



NORTHERN NEWS



American Planning Association
California Chapter
Northern
Making Great Communities Happen

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Complete Streets— completing the vision

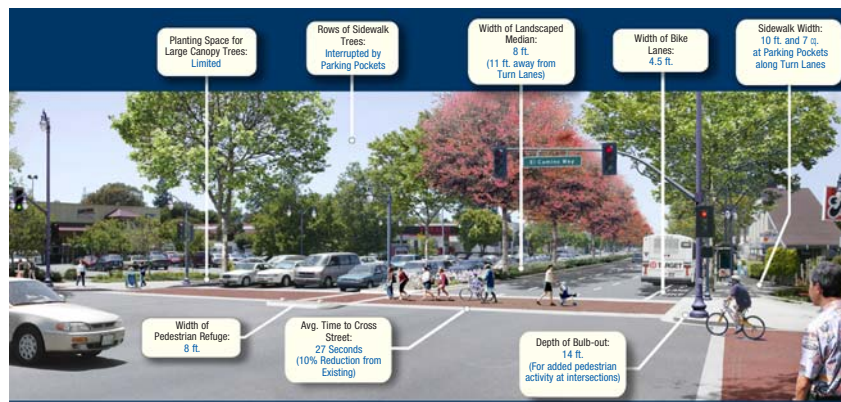
By Brooke DuBose, Christine FitzGerald, and Meghan Mitman

In September, Governor Schwarzenegger signed into law the Complete Streets Act of 2008 (Assembly Bill 1358). Commencing January 1, 2011, upon any substantive revision of the circulation element of the general plan, AB 1358 requires cities and counties in California to include Complete Streets policies with the goal of designing roadways to safely accommodate all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, the young, and the old. Benefits include reduced transportation costs and travel time, potentially improved safety, and the opportunity for people to choose which method of transportation they prefer to use at any given time.

Here's a quick look at how Complete Streets policies translate on the ground, and where opportunities exist to expand the vision for the future.

Embracing all users

With conventional practice, a street can generally be considered “complete” if it accommodates all modes of transportation: a roadway for motorists and buses, sidewalks for pedestrians, and designated lanes for bicycles. The Complete Streets concept has expanded from a street accommodating multiple modes of transportation to a street accommodating not only all modes of travel, but also all users.



El Camino Real at Los Robles, Palo Alto

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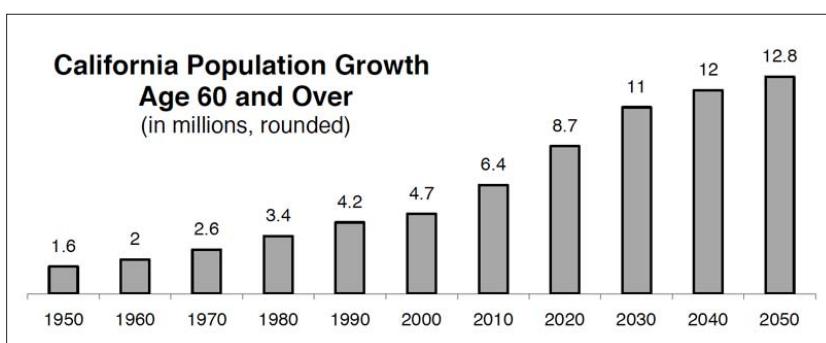
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Complete streets— (continued from previous page)

In this sense, we must truly “think beyond the pavement.” A Complete Street should offer equal accessibility for the young and old, disabled and not, and pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders. After all, designing streets for our most vulnerable populations means that they are safe and accessible for everyone.

Safe and friendly streets for seniors are particularly important given the demographic shift we are experiencing in this country. With the aging of the Baby Boom Generation, California’s senior population is projected to increase by 85 percent to 8.7 million seniors between 2000 and 2020. While more than one in five older Americans does not drive, alternatives to driving are limited, especially in the rural communities or suburban settings where residents are increasingly “aging in place.”



Source: http://www.aging.ca.gov/stats/Aging_California_from_2005-2009_State_Plan_on_Aging-SectionII.pdf

Complete Streets are also essential for encouraging children to walk and bike to school, and for enhancing their safety when doing so. A recent survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that the risk of injury is a key reason why fewer children walk to school today compared to previous generations. Complete Streets also help children be more physically active, which is essential for combating our nation’s childhood obesity epidemic.

National efforts are under way to help communities provide Safe Routes to Schools and Safe Routes for Seniors. However, these user-oriented programs are often viewed separately from Complete Streets efforts despite their potential synergies. Ideally we would see these efforts merge to benefit from common funding sources, professional expertise, and advocacy efforts.

Overcoming road blocks

Despite new Complete Streets policies in many jurisdictions, implementation direction is still largely missing. Design standards are typically separated by mode and do not detail modal interactions and user considerations. Therefore, even though it’s not a “Complete Street,” a roadway with heavy vehicular volumes traveling at high

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The deadline for submitting materials for inclusion in the *Northern News* is the 15th day of the month prior to publication.

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Northern News welcomes your comments. Letters to the editor require the author's first and last name, home or work street address and phone number (neither of which will be published), and professional affiliation or title (which will be published only with the author's permission). Letters over 250 words are not considered. All letters are subject to editing.

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Complete streets— (continued from previous page)

speeds, shared Class III bike facilities, narrow sidewalks directly adjacent to the roadway, and a bus that operates only once a day can technically be labeled a Complete Street.

One of the biggest obstacles to designing Complete Streets that are safe, comfortable, and truly functional is the mandate to adhere to acceptable vehicular Level of Service (LOS) standards, even when other modes and user groups are compromised. Adopting multi-modal LOS standards is a critical step toward creating balanced and well designed street networks.

Gauging early successes

As states and cities move forward to adopt and implement Complete Streets policies, we have the opportunity to gauge the success of this model. Basic performance metrics, such as an increase in bicycle and pedestrian volumes and transit ridership and a reduction in collision rates (especially among children and seniors), are strong indicators to determine the success of a Complete Streets policy. Providing the right infrastructure for people to walk, bike, drive, or take transit is key, but the essence of a great street may not be captured with these elements alone.

Many cities have already made great strides in this area, offering the following best practices:

- New York City's Safe Routes for Seniors, one of the leading efforts to address this need, focuses on traffic calming and transit access strategies for neighborhoods where large numbers of seniors live.
- Safe Routes to School programs in many cities, with good examples in Marin County and the City of San Jose.
- The adoption of multi-modal LOS standards in Fort Collins, Colorado, will help create safe and comfortable experience for all users.
- Policies that encourage public/private partnerships and programming of public spaces, such as New York City's Public Plaza Program.

Expanding the vision

As we think toward truly completing our streets, the vision should expand even further. A Complete Street should contribute to the public health, ecological sustainability, and economic vitality of a community. Depending on the context, it may be a place for people to stroll, shop, rest, or socialize. It may be a major thoroughfare that brings people to their jobs each day. It can also be a quiet residential street where children can safely learn how to ride bikes. An expanded vision of Complete Streets can include policies that aim to improve air and noise quality, provide opportunities for public-private partnerships for sidewalk cafes and plazas, and offer a roadmap for the sound management of surface runoff water on our streets. CoolConnections.org is one such initiative that brings together these issues in transportation and land use planning with the ultimate aim of addressing climate change. ■

Onward and upward



Valerie Barone, AICP, Walnut Creek's community development director since 2002, is now assistant city manager, Concord. In making the move, Valerie transitioned from

redevelopment, economic development, planning, building, transportation, code enforcement, housing and CDBG in Walnut Creek to overseeing Concord's finance, human resources, information technology, and recreation and community services departments. Barone previously worked for the City of Milpitas, starting as an associate planner in 1995 and leaving as director of planning, recreation, and neighborhood services in 2002. She holds a B.S. degree in natural resources planning from Humboldt State University. ■

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

By Juan Borrelli, AICP, SNI Senior Planner, City of San José

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as Section Director for the last two years and on the Northern Section Board since 2002. Please extend a warm welcome to incoming Director, **Darcy Kremin, AICP**. I look forward to an exciting and wonderful two years under Darcy's leadership while continuing to work with the board as Immediate Past Director.

Looking back on my term as Director, I am proud of the many efforts and accomplishments by each of the Section's very dedicated board members. They have provided extremely high quality services, programs, and events for California APA's largest Section. To name a few: the Section's very successful Awards Program, which continues to acknowledge and showcase excellence in planning in the Northern Section; the festive holiday parties and RAC socials and happy hours which offered many social and networking opportunities; our recently updated website, with its improved design, user interface, and access to information; and our 2007 transition to a greener, all electronic newsletter with its full-color layout and greatly expanded and improved news content.

I am also very proud of the far-too-many-to-name Northern Section and RAC sponsored and co-sponsored professional events and training programs that have kept our dynamic Section at the forefront of planning. They have well-served the Section's 1,900 members while partnering with and establishing or strengthening our relationships and alliances with planning-related professional organizations in Northern California. Many of these events have qualified for AICP/CM Credits, allowing our AICP members—in just the first two years of the CM Program—the potential to earn approximately 50 CM Credits locally and at no or very low cost. The [August 2008 Northern News](#) issue included a **2007-2008 AICP/CM Credit Log** for Section events through July 10, 2008. For an update on additional Northern Section events through 2008 with approved or pending AICP/CM Credits, [see pages 16–17](#) of this issue.

Two remarkable events during my term especially stand out, and I would be remiss if I failed to mention them. One was the extremely successful 2007 APA California Conference in San José, with its gala opening reception at the Tech Museum of Innovation, a first-of-its-kind Diversity Summit in the City Hall Rotunda, 100-plus professional programs and 11 mobile workshops, renowned keynote speakers, and dedicated conference committee members and volunteers. The second was the

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE *(continued from previous page)*

incredible 2007 Urban Planning Tour of China: Two groups of Northern California planners and some spouses spent several weeks visiting and meeting with public- and private-sector planners, urban designers, architects, historians, and preservationists in 10 Chinese cities, exploring, learning, and sharing information and ideas about our profession and each other's culture. I'm still enjoying the knowledge I gained from this amazing experience even as I continue editing the almost 10,000 photos I took while co-leading the endeavor.

Lastly, your recent Northern Section votes have been counted. For the next two years, **Hanson Hom, AICP**, will serve as Director Elect, and **Allen Tai, AICP**, will be the Section's Administrative Director. We also appointed two new board members at our last meeting—**Michael McCormick** as Communications Director and **Laura Gurney** as one of the two Student Representatives. Please welcome them and give the entire board your support and feedback. We always welcome your ideas for future professional development workshops, lectures, programs, and social and networking events. Send your suggestions to Professional Development Director [Iris Starr, AICP](#), or contact any of the RAC Chairs listed on [page 2](#) of this issue. I look forward to seeing you at an upcoming Northern Section event!

Reminder to VOTE in the current APA California election

On November 17th, all APA members received an email invitation to vote for our state officers. The email contained voting instructions, a link to the ballot, and your unique Ballot ID. The subject of the email was "APA California Election Ballot ID from CCAPA." If you haven't voted, please retrieve that email, login, and vote using the unique Ballot ID contained in CCAPA's email.

Deadline to vote is December 15th!



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ELECTION FALLOUT

Different votes, different folks— Northern Section and beyond

By Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP, and Bryan W. Wenter, AICP

Land use planning and related issues played a prominent role in the November election in the Northern Section, statewide, and beyond.

Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit District. Voters in the counties of Marin and Sonoma narrowly approved Measure Q, known as the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) project, a passenger train and pathway project that will connect the wine country to San Francisco Bay with 70 miles of rail and trail. SMART will run trains along a publicly owned right of way between Cloverdale, in northern Sonoma County, and Larkspur, where the Golden Gate Ferry connects Marin county to San Francisco. The plan calls for the train to serve 14 stations along the corridor, with the goal of providing a fast and reliable alternative to traffic-choked Highway 101, which parallels the rail line.

Measure Q needed the support of two-thirds of the voters to increase the sales tax by one-quarter of one percent to pay for the construction and operation of the project. The project won 68.4 percent approval in the two-county SMART District.

Lillian Hames, general manager of SMART, remarked that in light of the present state of the economy, voters “understood that now is the time to design and construct transportation infrastructure that reduces greenhouse gases, maximizes sound land use, and improves the quality of life for the North Bay.”

With its funding now secured, SMART’s next tasks are to select its rail vehicles and begin final engineering. Construction on the rail line and pathway project is expected to begin in 2011, with passenger train service beginning in 2014.

Monterey County. Measure Z asked voters to invest in a countywide transportation network by adopting a Transportation Investment Plan, with improvements to be funded by a 25-year half-percent sales tax and state/federal matching funds. The moneys were to be deposited into a special fund to be used solely to improve safety and traffic flow on Highways 1, 68, 156, and

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ELECTION FALLOUT *(continued from previous page)*

101; fill potholes and repair roads; improve bus service; expand transportation services for the elderly and disabled; and provide for habitat conservation.

Final results (December 2nd) showed the measure failed—77,137 (62.55 percent) voting yes, and 46,182 (37.45 percent) voting no—despite strong support from labor, government officials, and key opinion leaders. Funds from the sales tax would have been matched with an estimated \$392 million from a regional development impact fee adopted in August. Together, the two local revenue sources would have helped to secure an estimated \$400 million in additional state and federal matching funds. The resulting investment of \$1.8 billion in transportation improvements could have helped to restart the local economy.

Northern News hopes to present in its February issue an analysis of the success and failure of—and policy challenges posed by—transportation ballot measures in the 2004, 2006, and 2008 elections in the Monterey Bay area.

Santa Clara County. In a squeaker, a South Bay transportation tax passed by a fraction of a percent and survived a challenge in court. Measure B authorized a one-eighth-of-a-cent sales tax increase in Santa Clara County to help extend the Bay Area Rapid Transit system 16 miles south from Fremont, with stations in Milpitas, San José, and Santa Clara. The BART extension will connect to San José International via the Santa Clara station, and to the Caltrain service that runs from Gilroy to San Francisco. By helping to pay the operating costs of the extension, passage of Measure B was a critical step toward getting an additional \$750 million in federal funding needed for constructing the line.

On November 5th, the Measure appeared to have failed: The “yes” vote was 66.3 percent, with 66.7 percent needed. Even though 164,000 mail and provisional ballots remained to be counted, supporters were already looking for ways to scale back the BART extension, possibly only as far as the Berryessa area of San José, and not tunneling under downtown San José. San José Mayor Chuck Reed said he would advocate building the line “as far as we can with the money we have.”

But by November 25th, it was clear Measure B had passed by one-tenth of one percent, with 66.78 percent (414,328)

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ELECTION FALLOUT *(continued from previous page)*

voting “yes” to 33.22 percent (206,103) voting “no.” Pushing the measure past the two-thirds mark were provisional and mail ballots that ran nearly 75 percent for Measure B.

Some observers think the late surge in “yes” votes came from “young voters, who tend to be more supportive of mass transit, [and] may have been more heavily represented among the late and provisional ballots.” —Gary Richards, [*“BART sales tax now appears headed for passage,” San José Mercury News*](#), Nov. 17, 2008.

But opponents didn’t give up. As late as December 2nd, the day the election results were certified, the nonprofit Transportation Solutions Defense and Education Fund was in San Francisco Superior Court suing the Secretary of State, who had determined the ballot measure was ineligible for an automatic recount. “California’s recently passed election regulations call for a manual recount of 10 percent of precincts when the margin of victory is less than 0.5 percent on election night. But for ballot measures, the margin of victory is defined as the difference between yes and no votes—not how close the vote was to the two-thirds approval needed to win. Plaintiffs argued that the public is entitled to a 10 percent manual recount of Measure B votes, which now leads by several hundred votes in a race where more than 620,000 ballots were cast.” —Karen de Sá, [*“Measure B court challenge heads to SF,” San José Mercury News*](#), December 1, 2008.

On December 2nd, San Francisco Superior Court Judge Peter Busch denied a temporary restraining order requested by Measure B opponents. Santa Clara County officials certified the election results early the same morning, before the scheduled court hearing.

State Proposition 1A. A high speed rail line that will provide service from northern to southern California at sustained speeds of 200 miles per hour or greater is another step closer to reality after 52.6 percent of the state’s voters supported Proposition 1A, the Safe, Reliable High-Speed Train Bond Act. The measure authorizes the state to sell \$9.95 billion in general obligation bonds to fund pre-construction activities and to construct a high-speed passenger train system and capital improvements that will expand capacity, improve safety, or

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ELECTION FALLOUT *(continued from previous page)*

enable train riders to connect to the high-speed train system. The system would use electric trains to connect several major metropolitan areas, including Sacramento, the San Francisco Bay area, the Central Valley, Los Angeles, the Inland Empire, Orange county, and San Diego.

Since its formation in 1996, the California High-Speed Rail Authority has spent about \$60 million for pre-construction activities, such as environmental studies and planning, related to the development of a high-speed train system. The authority is expected to lobby the federal government to contribute \$10 billion to the project and to begin negotiating with landowners to acquire the necessary rights of way. Senator Dianne Feinstein has already pledged her support of the federal funds. "There is legislation that will set up 11 regional systems in the U.S. for high-speed rail, and we will qualify as one of them," she said. "I think we've now got our ducks in order to be No. 1 on that list, and as an appropriator, that will be a job of mine." — Michael Cabanatuan, "[High-Speed Rail Authority readies action plan](#)," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Nov. 6, 2008.

East Bay Regional Park District. With the support of 71.8 percent of the voters in the counties of Alameda and Contra Costa, Measure WW, a \$500 million bond to acquire park land and develop facilities in the 98,000-acre park district easily reached the required two-thirds vote. Measure WW replicates and extends Measure AA, a \$225 million bond measure passed in 1988, without raising property tax rates above the present rate of \$10 per year per \$100,000 of assessed property value. The state's largest park district has grown 31 percent under Measure AA, preserving an additional 34,000 acres and creating 17 new regional parks and 235 neighborhood recreation projects.

Of the \$500 million raised by Measure WW, \$375 million (75 percent) will fund regional park acquisitions and capital projects, with \$26.2 million (7 percent) held in reserve for unanticipated future needs and opportunities. In addition, \$125 million (25 percent) will go to cities, special park and recreation districts, and county service areas for their park and recreation services.

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ELECTION FALLOUT *(continued from previous page)*

Measure WW comes at a critical time, according to Shelly Lewis, spokeswoman for the regional park district. "The next 20 to 30 years are very important for the East Bay because in that time pretty much every piece of open space will be spoken for in Alameda and Contra Costa County."—Peter Fimrite, "[Measure WW: big reinvestment in East Bay parks](#)," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Sept. 30, 2008.

Town of Moraga. Moraga voters rejected competing ballot measures concerning development of hillsides and ridges. Measure J, which called for a mixing of open space and development, lost by an 86.5 to 13.5 percent margin, while Measure K, which would have blocked most development in the town, lost by a narrower 56.1 to 43.9 percent margin.

Supported by landowner and local developer David Bruzzone, Measure J would have protected 320 acres as permanent open space but would have allowed housing development on about 130 acres that Measure K sought to preserve. Specifically, Measure K would have expanded an existing open space zoning district by 1,700 acres and limited development to 10- or 20-acre parcels with severe grading restrictions.

And beyond: California-style planning for NOLA?

Until now, the New Orleans City Council has easily changed the zoning to advance or block specific projects. But on November 4th, 100,000 New Orleanians voted 51 to 49 percent to amend the City Charter to give the city's master plan the force of law. Land use and zoning decisions will have to conform to the Plan.

The catch is that, while consultants have been hired, the Plan hasn't yet been drafted. As a result, "The New Orleans branch of the NAACP warned that the plan might revive the post-Katrina idea of 'reducing the city's footprint' at the expense of many predominantly black neighborhoods... The plan must be reviewed and updated at least every five years and can be amended once a year, with the planning commission making recommendations and the council having the final word."

—Bruce Eggler, "[Master plan given force of law](#),"

The Times-Picayune, Nov. 5, 2008.

Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP, is editor of *Northern News*. Bryan W. Wenter, AICP, is an assistant city attorney for the city of Walnut Creek and serves as legislative director for Northern Section. ■

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Impressions from my first Cal APA conference

By Nathan Tinclair

A young, aspiring city planner, I was overcome by the endless array of planning topics I encountered at my first California APA conference in September. A recent UCLA graduate (urban planning minor), I am currently applying to graduate school; so while the interest in planning was certainly there on my part, I did not feel nearly as knowledgeable about topics in planning as most of the amazing people I met, spoke with, and absorbed knowledge from while in Hollywood. Still, I had some familiarity with planning topics through my undergraduate classes, my home dinner-table conversations (my stepmother is a California city planner), as well as my own ponderings and experiences. While many nuances escaped me, I had a basic idea of the processes and issues with transportation planning, housing issues, and some familiarity with new urbanism and sustainable planning, and I did my best to attend workshops that would expand my limited planning knowledge.

The first topic of importance to me was the CEQA guidelines—apparently the hot subject at this year's planning conference. I can't count the number of particularly young planners who seemed to think this was the future of the profession and a prerequisite for entry-level work. However, the workshop, "New CEQA Techniques: Avoiding the Full Monty," while technically quite important, proved to be confusing and not the most interesting topic I explored at the conference. Perhaps I will work with CEQA someday, but I found my true interest in a different session.

The topic I found most interesting was adaptive reuse, explored by Ken Bernstein, Al Bell, Hamid Behdad, and Kate Bartolo in the session, "Adaptive Reuse as a Revitalization Tool: A Hollywood Tale." I have always had an affinity for historic buildings, perhaps because the town where I grew up (Berkeley) has great difficulty parting with anything remotely old. Adaptive Reuse seemed to me to be an important way to preserve our historic heritage while at the same time improving a neighborhood's appearance and vitality.

According to the presentation, the city of Los Angeles defined adaptive reuse as "adapting an existing, economically obsolete building for a new, more productive purpose." This could mean new apartments, condos, office space, etc., but the bottom line is that an aging building that has seen better days

(continued on next page)

Where in the world?



Photo by Ella Samonsky, LEED AP
(Answer on [page 14](#))

Conference impressions ... (continued from previous page)

can be restored to being an integral part of a neighborhood and city. The case study used by the presenters was the “Broadway” building—once the flagship of the Broadway Department Store and considered a Hollywood “crown jewel”—which had deteriorated severely by the 1990s with boarded-up storefronts and a 40 percent upper-floor office vacancy rate.

Despite the numerous challenges of redeveloping a historic structure, the developers were very successful at transforming the Broadway building back to a proud state. The building now houses high-end retail as well as modern lofts, and can once again be seen as one of the “crown jewels” of the neighborhood. For me, this was the most inspiring topic at the conference. Through deliberate and thoughtful planning, private developers and public employees working together were able to transform an important part of the city for the better. It’s the sort of impact I would like to be able to make in my future professional career.

Nathan Tincclair is a recent UCLA graduate in political science and urban studies. He is currently working at a law firm in construction litigation and applying to graduate planning programs for next fall. You can reach Nathan at tinclair@gmail.com ■

40 years of planning, Cal Poly SLO-style

By Nicole Smith

A sunny Saturday on Dexter Lawn; alumni filtering onto campus; old friends greeting each other; an excited crowd—just another day in late October in San Luis Obispo as 100 alumni of the City and Regional Planning Department at California Polytechnic State University celebrated the department’s 40th anniversary. Attendees—spanning the Class of 1970 to the Class of 2008—came from near and as far as San Diego and Seattle. The two-day event was packed with activities that celebrated the planning profession and utilized the alumni’s broad experiences to inform the department and its students.

With the alumni seated for lunch, R. Thomas Jones, dean of the College of Architecture and Environmental Design, gave an uplifting speech on the importance of the planning profession and its future at the university. William Siembieda, head of the City and Regional Planning Department, talked about how the department was started by George Hasselstein and Ken Schwartz, and how the department is looking to the future. The excitement and cheer carried through to an evening event at the San Luis Obispo Art Center with a jazz band and of course more eating, chatting, laughing, and reminiscing.

But the event wasn’t all fun and games. Informational sessions included an update on the department’s curriculum, open studios displaying student work, a Careers in Planning panel for job-seeking students, and an alumni organizational meeting to inspire future interactions with the department.



Planning students at Cal Poly SLO’s 40th anniversary listen to a panel of visiting alumni discuss careers in planning.

Conversations initiated at the 40th anniversary events have led to formation of an alumni group that will interact twice a year with the department and its students. The next alumni event will be held in April at the Cal Poly Open House. A video, “40 Years of Planning Education,” will be shown. It features interviews with alumni and professors and clips from the October anniversary event. For information on the department, go to www.planning.calpoly.edu.

Sponsors and donors who contributed to defraying the event’s costs and making it successful include RBF Consulting; PMC; HMM Engineers; Crawford Multari & Clark Associates; Earth Design; Jacobsen & Wack, and other firms and individuals. Thank you all for your help!

Nicole Smith, MCRP 2008, was the event coordinator for the 40th anniversary. ■

REVIEWER WANTED

Northern News has received a copy of “Urban Transformation—Understanding City Form and Design,” by Peter Bosselmann, professor of urban design at UC Berkeley. (Island Press, 2008, 368 pages; numerous color photos and illustrations). Bosselmann’s book asks how cities transform over time, and why some cities change for the better while others deteriorate. The author compares satellite-produced “maps” of the world’s 20 largest cities to understand the key elements of urban design, and interprets essential aspects of “life and place” by evaluating aerial images of the San Francisco Bay Area taken in 1962 and 2005. Bosselmann’s previous publications include the 1997 book, “Representation of Places.”

If you are interested in reading the book and will commit to submitting a review by February 13th for publication in the March issue of *Northern News*, please contact the editor, **Naphtali H. Knox**, FAICP, knoxnaph@gmail.com or 415-699-7333. A suggested length for the review is 800 to 1,000 words. ■

What others are saying

An energy stimulus. “The easiest way to [solve all of our problems at once], at least in domestic policy, is by a stimulus program that rewards renewable energy and over time attempts to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy. The Google calculations indicate that over a 22-year period, you can save a trillion dollars by investing in these technologies, including plug-in hybrids, and thereby reduce our reliance on oil.”

—Miguel Helft, quoting Google Chief Executive Eric Schmidt in [“Google at 10: Searching its own soul,”](#) *The New York Times Saturday Interview*, Nov. 7, 2008.

Foreclosures, near and nearer. First American evaluated 42 million residential properties with mortgages to find those with negative equity and ranked “the 20 ZIP codes that are furthest underwater. The 95391 ZIP code, which includes all of Mountain House, has the unwelcome distinction of being first in the country. Out of 1,856 mortgages in the ZIP code, First American calculates that nearly 90 percent are underwater. The first homes in Mountain House were sold in 2003. Its relative proximity to San Francisco drew many who traded a longer commuting trip for a bigger place.” —David Streitfeld, [“A town drowns in debt as home values plunge,”](#) *The New York Times*, Nov. 11, 2008.

“Locally, the underwater rate ranged from 7.31 percent in San Francisco to 38.63 percent in Solano County,” as home values fell for the seventh consecutive quarter, according to Seattle-based Zillow. “Nationwide, 16 of the 25 metropolitan areas with the greatest share of ‘upside-down’ homes are in California.” —Carolyn Said, [“Bay Area homeowners owe more than home’s worth,”](#) *San Francisco Chronicle*, Nov. 12, 2008.

Jobs just keep disappearing. “If the last year has proven anything, it’s that we should not assume something can’t happen simply because it hasn’t happened recently. Cold economic realities deserve the benefit of the doubt, even when they point to uncomfortable conclusions. And right now, the economic realities are pointing to a serious consumer recession. The job market ‘already appears to be in worse shape than at any time during the recessions of the early 1990s or early 2000s,’ says Lawrence Katz, a Harvard professor and former Labor Department chief economist. Unemployment is higher than the official rate suggests, and it is rising.” —By David Leonhardt, [“Buying binge slams to halt,”](#) *The New York Times*, November 11, 2008.

(continued on next page)

Governor directs State agencies to plan for sea level rise

California's first comprehensive climate adaptation strategy will aim to improve coordination within state government to more effectively address climate impacts to human health, the environment, the state's water supply, and the economy.

Governor Schwarzenegger on November 14th issued executive order S-13-08 to enhance the state's management of climate impacts from sea level rise, increased temperatures, shifting precipitation, and extreme weather events. "Given the serious threat of sea level rise to California's water supply, population, and our economy," the governor said, "it's critically important that we make sure the state is prepared when heavy rains cause flooding and the potential for sea level rise increases in future years."

Key actions in the EO include: (1) initiate California's first statewide climate change adaptation strategy; (2) ask the National Academy of Science for an expert panel to report on sea level rise impacts in California; (3) issue guidance to state agencies to plan for sea level rise in designated coastal and floodplain areas for new projects; and (4) initiate a report on critical existing and planned infrastructure projects vulnerable to sea level rise.

For a complete copy of the press release and the EO, [click here](#). ■

What others are saying *(continued from previous page)*

"You know things are bad when even lawyers are getting laid off. Thelen and Heller Ehrman, two firms whose deep San Francisco roots extend back decades, have collapsed outright. [According to] Robin S. Miller, a principal at Corrao, Miller, Rush & Wiesenthal Legal Search Consultants in New York, 'The last time we saw anything like this, this bad, was in the early 90s, but it's starting to feel even worse.' "

—Jonathan D. Glater, "[Law firms feel strain of layoffs and cutbacks](#)," *The New York Times*, Nov. 12, 2008.

Neither comprehensive nor reform. "SB 375 is by no means a comprehensive growth management or land use reform law. It's a law designed to alter land use patterns as a means of achieving a small part of a much bigger goal—reducing greenhouse gas emissions." Laws in Washington, Oregon, and Florida have "two things that California still does not have: a strong and direct role for the state government and an overt focus on the actual use of land. Senate Bill 375 is clearly intended to alter land use patterns, but most of the language that overtly tied the bill to things like urban growth boundaries and protection of resource lands got removed or heavily watered down." —Bill Fulton, "[SB 375: Legislation provides incremental change, not land use revolution](#)," *CP&DR*, Nov. 2008. (Subscription or \$2.95 purchase required to view the article.) ■

Answer to "Where in the world?" *(Page 12)*

Granville Street, Vancouver, BC, 2007.
Constructing the Canada Line to connect the airport with downtown Vancouver.
Photo by Ella Samonsky, LEED AP

Healthy urban planning—think “food”

By Riad Steven El-Bdour

At the 2008 APA California State Conference in Hollywood, I was most impressed with the sessions dealing with health, food, and urban planning. Though urban planning and public health share the same origin, urban planning drifted from its more healthful beginnings. Health-related urban planning seems to be getting a much deserved and long overdue interest.

Not long before deciding to pursue an urban planning-related career, I was teaching in Taiwan. My adult students were often curious about America; my younger students seemed to think I was a space alien. Many of my students had never left the island. Taiwan was the only world they knew. In many cases, I was the only American they had ever met. It was quite humbling.

Many of the students held very incorrect stereotypes about what America and Americans were like. They were surprised to hear that the America they saw in the movies was not even close to accurate. Most Americans were not rich, and many came from families where no one could afford that beautiful California house with a swaying palm tree in front. But yes, nearly every American I knew depended on a car to get around, and our gas was a lot lower-priced than theirs.

Everywhere I went, friendly Taiwanese approached me and tried to speak some English. Unfortunately, I often did not understand them. They were often surprised I could speak Mandarin pretty well, thank you U.S. Army, and they would continue to try to speak to me in English. Sometimes they graciously offered me a smoke and looked disappointed when I declined.

I missed the smoke-free California restaurants. During the long breaks between classes, I sought refuge in the closest smoke-free restaurant I could find. When the conversation with students turned to food, as it often did, I became aware that many students knew American food entirely by its fast food industry. Everyone knew Ronald McDonald. He was their friend. Often they did not know any American food other than a hamburger and French fries, Whopper, or fish filet. I did not think so much about it at the time, but on my 20-minute bus ride to work I passed at least three McDonalds, three Starbucks, two Kentucky Fried Chickens, two Pizza Huts, a Dominos Pizza, and a Subway—and those were just the western fast food chains.

It was also interesting that I rarely saw a children's playground in a public area, but nearly every McDonalds had a kid-packed playground. Kids everywhere, eating Chicken McNuggets and guzzling sodas. And it hit me that we're not that different after all.

Fast food has become so prominent in American life that on a typical day almost one-third of children and adolescents eat at a fast food restaurant.¹ Among American adults, one quarter visit a fast food restaurant each day.²

In the health planning sessions at the conference, I heard a lot about the dangers of processed food and how communities needed to include health-related elements in their general plans and zoning codes. A common theme was that good urban planning made communities healthier. I had never heard the point of urban planning put this way in a class, at my former internship with a large city, or at any public meeting.

U.C. Berkeley professor and author, Michael Pollan, was mentioned often. I got his popular book, “The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals” and read for myself just what he had to say.³

The book gave me some new insights into what it means to be “corn fed.” In Pollan's discussion of McDonalds Chicken McNuggets, I learned that those bite size little pieces (which I craved as a child) contain thirty-eight separate ingredients, and chicken is not the main one. McNuggets contain petroleum byproducts—chemicals like sodium aluminum phosphate, mono calcium phosphate, dimethylpolysiloxene, and tertiary butylhydroquinone (also known as TBHQ). The chemicals allow the McNuggets to be frozen for prolonged periods while assuring they will cook properly and look fresh and appetizing.

Pollan points out that TBHQ is a form of butane, better known as lighter fluid. TBHQ comprises at most a trace (0.02%) in a McNugget, which the Food and Drug Administration says is safe for human consumption, and is also found in their French fries and fish fillet sandwich.

There I was—attending the conference sessions and thinking about food—but I was listening, and it made me wonder: How often do planners and other decision makers step back and ask, “Is this project going to help make my community healthier?”

Riad Steven El-Bdour expects to finish his masters degree in urban and regional planning at SJSU this month. His thesis topic is “Regulating Fast Food Restaurants: Strategies for Fremont, California.” He can be reached at relbdour@yahoo.com

- 1 Bowman SA, Gortmaker SL, Ebbeling CA, Pereira MA, Ludwig DS. Effects of fast-food consumption on energy intake and diet quality among children in a national household survey. *Pediatrics*. 2004; 112–118.
- 2 Schlosser, Eric. *Fast food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*. New York, Houghton Mifflin, 2001, 3.
- 3 Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. New York: Penguin Press, 2006 113-114 ■

AICP/CM Credits available locally

The Fall 2008 issue of *APA Interact for Certified Planners* provides a snapshot of progress for the first two-year CM reporting period that began January 1, 2008.

“As of September 30, 2008, 56 percent of current AICP members have logged CM credits, 28 percent have logged at least half of the required credits, and 6 percent have logged 32 or more credits.”

“APA’s first online course, ‘Planning for Healthy Communities with Health Impact Assessments,’ which launched over the summer, offers six CM credits at no cost to members ([click here](#)). Additional online courses on law and ethics should be available to members later this year. In addition, a podcast of the 2008 AICP National Symposium, offering 2.5 CM credits at no cost, is also available to members.” [Click here](#) to read the Fall 2008 AICP/CM Quarterly Achievement Report.

Northern Section continues to offer local lectures and programs for CM credit

Below is an updated list of the local sessions offered since June 1, 2008, for which CM credits have been approved. The list will be expanded from time-to-time as word is received that programs with pending credits have been approved by AICP. A list of local programs offered from April 2007 through May 2008 and approved for CM credits is available ([click here](#), see pages 13–14).

AICP/CM Credit Log for Events in the Northern Section, June through November 2008

Date	Time	Event Title	Location	CM Credits
Thursday, 6/5/08	6:00 PM – 7:30 PM	City Planet (Great Cities Speaker Series)	San José	1.0
Sunday, 6/8/08	4:00 PM – 5:00 PM	When Cities Tango: The Art of Glocal Public Space Design (Great Cities Speaker Series)	San José	1.0
Monday, 7/14/08	6:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Great Ideas for Building Livable Communities (Great Cities Speaker Series)	San José	1.0
Monday, 8/18/08	6:00 PM – 7:00 PM	The New Majority-Minority City (Great Cities Speaker Series)	San José	1.0
Tuesday, 8/22/08	6:00 PM – 8:30 PM	Green Technology Walking Tour (APA/AEP)	American Canyon	1.0
Monday, 9/15/08	6:00 PM – 7:00 PM	The Distinctive City (Great Cities Speaker Series)	San José	1.0
Tuesday, 9/27/08	9:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Master Park Planning: Tour of Coyote Creek Parkway (San Jose State University)	Santa Clara County	3.0
Thursday, 10/9/08	6:00 PM – 7:00 PM	The Next Generation City (Great Cities Speaker Series)	San José	1.0
Thursday, 10/23/08	6:00 PM – 8:30 PM	Planning Practice & Applying the AICP Code of Ethics (Northern Section)	Oakland	1.5 Ethics credits
Monday, 11/3/08	6:00 PM – 7:00 PM	The Power of Zero: The Mayan Key to Vibrant Communities (Great Cities Speaker Series)	San José	1.0
Monday, 12/1/08	6:00 PM – 7:00 PM	The Reframing of the Everyday: Artists & Public Space (Great Cities Speaker Series)	San José	1.0

(continued on next page)

An important note regarding two programs in 2007: Credits are awarded to individual events within a multi-part program. Since our last posting, eight additional sessions that were part of the “Urban Planning Tour of China,” Friday, 5/25/07 – Thursday, 6/10/07, have been approved for 1.0 to 4.0 credits per session. Similarly, the 11 mobile workshops at the Northern California APA Conference 2007 have been awarded from 3.5 to 5.5 CM credits. Go to planning.org, log in, and click on “Track my credits.” (We’ve also been told that the Sept. 30 Diversity Summit at the conference was awarded 1.25 credits; however, we searched but couldn’t find it. If you find it, please send us a letter with instructions!)

Finally (and unfortunately), we hosted **several local courses where CM credits are pending, but not yet certified by APA:**

Rising on the Pacific, Residential High Rise Tour – August 1, 2008

Sustainable Urbanism – October 20, 2008

Mandating Green Building: Sticks versus Carrots – November 13, 2008

Planning for Healthy Cities – November 22, 2008

Healthy Cities and Community Systems class at Merritt College – November 11, 18, 25, and December 6, 2008

State Capital Update – December 9, 2008

State of the Region – December 15, 2008

SB 375 workshop – December 17, 2008

We’ll keep you posted as we get updates from national APA.

All APA members are welcome at all of the offered courses, whether seeking AICP/CM credits or not. Check the [calendar](#) at the end of this newsletter for upcoming sessions. ■

Ethics workshop hosted by APA’s Northern Section

By Hanson Hom, AICP

In its continuing goal to provide convenient and low-cost training for planners to receive their AICP Certification Maintenance (CM) credits, the Northern Section hosted a well-received Ethics Workshop on October 23, 2008, at the MetroCenter in downtown Oakland. Close to 90 planners attended a lively session organized by **Hanson Hom, AICP**, the Section’s Ethics Review Director. Panelists **Daniel Iacofano, FAICP**, Principal, MIG, Inc, and **Carol Barrett, FAICP**, author of *Everyday Ethics for Practicing Planners*, offered their personal thoughts and reflected on past challenges in upholding the profession’s ethical aspirations and standards. Using hypothetical scenarios, Daniel facilitated a group discussion among attendees of common ethical dilemmas and issues facing planners.

Carol concluded the evening with suggestions on how planners can promote ethical behavior within the profession. Her thoughts included:

- Incorporate ethics standards into job descriptions and include an ethics question where interviewing for planners.

- Provide the APA/AICP Code of Ethics to planning commission members and cover in new commissioner orientations.
- Schedule a periodic discussion of ethics issues at staff meetings.
- Take the opportunity to inform other professions about the planners’ Code of Ethics.
- Find opportunities to contribute to the profession, which is a specific responsibility of planners in the Code.
- Apply the Code to everyday practice and be an active role model.

The Northern Section hopes to sponsor an annual ethics workshop as well as offer other opportunities for gaining CM credits, including a future workshop for CM-required legal credit. We will also consider videotaping future training sessions for the convenience of planners who can’t attend. Planners should check the newsletter regularly for upcoming CM-credited workshops and events.

To all who attended, thanks for your support and positive feedback! ■

NORTHERN SECTION CALENDAR

DECEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

DECEMBER

12/17 SB 375 Workshop sponsored by ICF Jones & Stokes, co-sponsored by APA. 2–4 PM, American Institute of Architects, Hallidie Building, 130 Sutter Street, Suite 600, San Francisco. The free event will present a briefing on SB 375 and its implications for Metropolitan Planning Organizations and local governments. Speakers include Bill Craven (member of the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee), experts from the environmental and transportation fields, and representatives from regional and local governments. **AICP/CM credits applied for and pending.** For more information, contact Michele Rodriguez at mrodriguez@jsanet.com or (415) 296-0524, x3010.

12/18 Monterey Bay RAC and AEP Monterey Chapter Happy Hour, 5:30 PM, Ol' Factory, 1725 Contra Costa Street, Sand City. Celebrate the holidays, network, and exchange ideas for future RAC events. For more information, contact Elizabeth Caraker at caraker@goldenstateplanning.com or (831) 372-1314.

JANUARY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JANUARY

1/10 APA California Northern Board Retreat, 10 AM–4 PM, Fremont Public Library, 2400 Stevenson Boulevard, Fukaya Room. The Board will discuss the Section's accomplishments in 2008 and goals for 2009. For more information, contact Darcy Kremin at dkremin@entrix.com or (925) 988-1278.

1/31 AICP Test Preparation, 10 AM–3 PM, San José State University, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Room 525, Cultural Heritage Center, 4th and San Fernando, San José. Materials charge is \$100. Free parking across the street on Saturdays. Remaining sessions will be held Feb. 28, March 28, April 18, and May 2, 2009. Dates and location are somewhat tentative, so call Dr. Don Bradley, AICP Director, (650) 592-0915 or email dr.donbradley@comcast.net for more information on applications and reservations. Provide your name, email, and phone numbers.

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FEBRUARY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

FEBRUARY

2/18

AICP Test Preparation, 10 AM–3 PM, San José State University, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Room 525, Cultural Heritage Center, 4th and San Fernando, San José. Materials charge is \$100. Free parking across the street on Saturdays. Remaining sessions will be held March 28, April 18, and May 2, 2009. Dates and location are somewhat tentative, so call Dr. Don Bradley, AICP Director, (650) 592-0915 or email dr.donbradley@comcast.net for more information on applications and reservations. Provide your name, email, and phone numbers.

MARCH

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

MARCH

3/5

Northern Section Board Meeting, 6:30–8:30 PM, location TBD. RSVP to Darcy Kremin at dkremin@entrix.com or (925) 988-1278.

3/28

AICP Test Preparation, 10 AM–3 PM, San José State University, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Room 525, Cultural Heritage Center, 4th and San Fernando, San José. Materials charge is \$100. Free parking across the street on Saturdays. Remaining sessions will be held April 18 and May 2, 2009. Dates and location are somewhat tentative, so call Dr. Don Bradley, AICP Director, (650) 592-0915 or email dr.donbradley@comcast.net for more information on applications and reservations. Provide your name, email, and phone numbers. ■