

## **Sustainable City Regions Reader: Joining Research & Action\***

The Sustainable City-Region Reader is written by the USP Senior Sequence's *student-mentor research teams* and by invited authors (faculty, researchers, and community-based partners). The Reader is not a collection of individual student's papers. There are 56 students enrolled in the 2008- 2009 Senior Sequence. Each student will be producing roughly 25 pages of text amounting to a collective output of nearly 1,500 pages, far too much for a Reader. Instead, the Reader provides high level narrative summaries of each Research Teams collective findings (highlights). Each Research Team has 2-4 students and one or more mentors.

The Reader is designed to help: (1) promote excellence in undergraduate research education, (2) encourage research integration across disciplinary boundaries, (3) cultivate critical and holistic approaches to solving problems in urban and regional development, and (4) build capacity for science communication and civic-engagement in the context of promoting sustainable development.

The Reader targets several groups: (1) undergraduate seniors as well as graduate students who need to design and carry out field research as part of their academic program, (2) faculty who teach research methods classes requiring fieldwork, (3) faculty looking for ideas and support to do their own civically-engaged research, and (4) community leaders, NGOs, think tanks, public and private sector organizations interested in policy and planning for sustainable city-region development.

Below is a link to unedited entries from the class of 2007-2008. These are in the process of being edited for publication in our 2008 Sustainable City-Region Reader. We will create a new Sustainable City-Region Reader this March 2009.

\* Text copied from the web site at [http://seniorsequence.net/?page\\_id=503](http://seniorsequence.net/?page_id=503)

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2. Instructions on Student Assignment #3, due Thursday, March 5, 2009 (p. 8 of the pdf)  
[http://seniorsequence.net/sequence/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/187-a3\\_urbanexpo-poster.pdf](http://seniorsequence.net/sequence/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/187-a3_urbanexpo-poster.pdf)

### **YOUR READER CONTRIBUTION**

The last part of this assignment calls for a contribution to the annual USP Senior Sequence Sustainable City-Region Reader. You will find on your student research profile a field to fill out called "Section of Class Reader." You need to fill that in on-line and also deliver a hard copy in class for grading/editing purposes. Your reader contribution should be no more than 250 words. It should describe the contribution/findings of your research. While this will go into the class reader, it is also intended to serve as your "elevator talk" (3min oral presentation as part of a postercast). This piece should be done in coordination with your fellow research team members and team leader. In addition to your individual contribution, you and your research team members, along with your mentor(s), will be generating an overarching contribution (2 pages) to the reader that highlights the grand challenge topic you addressed.

*Examples from the 2007-2008 Team focused on Equitable Redevelopment and Public Policy. The first one is 252 words, the second one is 192 words – both are excellent.*

### **Land Use and Economics: A Case Study of the National City Marine Terminal**

The politics of local government are the politics of land use, and the politics of land use are inseparable from the politics of redistribution. Local government land use decisions are often driven by local government revenue needs, rather than any conception of the public interest. The outcomes of these decisions are often inconsistent with our highest ideals—including our aesthetic ideals of good urban design and our political ideals of social and economic justice. The paper by Steven Mateer examines why redevelopment is so often skewed towards the interests of the wealthy and the powerful. The author finds that that local governments attempt to maximize revenue, though not under conditions of their choosing. Mateer's study focuses on the constraining role of public law. Mateer presents a parsimonious model of local governments as rational revenue maximizers. Local redevelopment strategies differ because local governments pursue revenues according to different institutional rules. The author discusses a variety of institutional constraints, although he particularly emphasizes constraints imposed by state law—such as Proposition 13, which limits municipal reliance on property tax revenue, or the Tideland Trust Act of 1911, which limits the Port of San Diego's use of maritime revenues. These divergent institutional constraints can lead to conflicts over development strategy. Thus, National City's dependence on sales tax revenue leads it to favor tourist-oriented commercial uses for its waterfront, while the Port of San Diego's dependence on contractual fees leads it to favor uses associated with maritime transport. Both of these strategies have potential negative externalities.

### **Redevelopment and military base conversion: a case study of NTC San Diego**

There are structural and institutional constraints on the redevelopment process in planning. These constraints are not immutable. Midori Wong argues that redevelopment decisions often reflect the influence of powerful interest groups. Wong compares the redevelopment of the Naval Training Center (NTC) San Diego to redeveloped naval stations in San Francisco and Orlando. She argues that the outcomes in other cities were similar despite different legal structures because the officials involved saw their jobs as securing return on private investment. Wong also presents evidence from a detailed case study of the NTC San Diego, which demonstrates that local governments are not simply passively constrained by state and federal laws, but may sometimes actively seek to change those rules. The city council, for example, lobbied to change a federal law that could have required the NTC to be converted into housing for the homeless. Advocates for the homeless, environmental groups, American Indian tribes, and other interest groups were unable to sway the outcome of the NTC redevelopment process because private developers had more leverage in the political process. This research helps identify the conditions under which redevelopment can be made to deliver community benefits.

### **Guidelines for the Senior Sequence 2-Page Narrative\***

The 2-page narrative should be in essay format -not a bulleted outline. The idea is to create a high level summary/analysis of the research team's efforts and contributions. We want to inspire those who follow us (next year's students) with a sense of excitement ---conveying why our

research is significant and why we need to move this frontier of knowledge forward for the common good.

Go to the class web site to see examples of 2 page narratives from last year:

[http://seniorsequence.net/?page\\_id=503](http://seniorsequence.net/?page_id=503)

Here are two especially excellent examples

Isaac Martin's group (direct link): [http://seniorsequence.net/sequence/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/2\\_2\\_1\\_redevelopment\\_in\\_critical\\_perspective\\_2007\\_2008.pdf](http://seniorsequence.net/sequence/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/2_2_1_redevelopment_in_critical_perspective_2007_2008.pdf)

Mirle Bussell's group (direct link):

[http://seniorsequence.net/sequence/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/2\\_1\\_1\\_participatory\\_methods\\_2007\\_2008.pdf](http://seniorsequence.net/sequence/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/2_1_1_participatory_methods_2007_2008.pdf)

The mentors serve as lead authors of these 2-page narratives. Students must provide the material necessary for the mentor to write the narrative. Here is the outline we want you to follow:

### *1. Opening paragraphs*

Describe the research team's subject area and significance, including reference to one or two scholarly sources of literature. Note briefly the kinds of methods used to gather the data.

### *2. Mid section:*

Synopsis of the teams work Limit this section to one or two main findings from each student's study. Clearly, in a two page narrative of this sort it is impossible to fully summarize each student's entire project. The aim here is to get each student to express the one or two most significant research findings/ lessons learned from their study. This is where the 250 word contribution the student writes fits in (to be uploaded to the students on-line profile). It will be important to do this writing in full awareness of one another's approach so the overarching piece comes out as an integrated and well-flowing whole (not a patch work quilt of disconnected ideas). The mentor should be able to help along these lines (serve as an editor).

### *3. Ending paragraphs*

Close the piece with a critically constructive and forward looking perspective. What does the mentor and team members suggest as far as carrying the torch forward (what are the most exciting research frontiers that can benefit from the light of new knowledge? How might this new knowledge be linked to action? What should future students be on the lookout for in this area of investigation?

\*Text copied from "view guidelines" link on the research team data input page for mentors/student leaders <http://seniorsequence.net/sr/help/ninstr.php>

The student leaders and mentors of each team are charged with producing the individual chapters (student-mentor research team narratives) that will make up the Sustainable City-Region Reader. But we need each student's timely contributions to make this possible. Pulling it all together isn't possible without the pieces. Together we can produce a Reader you will all be proud of!