

# MS in Urban Land Development Alumni Profiles

## **Andrea Howard**

**Principal Planner**, Parker Development Company

El Dorado Hills, CA

[www.parkerdevco.com](http://www.parkerdevco.com)

*I have spent my entire career in private sector real estate, most of which as an urban planner for a developer of residential master-planned communities in the Sacramento area. At a localized level and through a private sector lens, I have experienced some of the pressures facing California and other urban areas to address housing affordability, traffic congestion, natural resource protection, provision of infrastructure and public services, community engagement and fiscal sustainability. The MS-ULD program at Sacramento State gave me a much deeper appreciation for the complexity of public policy decisions and their effects on land use regulations, providing me the ability to analyze circumstances through the lenses of elected officials, public agencies, community citizens, investors, consumers, and other stakeholders. The MS-ULD curriculum challenged me to think critically, enhanced my understanding of the economic and financial constraints and incentives to development, and the necessity of public and private sector collaboration.*



**Rachael Brown**

**Economic Development Manager, City of Elk Grove**

[www.elkgrovecity.org/econdev](http://www.elkgrovecity.org/econdev)

*The ULD Program has benefited me immensely in my job at the City of Elk Grove. With the combination of both public policy and business courses in the curriculum, I have a better awareness of both local government and private development. Economic Development is a field that requires not only interaction with private developers and other departments at the City, but also acting as intermediary between the two on a regular basis. This unique opportunity in local government is what I enjoy so much about my job. Through the real estate courses in the program, I have an understanding of what makes a project pencil, which is integral to having meaningful conversations with developers to attract investment to the City. On the other hand, my knowledge of how public policy occurs, and the challenges an organization faces when trying to affect change in a community, is also critical to my job. Working in economic development at a local municipality allows me to utilize equal parts of the public policy and business courses.*



**Sahar Soltani**

**Development Manager, St. Anton Communities**

[www.antoncap.com](http://www.antoncap.com)

*The MSULD program provided me with all the right tools and connections that I needed to embark on my real estate career in California. With a bachelor's degree in City and Regional Planning from Turkey, I was focused on pursuing a career in planning. Although I enjoyed the city planning work immensely, after starting the MSULD program, I quickly realized that I had a stronger passion for land development and real estate.*



*The variety of courses in the curriculum, including finance, business, government, and public policy equipped me with an in-depth knowledge of the real estate industry. I am currently a project manager with one of the most active affordable housing developers in northern California, overseeing a variety of tasks such as, land entitlements, permitting, financing, and construction. I am passionate about what I do and truly enjoy leading a process of transforming blighted urban infill sites into attractive livable communities for those in dire need of housing.*

**Rupinder Jawanda**

**Senior Transportation Planner, Caltrans**

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/>

“My private sector and public sector experience is greatly enhanced by the Master’s Urban Land Development program. Courses that profile real projects and policies affecting California land use, planning and development have been invaluable when navigating issues whether at work or outside of work for a governmental body.”



*Rupinder currently serves as Caltrans Headquarters lead*

*for the I-210 Connected Corridors Pilot and statewide program development. Prior to her work at Caltrans, Rupinder worked for a real estate developer and builder in the Sacramento region, and interned for local Congresswoman Matsui and a former state Assemblymember. She also serves as a Commissioner for the Sutter County Local Agency Formation Commission for the past three years, a Board Member of the Urban Land Institute Sacramento Chapter’s Young Leader’s Group, a Board Member of the Women in Transportation Seminar (WTS) Sacramento Chapter, and is a past Board Member of the Hornets Policy and Politics Alumni Chapter.*

*Rupinder received her Bachelors of Science from CSU Chico in Finance and her Masters in Urban Land Development from CSU Sacramento.*

## Ryan Sharpe, MS/ULD 2018

### Thesis:

[The Effects of Population Density on Home Prices](#) © 2018 Ryan G. Sharpe. (spoiler: it's quadratic)

### Where you work:

[Caltrans, Division of Rail and Mass Transportation](#)

### How did the MPPA program help you achieve your career goals?

I'm an odd case; I fell into the MSULD program as I was firmly in the middle of a career change into transportation planning. I ended up getting a private sector planning job right after applying to the program and moved into public service shortly before graduating.

That said, the quantitative analysis really helped me hone my data and statistical analysis chops, the collaborative methods has been extremely helpful in dealing with our sometimes-recalcitrant rail partners (and getting me to challenge my us-or-them default!), and classroom presentations turned out to be valuable interview experience.

### What were some of the most valuable lessons learned in the MPPA program?

For me, it was that every subject matter overlaps somewhere if you dive deep enough, so you can't afford to sit in a silo. For transportation, this means looking at how some SES groups see bike lanes as a sign of gentrification, how residency limitations may prevent some former inmates from living in walkable neighborhoods, and the public health effects of each dollar of transit investment.

### Tips you would like to give current students on how the program can help them for their future, or to network.

Just talk to everyone and pay attention to everything. You never know where your next lead or opportunity will come from or what will unravel when you start pulling a thread.

### Would you be open to students contacting you? Of course!

Email: [nothingsharper@gmail.com](mailto:nothingsharper@gmail.com)

Cell Phone: (916) 267-5073



**Renée Funston**

**Development Manager**, Capitol Area Development Authority  
<http://www.cadanet.org>

The MSULD Program gave me the tools, foundational knowledge, and network to explore my interests in enhancing the urban built environment. When I finished undergrad, I knew I wanted a rewarding career that related to social responsibility, environmental sustainability, and community development. I first learned about the unicorn that is Capitol Area Development Authority (CADA) in Peter Detwiler's California Land Use Policy course. Following my experiences with internships and jobs that I was introduced to through connections from the MSULD Program, I honed in on my passion for improving the central city through mixed-use, multifamily housing development and streetscape improvements. The program was principal to jumpstarting the arch of my success.

