20 courses working with Springfield. SCI represents a multidisciplinary research, policy and teaching effort to comprehensively address a range of issues related to urban environmental, economic and social health.