

Focus

Volume 22, Academic Years 2024–25 and 2025–26

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College of Architecture and Environmental Design

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

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Masthead

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Note from the Department Head

Welcome to Volume 22 of Focus, the journal of the City and Regional Planning Department. This volume is a little different from previous editions, as it brings together the work and accomplishments of two academic years, 2024–25 and 2025–26. These two years have been especially important for our department. They have been years of transition, reflection, and preparation for a new chapter in planning education at Cal Poly.

I would first like to thank Dr. Dave Amos, editor of Focus, for his dedication to the journal. After taking over the editorship from Dr. Vicente del Rio, Dave has continued the important tradition that Vicente established more than two decades ago while bringing new ideas and energy to the publication. Focus remains an important record of who we are as a department and a place to celebrate the work and achievements of our students, faculty, and alumni. Much of our attention during these two years has remained focused on the transition from quarters to semesters. Over the



past several years, our faculty have worked extensively to redesign both the BSCRП and MCRP curricula. We have approached this transition not simply as a change in the academic calendar, but as an opportunity to rethink what planning education should provide to the next generation of planners. Our new curricula strengthen our

learn-by-doing philosophy while giving students greater flexibility and creating more opportunities for interdisciplinary education, off-campus learning, and connections across the College of Architecture and Environmental Design and the university.

The 2025–26 academic year marks our final year operating under the quarter system. This is a significant moment for the department and for Cal Poly. The quarter system has shaped our programs, courses, studios, and the experiences of generations of our students. At the same time, I am excited about the opportunities that the semester system will bring. Our faculty have put considerable thought and effort into preparing

for this transition, and I believe the new curricula will position our programs well for the changing needs of our students and the planning profession.

Another important milestone during this period was the Planning Accreditation Board site visit. Accreditation provides an important opportunity for us to examine our programs, assess what we are doing well, and identify areas where we can continue to improve. I am very pleased that the site visit resulted in a positive report. The process also reminded us of the strength of our department: the commitment of our faculty and staff, the accomplishments and enthusiasm of our students, the engagement of our alumni and advisory board, and our long-standing relationships with communities and the planning profession. I want to thank everyone who participated in the accreditation process and helped us present the department and our programs.

We are also very pleased to welcome Anahita Shadkam to Cal Poly in the 2025–26 academic year. The continued renewal of our faculty is essential as our programs evolve. I am delighted to have Anahita as part of our CRP community and look forward to the contributions she will make to our students, programs, and department.

Our community-based studios continue to be central to this mission, connect-

ing students with communities and providing opportunities to address real planning problems through practical and creative work. We also continue to strengthen our relationships with alumni, practitioners, our advisory board, and other departments and programs.

Looking back over the two academic years represented in this volume, I am grateful for what our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the department have accomplished together. Looking forward, we are entering an exciting period. We are completing one chapter of CRP's history as we teach our final quarters and preparing to begin another with the semester system. Through these changes, what remains constant is our commitment to our students, to planning education, and to serving communities through the work we do.

I invite you to enjoy Volume 22 of Focus and the work represented in these pages. Thank you to everyone who continues to contribute to and support our department. I look forward to beginning this next chapter together.

Amir Hajrasouliha, PhD

Department Head and Professor
City and Regional Planning Department
College of Architecture &
Environmental Design

Integrating Generative AI into Urban Planning: A Framework

Sahana Kotha Blythe Wilson Ethan Keller

Advisor: Dr. Amir Hajrasouliha



RESEARCH BRIEF

Undergraduates Present at AI Conference in London

RESEARCHERS: SAHANA KOTHA, BLYTHE WILSON, & ETHAN KELLER

The role of artificial intelligence in the field of city planning is still under debate. Practitioners and researchers are assessing the benefits and drawbacks of this new technology. At the forefront of this discussion are three CRP undergraduates—Sahana Kotha, Blythe Wilson, and Ethan Keller.

The trio presented their findings at the 19th International Computational Urban Planning and Urban Management (CUPUM) Conference at University College London. The conference, running from June 23-27, 2025, was a forum for researchers to explore the cutting edge

of computing technologies and the ways they shape cities.

Sahana, Blythe, and Ethan's work comes from their past work under Dr. Amir Hajrasouliha. It strives to understand how AI can augment rather than replace planners, with a specific focus on urban design, community engagement, and participatory planning.

Their presentation received a warm welcome from the computer scientists, data analysts, professors, and student researchers in attendance. After the presentation, they heard valuable feedback

about the future of their work, which Sahana and Blythe are carrying forward into their senior projects next year.

The conference also served as a valuable educational opportunity for Sahana, Blythe, and Ethan. They all learned about new participatory planning tools that used virtual reality, mixed reality, 3D experiences, interactive dashboards, games, and storytelling tools. They saw examples of AI being used to facilitate scenario planning workshops with stakeholders, create interfaces that help non-planners use GIS, and determine the distribution of green space within cities.

“A majority of CUPUM attendees were computer scientists and programmers who applied their highly technical knowledge to urban planning,” said Sahana. “This reinforced to me that there is definitely a need for planners to be involved in these conversations as technology progresses and becomes more intertwined with the field of planning. I feel confident that our research is a step in the right direction, helping us bridge the gap between high-level programming and people-centered professions like planning.”



Sahana, Blythe, and Ethan at University College London



RESEARCH BRIEF

Photo by Arphy on Unsplash

CRP Professor Develops Global Resource for Urban Climate Adaptation Strategies

RESEARCHER: ADRIENNE GREVE (CRP)

The global climate crisis is already creating significant and severe impacts for cities across the globe. These can include impacts to cities and the infrastructure that unpins many of the core functions of cities. Cities and local governments must adapt to this changing context through sound climate policy embedded in every decision.

To assist in this global effort, Dr. Adrienne Greve was part of a team that published “Mainstreaming Climate Adaptation in City Financial Planning and Budgeting,” a 50-page report pub-

lished by C40 Cities, a network of nearly 100 the world’s leading cities working to deliver the urgent action to confront the climate crisis and create a future where everyone, everywhere, can thrive.

The report offers a practical guide for cities to integrate climate adaptation into their financial planning and budgeting. It argues that climate risks are already creating financial losses and that resilience must be embedded across all levels of government decision-making. The report presents a structured framework of seven building blocks, ranging

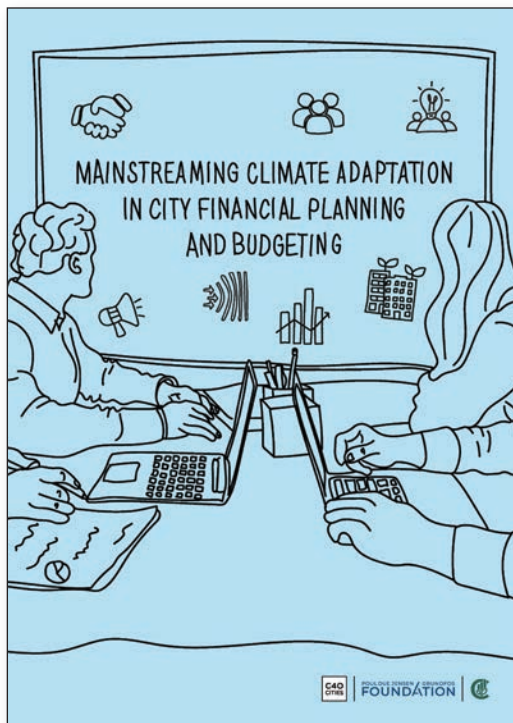
from multi-level integrated governance and risk assessments to budget processes and capital investment or improvement planning (CIP), that cities can use to systematically align adaptation with their financial systems.

Adaptation is a long-term, evolving process, requiring flexible strategies, equity considerations, and planning horizons that extend to and beyond 2100. Drawing on real-world city experiences, the report provides both strategic insights and actionable steps to help governments mainstream resilience into financial decisions, ensuring that investments

today can withstand tomorrow's climate challenges.

Developing a Risk Assessment

One of the most important concepts in climate planning is the need to start with a baseline for measuring progress, fundamentally re-shaping the production in the city by making more informed decisions on the effectiveness of adaptation pathways. The end goal is to be able to create collective action through an approach to climate adaptation that formalizes partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions, utilities, and civil society organizations to understand the local climate.



The report encourages cities to create a Climate Change Risk Assessment (also known as a CCRA) report. This is a comprehensive forecast of changing magnitude, frequency, and extent of climate hazards to properly assess the vulnerability of communities, assets, and services. By extending across different departments, local governments can observe measures together and translate the CCRA projections into clear goals and plans of action using an approach called Adaptation Pathways. These pathways do not have firm timelines, instead they rely on identified triggers that indicate when a new approach or pathway should be pursued.



Photo by Venus Major on Unsplash

Climate adaptation often requires cities to allocate resources—these solutions are not free. But as Dr. Greve says, “Compare it to the cost of doing nothing. Which, in a lot of cases, means having to rebuild whatever you’re building after it gets destroyed.”

Climate Solutions International

Dr. Greve’s work in this area is ongoing, as she continues to collaborate with Dr. Jan Whittington (at the University of Washington) and Micheal LaGuardia on the start-up company called Climate Solutions International (CSI). The company aims to share a proactive model with cities on integrating climate change into the annual CIP process. The com-

pany is slowly releasing online modules for components of the CIP model allowing cities to integrate climate change into the CIP (reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate impacts).

Greve’s collaborator likens the software to “a municipal Build-a-Bear” that allows client cities to provide their annual capital projects, develop alternatives, and balance the budget and potential climate actions. Cities want to be able to balance finding the cheapest way to finance assets through the annual capital pipeline while reducing carbon emissions and sustaining the performance of the buildings long term.

Key recommendations from cities to address the seven building blocks

The following recommendations summarise practical insights from the cities profiled in this report. They reflect lessons learned in implementing the seven building blocks for mainstreaming climate adaptation across government and finance systems.

SEVEN BUILDING BLOCKS	KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRACTICES DRAWN FROM CITY CASE STUDIES
BLOCK 1: Whole-of-government approach	• Mandates from political leadership formalise collaboration, and may be inspired by departmental initiative • The budgeting process itself can be a mechanism for cross-departmental change • Climate budgeting may result in a scope of climate action beyond a current CAP
BLOCK 2: Climate change risk assessment	• The scope and sources of global data for CCRA matter; cities need to engage with external organisations, like national agencies, universities and specialists to work with the most reliable data to deliver scientifically accurate CCRA • To be conservative, choose the most extreme yet likely global models and scenarios of global GHGs for forecasting • The purpose of the CCRA is to understand the changing exposure to climate hazards over time
BLOCK 3: Adaptation policymaking	• Mandates from leadership provide unparalleled value to climate offices in implementing plans and policies • Policies can formalise partnerships with neighbouring jurisdictions, utilities, and civil society organisations to take collective action • Understand the relationship between climate policies, revenues, and expenditures
BLOCK 4: Adaptation pathways planning	• The aim of adaptation planning is to maintain continuity of municipal services and the functionality of municipal assets, despite increasing climate impacts • Adaptation pathways planning was created to allow local engineers to map infrastructure options that will keep municipal services intact in the face of changing climate hazards • An adaptation pathways approach can unite city departments and the public through mutually and locally observable measures of climate impacts that, according to plan, will trigger a change in capital investments and policies
BLOCK 5: The cost of doing nothing	• The cost of doing nothing is an important financial baseline measure for targeting and monitoring progress in adaptation • It is important for the cost of doing nothing to be easily understood by a broad audience • Care should be taken when incorporating these values into cost-benefit methods of analysis to support decision making
BLOCK 6: Adaptation in multiyear financial planning	• Mainstreaming adaptation within financial planning involves establishing a reciprocal working relationship between climate and financial planning offices • Multiyear financial plans set the stage for annual budgets • When relying on the value of private property in financial projections of adaptation plans, be aware of the need to adjust methods to address equity implications
BLOCK 7: Adaptation in annual budgets and multiyear CIPs	• Budget instructions are a key point of intervention to mainstream adaptation • Mainstream until adaptation goals are fully integrated throughout the budgeting process • Plan early: Work with urban and environmental planners, architects, and engineers to ensure that proposed projects enter the budgetary process ready for climate adaptation

Mainstreaming climate adaptation in city financial planning and budgeting - 42

Excerpt from “Mainstreaming Climate Adaptation in City Financial Planning and Budgeting”



RESEARCH BRIEF

Federal Funding to Remove a Historic Pedestrian Mall: A Fresno Case Study

RESEARCHER: DAVE AMOS & KELLY GREGG (UNIVERSITY OF BUFFALO)

This Research Brief is a summary of a journal article by Kelly Gregg (University of Buffalo) and Dave Amos, titled “A case study of transforming Fresno’s Fulton Street from a pedestrian mall to a Complete Street: Examining the influence of federal funding at the local level” The paper was published in the Journal of Urban Affairs in 2025.

Fresno’s Fulton Street Pedestrian Mall originally eliminated automobile traffic in 1964, but like many postwar pedestrian malls in the United States (U.S.) and Canada, it struggled to maintain a lively retail environment over the long term.

Though Fresno’s pedestrian mall had high ground floor retail vacancy rates, the iconic and award-winning landscape design by Garrett Eckbo, on Fulton Street was not removed until recently. After decades of discussion, the Fresno City Council voted five to two in favor of redesigning the Fulton Mall in February 2014. This vote ultimately led to the reopening of the pedestrian mall to automobile traffic in 2017. The city officials who backed the redesign promoted it as a means of revitalizing downtown Fresno by attracting private investment and ultimately reducing the ground floor retail vacancy rates along Fulton Street. The redesigned street was also heralded

as a Complete Street for reintroducing two-way automobile and bicycle traffic with a shared bicycle and automobile lane, along with on-street parking. The city used a U.S. federal TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant to fund the majority of the 2016 construction. Fresno's TIGER grant is the only Complete Street project that *added* cars to a roadway. The research question is: To what extent did TIGER funding, used by the city, and the associated streetscape redesign support the city's intended goals of downtown redevelopment and a vibrant street life?

A Mixed Methods Approach

To answer the research question, we used a few different data sources. To more fully understand the expectations for the TIGER funding and the goals explicitly outlined by the city, we conducted a detailed review of documents (including grant reports) and local news articles related to Fulton Street's reconstruction and downtown redevelopment. Using the Polk Business Directories for Fresno, California, we conducted an extensive analysis of ground floor vacancy and establishment types spanning 72 years, from 1949 before the Fulton Mall

was built, to 2021 after the street was redesigned and reopened to automobile traffic in 2017. We also conducted eight interviews with key stakeholders during the reopening process.

Downtown Vacancy Changes

According to City documents and news media, one of the primary reasons for the Fulton Street redesign and removal of the pedestrian mall was to create a vibrant downtown by increasing retail and entertainment uses on the ground floor and reducing the high ground floor vacancy rates. In 2011, before the street redesign, there were 17 vacancies on any given block, on average. During street construction in 2017, the average number of vacancies increased to 21 on any given block. However, following the completion of construction and the street reopening, the average vacancy by block within the former mall area decreased to 13 in 2019 and 2021. Fulton Street lost many retail establishments during the reconstruction and were often replaced by non-retail uses. The percentage of retail establishments to all establishments declined from approximately 60 percent in 2017 to 30 percent in 2021. It is worth noting that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic likely had an impact in some way on these results.

A Loss of Latino Businesses

Furthermore, a closer look at the types and names of businesses listed in the business directories demonstrates the noteworthy changes among the specialized Latino- and Hispanic-focused establishments that had clustered along Fulton Street beginning in the 1990s.

Over twelve specialized Latino- and Hispanic-owned and serving businesses closed and were replaced along the mall and former mall blocks of Fulton Street between 2011 and 2021. These establishments were often replaced with less vibrant non-retail office uses that less directly served or represented the Latino and Hispanic population.

A Mismatch of Need and Funding

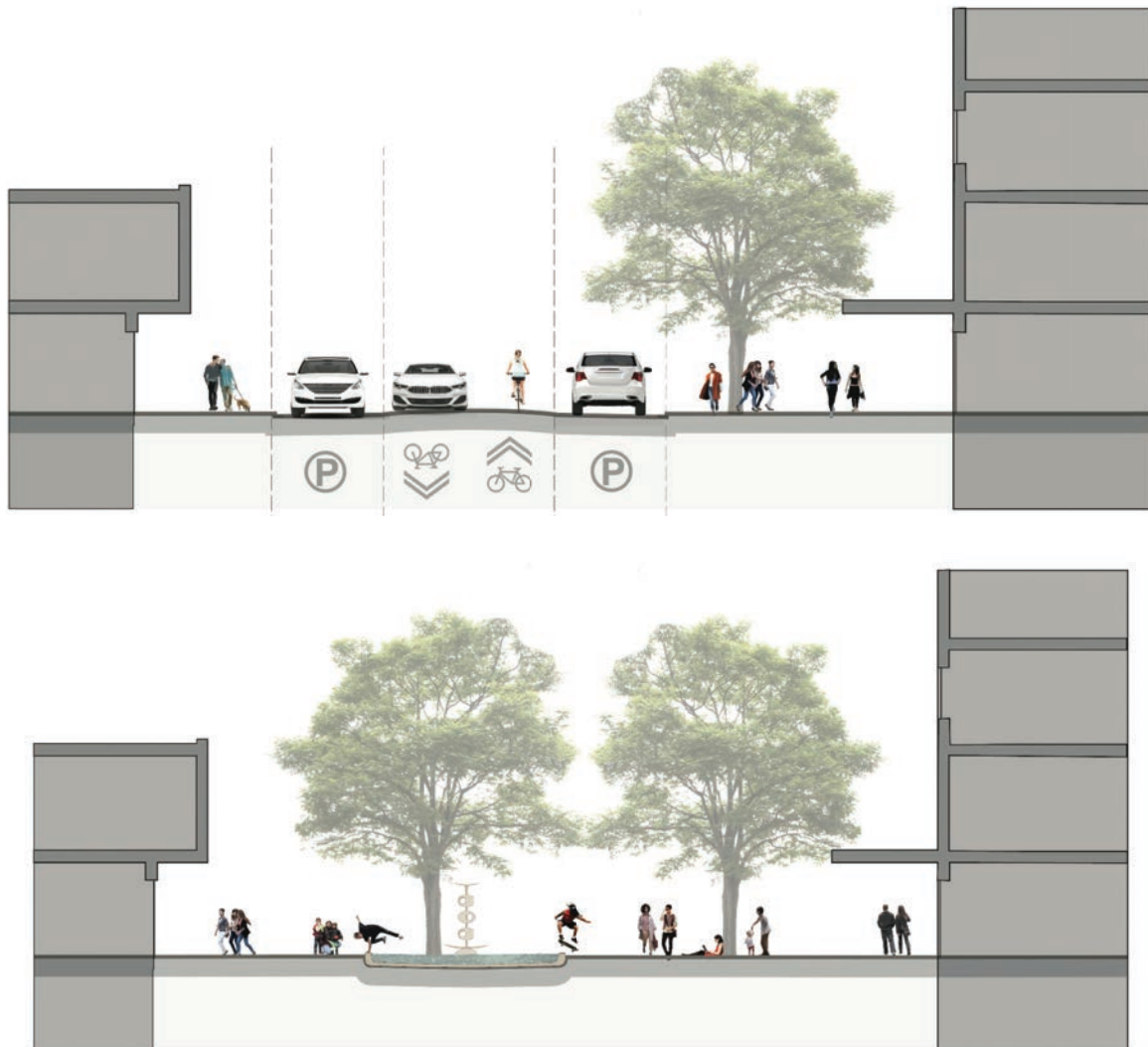
The City of Fresno felt compelled to characterize the redesign as a Complete Street to increase its chances of receiving federal TIGER funding, but this highlights the mismatch between the criteria to receive the funding and the goals of the project. The City's vision for downtown and Fulton Street, as stated in the specific plan, was a revitalized corridor with reduced ground floor vacancies, increased rents, and more people living downtown. Federal funding did not exist for urban redevelopment as it did in the mid-twentieth century urban renewal era, but it did exist for transportation projects and specifically Complete Streets designs. Even though the street redesign fell short of best practices as outlined by Complete Streets advocates, the City claimed that it was pursuing a "Complete Streets redesign" as a means to achieve its goals of removing the long-standing pedestrian mall.

City plans and federal funding supported the street reconstruction but failed

to support existing businesses, catalyze prospective businesses, or spur property investment (especially with historic properties). Instead, local officials placed high expectations on streetscape improvements to catalyze private business and building development.

Furthermore, public dollars were allocated to the construction of the infrastructure without any support for the existing business owners who experienced substantial disruption to their businesses during the long-term construction of the street. Local government officials should be aware of the limitations of federal funding. In this case, the intended goals might have been more fully realized with additional support and funding for business development and/or historic redevelopment. Local municipalities could potentially benefit from more flexible state and federal funding sources, or supplementary sources that more directly address local needs. Strategies that rely on indirect benefits from public investment like a street redesign may result in slower-than-anticipated positive effects, if such benefits materialize at all. In the case of Fresno, many of the challenges with vacancy and disinvestment in the historic buildings had been known and documented for many years prior to the public investment and use of the TIGER funding.

City officials also did not seriously consider historic preservation of the street as a viable option and failed to fully consider the potential opportunity for the historic pedestrian mall to become a unique attraction in the downtown.



Fulton Street after the 2017 redesign (above) and before the redesign (below). Diagrams by Kelly Gregg.



STUDIO PROFILE

Cal Poly Students Provide Assistance in Altadena after the Eaton Fire

CRP 341, SPRING 2025

In Spring of 2025, third-year City and Regional Planning students and fourth-year Architecture students participated in an interdisciplinary design studio to provide support for Altadena, California. The community was ravaged by the Eaton Fire in January 2025, the second-most destructive wildfire in California history. The unincorporated community in Los Angeles County was nearly engulfed by the fire, with over nine thousand structures destroyed and an additional one thousand damaged in the 8.5 square-mile community. Over the course of the spring quarter, the nearly 30 CRP and Architecture students

compiled information on rebuilding and community resources for residents and created urban design and architectural visions for major corridors with a focus on minimizing displacement. This studio, headed by CRP lecturer Beate von Bischoffinck and Architecture lecturer Barry Williams, was sponsored by Wildlife Urban Institute.

Geospatial Research First

Students began the quarter with geospatial research. Several teams compiled online resources on demographic information, extent of fire damage, locations of community landmarks, and other

important spatial information about Altadena and the fire.

Interactive Mapping and Outreach

With an increased understanding of the community and the impacts of the Eaton Fire, the students shifted to preparing for the first outreach event. The goals of the first event were twofold: gain insight from the community into what and where in the community is important and providing clear information about rebuilding. CRP students produced interactive maps and questionnaires for community members to engage with to

satisfy the first goal. Architecture students compiled state and county information about residential building codes to produce a set of recovery brochures covering four short- and long-term issues (Temporary Housing, ADUs, Like-For-Like Rebuild, and Fire Code Compliance) in pursuit of the second goal. In addition to the brochures, students printed out copies of flyers for upcoming community events and created an ArcGIS Storymap compiling said events along with local businesses that were open or in need of support.



CRP 341 students meet with Los Angeles County officials



Students meet with members of the community to get their input on the direction of the rebuilding effort.

Before setting up for outreach, the studio met with the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning to present their spatial research and outreach materials. The department staff applauded the production of recovery brochures, echoing how the wealth of information on rebuilding can be overwhelming, especially when trying to provide meaningful support to those

affected by disaster. Staff advised students on areas previously identified in the West San Gabriel Valley Area Plan to be candidates for mixed use corridor development and encouraged their designs to realize the plan's goals. The first outreach tabling was held in collaboration with a food distribution event at the location of Fair Oaks Burger, a family-run fast food restaurant. After participants

received their food, they were invited to participate in the outreach activities. Community members expressed their desires to preserve Altadena's neighborhood character and "small-town feel," as well as protecting the affordability and self-ownership of housing. Residents informed students of the importance of outdoor activities in the area such as local trails, parks, and community gardens. Farnsworth Park, which burned partially including the loss of an amphitheater, was mentioned frequently as a community landmark. Regarding rebuild efforts, community members expressed to students that navigating the rebuild process was prohibitively confusing and even preventing them from grieving their losses.

Future Development Scenarios

Following the engagement event at Fair Oaks Burger the focus of the studio shifted towards the production of design scenarios. Two sections of the Lake Avenue corridor in Altadena were identified as sites for student designs, and teams of CRP students developed low, medium, and high-density development scenarios for both sites. The purpose of the scenarios was to gauge community interest in increasing housing stock while presenting a variety of streetscapes and built forms to choose from. Architecture students concurrently developed visions on Lake Avenue, Fair Oaks Avenue, and Lincoln Avenue at a smaller scale and

in greater detail, focusing on rebuilding housing capacity while introducing new community space at a pedestrian scale. A small group of CRP students used generative AI tools to create supporting activities. The students generated a set images of urban scenes where only the building style changed between images, another set where only the housing typology changed, and assembled a third set of photos of different public amenities. The community members would then place stickers on only the images they would like to see realized during rebuild efforts at the engagement event.

After finalizing the designs toward the end of May, the studio travelled back to Altadena to meet with community members and discuss the designs and goals for rebuilding. The event was graciously hosted by Joey Galloway at the location of his Altadena Hardware store, a beloved community landmark which was burned out by the Eaton Fire. Dozens of community members observed posters highlighting the designs and spoke with students about their thoughts and experiences after the fire. Residents gravitated towards designs which closely resembled the existing character and typology of Altadena's urban design and recognized the role of adding new housing capacity to support affordability.



STUDIO PROFILE

Students Plan for the Future of Transportation in Grover Beach

CRP 410/411, FALL 2024–WINTER 2025

Grover Beach is a central coast city that sits at the crossroads of the Five Cities area. It's surrounded by the city of Pismo Beach, the city of Arroyo Grande, and the unincorporated communities of Oceano and Halcyon. This central location means that its transportation network is critical to the tens of thousands of people who live in the area, as well as the 12,700 residents of Grover Beach itself.

This was the setting Community Planning Studio students faced as they worked in collaboration with the City of Grover Beach to update the Mobility Element of the General Plan.

A Perfect Collaboration

Studio lead Professor Dave Amos jumped at the opportunity to work with the City of Grover Beach on this general plan element update. "I loved the idea that the students could be so close to their site. We could visit often to gather data and meet with community members." The proximity also meant that City staff were familiar with what the studio course could offer their community. "Senior Planner Kyle Bell was a graduate of our program and had gone through the studio, so he knew how to support our students and get the most out of them," Amos said.

Community Development Director Megan Martin brought a practical eye to the project, ensuring the students' work remained realistic for a city the size of Grover Beach, with all of its unique opportunities and constraints. Martin and Bell were able to meet with students in their studio as well as on site to help guide their work.

An Outreach Focus

With the studio in Cal Poly's backyard, students could take advantage of several unique opportunities to gather input from community members. They began with a tabling event in several key locations throughout the city to get feedback on existing conditions around trans-

portation issues. Later in October, the students organized a "Trunk or Treat" booth to engage community members with kids and parent about how they get to school. The students used this as an opportunity for creativity, and they designed their trunk to look like a school bus. They surveyed parents while the kids did ring toss.

Students believed that the best way of understanding Grover Beach's transportation system was by using it. They organized a group bike ride with Bike SLO County. They created a route along some of the more challenging corridors. Several students, members of Bike SLO County, and community members then



CRP 410 students show off their "Trunk or Treat" ring toss activity.



Getting ready for the Bike and Chat event that had community members showing students areas for improvement along the city's bicycle network.

stopped in key locations to discuss the ways bicycling could be improved. Students took notes and incorporated those insights into the final plan.

Solving Key Challenges

All of this outreach helped students focus in on a few key issues, including parking and cycling. Residents had concerns about the availability of street parking in the city, so the studio organized an effort to calculate the on-street parking vacancy rates in sample locations throughout the city. They went to Grover Beach multiple times to count cars and available parking spots, then computed an average for each block of the study area. They found there was

ample space for parking on street. This information then helped shape the policies they drafted in the plan submitted to the City in March.

Students also identified key bicycle routes throughout the city and the ways the City could ensure users are safe and comfortable on them.

“Grover Beach has great ‘bones’ for a multimodal transportation network,” said Amos. “The studio, working with community members and City staff, really had a simple task: find out how Grover Beach’s grid system could make all users feel like they belong.”



Table 1: Vacancy Rate and total parking spaces for each neighborhood

Map ID #	Neighborhood	Vacancy Rate		Total Parking Spaces	
		On-Street	Off-Street	On-Street	Off-Street
1	Monarch Grove	53%	41%	280	231
2	Northwest	60%	51%	476	326
3	North Central	56%	56%	695	277
4	Northeast	49%	45%	431	412
5	South Grand Neighborhood	70%	59%	498	403
6	Southwest	42%	46%	436	187
7	Southeast	48%	50%	653	284
8	South	58%	49%	875	244

The results of the students' parking study. They identified eight areas that were representative of Grover Beach's neighborhoods and visited each area twice, one at 9:00 pm and again at 6:00 am. They worked in teams to count the parking spaces and the parked cars.



STUDIO PROFILE

Building Cudahy's Climate Plan, Block by Block

CRP 552/554, FALL 2024–WINTER 2025

From Mid-September through March, second-year MCRP students partnered with the City of Cudahy to produce a draft Climate Action Plan (CAP). The students, under the instruction of Professor Mike Boswell worked from September 2024 to March 2025 to prepare the draft. The project came together through the Gateway Cities Council of Governments. The two-quarter sequence moved from evidence gather and community outreach in fall to policy design and Council presentation in winter, giving students full exposure to a real client and a live policy process.

A Two Quarter Approach to Climate Action Planning

The studio followed a clear structure. Fall quarter focused on building a shared understanding of the city's conditions and climate risks. "In fall quarter we produced a background report gathering data on transportation, housing, and land use, the built environment, municipal operations, and environmental issues, and parks and recreation," Boswell notes. Students also compiled the technical foundation a CAP needs: "We compiled a greenhouse-gas emissions inventory for the city and completed a climate vulnerability assessment.

All of that was done in the fall.” These baselines did double duty: they oriented students to the client and gave city staff a transparent reference point for decisions that will follow.

Winter quarter shifted from analysis to action. “Our policies and strategies were aimed at two things: reducing Cudahy’s greenhouse-gas emissions and increasing its resilience to climate impacts,” Boswell said. In Cudahy, resilience priorities were clear: “The big issues were heat and heat waves, potential flooding, and air-quality problems-some of them connected to wildfire.” The class

organized strategy work across transportation, buildings, waste, and urban heat/air quality, stress-testing ideas for feasibility, co-benefits, and near-term implementation.

Evidence and Community Voice

Engagement met people where they already gather. Rather than centering everything at City Hall, the team took the work into neighborhoods. “We set up tabling in front of local businesses- a grocery store, a baker, a restaurant- and in a city park,” said Boswell. Simple tools kept conversations moving: short surveys; map boards where residents



The studio team went to where community members were already gathered to collect valuable input on the climate action plan.

marked places they loved and locations with problems such as traffic safety, lighting, litter, and pollution; and quick prompts to capture ideas.

The studio also plugged into larger community events. “We joined a big family event—a county library book-fair festival with food, games, and storytelling- and set up a booth there.” Youth activities doubled as engagement infrastructure: the team brought sidewalk chalk and asked children to draw something about their neighborhood while students spoke with parents about daily concerns and priorities. Recognizing who lives in Cudahy shaped the process. “Cudahy is primarily a Hispanic, Latine community, so we produced all engagement mate-

rials in English and Spanish and made sure to have bilingual students at the table.” That choice broadened participation and surfaced block-level needs that don’t always appear in a single evening meeting.

The fall also delivered practical lessons in field craft. Community engagement can be unpredictable so the class planned for contingencies and adjusted in real time. When a chosen corner underperformed, teams relocated and simplified materials on the spot. Along the way, students confronted a universal planning challenge: “A greenhouse gas inventory looks straightforward on paper, but in practice it can be very challenging- especially when it comes to



Students prepare for an outreach event



Cudahy is a small city along the Los Angeles River dealing with a history of environmental injustice.

data.” When standard datasets weren’t available, the studio triangulated from regional sources or created new observations to fill gaps.

From Findings to Action

With the evidence base in place, the studio turned to policy and implementation. Transportation strategies focused on everyday access and safety—particularly around schools—while building recommendation explored practical upgrades in a renter-majority context, pairing tenant protections with incentives and municipal leadership projects. Waste actions emphasized low-cost fixes for multifamily properties and better access to organics collection. Heat and air-

quality measures prioritized cooling access, shade, and cleaner, safer routed to parks and transit.

The quarter closed with a public handoff. Looking ahead, the team identified one structural takeaway for small, built-out cities: align early with regional capacity. “If we ran this again, we’d coordinate earlier with regional partners—the COG, the county, and the school district—because a small city like Cudahy relies on regional agencies to get things done.” Taken together, the two quarter studio offered a complete arc, anchored in data, shaped by community voice, and designed for near-term action.



STUDIO PROFILE

Waterfront Studio: Designing Morro Bay's Working Edge

CRP 341, SPRING 2025

Morro Bay gave students a rare brief: redesign an area that serves as both a tourist waterfront and a working harbor. As studio lead Professor Ryan Sandwick put it, “Our first Morro Bay studio focused on a downtown design district—how to add infill and workforce housing while keeping that 1970s character and the city’s ‘sleepy’ feel, balancing tourist needs with those of residents and workers.” A second studio ran in parallel with the city’s Waterfront Master Plan effort. “The second studio ran alongside the city’s Waterfront Master Plan RFP, and I operated the class like a firm responding to it. Students read the RFP, developed

responses, and the planning department interviewed them with the same questions used for professional firms.”

The Challenging North Shore

The class organized around five geographies that collectively tell the story of the waterfront: the North Embarcadero working waterfront, the power plant and proposed battery plant sites, Coleman Park and the connection to Morro Rock, and the North Morro Creek campground area. That northern half demanded a different lens. The northern half of the bay transitions from tourist waterfront to a working waterfront where fishing boats

unload. Each area has very different needs and more stringent regulations to preserve their character.

Across all sites, context framed every move. “We were juggling sea-level rise, contaminated soils, floodplain areas, and sensitive habitat—plus big questions about structures that could stay or go,” says Sandwick. The power/battery district brought hard constraints: The battery plant site is highly contaminated. Housing is not possible, only visitor-serving uses. Just inland, a major PG&E switchyard tied to the regional grid and Diablo Canyon triggers nation-

al-security buffers that shape massing, access, and programming.

At the North Embarcadero, students were asked to design for a real economy. “For the North Embarcadero the question was: how do you design for a working waterfront? Parking is always a pressure, and circulation has to work for boats and trucks.” Students also had to consider habitat, including an otter nursery and protected eelgrass beds.

Coleman Park became a crash course in topography and adaptive edges. “Many



Students develop urban design schemes for Morro Bay's working waterfront.



Morro Bay is known for its tourism and beaches. Students take a break to enjoy a picnic on the beach.

students had never worked with topography. Designing steps, ramps, and a softened water's edge for sea-level rise was a steep learning curve." The campground team learned to program by risk tier. They reorganized uses by flood risk—bike-in camping in areas that can flood, drive-in tent sites higher up, and raised yurts for 'glamping.'

The studio's process mirrored practice. Students toggled between research and iteration, with constant site checks. "We partnered closely with the planning staff—every other week we worked from the Morro Bay Library so students could walk the site and get real-time guidance." Because the city had an active RFP, the class kept engagement lightweight and observational.

Tools, and Deliverables

Tools supported storytelling as much as analysis. Sandwick introduced students to LUMION 3D rendering software to help show graphically the students' work. Several groups used the tool in their final presentations. The CRP computer lab now has LUMION thanks to Sandwick and this studio.

Each team turned research into a concise final product. "Each team produced a tight 10-page booklet: lit review, process, site constraints, concept, and final designs. That format made a quick, high-quality handoff to the city," says Sandwick.

Lasting Impact

The studio built direct bridges to practice. "A student from the class landed an internship with the firm hired by the city, creating a direct pipeline from studio work to the professional plan." The experience also reset how some students felt about design. "One of my highlights



CRP 341 students present their work to Morro Bay City staff.

was hearing a student say they ‘fell back in love with studio’—it reminded them design is for everyone.” For Sandwick, that’s the point of pairing rigor with real clients: students see what survives contact with constraints, and cities gain fresh options. “Students bring fresh ideas that professionals might dismiss too quickly; even when a concept doesn’t advance, parts of it often influence the final product.”

The result: a portfolio of site-specific strategies that respect working-waterfront operations, protect habitat,

and open paths for future public investment—grounded in the realities of contamination, security buffers, sea-level rise, and the everyday choreography of boats, trucks, and people. It’s a design education with the bay breeze in it, and a plan set that can matter beyond the studio.



STUDIO PROFILE

A New Vision for the Grand Avenue Gateway at Cal Poly

CRP 341, SPRING 2026

For decades, the stretch of Grand Avenue between Highway 101 and Cal Poly has served as one of the university's primary entrances. Thousands of students, visitors, and residents travel through the corridor each day, yet the area remains largely unchanged from the suburban development patterns established in the mid-twentieth century. In CRP 341, students were challenged to rethink what this gateway could become and how it might better serve both the university and the surrounding community.

Objectives and Guidelines

Co-taught by Assistant Professor Ryan Miller and lecturer Liz Farren, the studio focused on exploring opportunities for housing, retail, mobility, and public space along the Grand Avenue corridor. Working with input from Cal Poly Campus Planning and local stakeholders, students developed proposals that examined how the area could evolve into a more vibrant and connected district while maintaining sensitivity to its existing neighborhood character.

“We wanted to increase housing off campus, increase retail opportunities,

and create more of a gateway experience,” Miller said. “All three projects approached those goals differently, but they all focused on making the corridor work better for the people who use it.”

The project emerged from a simple observation: despite Cal Poly’s close proximity to downtown San Luis Obispo, many students experience the campus as physically separated from the city around it. While downtown offers restaurants, shops, and community gathering spaces, few of these amenities are within easy walking distance of campus housing. “I can’t walk off campus and grab a burrito and walk back,” Miller said. “Every other campus I’ve worked on or attended had some kind of student-oriented district nearby. Grand Avenue seems like the logical place for that to happen.” Students organized into teams that explored different approaches to the corridor’s future. One group focused on housing, examining how zoning changes and mixed-use development could accommodate additional residential units near campus. Another emphasized retail and commercial activity, envisioning spaces that could support restaurants, grocery stores, cafés, and neighborhood services. A third team explored public space and gateway design, developing concepts for improved streetscapes, pedestrian connections, and memorable arrival experiences.

Together, the proposals challenged assumptions about how the corridor functions today and demonstrated how underused land could accommodate new housing and community-serving amenities.

Research, Analysis, and Creative Solutions

Before beginning the design process, students conducted extensive site analysis and community outreach. Teams developed surveys, interviewed corridor users, and gathered feedback from residents, students, and visitors. More than eighty surveys were collected and analyzed, helping identify priorities related to housing, transportation, safety, and neighborhood services. For Miller, one of the most rewarding aspects of the studio was seeing students apply skills learned in earlier coursework to a complex, neighborhood-scale project. “The biggest thing was taking those skills they’ve learned in their earlier classes and applying them to a wider area,” Miller said. “We gave them some broad goals and some guardrails, but most of the work came from students applying their own knowledge and ideas.” Several of the studio’s most compelling concepts emerged directly from student research.

While analyzing the site’s environmental conditions, students identified a seasonal stream that currently flows beneath much of the corridor through a system of



Left: The students proposed a novel “peanut” roundabout at the Highway 101/Grand Avenue intersection, among other creative solutions.

Below: CRP 341 students showing off their finished report.



culverts. Rather than viewing the stream as a constraint, multiple teams incorporated it into their designs, proposing daylighted sections, greenways, and pedestrian paths that could create new recreational and ecological amenities. Students also explored opportunities to improve connections between campus and downtown.

Through detailed analysis of topography and circulation patterns, teams proposed alternative bicycle and pedestrian routes, including a potential bridge crossing Highway 101 that would provide a safer and more direct connection for students traveling between campus and the city. “That wasn’t something that was on my radar at all,” Miller said. “It came from students really digging into the site’s context and discovering opportunities that weren’t immediately obvious.”

The studio emphasized not only creativity but also feasibility. Students were encouraged to think critically about implementation, development economics, and the realities of urban growth. Throughout the quarter, they examined how housing density, infrastructure investments, and land-use decisions interact to shape what is possible in the built environment. “We need enough housing units and enough activity to make projects economically viable,” Miller explained. “The challenge is bal-

ancing great public spaces and amenities with the realities of development.” The final presentations generated positive responses from reviewers, including city representatives and planning professionals. Stakeholders expressed particular interest in proposals related to bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, while others noted the value of encouraging new conversations about the future of the Grand Avenue corridor.

New Possibilities

For Miller, the project demonstrated the power of design education to help students think beyond existing conditions and imagine new possibilities. “People need to see what’s possible to even start that conversation,” he said. While the proposals remain conceptual, the studio succeeded in illustrating how one of Cal Poly’s most visible corridors could evolve to better meet the needs of future students, residents, and visitors. By reimagining Grand Avenue as a mixed-use gateway rather than simply a transportation corridor, students created a vision of a campus that balances housing, mobility, public space, and everyday life in new and meaningful ways.



STUDIO PROFILE

Planning a New Chapter for Cal Poly Solano

CRP 341, SPRING 2025

The recent integration of Cal Maritime Academy, now Cal Poly Solano Campus, into the Cal Poly system presented a unique planning challenge to the City and Regional Planning (CRP) Department: how do you plan for the future of a campus whose academic mission is still evolving? With a vision of growing enrollment from 850 to more than 2,000 students in 5 years, Cal Poly Solano sought fresh ideas for updating its campus master plan to support future academic growth while preserving its long-standing identity as a maritime academy and embracing its new role within the Cal Poly system.

From late March through early June 2026, 20 first-year graduate students and 13 third-year undergraduate students partnered with Cal Poly Solano to develop conceptual updates to the campus's existing Master Plan and Waterfront Master Plan. The project was sponsored by the CRP Department and Vice President Corey Cook, who served as the university's primary liaison. Graduate students in CRP 553 were led by Anahita Shadkam, while undergraduate students in CRP 341 were taught by John Donahoe and Ayla-Louise Mateo, both of whom brought extensive professional experience in campus planning and implementation.

The studio was structured in two phases. During the first four weeks, graduate and undergraduate students worked together as integrated teams, mirroring the interdisciplinary nature of professional planning practice. Students began with an in-depth review of previous master plans, strategic planning documents, campus reports, and background data before traveling to Vallejo for a two-day site visit. They toured the campus, documented existing conditions, and met with a broad range of stakeholders, including Solano Campus students, faculty, administrators, and facilities staff, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo academic

leadership, and representatives from the City of Vallejo. These conversations revealed not only the campus's physical opportunities and constraints but also the diverse perspectives surrounding the future of the newly integrated campus.

The Search for a Theme

Unlike many planning studios, the project began without a clearly defined program. Because the integration was still underway, many future space needs had yet to be determined by the university itself. Rather than designing solutions for a predetermined list of projects, students first had to identify emerging



Students developed visualizations of key sites, including this promenade near the waterfront.



Student concept for the locations of proposed land uses on the Cal Poly Solano campus.

priorities through research and stakeholder engagement.

“One of the most valuable lessons for students was realizing that planners rarely begin with complete information,” said Shadkam. “Before proposing solutions, they must first understand the problem by listening carefully to clients and stakeholders.”

The research phase identified several recurring themes that shaped the remainder of the studio, including student and faculty housing, stormwater management, waterfront improvements, campus mobility, stronger connections between the north and south campuses, expanded study spaces, new academic and administrative facilities, and enhanced dining and student amenities.

Working Across Programs

The integrated studio structure also became a valuable learning experience. Working across degree levels presented challenges as students navigated different levels of experience, communication styles, and approaches to problem solving. Over time, however, these differences became complementary. Undergraduate students contributed strong graphic communication skills that strengthened maps, diagrams, and visual presentations, while graduate students brought greater experience synthesizing large amounts of qualitative and quantitative information into planning strategies. Together, they developed a shared understanding of the campus that informed both studios.

Following the research phase, the graduate and undergraduate students separated into their respective studios to develop independent design proposals based on the common analytical foundation. Student teams focused on different areas

of campus while addressing the priority themes identified through stakeholder engagement.

Fresh Proposals for Solano

Many proposals concentrated new student and faculty housing on existing buildable land to support future enrollment growth while preserving environmentally sensitive areas. Other teams reimaged campus mobility through a shuttle system, improved pedestrian and bicycle connections, and consolidated parking near the campus entrance to create a more walkable academic core. Stormwater management became a defining element of many proposals, with green infrastructure integrated into open spaces and circulation networks to address flooding while enhancing the campus landscape.

The waterfront emerged as one of the studio's greatest opportunities. Students envisioned it as an active academic and social destination that would strengthen connections between learning, recreation, and everyday campus life. New public spaces, study areas, and waterfront amenities were paired with improvements to classrooms, simulation laboratories, and academic facilities to support a larger and more diverse student population. Several teams also proposed new development along the corridor connecting the north and south campuses, introducing student hous-

ing, administrative offices, and campus amenities that would better unify the two areas.

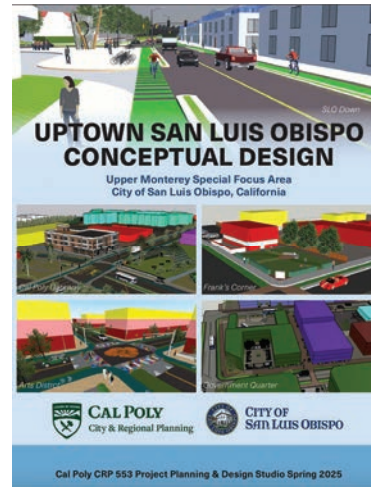
The studio concluded with presentations attended by Vice President Corey Cook and university leadership. The students' proposals were praised for balancing creativity with practicality and for demonstrating a deep understanding of the campus's history, opportunities, and future aspirations. Many of the recommendations closely aligned with the university's own emerging vision for the campus, reinforcing the value of the extensive research and stakeholder engagement conducted throughout the quarter.

While the scope of the project exceeded what is typically expected in a single academic studio, it also offered students an authentic professional experience. They learned that planning is rarely about solving a single design problem. Instead, it requires balancing competing priorities, engaging diverse stakeholders, and developing flexible solutions for places that continue to evolve. In helping imagine the future of Cal Poly Solano, students experienced firsthand the complexity of planning for meaningful institutional change.

STUDIO PROFILE

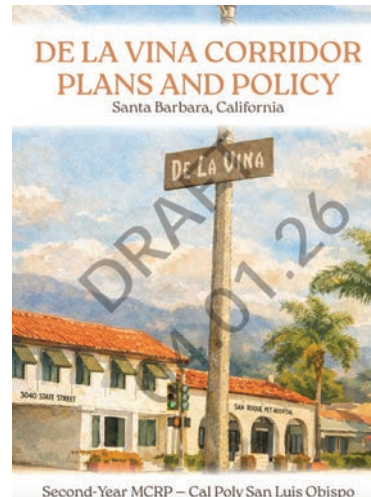
Uptown San Luis Obispo Conceptual Design

CRP 553, Prof. Dandekar, Spring 2025 This plan introduces a development vision and strategy for the Upper Monterey Corridor in San Luis Obispo, California. The area of focus is identified as a Special Focus Area by the City of San Luis Obispo and covers Monterey Street from Santa Rosa Street to the onramp of Highway 101, just north of downtown. The plan includes design elements such as improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, an emphasis on mixed-use development, and additional housing units.



De La Vina Corridor Plans and Policy

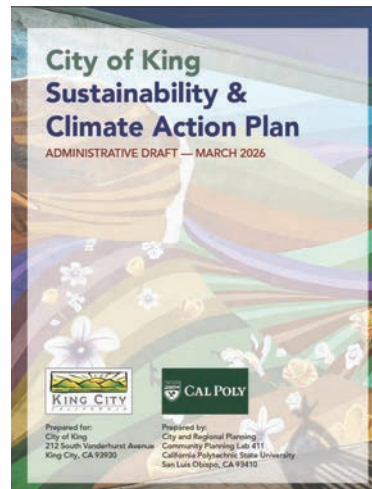
CRP 552/554, Prof. Sandwick, Fall 2025/Winter 2026 This plan introduces a development vision and strategy for the Upper Monterey Corridor in San Luis Obispo, California. The area of focus is identified as a Special Focus Area by the City of San Luis Obispo and covers Monterey Street from Santa Rosa Street to the onramp of Highway 101, just north of downtown. The plan includes design elements such as improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, an emphasis on mixed-use development, and additional housing units.



STUDIO PROFILE

King City Sustainability and Climate Action Plan

**CRP 410, Prof. Boswell, Fall 2025/
Winter 2026** This Plan will guide King City's current and future development to foster a climate-resilient community. The SCAP is to be used as a guide for decision-making, legislation drafting, surveying, GHG tracking and reduction, goal-setting, and action planning for a community. In addition to informing decisions regarding community development, a SCAP also addresses inequities within the community and how to accommodate them.



Your Community Can Partner with our Studios

Each year, our undergraduate and graduate students partner with communities across California to deliver high-impact planning and design solutions—from community-wide visioning to detailed district plans.

We could work with your community next! We offer flexible sponsorship options tailored to each partnership, based on the number of sections involved, project scale and complexity, travel needs, and the

level of refinement expected in final deliverables. Projects may range from visioning to focused studies or comprehensive, multi-section collaborations with highly polished reports. Scan the QR code to submit a proposal:



CLUB SPOTLIGHT

Associated Students in Planning (ASP)

Associated Students in Planning (ASP) is a professional and social organization for students in Cal Poly's City and Regional Planning major, or others interested in the field. ASP serves its members through socials, guest speakers, firm tours (local and statewide), professional development events, and a mentor-mentee program.

Firm tours provide students with an opportunity to learn more about the profession, network with Cal Poly CRP Alumni, and explore cities across the state of California. The 2025 Winter firm tour was to San Diego, where ASP met with the City of San Diego Planning Department, Kimley-Horn, Downtown San Diego Partnership, and Diego Vellasco of CityThinkers. In addition to meeting with public and private agencies, ASP members got to explore Downtown San Diego, ate at great restaurants, and spent a morning in Balboa Park.

Professional Development events ASP has hosted include an American Planning Association (APA) informational session, student internship panels, resume workshops, and a range of guest speakers from private firms like Fehr



and Peers, Kittleson, Placeworks, and KTGy, and public agencies including LA Metro, SLOCOG, and the City of Lompoc, many of whom are Cal Poly CRP alumni. These events allow members to learn about different opportunities, ask questions, and receive advice on entering the professional world.

ASP's 2025 socials included a student-faculty mixer, planning Jeopardy, Bike Night gatherings, board game gatherings, gingerbread house and hot cocoa night, and ASPresentation night, where students make PowerPoints and present on a planning topic of their choice (presentations are as serious or unserious as they want).

CLUB SPOTLIGHT



ASP members visiting the City of San Diego during their San Diego firm tour



Mentor-mentee bowling night at Mustang Lanes

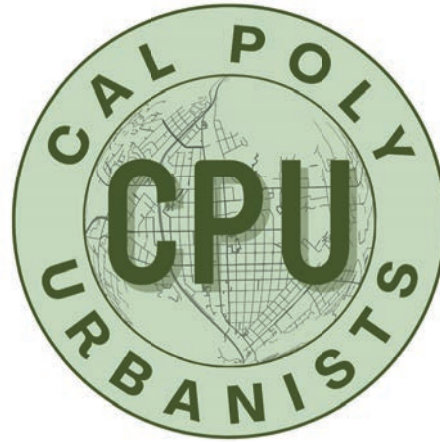
CLUB SPOTLIGHT

Cal Poly Urbanists (CPU)

Cal Poly Urbanists (CPU) is a project-based and social club dedicated to people-centered planning powered by student activism. CPU is primarily associated with the City and Regional Planning Department but is open to all students. CPU's projects attract students from all colleges within Cal Poly, making the work highly interdisciplinary.

Since 2024 CPU members have been able to work on a variety of projects. Most recently, the club began a place-making project in the courtyard in front of Building 21 (Engineering West). Over 10 weeks, club members made mosaic steppingstones from thrifted materials, painted a mural on the retaining wall that borders the courtyard, wove a seat for a metal swing found on the side of the road, and planted a flower garden. CPU sees the courtyard as a living project that will continue to be maintained and improved by club members.

Annually, CPU hosts a Jane Jacobs walk in the spring as part of the national movement to honor the author and urban theorist's legacy. CPU has collaborated with groups such as SLOCO YIMBY in 2024 and Strong Towns SLO



in 2025 for these events. In May 2025, CPU was able to host an on-campus Bike Breakfast for Bike Month in partnership with SLOCOG. CPU regularly hosts coffee socials. Members are encouraged to bike downtown to meet for coffee and conversations about local issues. The club emphasizes the importance of community involvement through local partnerships and social events.

CLUB SPOTLIGHT



ASP members visiting the City of San Diego during their San Diego firm tour



Mentor-mentee bowling night at Mustang Lanes

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

2025 Cal Poly Alumni Award: John Donahoe

John Donahoe ('84, City and Regional Planning) exemplifies the lasting impact of Cal Poly's Learn by Doing philosophy through more than 35 years of leadership in planning, real estate, and community development. As Director of Planning and Entitlement for Stanford University's Office of Real Estate, Donahoe has led the entitlement of

transformative projects across Northern California, including Stanford/Redwood City and Middle Plaza, while helping shape residential communities, office campuses, and mixed-use developments throughout his distinguished career.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Donahoe has remained deeply committed to Cal Poly and the next generation of planners. As an adjunct faculty member and vice chair of the City



and Regional Planning (CRP) Advisory Council, he has strengthened the connection between academia and professional practice. His industry experience gives students a firsthand understanding of how planning principles translate into real-world decision-making, while his mentorship encourages them to think critically about the challenges and opportu-

nities facing today's communities.

In recognition of his professional achievements, dedication to Cal Poly, and enduring contributions to the planning profession, John Donahoe is a deserving recipient of the 2025 Cal Poly Alumni Award. His career reflects the values of excellence, service, and lifelong learning that continue to inspire both alumni and future planners.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Celebrating the Legacy of Ray Hashimoto

On Wednesday, May 20, 2026, friends and colleagues gathered at the Corinthian Event Center in San Jose, California, to celebrate the life and legacy of Raymond T. Hashimoto while raising funds for the Raymond T. Hashimoto Scholarship Endowment Fund in Cal Poly's City and Regional Planning Department. The event reflected Ray's lifelong commitment to education, planning, and community service, ensuring that future generations of students will benefit from the opportunities created in his honor.

This memorable event would not have been possible without the generosity and dedication of many individuals. A special thank you goes to Paulo Hernandez and Dave Yocke, whose leadership, and hard work made the evening a success. Their commitment brought together friends and colleagues to honor Ray's legacy and support an important cause.



We are equally grateful to the many donors whose contributions enhanced the event. Dan Gordon generously donated the beer, while Eric Morley of The Morley Bros. and Red Door Ranch Vineyards donated the wine. Ralph Borelli generously covered the cost of the event photography, and Sherry Tesler donated her time and talent as the event photographer, beautifully capturing the memories of the evening for all to cherish.

Through the generosity of everyone involved, Ray's legacy will continue to inspire and support future City and Regional Planning students for years to come.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

New Professor and Urban Designer Anahita Shadkam Joins CRP

Anahita Shadkam, Ph.D., joins City and Regional Planning with a background that bridges architecture, planning, and public space research. Dr. Shadkam's background spans three countries. She trained as an architect in Isfahan, completing two degrees and practicing for three years. Graduate work at Penn State sharpened her interest in the social life of cities and a planning Ph.D. earned at the University of Waterloo deepened that focus on how age and design shape everyday experience.

Her scholarship examines how children use streets, paths, and courtyards as places to play. "Playgrounds alone aren't enough," she says, "we should see the urban fabric as a play network that links opportunities across the city." She emphasizes small, buildable moves and she champions "play on the way"—not just



destination-based play at a fenced playground, but play woven into everyday routes.

Shadkam brings a tactile designer's eye to planning. "I still bring a detail-oriented architectural lens—every curb, tree, and material choice affects how people behave in a place." That sensibility threads through her teaching. Her approach

emphasizes fieldwork and sketching. In studio, she uses scenario-based assignments to put students in the shoes of different households navigating mobility, budgets, and city systems.

"CRP is already a step ahead because we teach urban design studios; not every planning program does," she says. "I'm excited to explore the local context with them and to build projects that connect research and community."

Planning and Urban Ecology Field Trips



Students in CRP 445 (Planning and Urban Ecology) have gone on many field trips!

Above left: Paso Robles: Low Impact Design and Green Complete Streets on 21st and 12th. It was led by Dave LaCaro, Kim Porter, and Jared Pickens from the City of Paso Robles

Above right: Morro Bay: National Estuary Program Executive Director Melodie Grubbs to discuss coast dune and bluff restoration

Left: Piedras Blancas Road Realignment: with CalTrans Landscape Architect, Katherine Brown.

National Planning Conference 2026



Highlights from this year's National Planning Conference in Detroit! Cal Poly CRP undergraduate and master's students enjoyed exploring Detroit and connecting with fellow planners from around the country [@americanplanningassociation](#) [#npc26](#)

More Scenes from the Altadena Studio



In early May, an interdisciplinary studio with CRP and Architecture students traveled to Altadena for a public outreach event. On Friday, they presented their research to LA County Planning and received guidance.



On Saturday, students took the lead on an engagement event at Fair Oaks Burger, where residents shared their experiences with the fire recovery process and life in Altadena.

CRP Graduation 2025



CRP Graduation 2026



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CiRPAC: City and Regional Planning Advisory Council, Cal Poly



Sara Allinder



Paulo
Hernandez



Martin Magaña



Ginger
Anderson



Rachel
Hollander



Dawn Marple



Christopher
Craig



Trevor Keith



Sue Peerson



Geoff Bradley



Dave Javid



Lisa Ring



John Donahoe



Pamela Johns



Heidi Vonblum



Michael
Gibbons



Lesley Lowe



Dave Yocke



Ryan Gohlich



Steve Lynch

CiRPAC advises the department on the needs of industry and the profession; assist the department in meeting its advancement goals; and to promote the interests and activities of alumni.

Support our Mission: Donate to the CRP Department

Thank you for reading this volume of Focus Journal. If you've been inspired by the ideas, stories, and student work shared in these pages, we invite you to support our department's mission of shaping the next generation of planners. If you invest in the City and Regional Planning program, we can do a lot of really substantial things that enhance our students' education that are not supported with State funds. Your contribution has a direct and meaningful impact on student opportunities, faculty innovation, improved facilities, effective outreach, and creative educational practices. These include field trips, student travel to workshops and conferences, faculty creativity in the classroom, the parents' reception, student participation in competitions, celebration of student scholarship awards, support of student senior projects, and many more worthwhile activities. I hope that you agree these activities help make an excellent program even better.

I invite you to contribute any amount that feels comfortable and invest in the continued success of this hallmark program. If giving online is more convenient, you can use a credit card. You can access the direct link to the City and

Regional Planning Fund for Excellence by scanning the QR code below.

I look forward to staying connected with you and encourage you to drop by the department whenever you're in San Luis Obispo. It's always a pleasure to hear from the CRP friends and supports and discuss how we can continue to enhance the program. If you're unable to visit in person, feel free to reach out by phone at 805.756.1592 or email at ahajraso@calpoly.edu.

Sincerely,

Amir Hajrasouliha
Department Head, City and Regional Planning

