

# Northern News

NORTHERN SECTION, CALIFORNIA CHAPTER, AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

## Vote Yes on Measures A and B in Santa Clara County

by John Cook

RECEIVED

OCT 8 1996

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Planners tend to have mixed opinions about the advent and ongoing practice of so-called "ballot box planning," especially in California, where the rights to initiative and referendum are firmly entrenched and frequently exercised. Two transportation related measures in Santa Clara County, Measures A and B, have gained the endorsement of the Board of the Northern Section of the California Chapter of the American Planning Association. The measures will appear on Santa Clara County ballots this November 5.

These measures mark the second attempt in the county in the past four years to pass transportation related legislation via a tax increase. Measure A of 1992 was eventually overturned by a court when it was deemed a "special tax." If both Measure A (a list of specific transportation improvements) and Measure B (an increase in county sales tax rate from 7.75% to 8.25%) pass with a simple majority vote, Santa Clara County will finally be able to embark on a series of long-awaited transportation improvements.

The Citizens Coalition for Traffic Relief, the main creator and advocate of the legislation, cites many of the traditional negative externalities associated with traffic congestion – decreased air quality, downward spiraling quality of life, eventual economic decline, et al – as compelling reasons to pass the measure. Just as ISTEA was a departure from past federal level auto and highway-related programs, so is Measure A innovative in its promise to dedicate 50% of its funds to transit oriented projects.

Among the transit projects slated for funding under the measures are three new light rail lines, the Tasman, Vasona, and Capitol lines. The Tasman West line would run between Highway 237 and the 101, connecting the end of the Guadalupe line with Mountain View. The Vasona line would run from San Jose into Campbell. The Measures also stipulate that access to light rail by seniors and the handicapped be enhanced through the purchase of low-floor vehicles for all future rail lines.

Measure A also calls for a Santa Clara County connection to BART, probably to run along the Union Pacific tracks between downtown San Jose, through Milpitas, and on to the Fremont BART station. Improvements for CalTrain are also on the agenda, most notably in the form of increased frequency of service between San Jose and Palo Alto, as well as enhancements – including better bike facilities and parking – at stations all along the line.

Measure A would also fund roadway improvements. The eight expressways that run through Santa Clara County—Almaden, Capitol, Central, Foothill, Lawrence, Montague, Oregon, and San Tomas—would have their signal timing improved by the installation of a video surveillance monitoring system. Such a system would allow rapid signal adjustments to smooth snarls due to poor weather, accidents, and peak hour congestion.

The plan also calls for the widening of Highway 101 between Bernal Road in South San Jose and Cochrane Road in



(continued on page 4)

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## DIRECTORS CORNER

by Wendy Cosin

Discussion of affirmative action is particularly important right now with the misleadingly labeled "California Civil Rights Initiative" on the November ballot. Many articles and surveys have pointed out that when people understand that affirmative action programs seek to level the educational and economic playing fields for women and minorities without resorting to numerical quotas, they overwhelmingly register their support. Hyperbole and misinformation about hiring, promoting, or admitting unqualified employees or students needs to be corrected.

Affirmative action is simply about actively ensuring that everyone has equal access to quality schools and viable employment, while also taking reasonable measures to redress enduring histories of discrimination. Many gains have been made since discrimination was prohibited only 32 years ago, but opportunities are not equal for people of different races for a variety of reasons. Once it is recognized that opportunities aren't equal, steps need to be taken at every level to create change. Affirmative action policies are one way of doing this.

What does this have to do with planning? Planners can most effectively meet the needs of the entire community if planning departments are themselves diverse. This is not meant to say that only planners of a specific background can plan for specific communities, but rather that a diversified department can most successfully understand and respond to different community interests, as well as encourage trust and participation. The California Chapter of the APA has created a task force to develop an action plan to implement the following goals:

- Recruit minority membership in APA
- Increase visibility of issues of interest
- Encourage under-represented groups to enter the planning profession.

To learn more or to participate in the task force, call Frank Wein at 818-585-6241.

On a local note, the Northern California Section of the Planning and Black Community Division of APA has recently been formed. The Division is working to increase membership and visibility, and to adopt a national agenda dealing with issues of importance to African-American planners and communities. Local meetings are held and the division publishes a regular newsletter. To get involved, call Yvonne Daniely at 510-286-5553.

I frequently hear people saying that they don't know what they can do to make a difference in racial issues. Working against Proposition 209 offers a great opportunity to work for affirmative action. Californians for Justice needs help with precinct walks, voter registration, phone banks, and office help. To make a difference, call them at 510-452-2728.



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## State Conference

This year's CCAPA Conference was hosted by the Inland Empire Section and was held in Palm Springs. Next year's CCAPA Conference will be hosted by our very own Northern Section, and is slated for Monterey. If you attended the Conference and have any ideas, suggestions, or comments about the event please contact a Northern Section board member. We can learn from your experience, and hopefully put together a Conference program that will keep Monterey in the minds of planners for year's to come.

## UCB Extension, Fall Planning Courses

The Extension Program at the University of California, Berkeley, will offer a series of one and two-day classes during October, November, and December that are of particular interest to planners looking to explore new areas or to refresh old ones.

Below is a list of courses and dates:

**Subdivision Map Act Advanced Seminar**  
October 10

**Using CEQA in Project Approval Process**  
October 25-26

**Environmental Law III: Complex Projects and CEQA\*** November 1-2

**Erosion Control and Land Restoration**  
November 8

**Historic Preservation for Planners\***  
November 9

**Planning Law and Legal Processes**  
November 15-16

**AICP Exam Preparation Workshop**  
starts December 7


Asterisks denote classes being held at Oakland City Center, 1333 Broadway; all others will be taught at the UC Extension at 150 Fourth Street in South of Market, San Francisco. For information and registration, call (510)-642-7143.

## Upcoming SPUR Events

San Francisco Planning and Urban Research continues its series of lunch-time forums and discussions at its headquarters at 312 Sutter Street in downtown S.F. Events begin at 12:30 p.m. and are free for members; \$3 for non-members. For more information, contact SPUR at (415)-781-8726 or visit SPUR's web page at <www.spur.org>.

- October 10 **Labor Issues on the November Ballot Propositions D and E**
- October 15 **District Elections: Proposition G**
- October 16 **At Large Preference Voting: Prop. H**
- October 17 **Habitat for Humanity**
- October 22 **Taxicab Wars: Prop. J Debate**
- October 23 **Live-Work Housing**
- October 24 **CalTrain Downtown Extension**
- October 29 **Civic Center Plaza Competition Results**

## AICP Snafu?

No... Last month's newsletter included an article and a list of "new" AICP members. The NSCCAPA Editorial Office received a number of calls from individuals whose names did not appear on that list even though they had passed the exam this year. It should be noted that the opening paragraph of that selection indicated that that the list was for last year's successful exam participants. The list for this year's AICP exam will be published next month. The Editorial Staff of the Northern News wishes to apologize for any confusion this may have caused. 

The Bulletin Board section of the Northern News is intended to provide a forum for individuals to provide the membership with information about events or current topics. If you would like to submit an item for the Bulletin Board section, contact the Newsletter Editor at (510) 227-4362.

## Vote ... *(continued from page 1)*

North Morgan Hill from two to three lanes in each direction, thereby making this eight mile stretch of the highway consistent with the number of lanes from Morgan Hill south to the county line. Smaller stretches of Highways 880, 17, and 87 would also be widened with funding from these measures.

On top of signal adjustments and roadway widening, Measure A would also fund a county wide program to maintain existing streets and fill potholes. It also aims to increase highway safety through placement of a safety barrier down the middle of Highway 85 and truck climbing lanes and pull-outs on Highway 152, the Pacheco Pass. Increased safety and congestion easing would also result from the improvement of several key interchanges in the city—between 237 and 880 in Milpitas, 85 and 101 at Shoreline in Mountain View, and between 85 and 87 in both the Almaden Valley of San Jose as well as near Bernal Road in South San Jose.

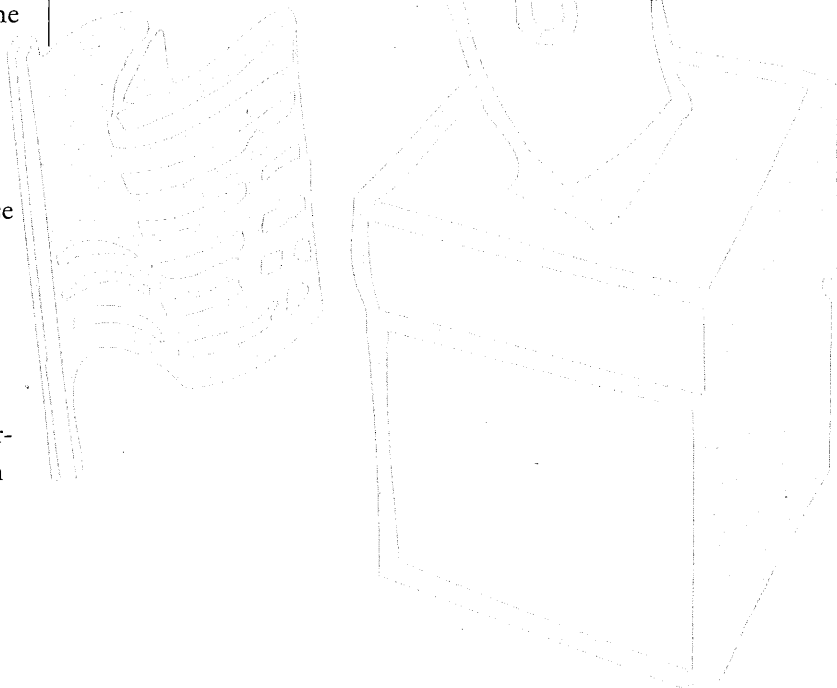
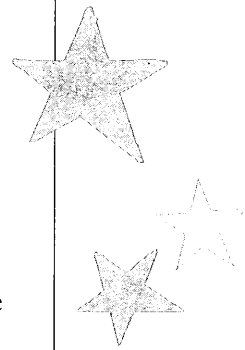
For those who can't or won't take to the freeways or light rail lines, Measure A seeks to improve county bicycle facilities. Funding from the measures would implement the building projects identified in the T-2010 Bicycle Plan created by the County Bicycle Commission. If passed, the measures would effectively double the funds available for Santa Clara County bicycle projects.

Northern Section Board Director Wendy Cosin said that the Board chose to endorse Measures A and B based on both the balance between funding for transit and highway projects, as well as on the broad-based support for the measures from organizations such as the Santa Clara County League of Women Voters, numerous chambers of commerce, the American

Lung Association, the Greenbelt Alliance, the League of Conservation Voters, the Building and Construction Trades Council, as well as Santa Clara area firms like Hewlett-Packard, Lockheed-Martin, IBM, and Apple Computer. Although the Northern Section has not made many endorsements in the past, Cosin said that the Board is considering increasing its advocacy role, not only "to garner visibility and respect for the APA and its members," but also simply to "lend support to causes that advocate good planning."

The Board encourages you to support Measures A and B. If you are interested in obtaining more specific information about the measures, contact the Citizens Coalition for Traffic Relief at 408-467-9960. Further, those interested in bringing issues before the Board for endorsement consideration should contact or send information to a Board member, whose names and numbers you can find in the directory on page two of this newsletter.

*John is the Northern Section's Editorial Assistant, and a graduate student in the Department of City and Regional Planning at UC Berkeley.*





## Urban Streams Conference

Channelized and tunneled for many years, urban streams are these days getting much more attention as integral parts of the urban landscape. The Urban Streams Conference on November 15-17 in Arcata will address many significant issues related to urban creeks, including flood management, non-point source pollution, recreation, education, restoration, preservation, and creeks as habitats for native species. Continuing education credits are available for conference attendance.

Date: November 15-17  
Location: Arcata High School, 1720 M. Street, Arcata  
Cost: \$60 by October 15; \$75 thereafter (scholarships available)  
Info: Susan Schramm, 707-441-9856

## NSCCAPA Holiday Party

The City Club of San Francisco is the site of this year's Northern Section Holiday Party. Join your colleagues and friends on Thursday, December 5, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. for drinks and hors d'oeuvres while enjoying fine city views and an original Diego Rivera mural. Admission is guaranteed to those who register by November 22, by sending a check for \$20 per person, payable to the NSCCAPA. Next month's newsletter will include additional information relevant to directions and access to the City Club. Plan now to attend, and spend an exciting evening in San Francisco!

Date: December 5, 1996  
Time: 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.  
Location: The City Club, 155 Sansome Street, SF  
Access: Montgomery Street BART  
Info: Bonnie Guttman, 510-238-3941



### REGISTRATION FORM

Mail with payment to:

Phil Woods  
1330 Broadway, 2nd Fl.  
Oakland CA 94612-2502

*Yes!* I would like to attend the Holiday Party on December 5 at the City Club in San Francisco. Enclosed is my check for the following individuals:

Please make checks to the NSCCAPA



## Great American Public Spaces

SPUR is sponsoring a party celebrating the publication of a book honoring great American public spaces. Starting at 1:30 p.m., docents will lead a tour of two celebrated spaces, Grace Marchant Gardens and Washington Square. Afterwards, attend a reception and slide presentation led by New York architect Gianni Longo, where other great public spaces will be discussed.

Date: Sunday, October 20  
Time: Tour begins at 1:30 p.m.  
Reception at 3:00 p.m.  
Location: Tour begins at Moose's,  
1652 Stockton Street, SF  
Reception at Moose's  
Cost: \$25 per person; reservations preferred  
Info: SPUR: 415-781-8726 or  
spur@well.com

## Lectures at Berkeley CED: Cisneros, Postwar Planning

Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry Cisneros will speak on Wednesday, October 9, in Wurster Hall at the University of California, Berkeley, on "The Future of Housing in the United States." Time permitting, Secretary Cisneros will field questions from the audience.

Exactly three weeks later, another lecture of note will be given by Professor Greg Hise of the University of Southern California. His presentation is entitled "Planning the Post-War Metropolis: Precedents, Principles, and Patterns." These and other talks in the Fall Lecture Series are sponsored by the College of Environmental Design. The events are free and open to the public.

Date: Cisneros: October 9  
Hise: October 30  
Time: Both begin at 7:00 p.m.  
Location: Room 106, Wurster Hall,  
UC Berkeley  
(at Bancroft Way and College  
Avenue)  
Access: Berkeley BART, AC Transit #7 or  
#51  
Info: 510-642-0831

## Housing Solutions for Silicon Valley

The San Francisco Bay Area is one of the most attractive housing markets in the United States. One of the Bay Area subregions that contributes to this high standard is the Silicon Valley. The Silicon Valley is experiencing a critical shortage of affordable housing available to its exploding workforce and their families. As we approach the millennium, local employment projections show that while the Valley has the land to build affordable, higher density homes, severe housing shortages exist.

Currently there exists in the Valley a one to two percent vacancy rate in rental housing, which is the most affordable housing available. Healthy housing markets maintain an average of four to five percent vacancy for rental stock. In order to attain a jobs/housing balance by the year 2000, a total of 56, 287 homes will need to be built in the Valley in the next four years (ABAG, U.S. Census Bureau).

One of the solutions for meeting this demand is infill housing. Building homes on infill sites within the existing urban service area maximizes the use of city services and minimizes infrastructure costs. If homes are built along existing transit corridors, auto use may decrease so that area congestion also decreases. Additionally, building at slightly higher densities increases housing opportunities while lowering the average cost per unit.

The Housing Action Coalition, in partnership with San Jose State University is hosting a symposium to explore the future of housing in the Silicon Valley on October 23 of this year. The symposium is co-sponsored by a host of private, public and non-profit groups, including the NSCCAPA. Featured speakers include Anthony Downs of the Brookings

Institute, William Fulton of the California Planning and Development Report, City of San Jose Mayor Susan Hammer, and a number of representatives from Silicon Valley business, the building industry, and community planners.

Developing infill housing is not as simple a solution as it could be. Symposium planners hope to begin work that will change existing political, financial and NIMBY barriers while increasing local government's commitment to approve affordable, infill, transit-oriented developments. Another goal of the symposium will be to convince developers, architects, and lenders about the feasibility of infill housing by quantifying the link between economic growth and infill housing development. In addition, participants can augment their knowledge of current and cutting edge infill development strategies.

At this year's symposium, participants will meet leaders in the field of infill housing and learn about strategies that work. They will also discuss practical techniques to address and overcome political, financial and neighborhood barriers to housing development. The event will also feature a tour of local residential developments that are excellent examples of how infill housing can work.

The symposium is being held Wednesday, October 23, on the campus of the California State University at San Jose. For more information contact Leslee Coleman at 408-496-6801.

*Prepared by Mark Rhoades, Northern News Editor, with information provided by the Housing Action Coalition.*

The Commentary section of the newsletter is intended to provide a forum for members to express their views relative to planning related topics, or to express an opinion relative to articles printed in this newsletter. If you would like to submit an article, contact the Newsletter Editor at (510) 227-4362.

by Steve Mattarazzo

I was recently catching up on my career-related reading and came upon the court case *Littoral Development Co. v. San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission* regarding the issue of “egregious bureaucratic overreaching,” or EBO (the court’s terminology, not mine). This case brought to mind several instances that I have witnessed over the years where an agency staff member overextends his or her authority, feeling that it is his or her duty to regulate, criticize, or intervene in a process that might not otherwise merit bureaucratic intervention. A common example of this occurs when a development team submits site and architectural plans for a project that meets every design criterion of a jurisdiction, and even goes beyond those criteria to be an exemplary project. Many a design reviewer will examine this type of project— with a recommendation for approval with recommended design modifications. Since we are hired to be hard-nosed defenders of the built and natural environments, we sometimes do not like to admit, for job security purposes, that on some occasions, our review was not necessary or did not need to be extensive.

Coincidentally, I also recently finished reading the book *The Death of Common Sense: How Law is Suffocating America*. Not only will it make you dislike lawyers even more (as difficult as that may seem), it will cause you to re-evaluate your role as a government bureaucrat. too many anecdotes told by the author involve planning-related laws and regulations that defeated common-sense approaches to problem-solving. In one cited case, even Mother Teresa couldn’t get a break!

We, as public-sector planners, need to ask the philosophical question: why are we here? Many Republicans have already asked this question and their answer will likely result in less employment for planners and other well-intentioned public servants. Let’s pave the path to heaven with a better response.

---

*Steve is the Community Development Director for Sand City.*



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**NORTHERN SECTION CALENDAR**

**October**

- 9 UC Berkeley, Henry Cisneros
- 20 SPUR, Public Spaces
- 30 UC Berkeley, Greg Hise

OCTOBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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**November**

- 15-17 Urban Streams Conference, Arcata

NOVEMBER						
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**December**

- 5 NSCCAPA Holiday Party

DECEMBER						
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