**Course Assignment**

**Using Opportunity Zone Tax Incentives Effectively**

**Assignment Goal:** The goal of this assignment is to look at a city’s assets and challenges and create a specific plan to market Opportunity Zone projects to local, regional, and national investors. Teams will submit PowerPoint presentations including maps and a two-page summary report with findings and recommendations.

**Assignment Background:** In 2017, the federal government introduced Opportunity Zones, which were designed to encourage investment and development in struggling areas. Immediately, cities, states, developers, and investors sprang to action, looking to take advantage of these tax incentives. Concern quickly grew that despite the potential Opportunity Zones offered, they might be taken advantage of in ways that wouldn’t benefit low-income populations. Cities have been looking to support projects in Opportunity Zones that can gain investor support, but benefit low-income residents without displacing them.

**Tasks**

1. Become familiar with PolicyMap. PolicyMap can be accessed through the library’s website. If you haven’t already, you may want to complete this introductory assignment: <https://www.policymap.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Introduction-to-PolicyMap.docx>. You can also watch a brief demo here: <https://www.policymap.com/support/demo/>.
2. Identify the different Opportunity Zones in a city of your choice.
3. Create a Community Profile report for at least one of the Opportunity Zones. You can do this by selecting the “Designated Qualified Opportunity Zone” map boundary, identifying the census tract(s) in the Opportunity Zone, and running a report for the tract(s). To run a report for multiple tracts, you can draw a custom region around the tracts, click on the icon for the custom region, and run the community profile report from the custom region info bubble. What’s important to know about the people in these areas?
4. Using PolicyMap and other research, identify the city’s core growth assets and opportunities. Using PolicyMap, identify: Where are the job centers? What types of education does the workforce have? What is the existing level of investment that can be leveraged (through Low Income Housing Tax Credits, New Markets Tax Credit Projects, etc)? How affordable is housing in the city (using cost burdened household data)? What transportation options exist around the Opportunity Zones?

Using your own knowledge of the city, identify: What are the city’s major employers? Where are they located? What types of education does the workforce have? Are any large businesses moving to the area? Have any recently left?

1. Next, identify
   1. The kinds of developments investors are likely to support, and why
   2. The kinds of developments that will help the most people, in terms of jobs, human capital, and wealth creation
2. For each Opportunity Zone, design two potential projects that would
   1. Yield a financial and community development ROI
   2. Align with the demonstrated capacity of the city and developers working within the city
   3. Contribute to what makes the city unique
3. Write a group summary report (2 pages).
4. Create a PowerPoint presentation, including maps of the city, its Opportunity Zones, and any formatted tabular data downloaded from PolicyMap that justifies your proposed projects.