



APA California 2015 Conference Sustainability Sessions — The Upcoming Sustainability “Pivot” From “Less Damage” to Regenerative Urbanism

The sustainability sessions in APA California’s Conference 2015 reflect emerging best practices in sustainability planning across the planning-design-build professions. Topics covered include water reuse, urban food, GHG cap & trade, green infrastructure, spaces for makers, health, affordability, district-scale initiatives, equity, innovation economics, and resilience (the *new* sustainability). These innovative techniques and policy trends can be interpreted as laying the foundation for the next step in sustainability planning—a ‘pivot’ from a net-negative, “doing-less-harm” mitigation approach to a net-positive, “doing-good,” regenerative city approach (see summary <http://bit.ly/1efG7QD>).

And what more appropriate place to hold this conference than the City of Oakland? The San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose Bay Area has been innovating for sustainability since the Brundtland Report (<http://bit.ly/1CFWgVA>) first issued the challenge in 1987 and the UN Earth Summit (<http://bit.ly/1LEU3Sn>) put it on the world development agenda in 1992.

Key Bay Area innovations include:

1. Joint Venture Silicon Valley Indicators (annual, since 1995; <http://bit.ly/1dtII8M>)
2. Blue Print for a Sustainable Bay Area, Urban Ecology (1996; <http://bit.ly/1HvtLRW>)
3. Sustainable Oakland Program, City Council (1997; <http://bit.ly/1Lz45DK>)
4. Sustainability Plan for the City and County of San Francisco and a new Commission on the Environment (1997; <http://bit.ly/1LESV1b> and <http://bit.ly/1Ip6ZtN>)
5. Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Communities Regional Initiative and the Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area (1998-9; <http://bit.ly/1efFuXt> and the Compact <http://bit.ly/1LET6cM>)
6. Marin Countywide Plan: Sustainable Marin - Nature, Built Environment & People (2007; General Plan (<http://bit.ly/1GWjwT4>))
7. San Jose’s Envision 2040 General Plan (<http://bit.ly/1IijZq5>) & Green Vision (<http://bit.ly/1R0M6dW>; 2007)
8. Plan Bay Area 2040 (2013; <http://bit.ly/1IlgQXf>)
9. Palo Alto Forward: Sustainability + Mobility As A Service (2015; <http://bit.ly/1Lz4q9p>)

In recent years, APA National has strongly embraced sustainability with powerful initiatives:

1. Policy Guide on Planning for Sustainability (2000; <http://bit.ly/1Km6SPK>)
2. Sustaining Places Initiative (2010; <http://bit.ly/1Lz4tC3>)
3. Sustaining Places: The Role of the Comprehensive Plan (PAS 567, 2012; <http://bit.ly/1NuDTbW>)
4. Comprehensive Plan Standards for Sustaining Places (2013+; <http://bit.ly/1CFVAzw>)
5. Sustainable Communities Division (SCD; 2013; <http://bit.ly/1GW8j5b>)

The APA California Chapter supports sustainability through its annual conference and its Sections’ local initiatives. The Northern Section Board under Hansom Hom’s leadership launched its Sustainability Committee in January 2011 to provide a resource to advance



APA California 2015 Conference Sustainability Sessions — The Upcoming Sustainability “Pivot” From “Less Damage” to sustainability planning best practices by establishing a learning/practice network “Regenerative Urbanism” (Committee <http://bit.ly/1gQx2ge>). As of 2013, it was one of only five sustainability committees of APA State Chapters nationally (Summary, <http://bit.ly/1Lz4E0b>). Recently, the California Chapter under Hing Wong began working with the Sustainable Communities Division’s (SCD’s) local Sustainability Champion to accelerate and deepen sustainability planning in California (summary post, <http://bit.ly/APASCDSustChampProg>; and SCD Newsletter Article, p 4, <http://bit.ly/1Km7chf>). The Chapter’s upcoming Oakland conference continues this tradition of innovation with a rich set of sustainability sessions and workshops that illuminate the leading edge.

Three sessions submissions prompted by the Northern Sustainability Committee were made the competitive proposal process. They illustrate key threads of the emerging, next-generation approach to sustainability planning—an ecosystems approach to regenerative city planning that delivers higher value and multiple benefits compared to traditional “silo” approaches. Explore this approach in these two sessions.

- *The Ecological City: A Design Workshop*, SUN, Oct 3rd, 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm (Session Block #3). Explore the challenges, opportunities, and a framework to apply ecological ideas to city planning around three goals: (1) connecting humans to nature; (2) connecting sites to ecosystems; and (3) integrating systemic impacts into decision-making.
- *Bay Area Sustainability: Wicked Planning and Conflict Identification at Local and Regional Scales*, SUN, Oct 3rd, 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm (Session Block # 3). Climate change and sustainability are “wicked” problems representing conflicts over the greater good. Using Plan Bay Area and sustainability plans of 11 cities across the region, this session will provide tools for conflict identification and methods for planners to help adversarial stakeholders find common ground while retaining their core values.
- *Utilizing Integrated Utility Systems to Deliver Restorative City Goals*, MON, Oct 5th, 1:15-2:45pm (Session Block #7). This interactive session will present a pioneering restorative city framework and an Integrated Utility System (IUS) model that planners can use to unlock new levels of environmental, social, and economic sustainability performance. It will also outline a “turnkey” approach to assessing, designing, financing, and delivering an IUS at no cost to cities.

In addition, the Northern Section’s Sustainability Committee will host a pre-conference meet-up social (complimentary wine/appetizers) and then tour of Swan’s Market and Co-housing, followed by dinner at Swan’s Market (5:30-8:30pm FRI Oct 2nd; details here (<http://bit.ly/1UzCfs6>)).

Conference Sustainability Sessions



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Please see [the following post](#) in this Plan-it sustainably blog for a list of the more than 30 “Regenerative Urbanism” conference sessions anticipated on the topic of sustainability. You may also find [this summary of regenerative urbanism](#) useful.

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