**Course Name:** Big Box Upcycle

**Provided By:** AIA Pittsburgh

**Course Date:** 04/12/2018

**About:**

Once a predominantly suburban phenomenon, the big box store has become a pervasive feature of the American landscape, increasingly proliferating in urban, exurban, and rural communities alike. As a building type, they are amongst the most formulaic, the most generic, and the least responsive to the contingencies of place. Yet, as they proliferate, so too do their vacant remnants. Expansion and contraction in the market, demand for evermore vast contiguities of retail floor plate, and the evolution of business models and brand strategies all contribute. What does this mean for the communities that inherit these empty big boxes?

This session examines three facets of this question by first looking at global, contemporary trends in retail and mall development as well as planning in the context of potential vacancy, then examining the ecological and stormwater ramifications of big box and shopping center site planning. Lastly, this session will highlight a case study of the adaptive reuse of a former big box store into a creative workplace for an athletic apparel company. The case study will feature strategies for capitalizing on the advantages of the space type, especially its height, while overcoming the lack of site specificity. It will also offer prototypical material and assembly techniques that can densify occupancy and increase thermal performance in a cost-effective manner.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Analyze the contemporary trends in retail development as they pertain to planning and design.
2. Assess the ecological and stormwater impacts of big box development in the Pittsburgh region.
3. Calculate the carbon intensity of new construction compared to adaptive reuse.
4. Examine a prototype for repurposing a big box in terms of both space planning and material and assembly.

**URL:** <http://aiapgh.org/aia-programs-events/build-pittsburgh/presenters-programming-2018/>

**LEED Specific:** No

**GBCI CEUs:** 1.5

**AIA LU/HSW Hours:** 1.5