

At the confluence of the two largest rivers in the United States stands the small town of Cairo, Illinois. A once-thriving riverport town with a rich history, Cairo now exists as a vivid representation of small-town decline. At first glance, Cairo is a motionless, empty shell plagued by boarded-up windows, crumbling walls, and severe urban blight. However, the inside of this facade tells the story of a loyal and passionate community that remains hopeful that their town will one day return to its former glory.

In order to capture that hope, this thesis investigates the role of architecture in reviving small-town America. Using a context-driven approach, the potential benefits and viability of sustainable design in small-town contexts are explored to address the underlying issues currently facing the local community. Through a comprehensive analysis of the area, this thesis envisions a large-scale, mixed-use development in the historic heart of downtown Cairo that promotes tourism, fosters community well-being, and catalyzes economic growth. By integrating environmental stewardship, cultural preservation, and enhanced quality of life for residents, the project aims to create a vibrant, resilient urban environment that pays homage to Cairo's past while forging a bright, sustainable future for its people.



CONFIGURATION OF GROWTH, Sustainability and Hope

for the Small Town of Cairo, Illinois



01 GAS + CHARGING STATION 05 FARM-TO-TABLE RESTAURANT 06 COMMUNITY CENTER 07 MIXED-INCOME HOUSING

riverwalk



















