



# Christine Babla, AIA, AICP, LEED AP

## DIRECTOR, URBAN DESIGN AND PLANNING

### YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 22

#### EDUCATION

MAUD (Master of Architecture in Urban Design),  
Harvard University Graduate School of Design  
B.Arch., Illinois Institute of Technology

#### CERTIFICATIONS

American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP),  
2006  
Licensed Architect, State of Illinois (#001.020879),  
National Council of Architectural Registration  
Boards (NCARB), 2009  
LEED Accredited Professional, 2003

#### AFFILIATIONS

American Institute of Architects (AIA)  
American Planning Association (APA)  
San Diego Policy Forum  
AIA San Diego Chapter, Urban Design Committee

#### AWARDS AND HONORS

2017 Governor's Environmental and Economic  
Leadership Award for Sustainable Practices,  
Communities or Facilities: Long Beach Downtown  
Plan  
APA Los Angeles Chapter Award of Merit:  
Comprehensive Plan for a Small Jurisdiction, 2016:  
City of South Gate Comprehensive Zoning Code  
Update and Hybrid-Form Based Code  
APA California Chapter Award: Best  
Comprehensive Plan for a Small Jurisdiction, 2013:  
City of San Marcos General Plan Update  
APA California Chapter Award of Merit, 2013:  
Long Beach Downtown Plan  
APA Los Angeles Chapter Comprehensive Plan  
Award, Large Jurisdiction, 2013: Long Beach  
Downtown Plan  
CNU Charter Award, 2005: Waukegan  
Lakefront/Downtown Master Plan/Urban Design  
Plan  
Burnham Award for Excellence in Planning, 2005:  
Waukegan Lakefront/ Downtown Master  
Plan/Urban Design Plan  
AIA Honor Award for Urban Design, 2004:  
Chicago Central Area Plan

**Christine Babla, AIA, AICP, LEED AP** is an urban designer, architect, and urban planner with over 20 years of experience in design and planning. Christine is the Director of Urban Design and Planning for Ascent's San Diego office. She is currently leading work with the Port of San Diego and the City of South Gate, and managing on-call contracts for multiple agencies, including the County of San Diego and the Port of San Diego. Before joining Ascent, Christine was an Associate Principal leading urban design at the San Diego office of AECOM, a multinational infrastructure/engineering firm.

Christine has spent her career working in urban areas on infill and redevelopment, integrating transit, walkability, and mixed use to create complete communities. She is recognized for her skill in bringing together a variety of disciplines and stakeholders to solve complex planning challenges, establishing a distinctive community vision, and translating that vision into concise, graphic, and user-friendly vision plans, guidelines, and regulatory documents. Christine's project experience includes specific plans, community plans, master plans, streetscape design, design guidelines, hybrid form-based codes, and development of feasibility studies, with a special emphasis on smart growth, transit-oriented development, and sustainable design. Her projects have received numerous awards, of which the most notable are the Long Beach Downtown Plan, which was awarded the 2017 Governor's Environmental and Economic Leadership Award for Sustainable Practices, Communities or Facilities, the 2013 APA California Chapter Award of Merit, and the 2013 APA LA Comprehensive Plan Award for Large Jurisdiction, and the South Gate Form-Based Code, which was awarded the 2016 APA LA Chapter Award of Merit.

### PRIOR WORK EXPERIENCE

#### AECOM Design, Planning & Economics (Formerly EDAAW) San Diego CA.

##### Associate Principal and Senior Project Manager

Christine led Urban Design at AECOM San Diego's Design, Planning, & Economics group, providing staff supervision, mentoring, and review, as well as leading all aspects of project, client, and sub-consultant management, including proposal writing, scoping, budgeting, invoicing, and project design and direction. Christine transformed and modernized the office's planning practice, integrating urban design within planning and zoning, and also establishing a graphic user-friendly style for planning tools and documents.

Technical responsibilities included providing design and planning direction, content development, and QA/QC for complex, multi-disciplinary projects that have a strong design or physical planning component. Christine led design guidelines, streetscape design, corridor redevelopment, specific plans, zoning code updates, community plans, and master planning projects, including visioning, outreach, and feasibility studies for transit-oriented development and urban infill projects. Her projects ranged in scale from 1- to 2-mile corridors, to sites of 5 to 5000+ acres, throughout Southern California and Utah. [2008-2019]

## MW Steele Group Inc.

San Diego CA.

### Associate

Christine led community plans, specific plans, and design guidelines for transit-oriented development, redevelopment, housing, and urban infill throughout California. Responsibilities included project management and design, staff supervision, and mentorship, as well as development of the urban design practice. [2006-2008]

## Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill LLP

Chicago IL.

### Senior Urban Designer

Christine was a Senior Urban/Architectural Designer for brownfield redevelopment, campus and hospital planning, urban infill, streetscape, transit station design, and transit-oriented development projects. Christine worked on projects around the world and throughout the United States, ranging in scale from super-tall high-rise design to streetscape and master planning. Responsibilities included project design, staff supervision, and mentorship. [2001-2006]

## ADDITIONAL SELECTED WORK EXPERIENCE

- Sasaki Associates Inc. Watertown MA.
- Peter Lindsay Schaudt Landscape Architecture Inc. Chicago IL.
- Booth Hansen Associates Inc. Chicago IL.
- Lohan Associates Chicago IL.
- HPZS Architects, Engineers, Conservators Chicago, IL.
- Perkins & Will Group Inc. Chicago IL.

## PROJECT EXPERIENCE

### Senate Bill 2 Planning Grants Technical Assistance Services

California Department of Housing and Community Development

#### Strategic Advisor – Urban Design

Through the SB 2 Planning Grants Technical Assistance Program, Ascent and PlaceWorks are providing technical assistance to all local governments in California to help cities and counties prepare, adopt, and implement plans and process improvements that streamline housing approvals and accelerate housing production. Christine has served as a strategic advisor on urban design topics as part of technical assistance to local jurisdictions, and has played a leading role in best-practice research and guidance for objective design standards.

### Port of San Diego Master Plan Update

Nexus Consulting and San Diego Unified Port District

#### Project Director

Christine is Ascent's project director leading ongoing work on the Port Master Plan Update (PMPU). The work program continues the multiyear effort and strategic visioning process, with the intent of developing a modern, streamlined Port Master Plan document to meet Coastal Act requirements and to facilitate future project implementation. Ascent's role includes the coordination of detailed policies and development standards for each of the Planning Districts, as well as coordination with other team members on bay-wide and district-level policies to increase and improve coastal access and recreation opportunities consistent with the District's goals. Christine also served as the lead designer and primary author directing the multidisciplinary team that prepared the 2017 preliminary draft, including the initial water and land use strategy, the development of preliminary bay-wide and subdistrict-level policies, and the development of a dynamic model to analyze, plan, and evaluate physical planning opportunities in conjunction with economic absorption for each of the 10 Planning Districts.

### Gateway District Specific Plan

City of South Gate

#### Project Director

Christine Babla was the project manager and project director for the Gateway District Specific Plan while at a previous firm, and continues to play an active role in this effort as it is finalized through the public hearing and approval process. Christine worked with the Southern California Association of Governments and the City of South Gate to lead a multidisciplinary team in the preparation of a plan for the 60-acre Gateway District and Station Area, in preparation for the future West Santa Ana Branch station. The Specific Plan provides a vision and framework for the new station, station area, and surrounding transit-oriented development, which will be mixed-use and pedestrian- and

transit-focused. The Plan is a concise, user-friendly and highly graphic document that establishes the regulatory approach for the Gateway District, including goals and development and design guidelines and standards, together with frameworks for development, mobility, and open space strategies, as well as transition areas to the surrounding light and heavy industrial areas.

### East Campus Operations Center Master Plan

Sacramento Municipal Utility District

#### Advisor

Ascent is working with SMUD to prepare a master plan to guide the physical development of the ECOC Campus over the next 20 years. At its foundation, the master plan would act as a unifying strategy creating direction for planning and redevelopment of the ECOC in a manner responsive to the evolving needs of SMUD's customers and employees. The master plan will allow SMUD to plan its growth so physical improvements support its strategic vision as outlined in SMUD's 5-Year Strategic Plan 2018–2022. Christine is advising the team working on the site plan alternatives to reach a preferred site plan layout, which will form the basis for the master plan document. [2020-Ongoing]

### Sunnyvale Downtown Specific Plan Update

City of Sunnyvale

#### Advisor

Christine is an advisor working with Ascent's team of urban designers leading a planning effort to allow for greater amounts of housing, office, and retail in a very desirable South Bay location. The specific plan update will help the City establish a long-term plan and framework to support walkable growth and development in the downtown area of Sunnyvale. The plan will be updated to accommodate several ongoing plan proposals currently taking place at the City, ensuring the coordination of project proposals with the existing surrounding context and the City's vision for downtown Sunnyvale. [2020-Ongoing]

### Central Area Specific Plans Update for General Plan Implementation

City of Pasadena

#### Planning and Urban Design Lead

Christine was the planning and urban design lead for the update of three Specific Plans: South Fair Oaks, Central District, and East Colorado. The work program included extensive community outreach and a multidisciplinary approach to comprehensively update the plans to implement the newly adopted General Plan and create context-sensitive urban design, land use, and mobility strategies.

### Burbank Golden State District Specific Plan

City of Burbank

#### Planning and Urban Design Lead

The work program includes the creation of a mix of light industrial, flex, and residential mixed-use districts, as well as a framework for the integration of streetscape and accessibility improvements to integrate transit and future high-speed rail.

### Long Beach Uptown UZIP/UPlan

Southern California Association of Governments/City of Long Beach

#### Project Director/Principal Urban Designer

Christine was the project director for the development of a model zoning approach to implement the recently adopted General Plan and to guide development in the uptown's commercial and mixed-use corridors. The project included design feasibility studies to analyze the existing zoning standards and propose extensive revisions to incentivize quality housing and mixed-use infill. The team worked closely with the City of Long Beach, SCAG, and Here LA to conduct an extensive outreach effort, including numerous public meetings and a demonstration project to solicit feedback and engagement throughout the process.

### Kearny Mesa Community Plan Update

City of San Diego

#### Principal Urban Designer

Christine was responsible for the development of the Urban Design Element and Design Guidelines for the Kearny Mesa Community Plan update, including criteria to guide infill and redevelopment for urban mixed-use and employment uses, as well as public realm improvements.

## San Diego County Zoning Update

County of San Diego

### Principal Urban Designer/Senior Advisor

Christine was the Principal Urban Designer and Senior Advisor for the county-wide comprehensive zoning update. The work program includes a multi-year phased approach to the Zoning Update, including public outreach and the update of select community plans.

## Sorrento Valley TOD Feasibility Study

City of San Diego

### Project Manager/Senior Urban Designer

Christine was responsible for the evaluation of station location and associated TOD alternatives. This effort is part of an ongoing study for the City of San Diego Public Works Department.

## Palm Avenue Revitalization Plan

City of San Diego/Caltrans

### Project Manager/Senior Urban Designer

Christine was the project manager and senior urban designer responsible for the creation of a revitalization plan for Palm Avenue, working closely with the City of San Diego, as a subconsultant to Chen Ryan. The project area is a 1.5-mile, historically auto-oriented corridor, linking Imperial Beach to San Diego and the Palm Avenue Trolley Station, and it serves as the gateway to the South County beaches and oceanfront. The project scope included traffic analysis (by Chen Ryan), development of an urban design framework, and a multimodal mobility strategy. The plan was developed through a robust community involvement process, including a bike audit and several community meetings, as well as coordination with the South County Economic Development Corporation. The plan provides a long-term vision for the evolution of Palm Avenue into a walkable, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use corridor and complete street. The plan identified a series of catalyst projects, including operational improvements and beautification efforts, as well as longer-term implementation projects to improve mobility for all users.

## Western Avenue Corridor Street Enhancement Strategy, Los Angeles County

City of Rancho Palos Verdes/City of Los Angeles/SCAG/Caltrans

### Project Manager/Senior Urban Designer

Christine was responsible for the creation of a coordinated street enhancement strategy for this 2-mile corridor as part of a joint effort with the Cities of Rancho Palos Verdes and Los Angeles, SCAG, and Caltrans. The team worked closely with the communities and key stakeholders. The project will transform a historically auto-oriented corridor, with new pedestrian-oriented development, streetscape improvements, and a phased approach to complete streets integrating the needs of all users (bicycle, auto, pedestrian, and transit). This project is the second phase of the Western Avenue Vision Plan.

## South Gate Form-Based Zoning Ordinance, Los Angeles County

City of South Gate

### Project Manager/Senior Urban Designer

Christine was responsible for the development of a form-based code for all urban zones, as well as a comprehensive update of the citywide Zoning Ordinance. Key issues included translating the City's General Plan concepts for placemaking, transit-oriented development, and urban infill in key districts and corridors, while addressing transitions to existing single-family neighborhoods. The project was the recipient of the 2016 APA Los Angeles Chapter Award of Merit: Comprehensive Plan for a Small Jurisdiction.

## Long Beach Downtown Plan, Los Angeles County

City of Long Beach

### Project Manager/Senior Urban Designer

Christine was the project manager and lead urban designer for the Downtown Plan, a community plan, vision, hybrid form-based code for the downtown area. The Plan document integrates the planned development ordinance with form-based zoning, development standards, and design guidelines to achieve a user-friendly guide for revitalization of the 725-acre downtown area. The framework for development in the Downtown focuses growth and density near transit, while ensuring transition areas to the surrounding communities. A graphic approach to design guidelines and standards is provided to illustrate key components of a pedestrian friendly downtown, including building massing, mixed-use development, and the design of street frontage and streetscape. The Plan uses a highly graphic approach to design guidelines and standards, illustrating key components of a pedestrian-friendly downtown, including topics such as building massing, mixed-use development, and the design of street frontage and streetscape. The document includes concise text, tables, and framework diagrams paired with photos of built projects to succinctly convey the City and community's vision and intent. The Downtown Plan was the recipient

of the 2013 APA Los Angeles Chapter, Comprehensive Plan Award for a Large Jurisdiction, a 2013 APA California Chapter Award of Merit, and the 2017 Governor's Environmental and Economic Leadership Award for Sustainable Practices, Communities, or Facilities.

### Shoppes II Retail Center - Development Compass Blueprint Demonstration Project, San Bernardino County

City of Chino Hills

#### Senior Urban Designer

Christine was responsible for the creation of conceptual development scenarios. The project included the creation and refinement of a preferred development approach to transform the last vacant parcel at the Shoppes retail center into a vibrant, mixed-use development. Key issues included assessing market potential and financial feasibility, encouraging walkability and pedestrian-oriented residential and mixed-use development, placemaking, and refinement of parking standards.

### South Block Master Plan Design Standards, St. George, Utah

State of Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration

#### Lead Urban Designer

Christine served as the lead urban designer for the visioning and development of design standards for a 6,000-acre new town development. The design standards focus on the creation of a high-quality, traditional neighborhood development over a 30-year buildout. Villages are formed around recreational cores and include standards to reinforce the image and function of the street as a multimodal space, integrate community recreational areas with a mix of land uses, and facilitate walking and biking.

### San Marcos General Plan and Form-Based Zoning Ordinance Update

City of San Marcos

#### Senior Urban Designer

The comprehensive update program included an extensive public outreach program, including a website, newsletters, a General Plan Advisory Committee, youth outreach, and public workshops. As a tandem process, the Zoning Ordinance was updated to reflect a form-based approach to development in targeted mixed-use areas. The General Plan was the recipient of a local and state APA Comprehensive Plan Award for a Small Jurisdiction.

### Imperial Beach Commercial/Mixed-Use Zoning Review

City of Imperial Beach

#### Project Manager/Senior Urban Designer

Christine was responsible for the review of the City's commercial zoning and mixed-use overlays along the coast and in other commercial portions of Imperial Beach, and the development of amendments that better achieve the community's vision.

### Sorrento Valley TOD Feasibility Study

City of San Diego

#### Lead Urban Designer

Christine led the evaluation of station location and associated transit-oriented development (TOD) alternatives. This effort was part of an ongoing study for the City of San Diego Public Works Department.

### Midway and Old Town Community Plan Updates

City of San Diego

#### Project Manager/Lead Urban Designer

Christine was the Project Manager and Lead Urban Designer responsible for the overall urban design, planning, and public outreach for two parallel community plan updates in central San Diego. Major components included strategies for infill and transit-oriented development, improving pedestrian access, bicycle access, and walkability, as well as historic preservation.

### El Dorado Neighborhood Plan/ Specific Plan

City of Fresno

#### Project Manager/Senior Urban Designer

Christine was the project manager and senior urban designer for the El Dorado Park Neighborhood Plan. The Plan is a community action plan for the rehabilitation and improvement of the El Dorado Park neighborhood in the City of Fresno. Located directly west of the Fresno State campus, the neighborhood has a high reported incidence of gang violence, crime, and drugs. To address these problems, the City of Fresno, in collaboration with key community organizations, led a community planning effort which included extensive public engagement.

The Plan includes a detailed strategy for revitalization, including design guidelines to ensure an “eyes on the street” approach to renovation and redevelopment.

## ADDITIONAL RELEVANT PROJECTS

### Streetscape, Transit, and Transportation

- 19th Street Corridor Streetscape, Virginia Beach, CA
- Reimagining Grand Avenue, Los Angeles
- Canary Wharf North Quay Master Plan, London, UK
- Canary Wharf Cross Rail/Supermetro Study, London, UK
- State Street Boulevard Project, Chicago, IL

### Community/ Neighborhood Plans & Design Guidelines and Standards

- Lennar/LNR Great Park Heritage Fields Design Guidelines, Irvine
- Otay Mesa Community Plan Update, San Diego
- Lakefront-Downtown Master Plan/Urban Design Plan: Vision, Master Plan, and Design Guidelines, Waukegan, IL
- Old Beach District Center Master Plan: Master Plan and Visioning, Virginia Beach, VA
- Nanmen Lu and Guangji Lu Master Plan: Neighborhood Master Plans and Design Guidelines, Suzhou, China
- Stateway Gardens Redevelopment Plan and Planned Unit Development, Chicago, IL
- Virginia Beach Master Plan, Design Guidelines, and Architectural Guidelines, Virginia Beach, VA
- Prairie Crossing, Grayslake IL

### Campus Planning

- Carson Revitalization Project, Carson
- Parkland Hospital Master Plan, Programming, and Preliminary Architectural Design, Dallas, TX
- Texas Medical Center Programming, Master Plan, and Urban Design, Houston, TX
- Bowdoin College Campus Master Plan, Brunswick, ME
- Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences North Precinct Framework Plan, Cambridge, MA
- Tampa Cultural Arts District Master Plan, Tampa, FL
- Illinois Institute of Technology Landscape Master Plan, Chicago, IL

### General Plans, Specific Plans, and Zoning Updates

- General Plan Framework Element, Long Beach
- 2030 National Planning Development Strategies/Comprehensive National Plan, Kingdom of Bahrain, Middle East
- Central Area Plan, Chicago, IL