

NORTHERN NEWS

Improving America's Cities Will Take More than Economic Growth

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"City Planning Directors do not seem to believe that a rising tide raises all boats...some passengers are being left on shore and need additional help."

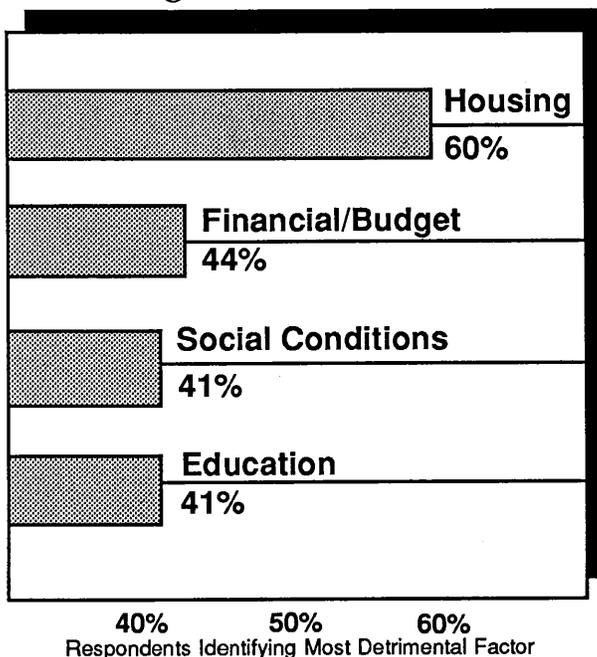
APA looks in on the Future of the Nation's Largest Cities

Although two out of three Planning Directors of the nation's largest cities believe their cities have bright economic futures, less than one in ten is optimistic about the social situation in their city, according to a new survey released by the APA's City Planning and Management Division.

"Economic growth alone will not solve urban problems," said the report's principal author, Minneapolis Planning Director Oliver Byrum. "If we only pay attention to economic questions, the urban backbone of America will fail." Byrum summarized the findings as follows:

- Planning Directors rated the three most promising factors for the future well-being of their cities as economic (67%), city governance (48%), and education (35%).
- The most threatening factors to the future well being of their cities are housing (60%), financial/budget (44%), social conditions (41%) and education (41%). Respondents were polarized on education, with none of the 27 respondents being neutral.
- The most important housing issue is the condition and supply of low income and public housing, followed by homelessness and the lack of a market for inner city housing.
- The most frequently cited social concerns of the planning directors are (in rank order): crime, drug use, housing, education, homelessness, and neighborhood liveability.
- The most frequently cited economic concerns of the planning directors are (in rank order): unemployment (due to the loss of a job base), tied with inadequate transportation systems, followed by unemployment (due to unemployability), loss of the industrial base, and competitiveness of downtown.
- Among urban infrastructure concerns, 85% cited surface transportation needs. This was followed by aging and deteriorating infrastructure, educational facilities, water and sewer facilities, and inadequate capacity of infrastructure.
- Air quality and traffic congestion stood out as the most important physical/environmental problem in view of the planners. Deteriorated infrastructure, water quality, and housing stock were also cited as important concerns.

Most Threatening Factors to Future Well-Being of American Cities



REVIEW:
LANDSCAPE Magazine

By: Richard Anderson, *Senior Associate,*
Bay Area Economics

College libraries are occasionally useful for more than meeting members of the opposite sex, and while browsing the stacks fifteen years ago, I came across a provocative journal called LANDSCAPE. It contained a fascinating mix of observations and meditations, all exploring the meanings of our built environment and all reinforcing the senses of discovery and excitement that originally attracted many of us to the study of cities. Just the thing for a mind on the verge of being suffocated in the rarified atmosphere of positive analysis.

Of course, I was too cheap to subscribe while a student, and with graduation and gainful employment, I lost track of the magazine.

Several years ago, though, I rediscovered LANDSCAPE at a local newsstand, and was impressed to find that, if anything, it had become even more eclectic over the last decade and a half. Recent issues, for example, have included such diversities as a history of the American drinking place, the design of Australia's underground town of Coober Pedy, photographs of an atomic test site in Nevada, and a surprisingly funny exploration of welcoming signs found along America's highways. Stimulating stuff, even pretty wild in its thematic scope, and rarely boring.

Some of the articles even have direct policy implications for planners (particularly with regard to design and

preservation) and a noticeable number are focused on the Bay Area. These are little more than secondary benefits, however. Of prime importance is LANDSCAPE'S ability to let us see the world we effect, and better yet, to enjoy the view.

LANDSCAPE is published three times a year. Annual subscriptions cost \$22 for individuals and \$18 for students. The list price for a single copy is \$6.95 — not exactly a steal, but not much more than a couple of burritos either. Although hard to find in retail venues, it can be ordered by mail from:

LANDSCAPE
P.O. Box 7107
Berkeley, CA. 94707

Improving America's Cities Will Take More Than Economic Growth (Continued from Page 1)

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Urban Concerns CATEGORY	Respondent's Perception of Impact Upon Future of the City		
	THREATENING	NEUTRAL	PROMISING
Social Situation	41%	52%	7%
Economic Situation	29%	4%	67%
Infrastructure Situation	37%	37%	26%
Physical Environment	40%	36%	24%
Financial/Budget Status	44%	37%	19%
Housing Situation	64%	24%	12%
Education	48%	17%	35%
City Governance	4%	48%	48%
Other Issues	100%		

The loss of federal funds was cited by 85% of the city planning directors as a serious financial problem. The planners also saw the loss of state funding, reduced tax base, and large numbers of service-dependent people as important financial issues. Loss of local tax base was cited as often as federal funding loss.

Gerald R. Mylroie, Chairman of the APA's City Planning and Management Division, noted that, "City planning directors do not seem to believe that a rising tide raises all boats and the economic futures of their passengers. Rather, some passengers are being left on shore and need additional help". Gary Schoenauer, San Jose's Planning Director and one of the survey participants, added, "Despite the economic growth of American cities in the past decade, today there are more homeless and ill-housed low income families, there is a child care crisis in many cities, and there is more gang and drug-related violence."

One outcome of the survey is a recommendation from APA's City Planning and Management Division to convene a White House Conference on American City Quality to address ways to improve American cities. The Division suggests that the Conference involve leaders in the private and public sectors, including local, state, and federal officials.

The city planning directors surveyed represent 54 of the nation's largest cities and range geographically from New York to Miami, Dallas to Los Angeles, and Oklahoma City to Honolulu. Fifty percent of the recipients responded.

Retrospectives ...

High Winds Don't Blow Out the Holiday Spirit

While record setting winds wreaked havoc outdoors, holiday cheer prevailed inside the offices of Sedway-Cooke Associates at Northern Section's Annual Christmas Party. About fifty APA Section members attended the event, which was held on the evening of December 16th. Congratulations to party organizer :Laurel Prevetti, who made all the arrangements, checked in guests and nabbed would-be freeloaders drawn in by the laughter and free food.

The party began promptly at 5:30 and was still going strong three hours later. Many familiar faces were present, along with some that were newer and less well known. The party provided an opportunity to get re-acquainted with old friends, to meet new friends, and to chat about the topics which planners love so dearly (i.e. which is the preferred Prismacolor shade for Single Family Residential, Lemon Yellow or Canary Yellow?).

Unlike the windstorm, which made the national news and blacked out 250,000 electrical utility customers in the Bay Area, the party was relatively calm and controlled. Although one of the attendees was seen trying to consume a ceramic eggplant dip dish ("But it looked so realistic!"), the revelry never got out of hand. Thanks to Sedway Cooke Associates for hosting this year's party and to its employees for contributing to the evening's success.

GET DOWN IN TIME: A Networking Guide to the Next APA Conference

By: Steve Matarazzo, County of Santa Cruz Planning Department

After returning from the annual Cal Chapter APA conference in Palm Springs fully rejuvenated and ready to get back in the trenches, I was left with the feeling that something was missing. Having attended most annual APA conferences from the time I was a planning student to the present (approximately 15 years), my list of professional acquaintances has grown accordingly. This, combined with the fact of being a "mobile planner" career-wise, gave me ample opportunity to get reacquainted with former associates and swap war-stories. My problem with this past conference, though, was that I didn't network enough, and limited my contacts to familiar faces - it was time for me to "get down in time!"

To "get down in time" is an expression I picked up from a current associate at the Santa Cruz County Planning Department. He explained that to get down in time meant to get off your high horse before getting thrown off; in other words, to become more human and less pompous. For the purposes of this overture to my colleagues in the profession, I will use vernacular license to add another meaning to this colloquialism: to get back to a time when we shared an attitude as school children of attempting to become friends with our classmates because we so much wanted to be accepted.

Analogously, I believe it is important to participate in an APA conference as you did in your early school days. After all, we are still students refining our skills on a day-to-day basis. Having an inquisitive attitude toward planners from jurisdictions as diverse as Ridgecrest, Eureka and Soledad would enable all of us to gain much more from conferences than just from participating in the scheduled seminars.

So, at the next conference, if a bearded, funny-looking planner from Santa Cruz County catches you in mid-chew of some rubber chicken and queries, "what's your sign (ordinance)?, be forgiving; he's only trying to get down in time in order to maximize his learning experience.

Petaluma's Residential Growth Management System Takes 1988 Award for Ordinance of Unusually High Merit

Final installment in our series of articles on the 1988 Northern Section Awards Program

Petaluma has been synonymous with residential growth management since adoption of the "Petaluma Plan" in 1972 and subsequent upholding of the Plan by the U.S. Court of Appeals. While the principle of growth management evolved into a political institution in the intervening years, the mechanics of the growth management system came under increasing criticism from development interests, local decision-makers and city staff. By the mid-1980's, the ordinance was viewed as administratively burdensome, subjective and ineffective in meeting certain objectives. Following adoption of a new general plan in 1987, the City Council directed staff, with consulting assistance from Nancy Alexander and Associates and Moore, Iacofano and Goltsman, to totally revise the old system.

The new growth management system is radically different from its predecessor in several ways:

- 1) Instead of limiting building permits on a yearly basis, it limits allocations (the ability to create residential lots or units). In this way, the City limits entry into the development "pipeline", where the City has more discretionary authority.
- 2) It does away with a point rating system and relies instead on the Planning Commission and Design Review Committee to handle issues of design quality.
- 3) The system is based on historic development patterns and processing times, as well as significant input from the developer community. It does not create artificial time constraints that may be out-of-sync with construction seasons and business cycles.
- 4) The system moderates growth over the long term but has flexibility to handle short term increases in demand.

Prior to drafting the ordinance in final form, the system was tested quantitatively against a variety of development scenarios to determine potential weaknesses. This analysis allowed the City to make several technical corrections and to substantiate its basic assumptions for the City Council.

The Residential Growth Management System *User's Guide* was developed to make the transition from the old system to the new system easier for its potential users. It highlights key dates and terms, allotment application material and procedures, and answers the most commonly asked questions about the system.

1989 Awards Program Chair

Goldberg Leads Search for the Best and Brightest Plans

By: Ann Bogush Millican

Congratulations to Northern Section's new Awards Chair Wayne Goldberg. Wayne has accepted the baton from Marta Self, who was Awards Chair for the past four years. He will lead Northern Section's quest to find and honor the best and brightest planning efforts in Northern California.

Professionally, Wayne has been on the leading edge of planning practice in cities wrestling with growth management. He is currently Director of Community Development for the City of Santa Rosa, and was previously Director of Community Development for Simi Valley. Wayne was also the City of Arcata's first Planning Director.

An APA activist, Wayne is on the California Planning Foundation (CPF) Board of Directors, the California Planning Roundtable and is a member of AICP. He has been on both the giving and receiving end of the Awards Program. In 1985, Wayne was a jury member on the Awards Committee. On the receiving end, he was the Director of two award-winning plans. Santa Rosa won a Northern Section and Cal Chapter APA award for a public video on disposal alternatives for treated wastewater. Arcata received a Northern Section American Institute of Planners Award for its innovative report on the social implications of land use.

Wayne will be announcing the schedule for this year's award program in the March issue of Northern News. For more information contact him at 707/576-5236. Until then, think about which planning efforts in the Northern Section should be nominated for an award as the best and the brightest.

Planlines

By Chuck Myer, AICP

(This month we follow the escapades of Herb Renewell as he checks into a big chain hotel in a large metropolis where he continues the endless battle against B.L.I.G.H.T.*)

Herb looked down from the balcony of his room. Behind him was the bay; to the right and left, construction sites for more hotels. One hundred fifty feet below were potted palms and a fake fountain being circumnavigated by taxis, vans trucks, oversized busses and limos with pituitary problems, turning on and off the four lane "Harbor Blvd."

Parallel, alongside the busy thoroughfare, moving to the vanishing point in the horizon in both directions were seven sets of railroad tracks. Beyond the fence on the other side of the tracks was a jungle of rundown warehouses. Just beyond them, within what would have been walking distance if not for the aforementioned, was Herb's destination, the City's downtown.

There were no sidewalks anywhere. The hotel had 1,500 rooms, yet there was no way Herb or any other guest could get out of it on foot.

Having misplaced his itinerary, herb could see no landmark to even tell him which city he was in. In fact, the interior of the hotel couldn't even give him a clue as to which country he was in. This hotel has high-rise hotels in sixteen different countries and they're virtually identical. English is the universal language spoken in all of them. The currency is the same too. All transactions are on paper. The result is a culturally neutered megabuilding that any American would feel at home in.

Herb knew that if he weren't on a special mission, he would never have to leave the hotel. His every need could be met somewhere in this building. In his room, there wasn't just shampoo, there were conditioners, finishing rinses and body lotions. He counted twenty mir-

rors in his room. There wasn't just a sink, there was a fully stocked bar. The phone wasn't only by the bed, there was one in the bathroom. (He learned later that it was a dollar for a local call, and five dollars for a drink.) He could even watch TV in the bathroom. He could get laundry, cleaning and pressing without leaving his room, too.

Downstairs, there were four hotel restaurants, so he wouldn't have to go to the same one twice in a day. Mail. Shops. News. Tobacco. Gifts. If he ran out of money, there was an electronic bank right there.

There was a tennis club, four swimming pools and whirlpools, a boating marina, a pub, and a ballroom. There was a beauty salon, a hair salon and a fitness center. Herb decided that he better use the fitness center to exercise since the maid wouldn't even let him pull down his own bedspread.

Herb thought, is it any wonder that the city's downtown is dying? You can't get there from here. The hotel's magnet magnet is trained to keep you here, in this web, where all you need is your room number, your bank number, and your flight number. They'll do the rest.

Why do we build cities straight up into the air, he wondered. To escape from the ones we already have? Why travel, if the building we're travelling to looks like the one we just left?

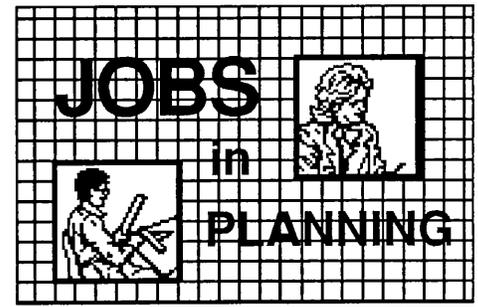
He knew he had to leave this building, but that he would first have to get by all of the bell captains, maids, doormen, concierges, elevator operators, valets and driver, all of whom were expecting a healthy tip.

He was up to the challenge. He put his map and flow pens into a backpack, walked past the elevator and slipped down the stairs and out a side door.

He jaywalked across Harbor Blvd. He crossed the tracks. He hoped a fence. He walked through the industrial streets until he came to the heart of downtown. And then he saw it...

Stay tuned for further adventures of Herb Renewell

* (You can help determine what B.L.I.G.H.T. stands for: Send your acronym answer and your guess as to which city Herb is in, to: Herb Renewell, P.O. Box 2296, Gilroy, CA. 95021-2296)



ASSISTANT PLANNER--City of Benicia, CA. -- (\$2,514-\$3,057/mo.) Varied assignments, current planning emphasis. Bachelor's Degree, Planning/Rel. field + 1 year technical experience or Master's Degree. File By: 03/24/89. More Information, call: 707/746-4205.

PARK PLANNER I--East Bay Regional Park District -- (\$2,451/mo.+Benefits) Advanced planning unit (park land use plans) Bachelor's Degree + 1 yr. professional planning experience. File By: 03/01/89. More Information, call: 415/531-9300 ext 2600.

PRINCIPAL PLANNER--City of Berkeley, CA. -- (\$3,355 -\$4,050/mo.) Supervises current or advanced planning division. Bachelor's Degree, Planning/Rel. Field + 6 yrs. professional experience, 2 yrs. at project management/staff supervision level.

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