

Smart growth, affordable housing and the environment to be examined at UCSD conference June 29

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SMART GROWTH, AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND THE ENVIRONMENT TO BE EXAMINED AT UCSD CONFERENCE JUNE 29

As urban areas throughout the country grapple with the often competing needs of affordable housing and environmental preservation, environmental and community development interests are coming together in an attempt to navigate a path to "smart growth."

The myriad land use issues surrounding this quest will be examined at a free all-day conference at the University of California, San Diego, on June 29. The conference, Community Development, Affordable Housing, and the Environment: Is There a Common Path to Smart Growth? will be held from 8:30 to 4:30 p.m. in the Institute of the Americas auditorium on the UCSD campus. The conference is being funded by the UCSD Civic Collaborative, an effort to better integrate the university's research and teaching expertise with community needs and interests.

"This conference will bring together activists from two groups which have not been prominent in planning for San Diego's anticipated growth -- advocates of low income housing and community development and environmentalists" said Amy Bridges, a professor of political science at UCSD and director of the Urban Studies and Planning Program, which is convening the conference with San Diego State University's City Planning Program. "We are hoping these activists, often posed in opposition, can find common ground."

The conference will feature keynote speakers from Portland, Or., a city that pioneered the smart growth concept with its Coalition for a Liveable Future. While many fast-growing cities in the West, including Denver, Phoenix, Las Vegas, and arguably San Diego have followed a predictable pattern of urban sprawl in the last decade, Portland stands out as a city that proactively shaped its growth by promoting development within its urban boundaries and preserving the forests, fruit orchards, and creeks for which the region is known. Moreover, it did this in cooperation with major employers like Intel, Hewlett-Packard, and Hyundai, thereby preserving jobs in the area.

Mark Houck of the Audubon Society and Tasha Harmon, affordable housing advocate and coordinator of the Community Development Network, will deliver the keynote address, Creating Just, Affordable and Sustainable Communities: The Portland Case of the Coalition for a Livable Future, at 12:45 p.m., following a luncheon for conference participants.

Several conference speakers will focus on San Diego efforts and experiences, including: Sue Reynolds, Community Housing of North County, who will discuss the efforts of nonprofit affordable housing builders and community development corporations; Deborah Fountain, Housing and Redevelopment Department, City of Carlsbad, who will comment on inclusionary housing and job and housing balance in Carlsbad; and Diane Tavkorian, Environmental Health Coalition, who will talk about environmental preservation efforts in Barrio Logan.

In addition, a breakout session will be held at 2 p.m. for all participants to discuss prospects for equitable, sustainable growth in San Diego. Closing remarks will be delivered at 3:30 p.m. by former San Diego city council member and state assembly person Lucy Killea, president and CEO for International Community Foundation, and Art Madrid, Mayor of the City of La Mesa and chairman of the SANDAG Board of Directors.

For more information on the June 29 conference, please contact UCSD Urban Studies and Planning at (619) 534-3690.

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