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How did you find your way into the industry?

I've been interested in and attuned to land use and development since taking an elective in high school on urban issues and design. I majored in urban studies at Washington University in St. Louis and received my Master of Planning degree from the University of Southern California. After that, I was fortunate to find a spot at RSG, where we work to improve land use directly through the practice areas of real estate advising, affordable housing, and economic development.

What advice would you give to an emerging young leader just starting their professional career?

Don't hesitate to get involved outside of work. ULI provides a multitude of different ways to advance your career, from learning and sharing technical skills and ideas to hearing lessons from seasoned professionals' experiences to building your own professional network. Take advantage of these opportunities by attending as many ULI events as you can. The investment of your time is just like any other; it pays off more over the long term.

What traits do you think define a successful leader?

Successful leaders inspire their team members, provide direction and opportunities for others to shine, and learn from their own mistakes to put themselves and their co-workers in a better position for success the next time. To do so, they need to be passionate about their field, collaborative, humble, and hardworking.

What is your current job and what types of projects are you working on now?

As an Associate at RSG, I work on, and often manage, a variety of projects for clients throughout California. I assist local agencies in navigating through the process of redevelopment dissolution, project and calculate property tax growth and distribution, analyze the current market and trends for real estate and economic development, and estimate fiscal and economic impacts of proposed development. I am also currently working on a nexus study for an affordable housing in-lieu fee and two situations involving public subsidies for private development (one on each side).

What do you find most challenging about your profession on a day-to-day basis?

One of the things I find most challenging, as well as most interesting, about my role is the broad variety of things on which I work. Because RSG's practice areas span affordable housing, real estate advising, economic development, and municipal finance, I am constantly deepening my understanding of the many topics within each of these areas. It's difficult to develop and maintain expertise with such breadth, but I enjoy the challenge.

What are you looking for in terms of career development - OR In what areas would you like to professionally develop further?

I would like to continue developing the breadth and depth of my understanding and professional experience in order to achieve the status of a thought leader in the realm of land use and economic development. I hope that this will maximize my ability to improve communities' economic and fiscal health and peoples' quality of life.

Describe a situation that was a great learning experience.

On several projects related to redevelopment dissolution, I have been tasked with solving a financial problem. In one case, for example, the problem was due to miscommunication regarding an agency's cash flow. In another case, the problem was caused by misinterpretation of legal documents. In all cases, I worked closely and communicated frequently with my co-workers, the client/public agency, and the local and state-level reviewing agencies. The biggest lesson I drew from these experiences, and perhaps from all of my professional experiences, is that our task is not only to find solutions, but also to pave the way for their implementation. How we coordinate and communicate in the process of identifying the best solution often affects whether that solution is accepted and applied.

How do you deal with stress at work?

In order to handle stress, I prioritize what I need to do and coordinate with my co-workers to try to avoid stressful surprises. Outside of work, I enjoy reading or watching movies to ease my mind with a good story.