

Learning from California: Highlights of CRP Studios Fall 2013/Spring 2014

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CRP Department Head Hemalata Dandekar writes about the 2013-14 studio projects. By highlighting their objectives and accomplishments, she notes how important community outreach and learn-by-doing studio pedagogy are in shaping students into professionals who will be fully engaged in the field.

Earlier volumes of FOCUS spotlighted the variety, diversity, and locational distribution of the California communities that host and support the CRP planning studios. Intensive curriculum studios are a key element of the CRP program offered at all levels of the graduate and undergraduate curriculums. FOCUS Volume 7 (p. 81) elaborated on the concept of "learning from California" and the program's underlying mission of serving community and how this is practiced in studios at all levels of the curriculum. FOCUS Volume 8 (p.72) charted the studio sequence for both programs to identify the graphic, analytic and conceptual skills that are taught at various levels. And FOCUS Volume 9 (p. 96) described the ways in which learning from California is tempered in our program with opportunities to experience a comparative frame of reference by exposure to

international practice. FOCUS Volume 10 (p. 131) noted the fact that CRP studios are contacted with, and supported financially by, host cities as a demonstration of the utility that student work brings to California communities.

In addition to describing the studio work completed in the recent academic year, this volume elaborates on the key areas of community-desired impacts that guide each studio exercise. This analysis reflects the department efforts to clarify the outcomes of planning and the learning goals for each level of our studio sequence. Given the significant investment in studio-based pedagogy in our program this will clarify how the communities served and the students trained benefit from our integrated, community-service oriented approach to studio



instruction. The underlying premise of our studios is that student learning in core and support classes of our curriculum is applied to specific planning situations in an integrative, holistic, and hands-on fashion. And, that the solutions are subject to the assessment of the communities served. This latter premise adds an additional layer of complexity and accountability to the effort.

In the 2013-14 academic year once again a range of California communities (Figure 1) hosted our studios. Most studios received financial support from the host client-communities, bringing a heightened accountability to the end product expected and increasing the responsibility of the supervising faculty. Host communities ranged from the City of Milpitas (the work for which won the CalAPA Award of Merit and awards of excellence from the Northern and Central Coast divisions), to the smaller, central coast cities of Cayucos and Morro Bay that compete to attract tourists yet sustain a high quality of life for their residents. In the 2013-14 academic year CRP studios engaged in the projects described next.

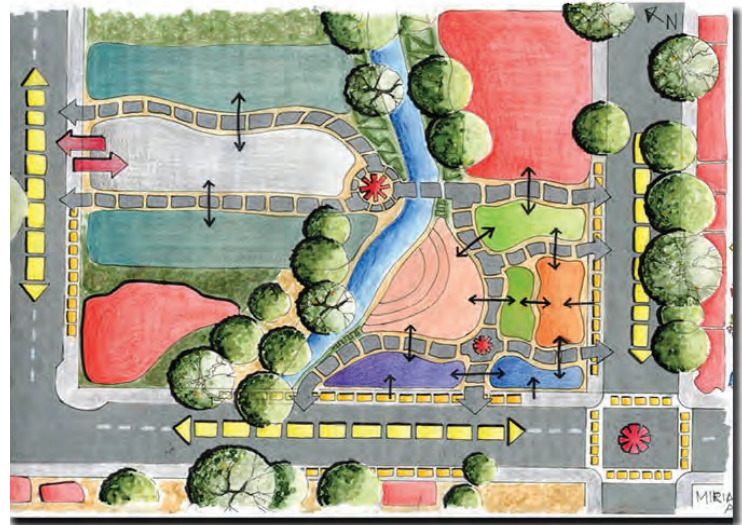
Undergraduate Studios

*Basic Graphic Skills CRP 201 (Fall 2013),
Urban Design Studio 1 CRP 202 (Winter 2014)
Instructors Umut Toker and Dennis Combrink*

In CRP 201, a series of applied in-studio and field assignments introduce students to basic graphic communication methods and urban design concepts. They learn freehand sketching, orthographic drawing, and layouts using traditional drafting techniques, as well as basic computer-based graphic techniques. In CRP 202, students apply these skills to a small urban design project, and articulate the rationale behind their design decisions as they relate to a specific client program, environmental concerns, regulations and ordinances, economic factors, site opportunities and constraints, circulation, and creating a pedestrian friendly environment. This year CRP 202 addressed a strategic gateway site in San Luis Obispo at the intersection of Monterey and Santa Rosa streets.

*A Vision for the Power Plant Area, Morro Bay, CA
Urban Design Studio 2 CRP 203 (Spring 2014)
Instructors Vicente del Rio and Dennis Combrink*

Morro Bay's Power Plant was officially shut down in 2014, and the fate of the imposing three-stack building and of the surrounding land remains unclear. With the City of Morro Bay's interested support, both sessions of CRP 203 explored urban design ideas for the redevelopment of the site, including the functional adaptation of the old Power Plant building and careful redesign of the waterfront facilities. The students exchanged information and ideas with students in parallel studios in Architecture and Landscape Architecture. The final proposals turn the site into an integral part of the city, respond to regional recreational needs, and take advantage of the beautiful California Coast. At the end of the quarter, posters depicting



Figures 1 & 2: Work by students in the CRP 201 Basic Graphic Skills studios this year. Top, site concept diagram by Miriam Arias. Below, hand-colored detail of SketchUp model by Rachel DuMont.

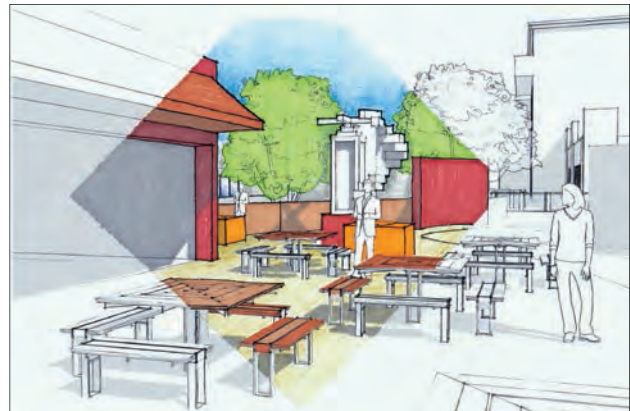


Figure 3: From CRP 202 Urban Design Studio I, a SketchUp Bird's-eye-view of Plaza Nueva, by Rachel DuMont and Steven Orosco. A block-sized mixed-use development including a bus terminal proposed as a gateway to San Luis Obispo's downtown.



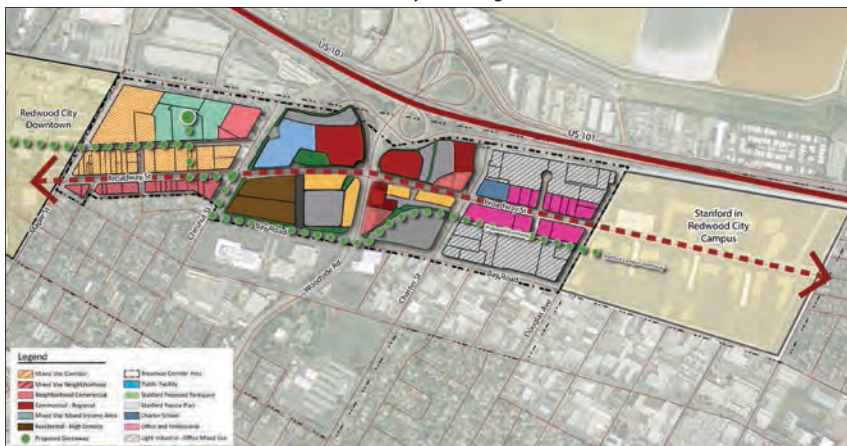


Figure 4: SketchUp view of a proposal for redevelopment of Morro Bay's Power Plant site, by Miriam Arias, Alan Ayon, Gustavo Castro, Steven Orosco, and Jayeong Kim. From CRP 203 Urban Design Studio II.



Figure 5: From CRP 341 Urban Design Studio III, proposed redevelopment in Milpitas's old downtown by Kevin Alcantara, Chris Bedekovic, Jane Kim and Diane Tran.

Figures 6 & 7: Concepts from the Broadway Corridor Plan for Redwood City, by CRP 410/411 Community Planning Laboratories I & II.



the proposals were exhibited for public review at the Morro Bay Community Center.

Urban Design Visions for Milpitas, CA

Urban Design Studio III CRP 341 (Fall 2013)

Instructors Vicente del Rio and Hemalata Dandekar

The City of Milpitas Planning and Neighborhood Services Department challenged our class to develop land use and urban design studies, pre-planning insights, visions, and urban design concepts for two catalyst areas in Milpitas: California Circle, which had the potential to become a "billboard" development on highway 880, and an area around Main Street and Serra Way with the potential to become a gateway to both the historic downtown and the newer civic center plaza. This broad-ranging visioning exercise turned the youthful energy of 29 third-year undergraduate CRP students to imagining creative and dynamic futures that would have a transformative effect and announce what Milpitas aspired to become in the 21st Century. The expectation was that students would develop visual and physical imagery to inspire development of new identities for both sites, creating activity nodes that could contribute to the city's economy. Guided by Professors Vicente del Rio and Hemalata Dandekar, the students developed posters, fly-through computer scenarios, and a report containing seven alternatives. This work won the 2014 Academic Award of Merit from the California Chapter of the APA, and Awards of Excellence from its Northern and the Central Coast divisions. See also the article by Caruso and del Rio in this issue of FOCUS (pages 81 to 87).

Broadway Corridor Plan, Redwood City, CA

Community Planning Laboratory I & II CRP 410/411

(Fall 2013 and Winter 2014)

Instructor Zeljka Howard

The fourth-year undergraduates, under contract with the City of Redwood and under the guidance of Professor Howard, developed a land use and circulation plan for a section of Broadway Corridor in Redwood City, CA linking Downtown to Stanford. See also the article by Howard and Messner in pages



88-91 of this FOCUS. A two-phased planning process involved the following interrelated phases and documents:

Phase I (Fall Quarter): research on the regional context, the study area, and the community including field surveys to record parcel-by-parcel land uses, roadway and intersection measurements, and mapping. Public outreach efforts included City staff and stakeholders interviews, public workshops, and focus discussions with community organizations and high school students. An online community opinion survey extended the outreach effort to the general public. Phase I is summarized in the final report *Broadway Corridor Study: Public Outreach*.

Phase II (Winter Quarter): analysis of background information and community input, case study development, and formulation of overall vision and goals to guide alternative concept plans for circulation and land development. Alternative concepts included two for the entire Corridor, two for the Gateway District, and two alternative circulation concepts. All were displayed and discussed at an Open House held in Redwood City attended by City staff and stakeholders. The final report and recommendations were refined based on feedback received from the community. Phase II is summarized in *Broadway Corridor Study: Land Use and Circulation Concepts*.

Graduate Studios

Vision for Embarcadero North, Morro Bay, CA

Project Planning Laboratory CRP 553 (Spring 2013)

Instructors Vicente del Rio and Hemalata Dandekar

Embarcadero North in the City of Morro Bay is an area directly north of the iconic but now closed Power Plant and its three towering smoke stacks. Dominated by an astounding view of Morro Rock, the area has direct access to the beach and is accessed through Highway 41 thus serving as a terminus to a link to Yosemite National Park and California's Central Valley. Embarcadero North contains Morro Bay High School, a teen center, the Lila Keiser Park, four RV parks that are mostly used seasonally but have no amenities and are physically disconnected from Morro Bay's waterfront and downtown with their unique setting of working and touristic boats and piers, local retail, and eateries. City officials challenged the students to develop alternative visions for circulation and transit, land use development, tourism, and economic development, and to do this with an eye to augmenting and amplifying rather than competing with the existing resources and economic activity of the city. The final report, which students presented to the City Planning Commission, is available at: <<http://www.morrobay.ca.us/index.aspx?nid=787>>

Connecting Cayucos: Visions and Actions for Public Space

Project Planning Laboratory CRP 553 (Spring 2013)

Instructor Kelly Main

The City of Cayucos charged students to develop site-specific recommendations for public space to address several goals for the community that were established in San Luis Obispo

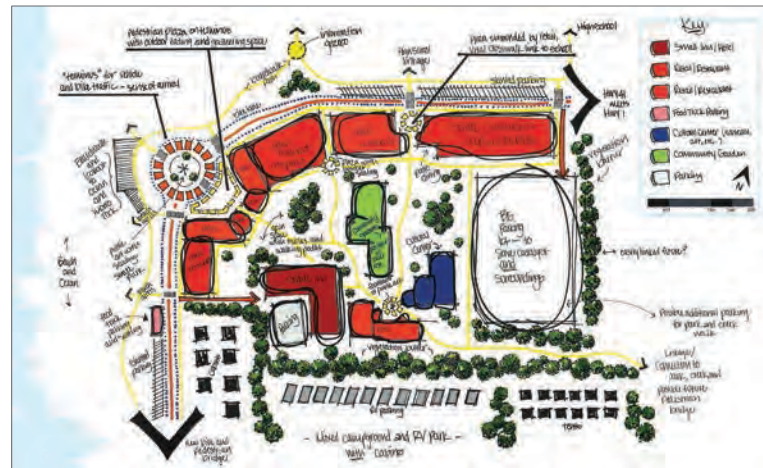


Figure 8: Site design diagram of the proposed Catalyst Project from the Vision for Embarcadero North, Morro Bay, CA. From CRP 553 Project Planning Laboratory.

County's Estero Plan (2009)—a beachfront walkway, economic vitality, additional parking, connectivity as well as community identity, health, and sustainability. A Senior Planner in San Luis Obispo County and the Cayucos Citizens Advisory Council guided the student effort. Given a focus on public spaces, community outreach was a top priority and included participation at community events and meetings—such as the annual Easter Egg Hunt/Dog Parade, the weekly Farmer's Market, and local Rotary Club—along with working with 8th graders at Cayucos Elementary School and interviewing community residents and visitors in public spaces. The work culminated in students presenting their ideas, which included the creation of a community garden and the conversion of a beachfront parking lot into a community plaza, to the Cayucos Advisory Council.

General Plan Update, City of Guadalupe, CA

Community and Regional Planning Studios I & II CRP 552/554

(Fall 2013 & Winter 2014)

Instructor Chris Clark

The City of Guadalupe asked Professor Clark's session of the graduate studio to update its General Plan. Guadalupe is a small mostly farming community close to the northern Santa Barbara County line. Once a thriving agricultural center served by the Union Pacific line and Highway 1, the construction of Highway 101 and the expansion of the City of Santa Maria to the east caused Guadalupe to slip into the shadow of larger economies, but it remains an agricultural hub and hosts two large produce packing plants. It is a quiet community of families with modest economic means, and home mostly to farmworkers.

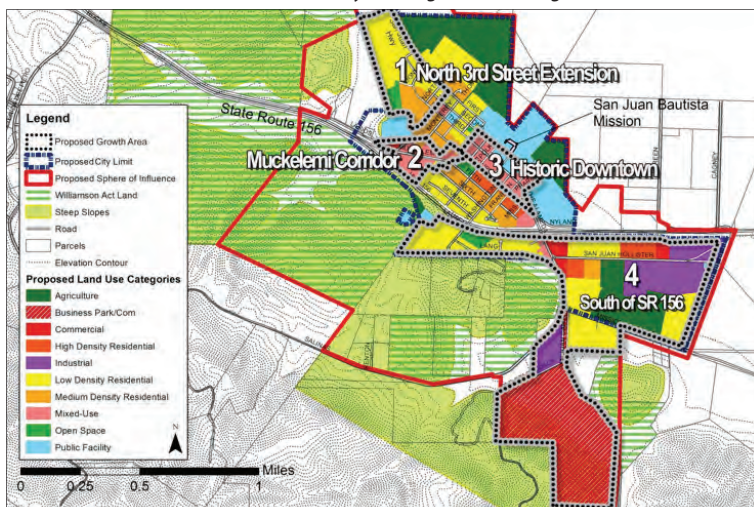
A varied outreach program sent the class to many activities throughout the community. Students surveyed businesses, school students, and residents about their town and asked where they thought it could go. Students completed technical studies including a full land use survey and a Complete Streets



Figures 9 & 10: Guadalupe's old movie theatre announcing the students led workshop for the updating of the General Plan (top), and an image of a working table during the event. From CRP 552/554 Community and Regional Planning Studios I & II.



Figure 11: Proposed Land Use Plan for San Juan Bautista General Plan update. From CRP 552/554 Community and Regional Planning Studios I & II.



inventory. In developing policies the focus was on economic development, alternative transportation, and future land uses. The latter investigation stimulated considerable discussion around approaches to bring new businesses and shopping to Guadalupe. The housing element was updated, and in the process discussions were held with people interested in affordable housing and accommodation for farmworkers. The Complete Streets plan identified several opportunities to improve transit and the pedestrian experience particularly for routes to school. The students presented to the City Council twice, first to discuss the program and, at the conclusion of work, to present their findings to the community.

*General Plan Update, City of San Juan Bautista, CA
Community and Regional Planning Studios I & II CRP 552/554
(Fall 2013 & Winter 2014)
Instructor Cornelius Nuworsoo*

Professor Nuworsoo's session of the graduate planning studio prepared an administrative draft General Plan for the City of San Juan Bautista. Located in rural San Benito County thirty miles from the City of Monterey and just south of the fertile San Juan Valley, the city sits on 0.7 square miles and had 1,862 residents in 2010. In 2010, the median household income was \$53,077 compared to the County and California state median incomes of \$65,771 and \$60,883 per household, respectively.

The students collaborated with residents, advisory committees, and city leaders to formulate a development scenario to accommodate projected population, jobs and housing needs by 2035. Comprehensive research on the community and on development opportunities and constraints as well as public feedback guided the work. The class presented three distinct alternative growth scenarios to the City. The Preferred Growth Scenario for 2035 reflects a combination of features from all three scenarios and captures community desires for: a vibrant, walkable, and attractive downtown; to maintain the City's Historic nature; to provide an adequate supply of housing; and to increase the number of jobs within the City. The Proposed Land Use Map (Figure 11) focuses development in four key areas: (1) medium-density and single-family housing in the 3rd Street extension area, (2) mixed-use commercial and retail development in the Muckelemi Street Corridor, (3) infill commercial and residential development in the Historic Downtown, and (4) residential, light-industrial and commercial development south of SR 156.

The General Plan update included long-term goals, objectives, policies, and programs to inform future development on twelve Elements: Economic Development, Land Use, Circulation, Conservation, Housing, Public Facilities, Safety, Health, Open Space, Noise, Historic Preservation and Community Design, and Strategic Planning. The plan positions the City to improve the residents' quality of life, provide diverse housing options, generate economic vitality for the city, and enhance its attraction as a tourist destination with additions in and around its popular Mission San Juan Bautista.