

## John Yung

### THE PLANNER



"Every neighborhood has a story," says John Yung, A.I.C.P., senior project executive at Urban Fast Forward. And through intentional urban revitalization strategies aimed at preserving and building upon a community's unique characteristics, Yung is actively contributing to the sustainable future of some of Cincinnati's most cherished neighborhoods.

When Yung was 12 years old his family moved from Chicago to a suburb in Lebanon. Pinned between a cul-de-sac and state highway he wondered why he couldn't walk to school, the library or other amenities that were accessible to him in a more walkable urban setting.

It wasn't until he took an undergraduate course during his time at Muskingum University that he learned about the phenomenon of the "cul-de-sac effect," which examines the relationship between reduced communal social interaction and the limited freedom and mobility of closed-off street designs.

Resonating personally with this issue, Yung decided to devote his time to integrating neighborhoods to be more harmonious through better developmental strategies. He earned his master's degree at the University of Cincinnati DAAP School of Planning in 2013 and has 10 years of community development, planning and zoning experience.

Yung currently works at Urban Fast Forward—a consulting and real estate firm that specializes in urban development and retail district revitalization.

"Whereas traditional firms tend to lease, sell or purchase any real estate based on historic market data and drive times, we work with communities to develop a retail and community vision that emphasizes the unique assets and characteristics of communities," says Yung. "We build a relationship with them, so we can help them grow and prosper. I don't know of any other real estate company that works this way."

In 2017 he helped complete the Camp Washington project plan, "Made in Camp," highlighting the trademark qualities exclusive to the area, including Camp Washington Chili, the American Sign Museum, and vast collection of historic industrial buildings.

Before employment at Urban Fast Forward, Yung developed a form-based code (FBC) for Bellevue, Kentucky—one of the largest planning efforts ever conducted in the city and the first form-based code in the Cincinnati region. This type of zoning regulation enables communities to construct new buildings that better integrate into the existing historic fabric. The code has guided development in the city since 2010 and is still in place today.

Above all, Yung passionately believes in the personality of individual communities and discovering ways to elevate the foundation that already exists. Part of this is staying away from monoculture storefronts and restaurants ubiquitous to cities all across America.

"One of our strengths in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky is that we have so many distinct neighborhoods. We offer opportunities for almost everybody, which we need to leverage. The key to longevity and long-term success is for neighborhoods to realize their own destiny. The goal is not to be the next Over-the-Rhine, it's to be the next best version of that community," says Yung.

—JESSICA BALTZERSEN