

JUNE 1997

Northern News

NORTHERN SECTION, CALIFORNIA CHAPTER, AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

A Bridge to the 21st Century (and hopefully beyond)

by Robert R. Piper, Ph.D.

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The Northern Section is considering making an endorsement of plans and/or principles for the probable replacement of the eastern span of the Bay Bridge. Although it is unusual for the **Northern News** to lead with an opinion article, we hope to foment discussion of this critical issue with Robert Piper's article. The Northern Section Board will review the various options that are now being considered by the Bay Bridge Design Task Force, a subcommittee of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. Major issues include the bridge's structural design, the provision of bicycle lanes, how the bridge should be financed, and the possibility of congestion based pricing. During its July 10 meeting in Berkeley, the Board will consider which plans, provisions, or principles, if any, should be publicly endorsed by the Northern Section.

As the article on page 3 reads, the Board is also considering adopting a position on the proposal for a regional gas tax. If you are interested in participating in the discussions of one or both subjects, we encourage you to come to the meeting or register your opinion by calling the Northern Section voicemail at (415)281-0195 or emailing to jcook@ced.berkeley.edu

More than seven years after the fatal collapse of a section of the Bay Bridge, CalTrans has opened discussion of the retrofit or replacement of the bridge's eastern span. Major issues are what kind of investment will best meet future transportation needs, who should pay for it, and how it should be managed. There seems to be consensus developing that replacement instead of retrofitting is the most prudent option. The local media have been reporting on various designs for a new eastern span, whose cost estimates start at \$1 billion.

Elected officials are trying to decide what to tell CalTrans to build and how to raise the necessary financing. Seven members of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) are holding public hearings as the Bay Bridge Design Task Force, chaired by Alameda County Supervisor Mary King.

Transit advocates want any new structure designed so that passenger trains could potentially fit. Indeed, BART already carries standees during rush hours—additional and alternative transit will be needed. Measures to run rail across Treasure Island and the west span to San Francisco are predictable and feasible. It is only prudent to ensure that design of a new east span does not foreclose such a step. It is imperative that the Task Force ask CalTrans for cost implications in designing for ultimate installation of LRT or (more expensive) conventional rail passenger service over a new eastern span.

A related issue is rehabilitation of the TransBay Terminal and its approaches in San Francisco. It, too, needs costly seismic retrofit. It currently serves as a bus terminal for AC Transit, from the East Bay, MUNI, and other buses from Marin and San Mateo Counties and elsewhere. It was built for the

trains that carried passengers across the Bay Bridge until 1958. It is the ideal San Francisco terminus for Caltrain and an eventual high speed train to the south. It would then serve as an intermodal transfer facility and activity center for the entire Bay area.

Another question is bicycle travel. Some in the bicycle community want bike lanes included on any new eastern span. Others say that such lanes would serve primarily the needs of recreational cyclists to Treasure Island, not commuters to or from San Francisco; that, even if bike lanes eventually extended all the way across, the Bay Bridge is too long and suffers too much wind and rain ever to attract significant numbers of commuters; that a better solution is to allow bicycles on transit and expand transit service across the Bay. The Task Force should ask CalTrans to estimate the additional cost of bike lanes so that costs and benefits can be compared.

In their plans for the new eastern span, CalTrans proposes to widen the travel lanes and provide shoulders. The result would be a structure wide enough that an additional lane could conceivably be added in each direction. The Task Force should direct CalTrans to reveal the cost penalty of the extra width.

Financing the project has become a classic California circus. Politicians scramble to ensure that somebody else's constituents, not theirs, pay. Bay Area legislators want the Bay Bridge funded out of the state gas tax (strictly speaking, the Highways account, which includes vehicle registration and drivers license fees in addition to motor fuel taxes) so that all Californians can share the tab. Legislators from elsewhere are reluctant. What, they ask, happened to the concept

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DIRECTORS CORNER

by Wendy Cosin, AICP

I'm going to spill the beans and announce the nine Northern Section CCAPA award recipients BEFORE the banquet. Rather than build the suspense, I want to tell you enough about the winning plans to stimulate your interest in attending the **June 27 Awards Banquet**. This is your chance to learn more about award-winning projects—why they won and how they can help you with similar efforts in your community. It is also an opportunity to bring a planning commissioner, council member, or city manager to an event that will reinforce the importance of planning and its potential for making change in our communities.

In the Planning Implementation category, the **Stockton Waterfront Revival Vision and Action** plan won the top award for a large jurisdiction. The visioning process that they used shaped the project and included an economic feasibility analysis of the vision. The **Santa Clara County Growth Management** and UGB-related projects won an Award of Merit in recognition of the cooperative efforts of several jurisdictions in describing successful approaches to preserving agricultural land, protecting hillsides, and establishing long-term UGBs.

In the small jurisdiction sector of the same category, the winner is the **Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan**. This long-range plan describes restoration, preservation, and enhancement of the Petaluma riverfront, including water-related commercial development, bike and pedestrian link, and a focus on maximizing the benefit of the river for river-related uses. An Award of Merit will also go to the **Clayton Housing Element** for its inclusion of detailed targets for affordable housing on four sites.

The publication *"Rebuilding Communities in America"* won the Focused Issue Planning Award. This engaging book describes opportunities to use a people-oriented philosophy in plans to rebuild communities. Three awards of merit will be presented to 1) the **Santa Clara County Golf Course Environmental Design Guidelines**, which address habitat protection, 2) the **Santee Neighborhood Revitalization Plan**, which identifies code enforcement, unified property management, and increased police service as key issues in its plan to revitalize a lower income neighborhood, and 3) the **UCSF Long Range Development Plan** for its extensive public involvement efforts.

An Education Project Award will be presented to Urban Ecology's *"Blueprint for a Sustainable Bay Area,"* profiled in the December/January issue of the Northern News. The publication includes excellent graphics and a thoughtful presentation as well as hands-on tips for people to make their own lives more sustainable.

Last year, over 100 people joined us in the awards celebration at the Fort Mason Officers' Club, with its wonderful bay views. We are extremely pleased to return to this spectacular setting for the 1997 awards presentation. Make your reservations early: call Wayne Goldberg at 707-543-3220 for information and reservations. Although you now know who the winners are, we hope to entice you by arranging for a surprise guest speaker. Hint: s/he's prominent in politics, planning, and education. Hope to see you there.



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The deadline for submitting materials for inclusion in the **Northern News** is the 16th day of the month prior to publication.



Northern Section Board to Consider Regional Gas Tax Endorsement

The Northern Section APA Board will consider endorsement of a regional gas tax at its July meeting. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission has sponsored a bill in the current state legislature (AB 595 - Valerie Brown of Sonoma) that would authorize a vote by the region's electorate to approve a regional gas tax to fund a series of transportation improvement projects.

The bill directs the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to develop a list of transportation expenditures prior to the vote. Working with local officials and the public, MTC will develop a list of specific projects and programs, develop costs estimates and options for the amount of tax revenues expected.

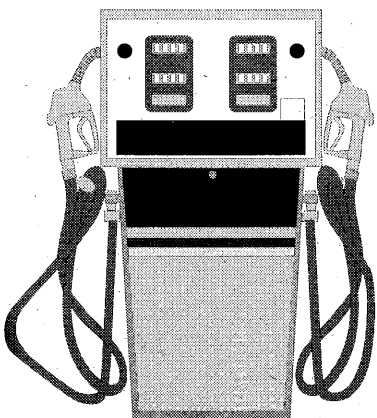
The bill would authorize placing the gas tax on the ballot in all nine Bay Area counties. AB 595 authorizes a maximum tax rate of 10 cents per gallon; the tax level submitted to the voters might be lower. A regional gasoline tax of 10 cents per gallon would generate approximately \$4 billion (in 1997 dollars) over a 20-year period, or on average approximately \$200 million per year.

The Northern Section Board reviewed background material from MTC at the May and June board meetings and will consider endorsing the measure at the next meeting in July. The measure was approved by the full Assembly in May and is currently moving through the Senate. Governor Wilson indicated opposition to the proposed measure when it was introduced to the legislature in previous years. However, a growing coalition of business, environmental and transportation organizations have endorsed the measure including the BART Board, the California Bicycle Coalition, Union of Concerned Scientists, Planning and Conservation League and the Sierra Club of California.

Gasoline is taxed on a per-gallon basis at the federal and state levels. Currently, the state and federal tax rates are the same; each is 18 cents per gallon. Gasoline is also subject to the state sales tax which varies by county. Gasoline costs in the U.S. are among the lowest among developed nations. Adjusted for inflation, current gasoline prices at the pump are less than they were 20 years ago. Even a sizable new tax on gasoline in the Bay Area would leave the gas tax costs paid by motorists well below historical levels.

Earthquakes, the 1990-95 recession and the failure of state-wide bond measures have sharply curtailed available transportation funding. Currently, many of the Bay Area's transportation systems, including MUNI and AC Transit have only limited local dedicated sources of funding for operation costs and decreasing funding sources for operations at the state and federal levels. Likewise, many local agencies have only partial funding for major capital improvements such as the proposed light rail corridor in the Marin and Sonoma Counties, the Geary light rail corridor in San Francisco and the proposed BART-Santa Clara County commuter rail connection between Union City and San Jose. Local streets and roads are another eligible category that represent one of the largest funding shortfalls faced by most local governments.

The Northern Section invites your comments and questions about the proposal and the Board's pending decision on whether to publicly endorse AB 595. Please call any of the Board members listed on page 2 or leave a message on the Northern Section voicemail (415) 281-0195. To receive information directly from MTC, please call Steve Heminger, Legislative Affairs Director at MTC, (510) 464-7810.



A Bridge... *(continued from page 1)*

that toll bridges should be self sustaining? Bay Area legislators argue strenuously against covering all costs by toll increases.

Never mind that, in constant dollars, the current toll (\$1.00) is only 6.25% of what was charged when the bridge opened in 1936. The toll then was \$1.30, which would be \$16.00 in 1997 dollars. Never mind that bridge tolls elsewhere in the U.S. are far higher. The Golden Gate Bridge, whose independent Board sees itself in the transportation business, not the automobile promotion business, charges \$3.00; it costs even more to enter Manhattan.

The dominant view, expressed by a prominent Bay Area legislator, is, "Californians have viewed the automobile as more than just a mode of transportation. It is an instrument for individual liberty..." Conclusion? Nothing so crass as cost should dissuade a Californian from jumping in the car and driving; or worse, impose the humiliation of sharing the ride with someone else in order to save money; or, worst of all, risk the physical proximity of strangers on transit, some of them less prosperous of a different skin color or both.

The north v. south dispute will probably be resolved by compromise: some gas tax money and some toll increase. Legislation (SB 47, Kopp) to raise tolls on all State owned bay bridges by \$1.00, to \$2.00 is working its way through the legislature. Drivers over all the bridges would pay extra, though Bay Bridge users would reap most of the benefits. The toll increase would last only long enough to pay for the bridge work and then revert to \$1.00. In a break with history, none of the new revenue would go to transit. No provision was made to making the bridge function better. The only consideration given to the environment was to ensure that provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act be waived. Fortunately, other State and federal laws do apply. The finance issue offers an opportunity both to improve bridge productivity and to reduce environmental degradation. There are

three issues: How much motorists should pay altogether; how they should pay it; and how the revenues should be spent. By market standards, total revenues from highway users cover less than half the costs of all streets, roads and highways in the U.S. In addition, many economists believe that highway users should bear the costs that drivers impose on others, called "spillover costs." Spillover costs include various kinds of pollution (air, noise, vibration, pavement runoff and particulates), congestion, petroleum supply anxiety (the Gulf War, for example), injury crashes, isolation of those who do not drive, the demise of public transit, and so forth.

Economists and politicians as diverse as John Anderson and Ross Perot have long argued that government should charge motorists more; that cheap driving exacerbates all the problems of spillover costs—pollution, white flight to the suburbs, and sprawl, and that elimination of highway subsidies would be good for both the environment and the economy. Higher bridge tolls would reduce spillover costs. Social costs would be reduced still further if toll revenue revenues were applied to supporting alternative transit services such as ferries, buses, and trains.

Finally, there is the question of how tolls should be levied. We all know that traffic congestion is a serious problem. It imposes delay costs that burden the economy, generates tons of pollution, and leads to pleas for more highway lanes. Since most vehicles contributing to congestion carry only the driver, the productivity of the highway, measured in terms of people moved, is a tiny fraction of what it could be. The traditional traffic engineering focus on maximizing vehicle flow is misdirected. On the Bay Bridge, the SOV problem has been recognized by opening toll-free HOV lanes for vehicles carrying three or more people west-bound. Historically, some toll monies have also supported transit, where vehicles carry far more than one passenger.

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Planning Directors' Seminar

by Michael Neuman, AICP

On May 9, forty persons attended the first Planning Leadership Seminar sponsored by the Northern Section, the Bay Area Planning Directors Association and the California County Planners Association. The seminar, titled Planning Leadership Through Strategy and Management, was held on the Oakland waterfront at Scott's Restaurant in Jack London Square.

The seminar sold out a month in advance. City and county planning, development, housing, redevelopment, transportation and port agency directors throughout California attended. Sunnyvale, Antioch and Redwood City sent entire management teams of two or three different directors and managers. John Bridges, President of the California Chapter, flew in from Los Angeles.

A high-level, high quality exchange of ideas occurred throughout the day, which was evident in the intensive participation and in the written evaluations of the seminar by the participants. The very act of getting away from the daily grind and be with peers to focus on what matters most to public sector leaders was

judged an invaluable aspect of the seminar.

The seminar was focused on developing top-level strategy. Daniel Iacofano of Moore Iaconfano Goltsman in Berkeley kicked off the morning sessions. These centered on strategy as a way of thinking and acting that leaders use to look at the big picture, select key items that make a big difference, and then to take bold strokes to make strategic change happen. The essence of strategy was described as positioning. What is the position of planning in government? In the community? What is the best way to position development, or a major project, in a place? A triad of timing, location and critical mass were shown to be the keys to a positioning strategy.

Planning as problem solving, planning as regulating, the planning agency as a black box — these were just a few of many images that popped up from a short exercise which generated another debate. This debate centered on how planning is seen in the eyes of constituents. Planning, accord-

(continued on page 6)

Reservation Form

1997 Northern Section Annual Awards Banquet

There's still time to join your colleagues in honoring the excellent planning efforts conducted in the Northern Section. Northern Section award winners will go on to compete in the state, and if successful, the national levels. The Banquet affords you the opportunity to learn about these programs in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere.

For the second year the Awards Banquet will be held at the **Fort Mason Officers Club** on the beautiful San Francisco waterfront. A social hour and no host bar is scheduled to begin at 6:15, with dinner and presentations to follow at 7:15, on **June 27th**. Last year well over one hundred individuals attended this event, so sign up now.

To secure your reservation, mail this form for delivery by June 20th, with a check for **\$32.00 per person** to:

Wayne G. Goldberg
Director of Community Development
P.O. Box 1678
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Please reserve _____ seats for me at the 1997 **Northern Section Awards Banquet**.

Make check payable to
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Northern News



The Natural Step Comes to Town

A Challenge for Planners

by Lois Jones, urban planner

Two extraordinary one-day seminars, on June 9 and June 28, will provide participants with a shared framework for understanding sustainability and powerful strategic tools for achieving it. The June 9 seminar is a rare opportunity for a small group of City management, staff and political leaders to meet with two top eco-municipality trainers from The Natural Step organization in Sweden. It is sponsored by Alameda County Waste Management and Recycling Agency. Call Lois Jones at (510) 527-3452 for more details.

The June 28 event is co-sponsored by Architects, Designers, Planners for Social Responsibility and the Green Business Alliance and is focused on sustainable business and industry as well as local government applications. The seminar will provide an overview of the

Natural Step ideas, followed by dialogue and working groups in the afternoon. It will be led by Susan Burns, president of Natural Strategies, and facilitated by Terrance McNalley, facilitator, writer and host of the 'solutions centered' radio program on KPFK-FM in Los Angeles. It will be held in the Lake Merritt Garden Center in Oakland, June 28 from 9 to 5. For more information, call Gary Gerber at (510) 845-2997, gballiance@aol.com or TNS@naturalstep.org (415) 332-9394.

The Natural Step, an international environmental organization, has achieved impressive results since it was founded in 1989 by Dr. Karl-Henrik Robert, a Swedish physician and cancer researcher. More than 60 major corporations, 100 municipalities and dozens of smaller businesses have retooled based on four fundamental, scientific, non-controversial and easily understood environmental principles. The Natural Step is grounded in the belief that only by working within the natural cycles of the Earth can we survive and prosper. Because the ecosphere and its systems support human societies and economies, not the other way around, human societies must be designed so that they do not compromise natural systems.

The environmental principles were originally endorsed by 50 prominent scientists in Sweden after 21 working drafts. This understanding reduces the conflict that plagues the relationship between the environmental movement and business and commerce. Twenty prominent US scientists, including Drs. Ralph J. Cicerone and F. Sherwood Rowland, University of California, agreed that 'the application of The Natural Step's four System Conditions is a valid approach for addressing problems that threaten human civilization and biological diversity, and is especially useful for organizing information regarding sustainability.' Chair of the US branch of the organization is Paul Hawken, a founder of Smith and Hawken and author of "The Ecology of Commerce". Molly Harriss Olson, formerly executive director of the President's Council on Sustainable Development, is President and CEO of TNS/US.

MONTEREY '97



California Chapter
American Planning Association
October 12 - 15

Diverse professional development opportunities abound at Monterey '97, CCAPA's Annual Conference. Peter Douglas, California Coastal Commission Executive Director, will be the Opening Plenary Session Speaker, and Bill Press, co-host of Crossfire, CNN's popular political debate program, will be Keynote Lunch Speaker.

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- MW3:** Boat Tour of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
- MW4:** Pebble Beach and Spanish Bay Revegetation
- MW5:** Fort Ord Base Conversion
- MW6:** Cannery Row/Doc Ricketts' Walking Tour

For further information, to request a registration form or to register for the planning conference geared toward change, call (916) 361-8384 or access CCAPA

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A Bridge...

More aggressive action is possible. A coalition of business, government, and environmental groups has proposed varying bridge tolls by time of day. The idea is to emulate businesses with analogous congestion problems. Examples include resorts, hotels, airlines, restaurants, theaters, and telephone companies. All vary their prices by time of day or week or year so as to encourage customers to switch patronage from times when demand is heavy—the system is at capacity—to periods when demand is low. Originally dubbed “congestion pricing,” it is really “productivity enhancement pricing.” Variable pricing allows a facility of fixed capacity to produce more service. Such productivity enhancing pricing has proven remarkably successful at reducing highway congestion where tried in other countries.

The coalition proposed that Bay Bridge tolls be raised during rush hours and lowered during the “off peak.” The HOV lanes would remain free and the toll increase would not apply to low income drivers qualifying for lifeline utility rates. The variable tolls would be implemented with electronic toll collection, which CalTrans is installing to replace manual toll takers.

The Bay Bridge funding crisis offers an ideal opportunity to implement variable tolls. They would encourage people to travel together in fewer vehicles, HOV or transit, or to travel when traffic is light. The bridge would carry more people (function better) and pollution would be reduced. In the long run, some people would seek to settle in locations where access to transit or ride sharing would be easier. A market would develop for dense development and infill, the antithesis of sprawl.

The planning community should speak out on these issues. Do we want to continue the status quo of subsidizing automobile use—encouraging pollution, congestion, waste, sprawl, and social division—or do we want to change course?



Letter to the editor

To the editor:

My compliments and thanks to you for the cover article “The Road Too Often Taken.” Whether we agree in whole, part, or not at all with Jane Holtz Kay’s ideas, you have given us something to think about, discuss, and debate. *That’s* exciting stuff.

This article is a substantial and positive departure from the “culture of complaint” that had a hold on the newsletter contents for some time—frankly, we do not need another article or editorial on just how tough it is to be a planner. Enough whining already!

Thanks for redirecting the focus and keep it up.

Gayle Borchard, AICP

Principal, G. Borchard and Associates,
Oakland

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) 540-0655.

Planning Directors' Seminar

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ing to seminar participants, is seen in vastly different ways by the various stakeholders. Claudia Cappio, Emeryville's Planning and Building Director, indicated that in Emeryville the city council sees planning as a "maze", the citizens see planning as a "necessary evil" and she sees it as the place to get information and guidance about how to "navigate the maze and get through the permit process." How does the fact that planning is viewed in highly divergent ways, and therefore valued to varying degrees, affect how we plan? How does it sway politicians and others who determine if we plan?

Paul Zucker of Zucker Systems in San Diego, author of the recent book *The ABZ's of Public Management*, started the afternoon with an entertaining and idea-packed session on customer service. Customer service is an example of one type of strategy. In the strategic context it is seen as a way for the agency to perform at a higher level in the eyes of their constituents or customers. A properly executed customer service system changes the orientation of the entire agency and puts the top staffers on the front lines, where the "rubber meets the road". Customer service is driven by feedback from customers about their experiences with the agency — feedback that is often hard to get.

Participants developed a strategy for their own agency in an exercise to close the seminar. They spent part of the time working individually on six strategic variables that they could choose to change and use within their own jurisdiction: the agency's core values, its

staffing, organizational design, systems and process design, resources, and technology. Then people worked in pairs to exchange and refine the strategy frameworks they developed.

Finally, the seminar ended with a group discussion in which participants shared the strategies they developed. Gerald Green, San Francisco's new Planning Director, offered his approach to use zoning and regulations as a strategy to change his department from within. His approach was at once a subtle and detailed organizational strategy and a bold political strategy.

One attendee said that she would recommend the seminar to her colleagues because "it is an opportunity to meet and hear from other senior management level planners regarding important issues we all worry about."

One idea spurred by the seminar was to prepare a strategy for the Northern Section over the next year. Another request from some attendees was to bring the seminar down to Southern California. Opening up attendance to the "second in command" at development and planning agencies in addition to directors was suggested by several persons. If you have thoughts on this, please direct them to the editor or any of the persons mentioned here. We'd love to hear from you!

Michael Neuman of the Michael Neuman Consultancy in Berkeley (510) 548-7500 specializes in strategies for public agencies, development firms, and non-profits to attain sustainable development.



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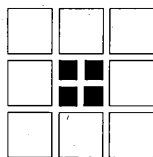
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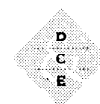


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NORTHERN SECTION CALENDAR

June

- 5 NSCCAPA Board Meeting, Berkeley
- 9 The Natural Step (510) 527-3452
- 16 Bay Bridge Engineering and Design Advisory Panel
Port of Oakland Board Room
(510) 464-7810
- 24 Bay Bridge Design Task Force
Port of Oakland Board Room
(510) 464-7810
- 27 NSCCAPA Annual Awards Banquet (707) 543-3220
- 28 The Natural Step (510) 845-2997

July

- 10 NSCCAPA Board Meeting, Berkeley
- 16 Bay Bridge Design Task Force
MTC Auditorium, Oakland
(510) 464-7810
- 23 MTC Meeting: Adopt bridge design recommendations
MTC Auditorium, Oakland
(510) 464-7810

JUNE

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

JULY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

NSCCAPA Board Meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month at the Berkeley Permit Services Center, 2118 Milvia Street, one block west of the Berkeley BART. The Board welcomes your attendance and encourages your participation in the organization. For more information, contact Wendy Cosin at (510) 705-8108; (wec1@ci.berkeley.ca.us)



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