

THESES AND PROFESSIONAL PROJECTS ABSTRACTS

MASTER OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING, CAL POLY SAN LUIS OBISPO

As the concluding phase for the Master of City and Regional Planning degree, Cal Poly's CRP department offers the student a choice between a final comprehensive planning studio, a thesis, or a project with a real client. The following abstracts are from master's theses and projects defended in 2009, and are available as PDF files from Cal Poly's Kennedy Library website.

North Ventura Avenue Area Plan

Rick Caswell

This professional project provides a much needed draft update to the existing Area Plan for North Ventura Avenue (last amended in 1990), an unincorporated area of the County that falls under the City of Ventura's sphere of influence. New goals, policies and programs have been provided to supplement the goals, policies and programs of the current countywide General Plan for Ventura County (adopted in 2005). The supplemental goals, policies and programs proposed in this draft update apply specifically to North Ventura Avenue, and account for a pending annexation of the area by the City of Ventura. The overall aim of this project was to provide the Ventura County Planning Division with a draft update to the existing North Ventura Avenue Area Plan that reflects modern planning practice and theory. Sustainable growth and development for the area are the underlying goals of this proposed draft update. Reducing auto-dependency through the proposed adoption of a 'mixed-use specific plan' land use category represents the most pertinent recommendation of this draft update in aiming to achieve sustainable growth and development of the area in the future.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/theses/105/>

City of Patterson Sustainability Plan

Colin Brian Clarke

This Master's Thesis / Professional Project is a Sustainability Plan developed for the City of Patterson, California. The Patterson Sustainability Plan (PSP) was developed concurrently with the General Plan Update, and will be presented to the City for adoption within a year. The Sustainability Plan will help inform decision-making by way of its Goals and Actions for implementation to improve community sustainability. Before the plan was developed, background research was conducted that included a Best Practices Review to assess what other cities are doing to address sustainability, a Needs Assessment to evaluate existing conditions in Patterson and determine its unique strengths and challenges to improving sustainability, and a Policy Audit which includes an inventory and analysis of existing General Plan goals, objectives, policies, and programs supporting sustainability.

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Accessibility of Bay Area Rail Transit Stations: An Evaluation of Opportunities for Transit Oriented Development

Kevin Fang

There has been a valid push for a shift from automotive-oriented to transit-oriented transportation and land use. However, we need to verify how transit performs at meeting certain goals. This thesis examines the important characteristic of accessibility afforded to travelers using four rail extensions in the San Francisco Bay Area,

quantified through the calculation of job accessibility indices for stations. The four extensions investigated increase region wide rail accessibility by 18.5 percent. However, the new stations are on average less job-accessible than their existing counterparts. Two of the four extensions perform well on accessibility measures, either their stations have high accessibility, or jobs around them contribute to high accessibility for nearby stations. The other two extensions perform poorly on accessibility measures. The accessibility results indicate how the four extensions should be prioritized. The more successful extensions have good access to activity centers. Extensions having good connectivity offer opportunities for transit-oriented development at rail stations in the Bay Area.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/theses/221/>

Santa Barbara Tea Fire Multi-Hazard Mitigation Benefit Cost Analysis

David S. Flamm

Multi-hazard mitigation is an action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risks from natural or human-caused hazards. This study examines the benefits and costs associated with the outright purchase of properties for hazard mitigation (“property acquisition mitigation”) in Santa Barbara, California which reduced the exposure of four properties to multiple hazards. The study area for the Tea Fire BCA (Benefit Cost Analysis) is subject to multiple hazards, primarily landslides, wildfires, and earthquakes. The project, originally intended to mitigate landslide risk, mitigated risk exposure to multiple hazards. The mitigation was put to the test during the Santa Barbara Tea Fire, a wildfire which burned approximately 2,000 acres of Santa Barbara County land in November, 2008. The results indicate that the estimated overall benefit-cost ratio for property acquisition mitigation projects is 1.75:1 when the exposed properties meet a threshold of eminent threat for total loss. This study further suggests that when property acquisitions are performed in an area threatened by multiple hazards the mitigation becomes two to three times more beneficial than in an area threatened by a single hazard. Possible implications and future benefits associated with this mitigation and mitigations like this are also explored.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/theses/124>

Specific Plans: An Implementation Tool for Downtown Revitalization - A Specific Plan Proposal for Downtown Delano, Calif.

Emily Suzanne Henderson

This study builds off the assumption that downtowns are socially and economically important to cities and the people who live, work, and visit them; that’s why many suffering downtowns are pursuing revitalization strategies. The strategies summarized in this work represent mainstream techniques currently practiced by cities, planners, and developers, and are supported by two case studies. This thesis demonstrates the potential for specific plans as an implementation tool for downtown revitalization. These comprehensive documents are combine multiple regulatory processes to achieve the overarching goals of a city’s general plan and the community goals generated through public outreach and participation. In 2008 the City of Delano underwent a community participation planning process to improve the downtown resulting in the Downtown Delano Concept Plan. This thesis builds on this plan, and proposes the Downtown Delano Specific Plan, including a vision, a set of goals, proposed land uses, a circulation concept, and a Form-Based Code with design guidelines for new development and redevelopment. The proposal includes cost estimates and suggested financing mechanisms.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/theses/107>

Enhancement Plan for Downtown Cayucos, Calif.

Rachelle Sarai Sneh Lopez

An area can be torn by the competition between preserving its character and the desire for new development. Cayucos' downtown area is recognized by both residents and visitors as a special place with a strong, small, coastal town feel. However, issues such as accessibility, public amenities, parking, maintenance, and general development needs have to be dealt with. This thesis deals with the issue of how to plan for change while maintaining the character of Cayucos, and presents an enhancement plan proposal for its downtown. The development of this plan was based on a research-based design methodology, which included a literature review on sense of place, a review of five case studies, and fieldwork with surveys, interviews, and on-site observations and analysis. The research included the understanding of the needs, interests, and expectations of the stakeholders, including local business owners, residents, and visitors, in order to help define core issues and to inform the vision and a series of responsive goals for the area's enhancement. The final enhancement plan proposal followed a design approach that was responsive to site, context, and stakeholders, and will contribute to Cayucos' quest for the increase of the quality of its downtown while responding to market and development needs.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/theses/171/>

Agricultural Buffer Criteria for the City of Arroyo Grande, Calif.

Laura A. Pennebaker

The conservation of agricultural land is an important and challenging part of local and regional planning. The conversion of land from farming to non-agricultural use significantly increases the potential for conflict between adjoining land uses and intensifies the pressure to develop adjacent farmland. Agricultural buffers serve as a tool to mitigate potential conflict between adjacent non-compatible land uses and protect both farming operations and residents from nuisance complaints. The City of Arroyo Grande has agricultural buffer policies which apply to development taking place adjacent to agricultural land. The City's general plan requires a minimum 100 foot buffer between all parcels proposed for non-agricultural development adjacent to agricultural land, and that it contains a minimum 20 foot wide landscaped area. City policy however, does not provide any specific direction or criteria regarding the actual construction of an agricultural buffer. The purpose of this project is to evaluate agricultural buffer policies in other jurisdictions and determine appropriate criteria for the construction and maintenance of an agricultural buffer in the City of Arroyo Grande. The project concludes with a draft document which includes agricultural buffer specifications such as plant palette and planting density which will be incorporated by reference into the City of Arroyo Grande Municipal Code.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/theses/77>

The Influence of Incentives Offered by Local Governments to Private Developers or Land Owners on the Rate of Brownfield Redevelopment

Erik Benjamin Simon

Redevelopment of brownfield sites has become increasingly popular since the inception of voluntary cleanup programs in the early to mid 1990's. Local governments have begun to offer incentives to private developers or land owners to offset costs associated with contamination and encourage the redevelopment of properties that are typically underutilized. Incentives may take several forms including, but not limited to, fast-tracked project approval, risk based cleanup standards, liability relief, tax breaks, and direct funding assistance. This study investigates how incentives that are offered by local governments to private developers or land owners

influence the rate of redevelopment in their sphere of influence. A survey was administered to local governments throughout the State of California to determine how incentives are used for the redevelopment of brownfields. Results from this study show a preference by participating local governments to offer direct funding assistance, which may be directly linked to a relative level of inexperience.

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