



# N O R T H E R N N E W S

Volume 5  
Number 4  
Sept 1983

## Identity Crisis

## WHAT DOES DOWNTOWN BERKELEY WANT TO BE?

### Preserving Cultural Diversity Is New Challenge For Planners

#### From Protest to Paté

*The following article, written by Francis Violich, Professor Emeritus of City Planning and Landscape Architecture, UC Berkeley, originally appeared in the Montclairion (now the Berkeley Voice), and is reprinted here in shortened form with their permission. It draws attention to one of several significant planning issues facing the city of Berkeley today—downtown, the neighborhoods, transportation, the waterfront. Professor Violich urges planners to take advantage of their local media channels to stimulate public interest and education, and to broaden the level of discussion on alternative plans and approaches to environmental quality.*

During 1982 some half-dozen proposals for major building projects in Downtown Berkeley together with the University of California's West Side Study have raised some basic questions of urban design.

The appearance of these projects on a piecemeal basis has already launched the city into a comprehensive look at the central core in relation to up-dating the city's Master Plan. They also offer the opportunity to bring to community focus the human issues involved in Berkeley's essential urban character and its particular source of identity. In short, what does Downtown Berkeley really want to be in terms of serving all of its people?

Downtown Berkeley stands as a unique resource for urban living. Too many unrewarding examples of downtowns can be pointed to in small and large cities. In many, during the past decades, decay has set in through suburban competition, or through over-development and destruction of the urban design heritage. In either case, the familiar image of the city is lost to residents: old centers lack vitality and downtown high-rise boomtowns become "look-alikes", a fate that Berkeley has the special circumstances to avoid.

#### A Positive Image For Downtown

The Downtown is small, central, compact and well-defined. It has excellent access by car, bus and BART, together with an ample supply of vacant or underutilized spaces lying close to a wealth of varied types of buildings, a condition well-documented by UC's West Side Study. Buildings reflect a wide range of architectural styles representative of the Bay Region's development and record important aspects of Berkeley's rich cultural history.

(continued on next page)

## PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AND DESIGN NETWORK

Many organizations and actors within and outside of the environmental professions use participatory approaches to problem solving as a mainstream management style and strategy.

The **Participation Network** provides a way for practitioners to share ideas and experiences with new techniques for group decision making, collaborative planning, environmental mediation, conflict resolution and design participation.

For further details, contact Daniel Iacofano at (415) 845-7549.

### Northern Section Professional Development Seminar Series

## HOW DEVELOPERS MANAGE LARGE SCALE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

As a continuation of the seminar held in July, developers from the private sector will offer their perspective on the planning process for large scale land development.

Panelists include: Bonnie Guiton, Vice President and General Manager of Kaiser Center, Inc.; Michael Demetrios, President of Marine World/Africa USA; and Jay Mancini, Director of Commerical Development, Campeau Corporation.

This seminar will be held **September 21, 1983**, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., in the conference room at the offices of SPUR (San Francisco Planning and Urban Research, Inc.), 5th floor, 312 Sutter Street, San Francisco.

Wine and cheese will be served before and after the seminar. To register, please call Mr. Chi-Hsin Shao at 558-5423 and make your reservation by September 19, or send your \$5/person check (made payable to APA) by the same date to: 2447 32nd Avenue, San Francisco, 94116.

The next seminar in this three part series will describe how cities incorporate large scale land development projects into their master planning programs.

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All Section members are encouraged to submit articles for inclusion in *Northern News*. Publication deadlines will be the 15th of each month.

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## BERKELEY (continued)

What image should Downtown Berkeley seek? What should be the sources of identity and "sense of place?" What should Downtown Berkeley be to give meaning to the day-to-day experience of urban living?

### Rich Cultural Diversity

To answer these questions, we begin with one basic premise, that the quality of Downtown Berkeley should reflect the character of the city as a whole and offer a ready sense of identity with it for Berkeley residents of all social and cultural interests and from all walks of life.

Berkeley as a whole has a strong image—more so than Downtown Berkeley alone. This unique quality stems from its location and its many generations of enlightened civic leadership: the city rolls off the hills that form a green and gold backdrop and sweeps on down to the water's edge at the Bayshore where its relic of a Pier points directly to the Golden Gate.

A vast University provides a cultural theme dominant in urban life, while preserving a sample of the originally arca-dian landscape, in itself a source of attraction and inspiration to residents since earliest times. A portion even defines one edge of Downtown. Berkeley's privileged position looks out from its hills and Downtown to San Francisco and to the Pacific, a symbol of the source of diversity of people who live here and of their forward-looking way of thought.

### Planning for Cultural Preservation

In practical terms, we need to build into the fabric of the dominant retail—commercial uses, a wide variety of facilities that will maximize the social experience of Downtown whether for shoppers, workers, business owners, service people or simply visitors and others who enjoy the urban uses of leisure time. These considerations could provide a framework for what might be called a *Cultural Component for Berkeley's Downtown Plan*:

- Make Downtown Berkeley representative of the social-cultural character of All Berkeley and balance this quality with its central economic and service functions.
- Foster the development of facilities that can bring into Downtown Berkeley a representative sampling of the rich, diverse cultural life of Berkeley as a whole drawing on groups, in art, music, theater, civic, community and ethnic interests.
- Bring to the edge of Downtown, facilities of a cultural and scientific nature within the University—as the city's leading cultural institution—and make them accessible to users of Downtown.
- Re-inforce Berkeley's uniqueness and identity via its already available architectural heritage and design new build-ings to interact well with the old.
- Bring into the downtown periphery a maximum number of full-time residents of varying economic levels and age status in order to intensify cultural and social interaction and vitality through day and night and to stimulate economic activities.

Francis Violich



# Northern News UPDATE...

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The 54th Annual Consumer Cooperative Alliance Institute was held in Berkeley last month with more than 500 people attending from cooperatively owned and operated businesses around the country. A critical topic of concern was how strategic planning techniques could be meshed with democratic management principles so that coops can remain competitive with traditional non-coop businesses in today's tight money markets. For more information, contact the Consumer Cooperative Alliance, c/o the Band Foundation, 4801 Central Avenue, P.O. Box 4006, Richmond, CA 94804.

\* \* \*

**Crisis Relocation Planning** and new policies and programs of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are now under review by members of California Chapter APA and will be discussed at the Tahoe Conference this October. These policies will have a significant impact on how local communities prepare for crisis events such as earthquakes, floods, nuclear incidents and/or war. Their main thrust is to coordinate all potential disaster preparedness schemes under one broad program for **Integrated Emergency Management (IEM)**. For further information on future meetings, discussions and conferences on IEM, contact Ken Norwood, AICP, 1642 Arch Street, Berkeley, (415) 548-6608.

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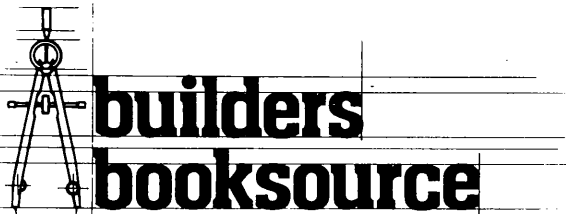
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