

By Sajuti Rahman, associate editor, Northern News



The Northern Section Board has elected **Florentina Craciun, AICP**, as Director-Elect of the section. A Senior Environmental Planner with the Environmental Planning Division, San Francisco Planning Department, Craciun holds a master's in Urban and Regional Planning from UCLA and a BA in history from UC Santa Barbara. She has served on the Board since 2012, first as membership Director, followed by East Bay RAC (regional activity coordinator, 2013-2014), and Awards Co-director for APA California-Northern (2015-2020).



**Amalia Lorentz Cunningham, AICP**, was promoted to Assistant Deputy Director, Housing and Community Improvement, in the Department of Conservation and Development of Contra Costa County. The move creates an expanded division in the County to support affordable housing, federally funded projects, and economic development initiatives. Formerly economic development manager for the County, Cunningham



## Who's where

holds a master's degree in City and Regional planning from UC Berkeley and a bachelor's degree from Amherst College. She and her family reside in El Cerrito where they are heavy users of the Ohlone Greenway and their Contra Costa branch library.



**Delo Freitas** was recently hired as a Senior Planner for the City of Arcata where she focuses on current and long-range planning activities as well as historic preservation. She previously was an associate planner for Planwest Partners in Arcata, and before that, was an assistant planner for the City of Eureka. Freitas holds a BA in community and regional planning from the University of Washington.



**Brian Heaton, AICP**, is a Land Use and Environmental Planner at GHD in Eureka. Previously a senior planner for the City of Eureka, Heaton holds



## Who's where

a master's degree in urban and regional planning from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a bachelor's degree in environmental studies from the University of Minnesota-Duluth, and a certificate in project management from UC Irvine.



**James Murphy** is an Assistant Planner with the City of Cupertino. Previously a planning technician with the City of San Jose, Murphy holds a master's degree in urban and regional planning from San Jose State University and bachelor's degrees in geography and urban studies from UC Berkeley. When not in the office, James enjoys hiking and cycling on the San Francisco Peninsula.



**Lauren Ninkovich** has recently been hired as an Assistant Planner at the City of Cupertino. Formerly a planning intern at the City of Poughkeepsie, New York, Ninkovich holds a BA in urban studies from Vassar College. Outside of work she

enjoys playing volleyball and hiking.



**Melissa Ruhl** is an Emerging Mobility Researcher at Ford's Research and Advanced Engineering division in Palo Alto. Her work there focuses on new and emerging transportation trends, such as micromobility, microtransit, and autonomous vehicles initiatives. Previously, Ruhl was a senior planner for Arup in San Francisco where she managed projects on transportation innovation. Ruhl holds a master's degree in city and regional planning from San Jose State University and a bachelor's degree in history from University of Oregon. She regularly speaks in California and nationally on autonomous vehicles and the future of cities. She has published a number of articles on future mobility and most recently co-authored a chapter on mobility as a service in the recently published *Disruptive Transport: Driverless Cars, Transport Innovation and the Sustainable City of Tomorrow*. In September 2019, Melissa was recognized on the "40 under 40" Mass Transit Magazine list.