

“Our Region”
Putah Cache Bioregion Project Spring Series

The Putah Cache Bioregion Project in partnership with the Public Service Research Program, UC Davis Extension Program, the Geography Graduate Group, Community and Regional Development, and the John Muir Institute for the Environment is hosting a series of workshops addressing the complex issues of growth and development in “Our Region.” We invite community, businesses, organizations, UCD students, faculty, and staff, to join us in considering how we can shape a future with healthy human and natural communities. The series is designed with the idea that our region’s social, economic and environmental interests do not operate independently, but are linked, and seeks to understand how we can best balance them.

Overview: A mix of interests –economic, social, ecological, political- affect decisions related to land use, natural resource management and community development in our region. Relationships between these interests are complex and often competitive, making choices between them difficult. It is important that communities, including the general public and elected officials, understand tradeoffs between different choices that are made regarding these issues at local scales. Communities in the Central Valley, and throughout California, face difficult decisions about their future, and even as new tools and approaches arise demographic and economic changes make managing and planning for growth increasingly difficult and important. The goal of this series is to increase public engagement in, and understanding of, growth and development issues in the region. The “Our Region” workshops will provide a forum for discourse and a foundation for understanding. The series will focus on these issues at increasing scales:

I. Development in Davis: Weighing Options and Understanding Tradeoffs

Growth is a perennial issue in the city of Davis. Current growth pressures coupled with socio-economic and demographic trends, fiscal constraints, housing needs, and the changing size and needs of the University create real challenges to balancing the long-term interests of the community. This session will begin with a discussion about the current trends as they relate to the challenges and tradeoffs of different development scenarios in Davis. Panelists will also offer ideas about strategies for meeting our needs and barriers to consider given current trends and constraints. Current issues will provide context for the discussion within a broader perspective about the regional effects of growth and meeting our long-term needs.

II. The Future Yolo County: Common Goals and Challenges for Managing Growth and Developing Healthy Communities.

In the rapidly developing Central Valley, productive agricultural land, valuable natural resources, and a growing population create a mix of demographic, socio-economic, and ecological considerations. Currently the County is revising the General Plan with the goal of guiding “*development of the unincorporated area toward the most desirable future possible,*” and combine “*minimum urbanization with the preservation of productive farm resources and open space amenities.*”) Meanwhile the planning county has more development proposals than the current staff can deal with. The people of Yolo County will need to make difficult decisions about the future shape and character of the county. This session will examine relationships between cities, towns and rural areas in Yolo County and provide a forum for discussing how each might change in the future.

III. Regional Perspective: The problems and potential of regional planning strategies.

This forum will provide a regional context for thinking about growth and development. Many complex problems are facing communities across the region and many of these, especially those dealing with natural resources, do not fit well into the scale of conventional planning and jurisdictional boundaries. Regional approaches to planning have long been advocated and are increasingly popular, but conflicting goals and interests often preclude or complicate planning efforts that are regional in scale. This discussion will draw insight from current regionally scaled planning efforts to better understand the barriers to, and potential of, planning at the regional scale.