

Cypress Environmental and Land Use Planning

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In this edition of the newsletter

- **Watsonville Approves its First Major Housing Project in 10 Years**

Cypress Environmental was part of the project team that planned the 88-unit Sunshine Gardens project on land set aside for residential development. The project, which includes a mix of housing types for various income levels, will fill a housing gap in this city of 51,000 people. [More below.](#)



- **Cordoba Center Project in Santa Clara County Moves Forward**

After substantial planning, this Cypress-managed project for a cultural and religious center moved closer to reality with submittal of a large permit application. Now public meetings and EIR preparation will follow. [More below.](#)



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- **How can Localities Best Fight Climate Change? Cool Roofs are one of the Most Effective Strategies for Cities and Counties.**

December's global summit on climate change resulted in several "big picture" agreements. But what about the smaller picture? One easily overlooked strategy for counteracting climate change is within the purview of cities and counties that implement the Building Code. "Cool roofs" could be an excellent small step towards cumulatively reducing global warming. [More below.](#)



Cypress Mission Statement:

Creating project solutions for you while enhancing our environment.



Cypress is certified as a sustainable practices business by the Monterey Bay Area Green Business Council.

Cypress has been a member of the Santa Cruz Construction Guild since 2010.



Sunshine Gardens Approved by Watsonville City Council First Major Housing Project in Watsonville in 10 Years

On January 12 the City of Watsonville approved the 88-lot Sunshine Gardens Subdivision. Cypress provided project management and land use planning services for the project team. The project includes construction of a dwelling on each lot and a 1.5-acre common-owned open space lot adjoining the riparian habitat of Watsonville Slough. A key feature of the project is a mixture of housing types that includes single-family dwellings; two attached "duet" townhouses; and townhouses attached in 3 to 5-unit

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Single-family dwellings will have a pedestrian orientation to the city street. Cars will access garages at the rear of homes via alleys. Balcony decks integrate outdoor open space in the design of dwellings



Grouped townhouse dwellings will also have a pedestrian orientation with a 30-ft. wide pedestrian greenway out the front door.. Floor areas will vary in each townhouse group.

dwelling groups. There is also a range of sizes in each dwelling unit providing a range of opportunities for home buyers. Many of the homes will meet the need of "missing middle housing" that I discussed in my [summer 2015 newsletter](#). Eighteen dwellings will meet the City's Affordable Housing criteria. Another important element of the project is the pedestrian orientation of over half of the dwellings. Grouped townhouses will front on a 30-foot wide greenway that contains a sidewalk and landscaped greenspace. Car access to these homes will be at the rear end of the dwellings via 24-foot wide alleys. This "New Urbanism" design promotes greater social interaction. The common-owned parcel will include a new dog park and a new hiking trail that will connect to the City's Slough Trail System. One of Cypress' achievements was the establishment of the common open space lot in the project design.

Watsonville, with a population of 51,000, lies in the center of the agriculturally rich and productive Pajaro Valley. In recent decades, conflicts over how much agricultural land the City should annex for future development was a major land use issue in City and County politics. The preservation of farmland is necessary to support Watsonville's economy and the County of Santa Cruz has several policies protecting ag. land in the unincorporated area. On the other hand, housing affordable to lower and middle income people is in extremely short supply.

In 2006 the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) approved an annexation based on an agreement allowing the City to annex 95 acres of adjoining rural land in one area but disallowing any further annexation of farmland for 20 years. After annexing the approved area, the City prepared and approved a Specific Plan for the area. The project is within an area designated for housing in the Specific Plan. This 6.8-acre area is surrounded by existing development to the west and south and Watsonville Slough to the east and north; and is a good example of an urban infill project. Sunshine Gardens is the first major housing project in Watsonville in 10 years.



Cordoba Center Project Moves Forward

Another Cypress Project

The Cordoba Center, a mixed-use religious and cultural center proposed on 16 acres in southern Santa Clara County, submitted its permit application on January 4. The project, located in the suburban/rural San Martin area, was 2.5 years in the making including extensive design work and various technical



studies. Application materials were also quite extensive, requiring 20 Cypress-prepared documents in addition to the project plans. Kim Tschantz is both the project manager and the land use/environmental planner for the project team. The project includes a mosque and a community center building framing each side of 15,000 sq. ft. open air plaza (See rendering above). Other proposed uses are a 3.5-acre cemetery, a 14-tent youth campground for summer sessions, a caretakers dwelling and an orchard. Topography on the site varies from 300 ft. to 384 ft. MSL. Buildings are proposed on the lower elevations. The cemetery will be located on a more visually prominent hillside, but all grave markers will be flat and flush with grade and not visible beyond the site.

The site design orientates the plaza towards the view of a prominent knoll (shown in image below) which will be retained in open space. The orchard will provide both a food resource and a landscape feature reminiscent of the farming that previously dominated the area a few decades ago. It will be planted along the property frontage to provide a 2-way visual barrier that will moderate visibility of project development from off-site views while creating a barrier to provide a sanctuary space for the project separated from traffic on the busy arterial road fronting the project site. Building style will be early California mission architecture.



The project is proposed by the South Valley Islamic Center, a multi-ethnic Islamic congregation that includes all Muslim sects, Sunni, Shi'ite and Sufi. Currently, there are no dedicated Islamic facilities in the area. Muslim families in the South County area have to travel over 20 miles to the nearest mosque located in San Jose. This month Kim is coordinating public outreach meetings with County staff as an early step in the processing of the permit application. Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report by a County-hired consultant will be the second major step in the process.

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Cool Roofs *are* Cool and Green Roofs are Too! A Cool Way to Combat Climate Change

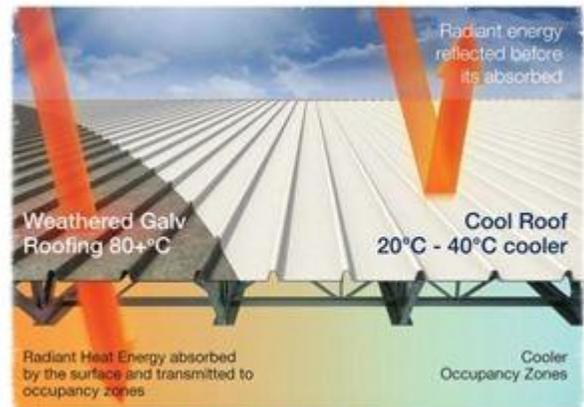


Cities and Counties across California have recently adopted Climate Action Plans which promote a series of local policies to combat global warming/climate change. But are “cool roofs” policies in these Action Plans? Roofs typically make up 15%--20% of most cities’ surface areas. Because roofs can typically be replaced or retrofitted more frequently than entire buildings, they represent an opportunity for developers and building owners to dramatically cut the “heat island effect” in urban environments as well as achieve energy cost savings. Since local governments are the permitting and inspection authority for building construction, how they allow the construction or retrofit building roofing can have a major impact on global warming.

Cool roofs are constructed with highly reflective and emissive materials, usually in the form of membranes, coatings, and tiles. Cool roofing materials can have solar reflectance of over 65%, compared to 5%--15% for traditional roofing materials. As a result, cool roofs tend to stay within 10--20°F of ambient air temperatures in the summer, while conventional roofs can be 55--85°F hotter than ambient air temperatures.

Single-ply membranes or elastomeric coatings can be applied over existing roofs to increase solar reflectance and thermal emittance. Newly installed “cool roofs” typically use specially colored tiles with higher solar reflectance or metal roofing to reduce solar heat gain. However, just painting a dark colored roof white (think standing seam metal roofing) will significantly reduce heat gain. Likewise, growing vegetation on roofs increases rooftop evaporation and transpiration rates and provides shade to the roof surface. Green roofs require more complex construction than the typical “cool roof” installation, but green roofs are doable. [This annotated slide show](#) will show you just how doable.

Last spring, France passed new legislation requiring new buildings in commercial zones must have either green roofs or solar panels. France is not alone. In Switzerland, all buildings must have a green roof if they have a suitable pitch. On this side of the Atlantic, Toronto, Canada has been requiring some buildings to include rooftop planting in their design since 2009. Cities across the country that adopt these smart roof technologies may be able to secure private and public benefits that include energy savings for building owners, reduced city peak summer temperatures, enhanced health and livability and incrementally reduce global warming.



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