

NORTHERN NEWS

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AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE - WHAT CAN PLANNERS DO?

By: George Mader, AICP and Martha Blair-Tyler, AICP

Those of us serving communities hit hard by the earthquake are facing tough challenges as we grapple with the problems of repairing damaged buildings and facilities, rebuilding destroyed areas, restoring economic activity and rehousing displaced residents. Tasks already faced, or to be faced, include:

1. Assess the patterns of damage and their implications for land use plans and development regulations.
2. Determine if heavily damaged areas are candidates for redevelopment
3. Devise streamlined procedures to issue building permits for repair and rebuilding in emergencies.
4. Prepare local hazard mitigation plans as required by FEMA.
5. Help manage the mountains of paperwork necessary to receive state and federal aid for the repair and restoration of public facilities.

All problems are urgent and decisions must be made quickly. As planners go through the first few months after the earthquake, they should keep two questions in mind: are the decisions about rebuilding and repairs going to lessen damage in future earthquakes? Are there now opportunities to make changes in land use which will have long term benefits to the community?

For planners outside the damaged areas, the earthquake affords a rare (we hope) opportunity to present new earthquake plans, ordinances and programs. We should assess what measures our community can take to prevent devastation in future earthquakes. The time to act is now, while memories are still vivid. Some questions we might ask ourselves are:

1. Is the Safety Element of our general plan complete and up-to-date? Are the other elements, particularly land use, open space and housing, consistent with seismic safety policies?
2. Have we identified active faults, areas subject to landslide and liquefaction, and other hazard areas? Are the land use and zoning regulations for such areas appropriate to the level of risk?
3. Does our subdivision ordinance require a geologic report, except when waived by a qualified geologist?
4. Can we locate a registered engineering geologist to advise us on policy and project applications?

Publisher's Note...

The Loma Prieta Earthquake left few people in our circulation area untouched. From those whose lives, homes and businesses were profoundly affected, to those who were inconvenienced in daily travel or pressed into long hours of public service, the earthquake seems likely to become one of those milestone events which mark the progression of our personal, as well as communal history. When asked about the "Quake of '89" years from now, you'll probably remember where you were and how you reacted.

Northern News tries to fulfill many roles in its service to the Planning community of Northern California. This issue is special, insofar as it records the October 17th event through the observations, insights and advice of Northern Section's own planners. It is both a retrospective look at the earthquake, and the outline of a roadmap defining the role of planners in preparing for future catastrophic events.

We have made the newsletter available as a forum for our contributors to speak to you on many facets of the October 17th disaster, past, present and future. To do so, we have suspended publication of several regular features in order to ensure adequate availability of space within our usual format. We hope that you'll find your colleagues' comments helpful in putting the Earthquake of '89 into a more optimistic perspective.

Mark Caughey, AICP
Publisher

CALL FOR PLANNERS... *Give Our Cities and Counties a Helping Hand*

Use your planning skills to help local agencies to catch up with permit processing and assist in the recovery and rebuilding process. Oakland, Santa Cruz, San Francisco and other communities need your help. Call Ann Millican (415/652-2426) if you would like to organize a planners clearinghouse for volunteers; if you would like to volunteer; or if you represent a community that could use help from volunteer planners.

ABAG OFFERS POST-QUAKE GUIDANCE

For several years, ABAG and the Bay Area Earthquake Preparedness Project have been working to improve the capabilities of local agencies, businesses and citizens to respond to seismic events. The following publications are available free of charge from the Bay Area Regional Earthquake Preparedness Project at 415/540-2713:

- *Putting Seismic Safety to Work* (10/88)
- *Earthquake Vulnerability Analysis for Local Governments* (9/89)

Other earthquake planning documents can be ordered through ABAG. For more information, please contact the ABAG Public Affairs Office at 464-7900.

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Mark Caughey <i>Publisher - (Production and Distribution Manager)</i>	408/252-4505
Barry Miller <i>Editor - (Communications Manager)</i>	415/495-2400

Somewhere Over San Andreas

By Anna Powell

O.K., so the ground shook on October 17th. The destruction has been broadcast (ad nauseum) to the world, but where is the every-cloud-silver-lined opportunity hiding? An informal review of Northern California planning departments provided some inspiring results.

In a profession where "red tape," "bureaucrat" and "politicking" are common adjectives, the post quake spirit of departmental cooperation has been amazing. Planners from Capitola, Watsonville, Santa Cruz City and Santa Cruz County all set aside their own duties to help the building departments as novice inspectors. In Santa Cruz County, planners were paired with out-of-town inspectors; one knew the area and the other knew buildings.

The breadth of damage in Los Gatos, Watsonville, Santa Cruz City and Santa Cruz County necessitated emergency operation centers for the public. In the true spirit of public service, the emergency operation centers provided the public with answers to numerous questions: when will we get water or power? What does this yellow (green, red) tag mean? Where can I find shelter and food? When can I get back into my building? While their own city building was being assessed for damage, Los Gatos temporarily set up their center in the parking lot. The found the location so visible and accessible that they remained there until the rains came.



In hard-hit Watsonville, planners and inspectors share the burdens of damage assessment

The City of Santa Cruz, experienced with the 1982 flood, was immediately prepared for the para-military, centralized procedures needed in an emergency. Their emergency plan specifies roles for planners and other city workers. One person assumes the role of City Information Officer to handle all press, while others set up evacuation centers and the command post.

As part of the emergency response, many planning departments have been able to streamline procedures. Planners in Watsonville, Santa Cruz City and

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5. Have we completed inventories of unreinforced masonry buildings as required by SB 547? Have other kinds of hazardous buildings been identified, particularly critical and high occupancy buildings?
6. Do we have redevelopment authorities in place for use after an earthquake?
7. Have we thought through the likely patterns of earthquake damage in our communities and planned how we will respond after the next earthquake?
8. Do we know the current FEMA and OES post-earthquake assistance programs and qualifying standards?

Beyond these questions, we need to consider what our roles as planners will be after the earthquake. We certainly will be asked to provide information for city operations and help set up streamlined permit processing procedures. Will we also be instrumental in establishing goals and policies to guide reconstruction? The potential role is very important. We

need to be prepared to fulfill it. Los Angeles is forging an innovative plan for post-disaster recovery in which the Planning Department has a key role in a team effort, including public works, building and other departments. We all might consider similar efforts in our communities.

CalChapter APA can help. This is a good time to start planning for a 1990 workshop in which those planners recovering from the earthquake can share their observations and lessons with the rest of us. As we face the tasks ahead, we can turn to the Bay Area Regional Earthquake Preparedness Project (415/540-2713) and the California Seismic Safety Commission (916/322-4917) for information and assistance. Two publications are particularly helpful:

Putting Seismic Safety Policies to Work, 1988, Bay Area Regional Earthquake Preparedness Project.

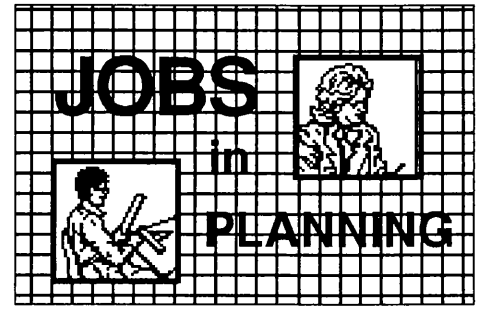
California at Risk, Steps to Earthquake Safety for Local Government, 1988, California Seismic Safety Commission.

A Post-Earthquake Construction Assessment

During the week following the October 17th 7.1 earthquake, I spent most of my waking hours - and that was quite a few due to the after shocks - assessing damage caused to structures in the mountainous areas of Santa Cruz County. I went out on inspection with building officials from Santa Barbara and the City of Davis. These fine people, under the auspices of their respective jurisdictions, offered assistance to the County in time of need. There were other jurisdictions as well that pitched in. As a planner for the County, and as someone who has always been interested in construction technology, the learning experience for me outweighed the fear of being swallowed-up by a major aftershock.

Geotechnical findings related to the quake will be issued in the coming weeks from the professional literature. Perhaps, however, the most interest non-geologic finding emanating from my field studies was that people are constructed of more than skin and bones. The sinew that holds them together in times of dire circumstance, the grace under pressure, is the most inspiring characteristic to behold. And yet, this was the most common after-effect we found when inspecting earthquake-damaged property - people withstood the quake with a strength and resilience that made me feel privileged to be a member of a profession that helps plan for the needs of these noble beings.

Steve Matarazzo
Santa Cruz County



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For information on these positions, call 415/646-4047.

ASSOCIATE PLANNER-- City of Saratoga, CA. (\$2,884-\$3,681/mo.) Current and long range assignments; extensive public contact in city of 30,000 pop. BA degree in Planning/rel field + 4 yrs. experience or Master's Degree + 3 yrs. experience; hillside planning experience planning desirable. Apply by: Open until filled. More information, call 408/867-3438.

PLANNER I -- City of Gilroy, CA. (\$2,283-\$2,775/mo.) Varied assignments, current planning emphasis; BA degree in Planning/rel field or 4 yrs. experience in a planning department. Apply by: 01/16/90. More information, City of Gilroy Personnel, 7351 Rosanna St., Gilroy, CA. 95020.

Holiday Party!!

**...The particulars
on Page 6**

Santa Cruz County, Los Gatos and San Francisco are all able to issue permits (without Council review) for replacing buildings lost in the earthquake. The express processing in Los Gatos even waives fees. Watsonville, Santa Cruz City and San Francisco are allowing some non-conforming structures to be replaced in kind.

Many communities are now trying to just replace what's been lost. Santa Cruz County has issued 3,000 emergency permits. That represents one year's worth of permits. They have put all current projects on hold and are not taking any new applications. Assistant Director Dan Shaw laments, "We are consumed with trying to clean up."

While the damage in Santa Cruz County was primarily to residential buildings, it was the commercial downtown of Los Gatos that was hardest hit. The Town quickly adopted "emergency restoration" procedures. The words were carefully chosen to convey the desire to restore buildings to their pre-quake appearance. Demolitions are limited to only those buildings which cannot be restored. "We were unprepared," says Director Lee Bowman, "for the speed at which people want things to get back to normal."

Santa Cruz City has many of the same concerns. They lost almost 50 percent of their downtown buildings. "The long range plans for the city are totally reoriented toward rebuilding the downtown," says Senior Planner Joe Hall. "We need to look at the options for rebuilding."

The City of Oakland, in a continuing state of redevelopment, is still trying to get back on its feet. With City Hall critically damaged, the city workers are dispersed about the city. Renovating City Hall is clearly a priority. The question of what to do with the Cypress Freeway is still very open. It will be an interesting issue to follow in the coming weeks.

San Francisco faces many interesting issues as well. They were just on the verge of starting new plans and zoning classifications for the South of Market area. The City is also confronted with the question of what to do with their unreinforced masonry buildings. Should the Embarcadero Freeway come down? San Francisco already has alternative design plans prepared, complete with environmental assessment.

The earthquake will change the character of Watsonville more than any other area. Many of the buildings downtown are of unreinforced masonry construction, and many were in a state of decline before the October 17th event. In fact, seismic safety concerns restricted use to the ground level only in many structures, thus limiting a great deal of building space. Ten of such buildings were heavily damaged or destroyed in the quake. As the buildings are restored or replaced, the usable upper floor space will become a welcomed addition. (Watsonville has been unable for some time to annex land to relieve its housing overcrowding and scarcity problem.) Planning Director Maureen Owens is pushing for upper story residential uses in these buildings. Much of the residential damage was in multi-family high-density areas. The Planning Department will be encouraging developers to rebuild at the highest density.

Many thanks to those who took time from their harried schedules to speak with me: Lee Bowman, AICP, Town of Los Gatos Planning Director; George Williams, Assistant Planning Director, San Francisco; Carol MacArthur, Assistant to the Mayor of Oakland; Bob Rivers, Associate Planner, City of Capitola; Maureen Owens, City of Watsonville Planning Director; Dan Shaw, AICP, Assistant Planning Director, Santa Cruz County; Joe Hall, AICP, Senior Planner, City of Santa Cruz.

Somewhere Over San Andreas

An informal survey
of Bay Area
Planning Agencies

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A Wrap-Up on the Earthquake of '89

By: Paul Sedway and Tom Cooke
Sedway Cooke Associates

The value of preparation for projected and unanticipated events, conveyed to us in our training as planners, was made clear to our firm last month. On October 17th, the quake benignly shook some bricks loose from the parapet of our home of two years - the historic and renovated Folgers Building. Early diagnosis indicated no structural damage, but later examination by the owner suggested to him that the building was unsafe and he required that all tenants leave the building - permanently!

Our firm had never been busier, with four mega-projects underway in the office, along with 26 other demanding assignments. Confronted with this potentially serious interruption in activity, we undertook an immediate resettlement effort. Our experience may be helpful to other firms and planning departments faced with this dilemma in the future.

Some years prior to the quake, we had developed an earthquake preparedness program for our staff, focusing on the "duck and cover" moments and building evacuation procedures. The October 17th quake demonstrated the importance of recognizing more far reaching concerns. How would our East Bay staff get home? Who would inform the staff of the status of our operations in the days following the quake? What were our immediate and long-term options for relocation? How could we as planners assist in post-disaster recovery?

In the hours following the quake, our firm formed a Resettlement Committee, with each member put in charge of a particular facet of the transition: temporary space, the permanent office search, moving arrangements, employee safety, on-going work continuation, and communications with clients and vendors. Due to its

creative and quick response, we were able to find replacement office space within a week after the quake. The new space, at Two Transamerica Center, provides the same square footage as our earlier office, with the added feature of steel girders embedded in bedrock!

The unique function of our profession requires that we develop post disaster plans not only for our communities but for our own offices. Planners must be ready to respond to their communities' needs even if impaired by the loss of their office space and equipment. Some suggestions for planning offices and departments around the Bay Area are presented below:

- Develop a "buddy" system so that personnel unable to return home after a quake can be housed by employees living close to the office.
- Designate a communications manager within the office to notify each staff person of the status of the office, and the location of interim office space.
- Identify interim post-disaster office space in the event your building is damaged or uninhabitable after the quake. Don't rule out employee residences as options. In a crisis, a dining room does fine as a conference room.
- Keep materials associated with current projects in one place so that these materials can be moved quickly.
- Keep a supply of flashlights and a battery-operated radio in the office. Food, water and bedding should be kept on hand for employees that need to stay overnight.
- Emphasize the importance of flex time to employees, both to ease commuting headaches and to extend office hours to meet in-

- creased public (or client) needs.
- Provide employees who may be "commute-stranded" with the opportunity to work at home until commuting becomes possible or office space becomes available.
- Portable computers with hard disks enable an office to quickly get reestablished in a new location after an emergency. After the earthquake, we were able to move the computers into a temporary office, plug them in, and get back to work within hours.
- Copies of the information on the hard disks should also be kept on diskettes, in case the hard disk or the computer is damaged in the emergency or the move.
- Inform the employees how to use the FAX line as a telephone. When our local phones were shut down by overuse, outside FAX lines were the only means of communicating with people across the Bay.
- Keep an emergency petty cash supply in the office. When the electricity went out, automated tellers didn't work, and the few businesses that remained open were reluctant to take credit cards without a credit check.
- Project managers should call clients to keep them posted of the status of the office and their projects.
- Keep critical functions such as word-processing and accounting consolidated in one place, and try to minimize interruptions in these services.

We were fortunate to have had prior exposure to emergency planning and believe we came out of the experience stronger than before it occurred.

Who says that planning doesn't work?

ESA

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RECRUITING FOR NORTHERN SECTION BOARD POSITIONS

The APA Northern Section Board is recruiting committed planners to fill three key positions:

San Francisco Liaison

Responsibilities: Organize one or two programs in San Francisco during the upcoming year and attend quarterly Board meetings in Foster City or the East Bay.

Education Director

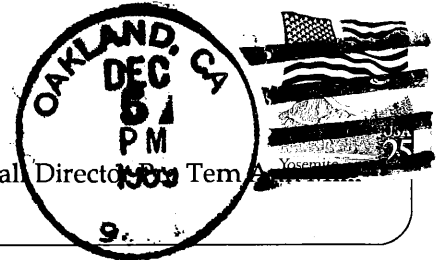
Responsibilities: Work with universities offering urban planning programs, including UCB, San Jose, Sonoma State and Stanford to increase participation in APA programs, promote student involvement in APA, organize an event at a planning school and attend quarterly Board meetings in Foster City or the East Bay.

Earthquake Planning Liaison

Responsibilities: This new position has been created to help local planning departments prepare for earthquakes and assist in post-earthquake recovery and rebuilding. The liaison can recruit other to share the responsibilities of this position, which include:

- Act as liaison to CalChapter in planning the regional program on Earthquake Planning and Recovery scheduled for January, 1990.
- Serve as "Clearinghouse" and contact for planners wishing to volunteer to help planning departments needing post-quake assistance.
- Organize a planners team to work with AIA or independently on rebuilding hard-hit areas.
- Organize a meeting on earthquake issues for Northern Section
- Write articles for Northern News on Earthquake Preparedness
- Attend quarterly Board meetings in Foster City or the East Bay.

If you are interested or know desirable candidates for any of these positions, please call Director Tom A. Yosemite at 415/642-2426. The Board is hoping to fill these positions early in the new year.



NORTHERN NEWS

APA EDITORIAL OFFICE
P.O. Box 160531
Cupertino, CA. 95016-0531

Send To: