STUDENTS DESIGN NEW DOWNTOWN FOR ORCUTT

Downtown Orcutt in northern Santa Barbara County might be getting a facelift, thanks to Danielle Ringstmeyer (CE '03) and Jesse Cline, a civil engineering senior.

Growing up near Orcutt, Ringstmeyer and Cline have firsthand knowledge of the traffic conundrums of the downtown region. So, for their senior project, the duo approached the Old Town Orcutt Revitalization Association with three alternative downtown designs. The designs explored different parking arrangements, traffic lanes, medians and sidewalk sizes. “It’s a good experience interacting with the public and putting together a presentation,” Cline says. “We went to public meetings to find out what the community wanted in the design, and we heard a diverse set of opinions. We then sifted through the information and opinions and tried to create a design that addressed all the needs and wishes of the people.”

Cline and Ringstmeyer used AutoCad to sketch the renderings of their downtown visions and presented their PowerPoint proposals to the Revitalization Association last summer.

The Revitalization Association was impressed by the students’ presentation. Association members especially liked the design with wide sidewalks, parallel parking, two-lane traffic, a median and a roundabout. However, more studies will be conducted before the project breaks ground.

In a letter to the students’ senior project advisor, Civil and Environmental Engineering Professor Ed Sullivan, the Revitalization Association wrote, “The students represented [the civil engineering department] in a very professional manner and made all of us proud that such a fine example of Cal Poly resources exist in our community.”

Cline said he and Ringstmeyer were well prepared for the project after taking an advanced transportation design class. They also give much credit to Sullivan for his guidance.

Ringstmeyer now works as a transportation engineer for Sequeira Infrastructure Associates in Irvine, and Cline is looking forward to graduating in fall 2003.

– Natalie Connelly