

NORTHERN NEWS

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Social Equity: The Challenge to American Planners

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Written by the APA Steering Committee for the Agenda for America's Communities

DUNCAN & JONES

"The new decade brings an old challenge to the urban professions: the challenge of change... [The] old policies, the old ways of thinking, and the old institutions are not responsive to the crucial needs of today. The problems... center around divisiveness in metropolitan areas along social and economic lines. Too many Americans are becoming alienated not only from each other but from the institutions of representative democracy... The problems of rural America are not too different from central city problems." These words were written by the late Samuel C. Jackson when he was General Assistant Secretary of HUD. We published them in March 1970. Jackson described his concerns about housing and transportation and jobs and schools and drug addiction and crime. He called it an old challenge in 1970. Today, it is a generation older and a generation more urgent.

"A planner must strive to expand choice and opportunity for all persons..."

Are we now prepared to meet the challenge more successfully? We will be if we accept social equity as an essential component of planning and demonstrate how community planning enhances social equity and is important to the achievement of other community goals. As community planners, we draw strength from our adherence to principles that we share. We believe that today's decisions must be made with thought not only to their short-term effect but also to their long-term consequences. What will it do for my children? And for their children? We believe in looking comprehensively at the impact that solutions for different problems have on each other. We believe in conserving our assets, natural and man-made, Grand Canyon and Grand Central Station. And, we must believe in a society that draws strength from values that are shared across

the full range of our diverse population, including the value of social equity.

For people who live in most inner cities and in many rural areas, the quality of life is often severely depressed and opportunities for betterment are [few]. The key problems that planners address — housing, transportation, economic development, environmental protection, land-use allocation, capital improvements — have a critical bearing on that quality of life. The decisions that planners make, the proposals that planners prepare in these areas of professional practice, have a potent impact in establishing the levels of quality and opportunity. Implementing one program rather than another may increase the inequalities between communities, leave them as they are, or reduce inequalities. In a planning context, the objective of social equity is to reduce inequalities of results, to narrow the

gap when disparities have been created in the distribution of goods and services influenced by planning decisions.

We define social equity as the expansion of opportunities for betterment that are available to those communities most in need of them, creating more choices for those who have few.

We recognize more than we did in the past that we cannot distinguish physical planning from social planning. Physical planning has social purposes and social consequences just as it has environmental purposes and environmental consequences. The planning profession has long recognized its obligations to social equity. The AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, part of our statement of Ethical Principals in Planning, requires that: "A planner must strive to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs

of disadvantaged groups and persons, and must urge the alteration of policies, institutions and decisions which oppose such needs."

Achieving equitable results in planning is also a continuing responsibility that future generations of planners must undertake. The schools that teach planning have appropriately committed themselves to transmit this obligation. The guidelines for the accreditation of planning programs include the following components of a curriculum: "...Students must be able to identify and debate the importance and the effects of the following values in relation to actual planning issues; 1) Issues of equity, social justice, economic welfare, and efficiency in the use of resources, 2) The role of government and citizen participation in a democratic society and in the balancing of individual and collective rights and interests, 3) Respect for diversity of views and ideologies..."

The challenge to pursue our principles effectively is greater now than it was a generation ago. Our cities have experienced an increasing concentration of social ills and economic decay. A large cause of the current urban condition is the rapid revolution in technology and economy. This has occurred against a background of a slower evolution in positive race relations. If racist barriers to economic opportunity had been removed in the older economy of manufacturing jobs and clerks with pencils, we would likely have achieved a smoother transition to an equitable society. But an enormous gap has opened between the effective education and training of racial minorities, especially African-Americans, and the demands for a computer-literate, productivity- and quality-oriented work force. The globalizing economy demands higher skill and knowledge levels of our people at a time when a higher proportion of the population consists of minorities;

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER

by Don Steiger

It's time for a calendar check. See page 3 and the back page for even more!

March 8 - 10 at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco, the American Society of Civil Engineers is presenting their third annual *Successful Land Use and Development* conference and exhibition. This is a national event and is co-sponsored by APA, ASLA, ULI, NAIOP, NACRE, NAHB, and CE&LSC. You should plan to attend if only to discover who these acronyms identify. Contact Jim Janz at either 415.434-4000 or 408.295-3210.

April 3, U.C. Berkeley hosts the annual **Spring Job Fair** with all Bay Area Planning Schools participating. RSVP Rolf Pendall or Kaye Bock at 510.642-3256.

The preliminary program has arrived for the **APA National Conference, Agenda for America's Communities**. The dates are **May 1-5 in Chicago**. We will be there in force to promote the San Francisco Conference in 1994.

The **1993 State Conference, Going for the Gold** is scheduled for **October 3 - 6 in Modesto**. Planners interested in participating should contact Brian Smith at 209.577-5267.

The **Pacific Rim Council on Urban Development (PRCUD) Conference** will be held at the Westin St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco. The dates are October 17-20. The theme is *Sustainable Development: Business Consciousness with Environmental Reality*. RSVP Lillian Yeh at 510.642-1776.

ARE WE BUSY OR WHAT??



COMMENT

**Upswing in AICP Applicants in 1993:
Implications for Professional Registration?**

by Don Bradley, AICP Coordinator

The annual AICP exam preparation workshops at Stanford have markedly increased in attendance this year. Participation has doubled since last year from 30 to 60 people attending. One would imagine that, during a recession, enrollment and interest in AICP membership would decrease; however, just the opposite has occurred. Job security appears to be very motivational.

Still, only about a quarter (7,500) of the nearly 30,000 APA members across the nation are AICP certified. Professional credentialing and state registration through licensing laws have never been popular with planners. In fact, the former AIP, and now APA have opposed state licensing for planners for decades. Only New Jersey and Michigan have these requirements.

Most other professions have such licensing, why not planners?

ARTICLE SUBMITTAL

Information for the *April Northern News* is due no later than **March 19, 1993**

Send items to:

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EVENTS

Sustainable Cities Forum: Sponsored by the Women's Transportation Seminar, this planning forum will present an update on the San Jose and Santa Clara County Sustainable Cities Program, which provides a link between land use and transportation planning and proposes solutions to achieve a better jobs/housing balance.

Date & Time: Tuesday, March 16, 1993. 6:30 PM.
 Location: 840 First Street, San Jose.
 RSVP: Terry Klim, 510.428-2550.

What's New in Light Rail Vehicles: The Transportation Research Forum (TRF) will present a dinner program on LRV technology, which continues to advance in Europe. This should be a fascinating look at what could be running in the U.S. in the near future.

Date & Time: Wednesday, March 17, 1993. 6 PM for dinner; 7 PM for program.
 Cost: \$13 for TRF members, \$14 for non-members.
 Location: Mandarin Garden Restaurant, 2025 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley.
 RSVP: Steve Gregory, 510.272-1363.

Transportation Planning in Alameda County: Here is your opportunity to learn about two major transportation planning efforts in Alameda County that are being developed under the auspices of the Alameda County Congestion Management Authority (CMA). The Countywide Transportation Plan has been developed with a "bottom up" approach involving decision makers, citizens and staff from the fourteen jurisdictions in the county. The Congestion Management Plan (CMP) is being developed as an important tool to implement the Plan and connect it to land use and air quality concerns. The Executive Director of the CMA and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) will review the plans and their implications. Jon Holan, of Union City, will discuss recent experience in complying with the CMP's land use program for General Plan amendments.

Date & Time: Thursday, March 18, 1993. 6:30 PM.
 Cost: Dinner; \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door.
 RSVP: Jon Holan, 510.471-3232, ext. 318.
 Location: Sweet Basil Restaurant, 1604 Decoto Road, Union City.
 Access: MarketPlace Shopping Center, across from Union City BART; also Decoto Road and Alvarado-Niles Road exits from I-880.

Far North Brown Bag Lunch on EcoTourism: Michael Sweeney will present information on a new institute for expanding opportunities to capture more of the global tourism market, preserve natural areas, increase local conservation and provide economic development.

Date & Time: Friday, March 26, 1993. Noon to 1 PM.
 Location: Conference Room B, Humboldt County Planning Department.
 RSVP: Lia Sullivan, 707.822-5955.



Urban Transportation Issues: Ideas from Around the World: A comprehensive slide show, including dramatic glimpses of urban transportation systems around the world, will be presented at the APA Professional Development meeting on April 1 (no fooling!). Featured transportation systems range from the ancient Wall of China to the contemporary jitneys of Manila and Bangkok.

The slide show investigates cause and effect relationships of urban and economic development with transportation. The presentation will also examine the social implications of transit decisions and the growing interest in increased pedestrian activities which can make cities more accessible, safe and liveable. A demonstration of the RIDES computer matching system will also be provided. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served. The slide show has been compiled and will be narrated by John Hirten, Executive Director of RIDES for Bay Area Commuters, Inc. Mr. Hirten is a nationally recognized transportation expert whose international perspective provides an overview of many of the world's urban transportation systems, with a focus on the variety of indigenous techniques used to meet local transportation needs.

Date & Time: Thursday, April 1, 1993. 6 PM.
 Cost: \$5 at the door; students admitted free.
 RSVP: Rose Ryan, 415.861-7665.
 Location: RIDES, 60 Spear Street, Suite 650, San Francisco.
 Access: Parking is available at Rincon Center (enter on Spear Street) or, better yet, come by public transportation (Embarcadero Station).

New Directions in Planning Education - What Do Planners Need to Know to Carry Out a New Urban Agenda? A panel discussion at San Jose State will consider how changes in the social and economic environment will affect planners, what new sensibilities will be needed for the challenges of the '90s, and what skills will be necessary for developing and implementing a new urban agenda.

Date & Time: Wednesday, April 21, 1993, 6 PM.
 Cost: \$5 at the door; students free.
 Location: San Jose State University, Washington Square Hall, Room 218.
 RSVP: Prof. Earl Bossard, 408.924-5860.

Spring Event: Come appreciate a portion of the East Bay's extensive greenbelt area with your fellow planners, friends and family at a picnic in Sunol Park on Saturday, May 22. Enjoy a 5-mile downhill hike from Mission Peak in Fremont to the party, or drive to the park and hike along the hillsides and canyons. Look for details in the April *Northern News*.



A Zoning Administration Primer

by Steve Matarazzo

Introduction

The following "rules" serve as a guide toward the proper conduct of performing the duties of Zoning Administrator (ZA) for those communities that have this sub-Planning Commission level of project review and approval. The Zoning Administrator function normally includes a formal public hearing process with the standard noticing requirements prescribed in the Government Code for those applications requiring discretionary approval. The information in this article is further intended to facilitate easy transition and consistency of administration between one or more ZAs as the position changes personnel from time to time based on the various needs of the Planning Department. "Smaller City" planning directors may also find some of this advice useful.

The Rules of Being A Good ZA

1. As a stress-reducer, don't sweat the little stuff.
2. It's all little stuff. Actually, there are a few controversial issues that come before the ZA, but not many. The ZA function is designed to keep the "little issues" away from the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, and this is reflected in the kinds of application presented to the ZA.
3. Act on the non-contentious items as quickly as possible. This can be done in a number of ways, including the waiver of the staff presentation, unless people in the audience want the staff report to be verbalized. Merely state that you have read the report, and have no questions at the present time, then open the public hearing.
4. If an agenda item has been withdrawn or a continuance has been recommended by staff after the staff report was filed, let people in attendance know this at the beginning of the meeting so that their time is not wasted.
5. It is sometimes valuable to make a "motion" to approve or deny a project prior to acting on the application in order to allow time for staff to add conditions or direction that you may have forgotten during the course of the public hearing. The verbalization of this concept goes some-

thing like this: "I move to approve application number 93-01, subject to the staff findings and conditions... and it is so ordered." This process provides a pause between the motion and "action" (it is hereby ordered) to allow staff time to insert additional conditions, based on public testimony, if necessary.

6. Allow some venting of hostility if a certain item becomes "heated." (In this case, it helps to be Italian. When emotions run wild at a public hearing, we get fits of nostalgia!) Most people calm down pretty quickly and apologize for the outburst after it is over; and allowing them this release usually results in their appreciation for your patience and understanding (trust me).

7. The ZA is one of the first lines of "public relations" for the Planning Department - don't forget this; you have now become the "faceless bureaucrat" unmasked. Be cordial and courteous, and even though it may be extraneous to the permit process, it doesn't hurt to informalize the process on occasion by letting people know that their project is well-designed, well-conceived, etc.; or, if as a result of your approval, an out-of-city/county applicant will build a house to move into, it's okay to say "Welcome to Azusa" (everything from A to Z in the U.S.A.) following your approval action.

8. Don't be afraid to continue an item, if resolution of a controversial issue is in sight and you believe it can be resolved in a reasonable time frame. This will likely save an appeal process which could take much longer. Conversely, don't be too hasty to continue an item. Sometimes, additional information can be gathered as the agenda is proceeding. In such cases, continue the item and place it at the end of the agenda, giving staff time to find the additional information and report back at the end of the ZA meeting.

Hopefully, this all just seems like common sense, in which case, these rules will also serve as a refresher course.

Steve Matarazzo is Principal Planner/Zoning Administrator for Santa Cruz County.

Social Equity...

(Continued from page 1)

that proportion will increase in years to come. Effective solutions are hampered by lingering old racisms left over from the age when they were legally sanctioned and new racisms that continue to foster separateness.

Our professional responsibility to help create good communities requires attention to social equity in the distribution of resources especially in an era of resource scarcity. We cannot, for long, have healthy, prosperous communities that are insulated from impoverished ones. While some suburban economies have grown increasingly independent of central cities, those that have done best have central cities that are also doing well. Smaller cities and towns are already coping with similar versions of what [were previously only] inner city problems. The interdependence of nations is now recognized world-wide. We must plan on the basis of even greater interdependence at metropolitan, state and national levels. A fractured society cannot be strong enough to compete in a global economy.

Our role as planners is to address equity issues through the plans and policies and programs that we now prepare. Every topic that we touch has elements that will affect equitable results and influence the allocation of resources that it may take to achieve them. A new approach to comprehensiveness in planning will not separate the analyses we make of economic impacts, fiscal impacts, and environmental impacts, but will include social impacts and examine them together as a whole so that all parts will mutually reinforce a proposed plan and not, through cross-purposes, defeat it.

Our role nationally is to provide a continuing stream of technical advice, case examples, and informational support for a reinvigorated approach to a new comprehensiveness in planning. Even the best planning will not resolve all equity issues quickly. Our challenge is to establish a direction and a systematic ongoing program that fosters our inventiveness as a caring, conserving, and effective profession contributing to the overall health of the American community.



How to Assess Retail Developers' Subsidy Requests

by Dr. Marian F. Wolfe

(Second of two articles by Ms. Wolfe on public subsidies of development. The first article was published in the February issue of *Northern News*.)

In assessing developers' subsidy requests, it is clear that both financial and public policy considerations play important roles. Although the city council may approve a developer's subsidy request solely on public policy considerations regardless of financial need, it is still important that a city's finance or development director evaluate supporting materials provided by the developer. In this way, the policy debate about whether to provide the subsidy and what the nature of financial assistance should be is better defined. Even if the conclusion of the analysis is that the request is **not** supported by economic information provided, a city may still decide to approve a developer's request based on non-economic criteria, such as a desire to reduce sales tax leakage and enhance the local sales tax base.

The level of detail in the supporting materials provided by the developer will depend on how far along the project is in the development process. If the project is still in a site development phase (and tenants have not yet been identified), information provided in the developer's pro forma will be much sketchier than if tenants have been identified and building costs estimated. Although some developers request assistance without providing supporting materials, generally cities require information on development costs, project revenues, and public revenues. In most cases, local governments ask for an independent evaluation of the developer's request; cities frequently retain the services of a specialist consultant to review the information provided by the developer.

Development Costs include land costs, the costs of on-and off-site improvements, and direct and indirect construction costs. Many of these costs can be verified by checking outside sources such as the Marshall Swift Valuation Service and consulting with local realtors and lenders. In addition, some costs can be verified by applying generally accepted rules of thumb, e.g., overhead, supervision and contingency fees tend to be a fixed percentage of hard costs. When numbers appear to be higher or lower than expected, the developer should provide some justification for the variation or modify the pro forma accordingly.

Project Revenues are generated by rents and are expressed in a variety of ways, including gross revenues, net operating income, and estimated cash flow. Project revenues are more difficult to assess, since leasing arrangements can vary widely depending on the size of the space and the type of the tenant. For example, rent per square foot will be higher for a small

space. Large retailers that serve as major draws for a center will expect lower rents, since the other tenants in the center benefit from the sales traffic generated by these retailers. Consulting with leasing agents can provide ballpark estimates of rents per square foot.

Public Revenues are provided through increases in taxable sales and the property tax base. The former is based on estimates of sales per square foot at the new center, and the latter is based on the projected assessed value of the completed center less the assessed valuation of the existing property. *The Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers* (Urban Land Institute) is a good source to consult to verify projected sales per square foot for various types of tenants. However, frequently the developer relies on sales data provided by the tenant, which is proprietary information. The developer may argue that the synergy created in a power center generates more sales per square foot than would a similar retailer located in a different setting, thereby increasing local tax revenues. Lacking access to proprietary sales information, the city may be unable to confirm projected sales figures. Other factors such as assumptions regarding lease-up and vacancy rates, and various economic scenarios regarding growth in sales can be evaluated using industry standards and projections.

A key issue regarding projections of public revenues is whether the developer provides information on gross or net taxable sales. Since some percentage of the sales at the new project will almost always represent loss of business to existing retailers, it is important that the city bases its projections of growth in sales tax revenues on the **net** effect. This more accurately represents the true gain to the city.

Based on a comparison of project costs with project revenues, developers provide their financial justification for requesting assistance. Then, by providing the city with estimates of anticipated tax revenue benefits, developers demonstrate to the city that additional funds will be available with which to provide assistance and the number of years it will take the city to receive full reimbursement for any subsidies provided. Once the numbers provided by the developer have been carefully reviewed and possibly modified based on staff comments, the city can determine whether the economic information provided by the developer offers a convincing argument in favor of assistance. If it does, the city has a sounder basis upon which to negotiate with the developer and provide a subsidy.

Dr. Wolfe is a principal with Vernazza Wolfe Associates, Inc., an Oakland economics consulting firm.



PLANLINES

by Chuck Myer, AICP

INFECTIOUS HABITATUS

A lot of people remember the affable keynote speaker at the CalChapter APA conference in 1990. He's one of the nation's biggest developers. In fact, his company expects to be the No. 1 builder in the United States by 1994. But he's probably the only developer that claims to use the "Biblical finance plan." Zero percent interest.

His name is Millard Fuller, and the company he founded, Habitat for Humanity, is unlike any other home-builder we've seen in this biz. His enthusiasm is contagious (often referred to as infectious habitatus). The group builds homes around the world for those who can't afford it, using volunteer labor and donated materials. The new owners have only to put sweat equity into the construction, and agree to pay a small monthly mortgage payment back into the coffers for building future houses.

The group has got a lot of high profile lately. You may have seen the Democratic candidates for President and Vice-President swinging hammers with ex-prez Jimmy Carter (a Habitat board member) as a photo op during the campaign.

Not only does each Habitat project provide shelter for the potentially homeless, it teaches skills to the skill-less. I represent that remark, so I decided to spend some of my 1992 vacation learning some basic construction skills at a Habitat building site in Manila (relax — it was Manila, California, which is in the "far north" portion of Northern Section).

"Congratulations," said coordinator "Duffy" McDuff to our group of unskilled Habitat volunteers as we reported for duty. "You have just joined the most inefficient home-building organization in the world." (He was quick to point out that HFH is one of the most prolific builders as well.)

Some of us shuddered to think that our inexperience might jeopardize the speed of the "blitz-building" campaign we were engaged in. Many of us, women and men of all ages and backgrounds, did not even recognize all of the terms being bandied around. We thought all of the walls would be drywalls, that

"framing" was for pictures, that "shingles" was a disease, and that "flashing" was a college prank.

But it didn't take long to catch on to the lingo and follow along behind those who knew what they were doing. We had each brought a hammer and a 6-foot measuring tape from home. Others brought paint brushes, carpentry aprons, knives and other tools.

The foreman didn't mince words when we arrived at the site. "Remember," he warned, "Safety is our #1 priority. Now, everyone up on the roof! Pretending I knew what I was doing, I ambled up the ladder and grabbed some asphalt shingles. I soon learned that I could find someone experienced merely by nailing a shingle upside-down; that brought the experts over in a hurry, and opened up the opportunity for dialogue and further instruction.

Before long, I was shingling with the best of 'em. When we finished the house, we each got a big hug from the new owner, Nelda Rose (a southern belle who once had a song written about her and recorded by Dolly Parton!).


The point here is we built two houses in six days, which was the duration of a conference we were all attending (Jubilee '92) at Humboldt State University. Each person took a four-hour block of time away from conference sessions to work on the house.

Is there any reason why APA couldn't do the same? Why don't we build a Habitat house during one of our upcoming conferences? Like Modesto '93? Or the national conference in '94 which we're hosting?

Stick that in your housing element.

copyright Chuck Myer, 1993

Ed. Note: You may contact Habitat for Humanity International at: 121 Habitat Street, Americus, GA 31709; or Habitat West (California, Nevada, Arizona and Hawaii) at: Julia Janecki, 1924 Trinity Ave., Walnut Creek, CA 94596; 510.937-0753.



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CALENDAR

- March 16:** *Sustainable Cities Program.*
 Time: 6:30 PM.
 Location: 840 First Street, San Jose.
 RSVP: Terry Klim, 510.428-2550.
- March 17:** *What's New in Light Rail Vehicles.*
 Time: 6 PM for dinner, 7 PM for program.
 Cost: \$13 for TRF members, \$14 for non-members.
 Location: Mandarin Garden Restaurant, 2025 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley.
 RSVP: Steve Gregory, 510.272-1363.
- March 18:** *Alameda County Transportation, Land Use and Air Quality Planning.*
 Time: 6:30 PM.
 Cost: \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door.
 Location: Sweet Basil Restaurant, 1604 Decoto Road, Union City.
 RSVP: Jon Holan, 510.471-3232, ext. 318.
- March 26:** *Far North Brown Bag Lunch on Eco Tourism.*
 Time: Noon to 1 PM.
 Location: Conference Room B, Humboldt County Planning Department.
 RSVP: Lia Sullivan, 707.822-5955.
- April 1:** *Urban Transportation Issues: Ideas From Around the World.*
 Time: 6 PM.
 Cost: \$5 at the door, students free. Wine and hors d'oeuvres.
 Location: RIDES, 60 Spear Street, Suite 650, San Francisco.
 RSVP: Rose Ryan, 415.861-7665.

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