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Learning from California: Highlights of CRP Studios, Spring 2010 - Spring 2011

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Abstract

CRP's department head writes about the variety of undergraduate and graduate studios that served California communities from Winter 2010 to Spring 2011. The studios continue to cover a lot of ground and to prove their pedagogical success in applying Cal Poly learn-by-doing philosophy. They helped shape better places and create more sustainable cities.

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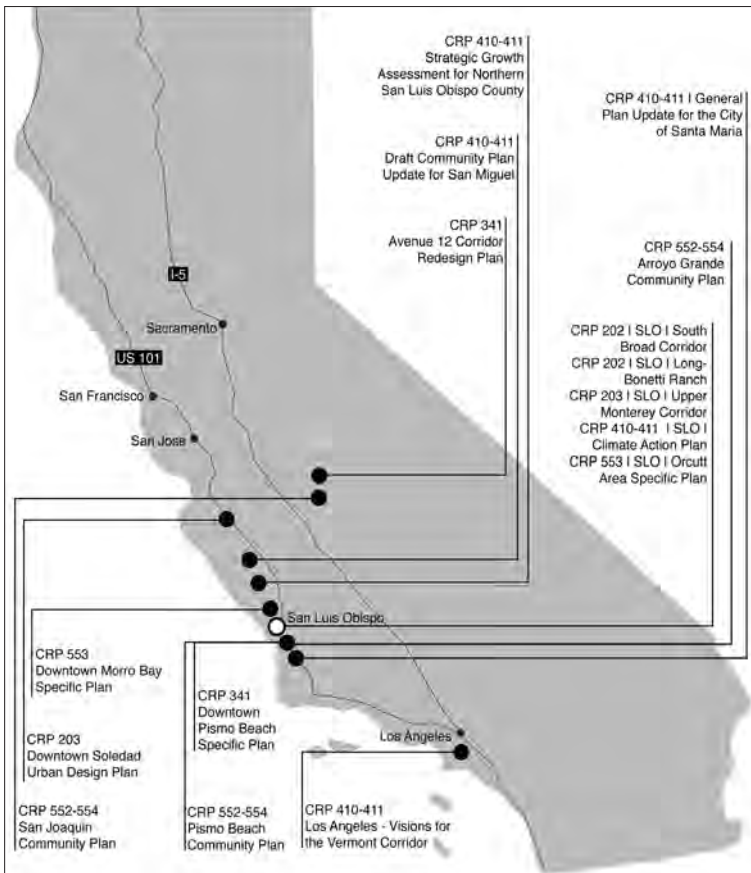
LEARNING FROM CALIFORNIA: HIGHLIGHTS OF CRP STUDIOS, SPRING 2010 - SPRING 2011

HEMALATA C. DANDEKAR

CRP's department head writes about the variety of undergraduate and graduate studios that served California communities from Winter 2010 to Spring 2011. The studios continue to cover a lot of ground and to prove their pedagogical success in applying Cal Poly learn-by-doing philosophy. They helped shape better places and create more sustainable cities.

Our studio-based curriculum, a hallmark of the City and Regional Planning (CRP) programs at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, is firmly embedded in the Cal Poly philosophy of "learning-by-doing." This emphasis on hands-on learning provides an additional benefit --serving the needs of many communities. Once again our foci on physical and environmental design are evident in the projects we completed in various California communities this past year. The studio sequences for both degrees are elaborated at the end of this article, in appendices 1 and 2. It builds: students' graphic and analytic capabilities; engages them on problems of increasing scale and complexity (site to regional plans); and elicits outputs from two dimensional layouts to policy and implementation strategies. The graduate studios, intense and compressed, cover physical and land use but also emphasize policy and theory.

Figure 1
Communities served by CRP studios in 2010/11.



Community clients sponsor many of our studios. They find that student work enables them to define a scope of work that can later be addressed by professional consultants. The locations of where we worked last year are shown in Figure 1. We embrace the opportunity community sponsorship provides to learn from engagement with grounded realities and needs in California. Students are eager to help develop plans which can make a difference and benefit clients. We look to you for your ideas and welcome opportunities you may have for such collaboration in the future.

Placemaking: San Luis Obispo's South Broad Corridor. Undergraduate studio, CRP 202, Winter 2010. Instructors Vicente del Rio and Umut Toker.

The city's smart growth policies rely on mixing residential with compatible uses, increasing densities, and encouraging infill development. In this class they were applied to a site on Broad Street, at the intersection with Santa Barbara Street, in San Luis Obispo's historic Railroad District. The project provided a mix of commercial buildings and housing (apartments and townhomes), and a series of public spaces and plazas while respecting the historic character of the place and creating strong connections to the surroundings and across the railroad lines.

**Urban Design for the Long-Bonetti Ranch, San Luis Obispo.
Undergraduate studio CRP 202, Winter 2011.**

Instructors Umut Toker and Dennis Combrink.

Located strategically at the corner of Tank Farm Road and South Higuera streets, the Long-Bonetti Ranch site offered students an opportunity to mix compatible land uses, increase land-use densities, encourage infill, and develop urban design proposals which were respectful of the existing historic structures.

**Upper Monterey Corridor Urban Design Study.
Undergraduate studio CRP 203, Spring 2010.**

Instructor Zeljka Howard.

Twelve blocks along Monterey Street between Santa Rosa Street and California Boulevard bordering the city's downtown area were designed to actualize their potential for downtown extension. The class proposals, which were documented on a series of posters and in a three-dimensional fly-through model, were presented to the City staff and a jury of planning professionals.

Downtown Soledad Urban Design Plan.

Undergraduate studio CRP 203, Spring 2010. Instructor Umut Toker.

In a sponsored project for the Community Development department, four visions for the urban design of downtown Soledad emerged from detailed site inventory and community residents' wishes about its future. Students conducted two community workshops to identify community needs and wishes. A CRP booth, set up in front of a busy grocery store in the project area, allowed responses to the student proposals, which included land uses, circulation, public space structure, and form-based codes. Final visions presented to the community and planning commission received a very positive response especially to the three dimensional fly-through visualization. Student work is the foundation for the Downtown Soledad Specific Plan currently being developed by the City of Soledad and its consultants.

Downtown Pismo Beach Specific Plan.

Undergraduate studio CRP 341, Summer 2010.

Instructor Umut Toker.

This Community Design Studio partnered with the City of Pismo Beach Community Development Department to develop specific-plan proposals for Downtown Pismo Beach. The studio, composed of fifteen CRP and five Landscape Architecture students, formed teams of five students and developed four alternative plans for the area. Teams visited Pismo Beach several times to interview residents, tourists, and business owners. They developed plan documents addressing land use, circulation, form-based codes, environmentally-conscious development, implementation, and phasing. Teams also developed a variety of visualizations using multiple media and

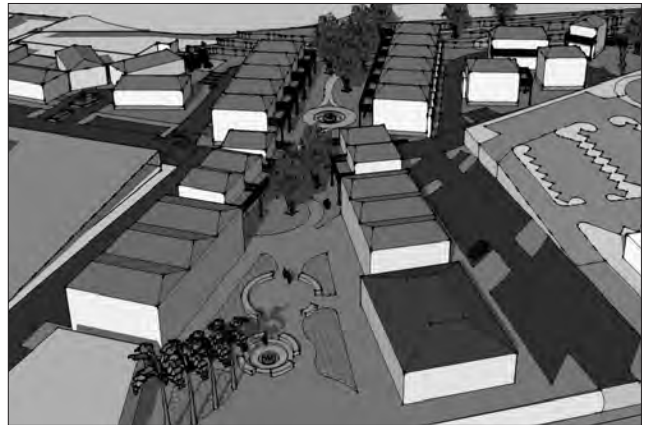


Figure 2
*Mixed-use project for the
Broad Street Corridor,
CRP 202. Team: L.
Barrera and M. Service.*



Figure 3
*Illustrative 3D model of
one of four CRP 203
proposals for Soledad.
Team: A. Douglas, K.
Evans, L. Lynch, M.
Sayles, and B. Syka.*



Figure 4

Illustrative site plan for Pismo Beach, CRP 341. Team: J. Amenta, G. Duer, P. McDonough, M. Lewis, and P. Tica.

Figure 5
Students in action at a community workshop in Los Angeles CRP 410/411.



computer software, ranging from over-the-board pencil and watercolor techniques to SketchUp and 3D Studio MAX for computer-based rendering. The proposals were very well received by the City staff and informed MCRP program's Graduate Community Planning Labs CRP 552 and 554 (Fall 2010 and winter 2011).

Avenue 12 Corridor Redesign Plan. Undergraduate studio CRP 341, Spring 2010. Instructor Vicente del Rio (in collaboration with Vangeli Evangelopoulos, LA 404)

In July 2009, CRP contracted with the Madera County Planning Department for the Avenue 12 Corridor Enhancement Project with three distinct but interrelated parts: community visioning, transportation, and corridor redesign (see the article in this issue). From July 2009 to July 2010 a visioning process was carried out by Umut Toker, and transportation studies were carried out by Cornelius Nuworsoo. In the spring of 2009, a joint urban design studio with CRP and Landscape Architecture students developed the Avenue 12 Corridor Redesign Plan, encompassing ideas for the street itself as well as for public and private development along it. Final reports and recommendations were submitted to the Madera County

Planning Department and, in the summer of 2010, were in the process of final approval for adoption by the community and the county planners.

Strategic Growth Assessment for Northern San Luis Obispo County. Undergraduate studios CRP 410 - 411, Fall 2009 - Winter 2010; instructor Zeljka Howard.

Taking a regional approach to growth, economic development, housing, resources, and the linkage of land use and transportation, CRP students identified areas suitable for urban expansion and the creation of new population centers to accommodate projected population growth. The final product included an expansion plan for Santa Margarita that the County could use to demonstrate the application of its recently adopted Strategic Growth Principles.

Visions for the Vermont Corridor in LA. Undergraduate studios CRP 410 - 411, Fall 2009 - Winter 2010; instructor Kelly Main (in collaboration with Margarita Hill, LA 402).

A "People's Plan" for the Vermont Corridor and surrounding neighborhood in downtown Los Angeles was developed with the Figueroa Corridor Coalition, consisting of 25 organizations that advocate for community benefits around the Staples Center Sports Complex in Los Angeles.

San Luis Obispo Climate Action Plan.
Undergraduate studios CRP 410 - 411, Fall 2009 - Winter 2010.
Instructor Adrienne Greve.

On the heels of the award winning Draft Benicia Climate Action Plan (see Focus 2009), students developed a Draft Climate Action Plan for the City of San Luis Obispo.

Draft Community Plan Update for San Miguel.
Undergraduate studios CRP 410 - 411, Fall 2010 - Winter 2011.
Instructor Zeljka Howard.

The San Luis Obispo County Building and Planning Department commissioned students to prepare a Draft Community Plan Update for San Miguel, an unincorporated community in northern San Luis Obispo County. Working closely with residents and County staff, students conducted three workshops and developed an extensive public outreach program that engaged all segments of the population in shaping the *Draft San Miguel 2035 Community Plan Update*. The County will draw on this planning process to prepare the Draft Public Review document and final San Miguel Community Plan.

General Plan Update for the City of Santa Maria.
Undergraduate studios CRP 410 - 411, Fall 2010 - Winter 2011.
Instructor Kelly Main.

The City of Santa Maria Community Development Department commissioned the class to prepare a Draft General Plan Update for the town located in northern Santa Barbara County. The class conducted an extensive community outreach effort to determine the changes that Santa Marians want for their city. Community input was gathered at the Santa Maria Farmer's Market, Waller Park, the Santa Maria annual Christmas parade, and the Abel Maldonado Community Center. The City of Santa Maria is currently updating their land-use and circulation elements and will be incorporating the class's work over the next year.

Morro Bay Downtown Specific Plan.
Graduate studio CRP 553, Spring 2010.
Instructors Umut Toker and Chris Clark.

Contracted by the City of Morro Bay, graduate students collaborated with the Morro Bay Downtown Steering Committee, City of Morro Bay Planning Commission, and Planning Staff to develop three Specific Plan Proposals for Downtown Morro Bay. The class conducted three community outreach activities, attending the farmers market and organizing two community meetings.

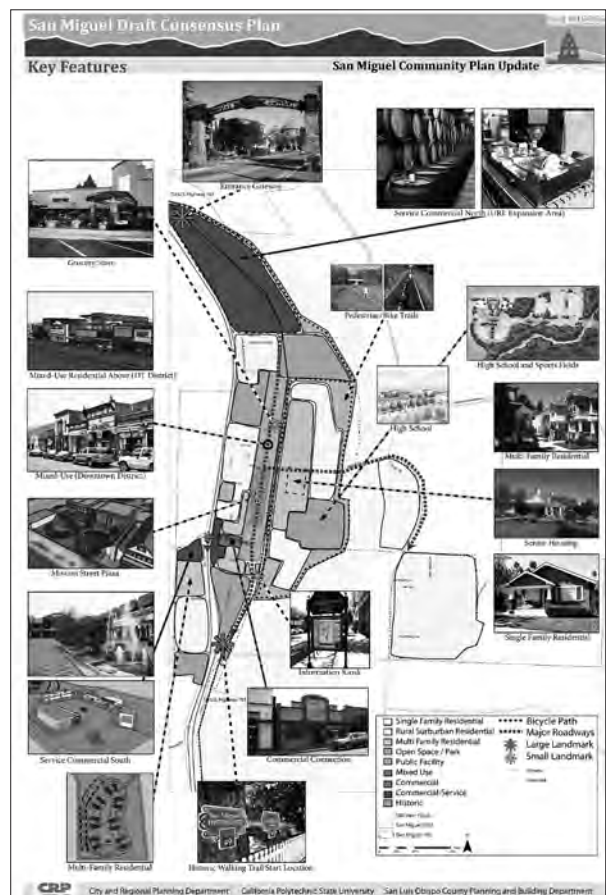


Figure 6
 Poster depicting key features of the Draft 2035 San Miguel Community Plan, CRP 410/411.

Figure 7
 Illustrative site plan, Downtown Morro Bay Specific Plan, CRP 553. Team: W. Harris, L. Heeren, A. Geratowski, S. Robidoux.





Figure 8
Illustrative site plan, Orcutt
Area Alternative Specific
Plan, SLO; CRP 553.

**San Luis Obispo, Orcutt Specific Plan.
Graduate studio CRP 553, Spring 2010.
Instructors Vicente del Rio and Paul Wack.**

Responding to the need to rethink suburban and fringe development, students reviewed a recently approved Specific Plan for the Orcutt Area in San Luis Obispo. They modified the plan to increase density, provide more commercial uses and an elementary school, and incorporate a future light-rail line running along the existing Union Pacific right-of-way. Using the existing EIR the students proposed a new design that makes a strong statement with a central core around a light-rail station.

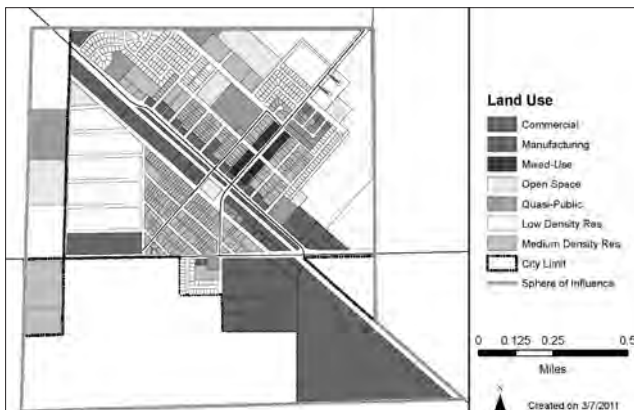
**Arroyo Grande Community Plan.
Graduate studios CRP 552 - 554, Fall 2009 - Winter 2010.
Instructors Cornelius Nuworsoo and Chris Clark.**

Two miles inland from the Pacific Ocean, the City of Arroyo Grande had a population of 17,080 residents in 2010. Students formulated a development scenario for 2030 to accommodate projected population and housing needs. The Preferred Growth Scenario, concentrated growth in the Grand Avenue Corridor by developing parcels to their full potential; preserved and enhanced the historical character of the Village; preserved the rural character of the City; achieved a zero net loss of agricultural land; acquired and expanded the network of conservation areas and open space for recreational opportunities; increased job potential to achieve an 80 percent jobs to labor-force ratio; and instituted a Transfer of Development Rights program.

**San Joaquin Community Plan.
Graduate studios CRP 552 - 554, Fall 2010 - Winter 2011.
Instructor Cornelius Nuworsoo.**

The City of San Joaquin in Fresno County sought to accommodate its population increase and minimize negative impacts of growth by striking a balance between preserving agricultural lands while meeting other land-use needs, establishing a program for energy conservation and efficiency, adopting green building and water conservation practices as well as new landscape standards, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The client was the San Joaquin City Planning Department and an advisory group of residents. A Community Plan was prepared to assist City staff in guiding future development in San Joaquin and creating optimum levels of services, economic activities, and quality of life for residents and visitors.

Figure 9
San Joaquin Community
Plan, Fresno County;
CRP 552-554.



**Pismo Beach Community Plan.
Graduate studios CRP 552 - 554, Fall 2010 - Winter 2011.
Instructor Chris Clark.**

In cooperation with the Pismo Beach Planning Department, students developed a Community Plan to assist City staff guide future development in Pismo Beach. The focus was on the development of a Parks and Recreation Element and an Open Space Element. Challenges addressed included accommodating future growth, striking a balance between full-time residents and the large influx of tourists and part time residents, increasing parks, and enhancing recreation opportunities.

Attachment 1

BCRP CORE STUDIO SEQUENCE

Core Studio Classes	201 (f)	202 (w)	203 (s)	341 (f or w or s or su)	410 (f)	411 (w)
Scale	Site	Block	Urban Design Plan 6 to 12 blocks	Specific Plan, 12 plus blocks	Community Plan	
Problem	One site	Part of Block	Corridor Urban Design, Downtown, Urban Infill / Revitalization	Green Field, Urban Infill / Revitalization, Implementation	Community analysis	Plan development
Comprehension / Critical Thinking / Integration	Read Plans/Make Plans	Design Site Plans, topography, bldg. footprints, shape public space, visualization	Urban design, land use, circulation, writing strategies, design guidelines / codes, visualization	Address elements of a Specific Plan, phasing, implementation, design guidelines / codes	Address elements of a community plan, phasing, implementation, long term strategy development	
Conceptual Framework and Readings	Read, Laseau, Ching on methods	White, Lynch (site planning), LaGro, Porterfield,	E. White site analysis, Sucher city concepts, Allan Jacobs, Leinberger, Community Design literature	OPR Guide to specific plans, Berke et al., Community Design literature	OPR Guide to general plans, Chadwick, Gotschalk, Lynch, Kelly & Decker	
Methods & Skills	Develop and Read Plans, over-the board drafting, basic image manipulation and graphic layout, basic 3D modeling	Design a Plan, Site Plan, Topography, BluePrints, parking, over-the board drafting, page layout, intermediate 3D modeling, basic graphic design, writing, visualization, basic plan document development	Basic Community involvement, land use, circulation, design guidelines, visualization, CAD, page layout, advanced 3D modeling, graphic design, writing, visualization, plan document development	Community involvement, land use, circulation, design guidelines, Capital Improvement costs, phasing, environmental issues, visualization, writing, visualization, plan document development	Community involvement, land use, circulation, population projections, writing, visualization, plan document development	Land use, circulation, design principles & guidelines, implementation, phasing, writing, visualization, plan document development
Client	Scenario	Scenario	City / redevelopment agency / nonprofit / scenario	City / redevelopment agency / nonprofit	City / redevelopment agency / nonprofit	
Products	over-the-board drawings, urban design portfolio, 3D model, animation	Team plan documents, team poster, 3D model, animation	Team plan documents, team posters, 3D models, animations	Team plan documents, team posters, 3D models, animations	Technical Background Report	Class Plan Document

Attachment 2

MCRP CORE STUDIO SEQUENCE

Core Studio Classes	512 (w)	553 (s)	552 (f)	554 (w)
Scale	Site	Specific Plan, 12 plus blocks	Community Plan	
Problem	One site	Green Field, Urban Infill / Revitalization, Implementation	Community analysis	Plan development
Comprehension/Critical Thinking/Integration	Read Plans/Make Plans/ Make maps	Address elements of a Specific Plan, urban design, implementation, phasing, design guidelines / codes	Address elements of a community plan, phasing, implementation, long term strategy development	
Conceptual Framework and Readings	Read, Ching on methods, Tufte on presentation	OPR Guide to specific plans, Berke et al., Allan Jacobs, Leinberger, Community Design literature, Lynch	OPR Guide to general plans, Chadwick, Gotschalk, Lynch, Kelly & Decker	
Methods & Skills	Develop and Read Plans, over-the board drafting, basic page layout, CAD, basic 3D modeling, GIS	Community involvement, land use, circulation, design guidelines, Capital Improvement costs, phasing, environmental issues, visualization, writing, visualization, plan document development	Community involvement, land use, circulation, population projections, writing, visualization, plan document development	Land use, circulation, Design Guidelines, Design Principles, Implementation, Phasing, Environment, writing, visualization, plan document development
Client	Scenario	City / redevelopment agency / nonprofit	City / redevelopment agency / nonprofit	
Products	Over-the-board drawings, urban design portfolio, 3D model, animation, GIS maps	Team plan documents, team posters, 3D models, animations	Technical Background Report	Class Plan Document