

Developing a Framework for New Ruralism

Workshop for Researchers and Practitioners

Friday April 7, from 10 am to 3 pm

Room 108 Wurster Hall, College of Environmental Design, UC Berkeley

Co-sponsored by the Institute of Urban and Regional Development (IURD) and

SAGE (Sustainable Agriculture Education)

AGENDA

Pre-meeting coffee, fruit, and pastries 9:30 am

Morning Session 10 am

Welcome – Harrison Fraker, Dean, College of Environmental Design, UC Berkeley

Introductions - participants

Overview – Sibella Kraus, Director, New Ruralism Project, IURD

Perspectives on the emergence of New Ruralism

Presentations will be 5 – 15 minutes with time for discussion

- *Context of The New Mainstream, a sustainable food and agriculture agenda for California* – Ann Evans, Co-Chair Roots of Change Council; former Mayor, City of Davis
- *Context of the California Roundtable on Agriculture and the Environment* – Michael Dimock, President, Ag Innovations Network; Chairman Emeritus, Slow Food USA
- *Potential relevance to federal farm policy* – Ed Thompson, Director, California Office, American Farmland Trust
- *Context of the New Urbanism* – Shelley Poticha, President and CEO, Reconnecting America and the Center for Transit-Oriented Development; former Executive Director, Congress for the New Urbanism
- *In the context of health and the built environment* – Richard Jackson, MD, MPH, Adjunct Professor, Environmental Health Services Division, School of Public Health

Lunch from Café Rouge 12:15

Afternoon Session 12:45 pm

Summaries of preliminary case studies - graduate student researchers

General discussion and identification of key research topics and policy opportunities - please bring your ideas.

Here are some of ours:

- Can the concept of New Ruralism help advance the common goals of sustainable agriculture/local food systems movements and the new urbanism/smart growth movements?
- Does New Ruralism provide a meaningful framework for analyzing past models and present initiatives for harmonizing city and countryside?
- Can New Ruralism be applied as a construct in planning projects and be advanced into governmental regulations, possibly in the form of an ‘intermediate layer’ between urban and rural areas?
- Can a New Ruralist vision, illuminated by key models, help galvanize the public support and private investment necessary to create urban edge agricultural preserves?

New Ruralism as a focus area for the Center for Global Metropolitan Studies (GMS) - Elizabeth Deakin, Professor, City and Regional Planning; Director UC Transportation Center; Co-Director, Center for Global Metropolitan Studies

New Ruralism Workshop- Participants List

April 7, 2006

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WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

The New Ruralism workshop was part of a collaboration between IURD and SAGE, initiated in fall 2005 with a grant from the Columbia Foundation, to develop a framework for New Ruralism. A long term goal is to produce a publication tentatively entitled, “New Ruralism: Developing Agriculture at the Edge and Beyond”.

Preliminary Work, September 2005 – April 2006

An advisory committee of UC faculty met in the fall to propose a general direction and products for the project. In the winter, Sibella wrote “A Call for New Ruralism”, a statement of a vision and preliminary principles, published in Frameworks, a publication of the UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design. Graduate students working on the project produced a literature search (key publications over a range of subjects underlying the New Ruralism concept) and case study research.

Workshop Purpose

The purpose of the New Ruralism workshop was to bring together practitioners and researchers engaged in urban-rural interface issues, to deepen the investigation of the New Ruralism framework. The aim was to stimulate conversation by looking at the framework from diverse perspectives, such as city and regional planning, land use law, agriculture, farmland preservation, and public health.

Workshop Attendees

Faculty: Elizabeth Deakin, Department of City and Regional Planning (DCRP); David Dowall, Institute of Urban and Regional Development; Harrison Fraker, College of Environmental Design; Dick Jackson, School of Public Health; David Moffat, Places Magazine

Students: Serena Unger, Heather Wooten, Department of City and Regional Planning (DCRP); Alethea Harper, Carrie Knecht, Jesse Roseman, Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning (LAEP); Patrick Archie, Lauren Gwin, Environmental Science, Policy and Management (ESPM); Nathan McClintock, Geography; Raquel Moreno-Peñaranda, Kevin Fingerman, Energy and Resources Group (ERG)

Practitioners: Amanda Brown-Stevens, Greenbelt Alliance; Eric Carruthers, Santa Clara County; Sarah Cohen, Sibella Kraus, Sustainable Agriculture Education; Michael Dimock, Ag Innovations Network; Ann Evans, Roots of Change Council; Steve Hammond, WRT Solomon E.T.C.; Paula Jones, San Francisco Food Systems (SFDPH); Greg Kirkpatrick, Farmland Conservation Strategies, City of Visalia; Jeremy Madsen, The San Francisco Foundation; Lamberto Moris, Moris/Merino & Associates; Shelley Poticha, Reconnecting America; Bettina Ring, Bay Area Open Space Council; Renee L. Robin, Stoel Rives LLP; Culley Thomas; Ed Thompson, American Farmland Trust; Tim Wirth Trust for Public Land (Contact information for attendees is attached.)

Workshop Summary

The workshop's morning session, introduced and facilitated by Dean Harrison Fraker, included presentations from several perspectives that helped set context for discussion.

- Dean Fraker framed the conversation about New Ruralism as a constellation of many different parts, and emphasized the strong linkages between the built environment and health as well as the need to look at the urban-rural interface issues in terms of mega issues and regions.
- Ann Evans, former Mayor of Davis, presented *The New Mainstream*, an ambitious agenda produced by the Roots of Change Council (co-chaired by Ann) that specifies the values, goals, and initiatives needed to transition California to a sustainable food and agriculture system by 2030. (See http://www.vividpicture.net/documents/The_New_Mainstream.pdf to download the new Mainstream report.)
- Michael Dimock, President of Ag Innovations Network (and Chairman Emeritus, Slow Food USA), described the county-based *Ag Future Alliances* and state-wide *California Roundtable on Agriculture and the Environment*. These linked efforts help foster the common interests of farmers, ranchers, farm labor advocates, environmentalists, planners, policy makers, and others in sustaining agriculture.
- Ed Thompson, Director of the California office of American Farmland Trust (and with AFT for the past 30 years) talked about the growing farmland conservation movement and how New Ruralism can help accomplish its policy goals of food security, profitable agriculture, and land stewardship.
- Shelly Poticha, President/CEO of Reconnecting America and the Center for Transit-Oriented Development (and founding ED of the Congress for the New Urbanism), addressed the need for California to 'catch up' with other areas in its commitment to transit-oriented development; and emphasized the importance of ongoing research in developing the New Urbanism framework.
- Richard Jackson, from UC Berkeley's School of Public Health (formerly CA State Health Director) addressed the correlations (primarily negative) between public health and the built and conventional agriculture environments.

The workshop's afternoon session was introduced and facilitated by Professor Betty Deakin, who first gave an overview of the Center for Global Metropolitan Studies and noted that often successful reform of urban policies goes hand in hand with successful reform of rural policies. The discussion touched on a wide range of issues stimulated by the morning presentations and was loosely structured around the New Ruralism framework. It also included a presentation by the project's graduate students about their findings from New Ruralism case studies. The students looked at 16 cases in terms of criteria derived from the preliminary New Ruralism principles, and categorized for two typologies: agricultural conservation developments and large-scale agricultural preserves.

The following is a distillation of the discussion and case study analysis, organized by major topics, and including key points and recurring questions.

Discussion Topics and Questions

Urban Edge Agriculture Attributes and Valuation

An urban edge zone centered on agriculture has, or can have, many attributes/values. Agricultural production itself can include food security and public health benefits; economic opportunities for

small farmers; and cultural benefits of keeping alive agricultural traditions. Additional attributes can include environmental services (e.g. carbon sequestration, groundwater recharge, heat island mitigation, contributions to air and water quality); habitat conservation; scenic value; open space benefits; public access; recreation benefits; and the benefit of providing city containment.

- How can these various attributes be measured and these metrics given financial value?
- How can these values be captured by the urban edge farmer, in the value of the farmland, and in the economics of farming operations?
- Are there ways to institutionalize and incentivize these various attributes?
- How can we develop a stronger value exchange for the resource flows between farm and city, such as green waste, carbon, infill, and consumer market for food, open space, recreation, etc.?
- Is there a way that the public can get a direct return on investment if it were to commit resources for protecting farmland and fully realizing its potential attributes?
- How can case study research contribute to the evaluation of the multifunctional aspects and attributes of the urban-rural interface?

Farmland Conservation

- Protection of farmland is not the same as protection of farmers and farming. Fundamentally, agriculture is an economic activity.
- The most important conservation tools being used today include: conservation/agriculture easements, purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, urban growth boundaries, mitigation of farmland loss, and improving profitability of farming
- In turn, new tools to improve profitability of farming include a range of stewardship incentives, marketing incentives, and mechanisms to facilitate provision of value-added products and services.
- New Ruralists and New Urbanists need to engage in a conversation about farmland conservation and its relationship to sustaining and containing cities.
- Are conservation easements practical given the current timetable and urgency to preserve farmland?
- Under what circumstances are conservation easements, such as affirmative agricultural and habitat protection easements, too limiting for farmers in terms of time frame and too inflexible in terms of farming systems?

Equity in the New Ruralism Framework

- How is social equity (in addition to agricultural and economic sustainability) accounted for in a New Ruralism model?
- What are the patterns and causes of social mobilization within agriculture and in the urban-rural exchange?
- How does New Ruralism help us understand 'old ruralism'?
- How can farmers retire equitably without selling their land to developers? What changes need to be made in the value structure of agriculture for this to happen?
- Is the model of agricultural conservation developments, as presented in the case studies, simply "dressing up" agriculture and in effect gentrifying ruralism?
- Is the trend toward outside incomes in farming households (whether for primary or secondary income), an indicator of a problem only or can this trend also indicate an opportunity?
- What are the costs and benefits of 'lifestyle' farming?
- Can happiness and well-being (i.e. of farmers and 'eaters' and non-farming rural residents), be factored into this framework?

Policy

- Success of urban growth boundaries has as much to do with what goes on in the urban area inside the boundary, as what goes on in the rural area outside the boundary.
- There is a need to understand the limitations, as well as the uses, of policy. Some elements of the sustainable food and agriculture change agenda require change in the mindset of farmers, as much as change in policy.
- Further case study research needs to demonstrate policy context.
- Various ways that New Ruralism can be addressed through Farm Bill Policy recommendations, include providing funding for cooperative extension agents to help conventional farmers transition to organic.
- In areas of some counties (e.g. Yolo, around Davis, Santa Clara, in the Coyote Valley), LAFCO is requiring mitigation for farmland loss. Could this be expanded or institutionalized?
- What are the geographical units for establishing urban-rural inter-connections and compacts?
- New Ruralism needs to build a constituency for its own values. Can it also help build a broader constituency for agricultural reform in general by being an “ambassador” to agriculture at large?

General

- New Ruralism is not just the absence of urbanism. It needs a comprehensive vision that is compelling and satisfying (like New Urbanism). It needs continued research to show that is more than just about agriculture and show the various ways that cities and the urban-rural edge can support each other. This research needs to go beyond associations and get at the causal models.
- The underlying pressures of growth need to be understood for a productive dialogue to happen and constituency to form.
- How can we capture wealth in cities and retire it out into farms; use ‘windfalls’ to compensate for ‘wipe-outs’?
- What is the nature of land and other markets, competing values, and overarching policies that obstruct New Ruralism concepts? How do these interact with the costs and values of amenities offered by New Ruralism?

Ideas for an institutional context for investigating/developing the New Ruralism framework

- UC Berkeley’s Global Metropolitan Studies Program could be forum for New Ruralism and the evaluation of areas of the world that have simultaneously reformed both urban and rural policies. Studio classes, design competitions, and university networks could be developed by a faculty-student working group on New Ruralism.

Other Next Steps

- There is support for the idea to pursue Farm Bill ‘earmark’ funding to investigate the feasibility of developing an urban edge agriculture ‘food-belt’ designation. This would be approached by proposing four to six study sites around the country that fit basic common criteria and also represented a range of different conditions.

Other Research Questions

The “Call for New Ruralism” and the New Ruralism Initiative White Paper, both of which were included in the workshop handout, include additional lists of research questions.

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