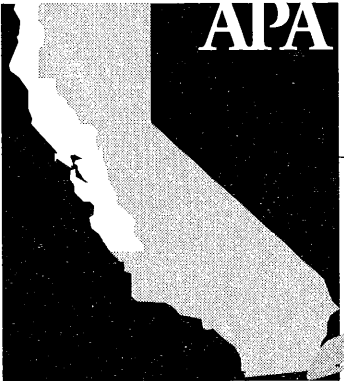


11/7/97



Northern News

NORTHERN SECTION, CALIFORNIA CHAPTER, AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

NOVEMBER 1997

Sustainability vs. the American Press

By Beryl Magilavy

eral cats, perfume, and eliminating automobiles from the city. These issues framed the press coverage of the new sustainability plan enacted by the City of San Francisco in July of 1997. For months, following the lead of a dismissive and misleading front-page piece in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the American press has indulged in a collective tizzy, from Rush Limbaugh's, "This goes beyond socialism. This, ladies and gentlemen, is communism!" to a "more craziness from San Francisco" paragraph in the *New York Times*. On the eve of the Kyoto

conference on climate change, this across-the-board dismissal of a community effort by a major American city to reshape its future bears some examination.

Traditionally, quality-of-life planning in cities has been handled in separate pieces: land-use the purview of architects and city planners; auto circulation the

realm of traffic engineers; water quality the province of public health chemists and works engineers. Environmental problems were addressed as a response to State and federal mandates. Economic development proceeded on a separate track. Health and social justice issues were addressed by city departments and the non-profit sector. These efforts were not coordinated and often worked at cross-purposes.

These development practices have created a culture in which cumulative effects are never addressed, and short-term decisions reduce long-term quality of life. A few instances illustrate this. There is near-consensus in the scientific community that the burning of fossil fuels is causing a dangerous change in global climate. We have already seen in-

creased winter flooding and the proliferation of severe hurricanes. What's to come? More floods in winter, more drought in summer, irrigation problems in summer because of decreased Sierra snow-pack, and more conflicts among potential water-users.

The proliferation of hazardous chemicals in our environment is also having negative effects on human and ecological health. San Francisco now disposes of seven and a half pounds of waste per person per day. The Audubon's Christmas bird counts show a marked decline in many bird species. Deaths of pedestrians from being stuck by automobiles is at an all-time high in San Francisco.

This is not merely a random list of current social ills. These problems represent a sampling of the results to be expected from a society that is not in tune with people and nature—one that allows its long-term planning to consist of the sum of unrelated short-term decisions based on immediate convenience and short-term profit, at the expense of long-term financial and social well-being.

A sustainable society, however, is one that meets the needs of the present without sacrificing the ability of future generations and the natural world to meet their own needs. It is a society that has a wellspring of values that say that people and nature matter.

Over the last decade an international movement has grown to create sustainable global development through local community-based strategic planning. San Francisco is in the forefront of the effort to shift direction toward prevention of environmental and social problems, and toward a local economy that is less wasteful and retains more economic benefit locally. It is obvious that prevention is cheaper, in the long run, than

The trick is to have the insight to identify what steps are to be taken and the persistence to carry them out.

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DIRECTORS CORNER

by Wendy Cosin

Over 500 planners attended the state APA conference in Monterey. The featured speakers at the plenary session and keynote lunch helped raise spirits with their strong support for planners and planning. They also recognized the challenges facing planning in California, especially in light of state fiscal policies and pending takings legislation.

Keynote speaker **Bill Press**, co-host of CNN's "Crossfire," offered both perspective and advice to planners. Twenty years ago, when Press was Director of the State Office of Planning and Research, there was more support for planning on state and local levels. While many state planning policies from two decades ago remain valid (i.e. renew and maintain existing developed areas; focus new development within or immediately adjacent to these areas), they did not go far enough and the free market has often overshadowed planning. Press was not shy about suggesting that the lack of support from Sacramento has thwarted good land use planning.

Press offered the following advice to planners: "Be Proud; Be Bold; Be Smart." He stated that we should be proud because planning decisions are among the most important decisions being made — the results of the decisions have long-lasting effects and set the stage for all future change. In our role of recommending or making these decisions, he emphasized the need for planners to be bold because California desperately needs strong land use planning. However, Press suggested that unless we are smart enough to find a solution to the economic pressures influencing local government in their land use decision-making process, we are unlikely to be successful in promoting good land use policies and decisions.

Prior to Proposition 13, cities had a source of income that allowed land use decisions to be based on merit, rather than on the need to attract sales tax and other revenue. This fiscal issue is explored in the California Planning Roundtable's recent publication — "Restoring the Balance: Managing Fiscal Issues and Land-Use Planning Decisions in California". The report succinctly describes how and why local governments are basing land use decisions on fiscal considerations, rather than with an eye toward healthy and balanced communities. Goals and actions are suggested to assist in taking the fiscal incentives out of land use planning. Two of the recommendations are: local governments need to work together in allocating tax revenue and the state should provide jurisdictions with a stable share of property-tax revenue. To receive a copy of the report, call Janet Fairbanks at San Diego Association of Governments — 619-595-5370.

California Coastal Commission Executive Director Peter Douglas' comments at the opening plenary session recognized the historical perspective of this year's 25th Coastal Commission anniversary and identified three themes threatening environmental protection. Value choices — the personal values of judges and legislators

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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.

**Housing & Community Development Manager (Principal Planner)**

The City of Santa Cruz

Salary: \$4,996-\$6,374/mo + benefits
Plans, organizes and directs the activities of the Housing & Community Development Division of the Planning Dept. Requires BA in Urban Planning, Public or Business Admin., or related, 5 yrs of responsible professional planning exp., which included at least 3 yrs of exp. in a public agency and 3 yrs of exp in housing & community development and 2 yrs of supervisory exp. Apply by 11/21/97. Contact City of Santa Cruz Personnel Dept., 337 Locust St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060, (408) 429-3616. TDD 800-735-2929. EOE/ADA

Environmental Programs Coordinator

City of Menlo Park

Salary: \$4,034.86 - \$4,863.11/month

The City of Menlo Park seeks a professional individual to act as a public liaison and staff consultant on environmental projects and programs, prepare or assist other staff in designs, specifications, plans, estimates, analysis, reports and proposals for environmental projects or programs; review and manage programs involving environmental mitigation, enhancement, and sustainability. The ideal candidate must be a self-starter and teamworker. Will also be responsible for developing and maintaining a program where businesses come into and maintain full compliance with environmental regulations and implement energy and water conservation, solid waste reduction and recycling, and pollution practices. Requirements: Bachelor of Science degree in environmental science, planning, civil engineering, or other related field, two years experience in environmental sciences, planning, or civil engineering, and possess a valid California driver's license. Contact the city of Menlo Park, Personnel Department, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025. Phone: (650) 858-3370. Resumes submitted with a city application will not be accepted. Deadline: 11/28/97. EOE

Fourteenth Annual Planning Seminar at Sonoma State University

The Planning Program at Sonoma State University and the Institute for Community Planning Assistance will be hosting the Fourteenth Annual Planning Seminar for Commissioners, Elected Officials, and Agency Staff. The topics include planning law update and current events in planning. For more information or a registration form call the contact person below.

Instructors:

Daniel J. Curtin, Jr., Attorney-at-Law
McCutchen, Doyle, Brown, and
Enerson

Gary Binger, Planning Director
Association of Bay Area
Governments

Date: December 6, 1997

Time: 8:30a.m. - 2:00p.m.

Cost: \$55 per attendee
(includes lunch and course materials)

Location: Sonoma State University
Stevenson Hall 1002
Rohnert Park

Contact: Kristine Bickell, ICPA, Project
Manager
(707) 664-4105
kristine.bickell@sonoma.edu

Stegner Environmental Debate Series

"Community in a Global Age" will be the topic of discussion at the Stegner Environmental Debates at the Stegner Environmental Center at the San Francisco Public Library. Although most of us support the idea of strong communities, many of our public policies and social habits tend to devalue community—from local zoning regulations to state and national transportation policies to international trade agreements. The debate will look at way to channel business energies, scientific genius, and investment capital into building systems that honor community.

When: Wednesday, November 19, 7:00 p.m.

Where: Koret Auditorium, San Francisco
Public Library

Info/Reservations: (415) 437-4860

NSCCAPA Holiday Party in San Jose

The Holiday Party will soon be upon us and is looking to be a very popular event. Send in your reservation now to guarantee a seat and qualify for a raffle. This year's party promises to be to be different than years past—it is scheduled on a Friday night, includes a sit-down dinner and has free parking on site. We hope these changes will encourage more of you to attend and join in a festive and fun environment. Prizes will be awarded to the Best Dressed and Most Festively Attired (who said we planners weren't fun?).

Bellino's Restaurant is located in downtown San Jose and is accessible by light rail as well as the Cahill CalTrain Station—we encourage the use of public transportation. For information on train schedules, hotel accommodations, and other nighttime activities in downtown San Jose, please circle appropriately on the enclosed reservation form or call Lori Neff at (408) 277-4576.

AICP Review Courses

It's that time of year again—to prepare for the AICP Exam. Fortunately, the NSCCAPA can help you prepare. For information on how to participate in review classes during the spring months, call AICP Coordinator Don Bradley at (650) 592-0915.

UC Berkeley Extension Courses

The UC Berkeley Extension series of courses on Land Use and Natural Resources continues throughout the fall. Most classes are one day and are held in Berkeley or in the San Francisco UC Extension in South of Market. For complete information on classes or to get a registration form, call (510) 643-7143.

Sustainability vs. the American Press

(continued from page 1)

remediation, if indeed remediation is possible at all. The trick is to have the insight to identify what steps are to be taken and the persistence to carry them out.

The organizers of San Francisco's sustainability planning process divided the field into 15 topics, from air quality to water and wastewater management. They invited local experts in each topic area to participate in a series of working sessions during 1996. Participants were asked to identify broad social goals, five-year objectives, objectives to achieve a sustainable society and actions that might help the objectives be achieved.

Implementation of parts of the plan has begun: the Department of the Environment oversees a city-wide pesticide reduction program and integrates the concepts of resource-efficient building into municipal projects; the Water Department continues to pursue increased recycling of wastewater.

While many of the proposals set out in the sustainability plan are ambitious, they are not unreasonable. (Judge for yourself: the plan on the City's Web site at <http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/environment/>.) Did the 370+ professionals who drafted the 15 topic sections lose their collective grips and propose a planning document that merited the collective scorn of the assembled American media? We don't believe so.

It is easier to think about something if one has a context of similar things in which to consider it. While nearly 2,000 other world cities have embraced a sustainable planning approach since the 1992 UN Conference in Rio on Sustainable Development, hardly any of them are in the United States. The international Agenda 21 treaty, signed by the US, that commits nations to begin to shift their development prac-

tices toward sustainability, is virtually unknown here. Reporters writing about this rather complex new planning tool had little familiarity with the reasons it was developed or what it hopes to achieve.

Much more familiar to many reporters, however, is the "only in San Francisco" story, the city of "fruits, nuts, and flakes." The specificity of the plan's proposals led to its trivialization. While the background leading up to and justifying the various proposals were often explained to the reporters, this context didn't make the story. Instead, journal after journal parroted the content and tone of the original Chronicle piece. Not all coverage fell into this superficial level, however. The *Washington Post's* George Will compared the plan to the days of Bolshevism. The *Boston Globe* implied that San Francisco had lost its grip on reality.

A disturbing thread through these critiques is the inference that any government action to achieve social ends is the thin end of the totalitarian wedge. Leaving aside the point that many of the proposals in San Francisco's sustainability plan are for private-sector action, these comments illustrate the strong ideology in the US that all forms of planning are an inappropriate intervention into private choice and the free exercise of the market. In this worldview, the good of the common is completely sacrificed to the preference of the individual.

Another attitude underlying the ridiculing of San Francisco's plan is an inherent assumption that nature has no value. It is easy to laugh at proposals for maintaining biodiversity (Feral cats killing ground-dwelling birds? Who cares?!) if one dismisses forms of life other than humans as unworthy of attention. Change our transportation mix

to decrease air pollution? "Eat my exhaust!" said Debra Saunders of the *Chronicle* in a column on bikes.

Perhaps our generation has no obligation to share the world's resources with others living today, or to preserve a decent quality of life for future generations. Perhaps there is nothing we can do to preserve the health and beauty of our city and the richness of its natural context. We in San Francisco do not share that view. Schopenhauer said, "All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as self-evident." The press coverage has not impeded our work toward a sustainable city.

We urge other cities to join Austin; Chattanooga; Portland; San Francisco; Santa Monica; Seattle; Thomas Jefferson County, Virginia and a growing number of other local authorities in this country in planning to ensure that their quality of life can be sustained into the future. Collectively, we can shift America's priorities in a direction that will improve everyone's quality of life, and leave a lasting legacy for the generations that come after us.

Beryl Magilavy is director of the City and County of San Francisco's Department of the Environment.

Copies of The Sustainability Plan for the City of San Francisco are available from the Department of the Environment (415) 554-6390.

Northern Section CCAPA

Holiday Party

Friday, December 5, 1997

Bellino Bar & Grill

95 So. Market Street
(at San Fernando Street)
Downtown San Jose

6:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

No host bar begins at 6 p.m.

Dinner will be served at 7:30 p.m.

For reservations or information contact

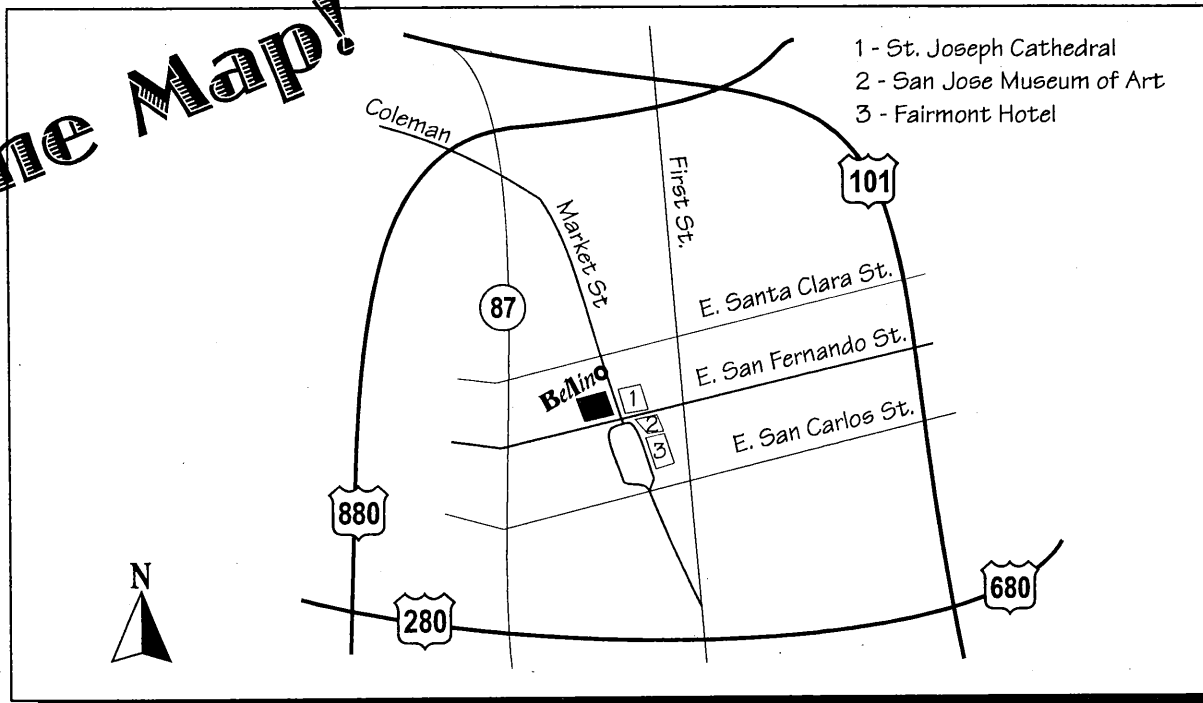
Lori Neff (408) 277-4576 or

Deborah Ungo-McCormick (408) 920-0900 or 298-1942

\$27.00 per person
(includes on-site parking).
RSVP before November 15 and you
will qualify to enter a drawing.
\$32.00 after November 15.
Space is limited, so please
call to confirm availability.



The Map!



The Menu!

FIRST COURSE: (Choice of One)

Mixed Sonoma Greens with Balsamic Vinaigrette and Garlic Croutons
or Soup of the Day

SECOND COURSE: (Choice of One)

- 1) Penne Milano with Eggplant in a Basil and Garlic Flavored Marinara
- 2) Breast of Chicken Saute with Mushrooms, Artichokes and Sun-dried Tomatoes
- 3) Salmon in Filo Pastry with Lemon, Ginger and Lemongrass Coulis.
- 4) Oak-Fired Posted Pork Chops with Mushrooms and Pancata in Cabernet Sauce

THIRD COURSE: (Choice of One - coffee included)

White Chocolate Mousse with Fresh Monterey Berries
or Bellino Tiramisu

Please send payment to: Lori Neff, Planning Division, 801 N. First St., Rm 400, San Jose, CA 95110-1795

Choice: (Please Circle)

First Course:

Salad or Soup

Second Course:

Penne Milano

Chicken

Salmon

Pork Chops

Third Course:

Mousse or Tiramisu

Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone Number: _____

() _____

Number of Persons: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

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NORTHERN SECTION CCAPA

I would like more information on:
(Please circle all that apply)
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Hotels/Downtown Events
Night Clubs



Community Development Positions

City of San Rafael

Senior Planner (Current Planning)

Salary: \$4,840 - \$5,608/ month

Reporting to the Planning Manager, this position will supervise staff or major functions in the Current Planning Section. Requires: graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in planning or related field and four years of increasingly responsible professional planning experience. Prefer some experience with design review.

Planning Technician

Salary: \$3,081 - \$3,537/month

Requires: any combination of related experience and education equivalent to completion of a four year degree in planning or related field which demonstrates significant knowledge of the principles of city planning and general office procedures.

Senior Planner (Advance Planning)

Salary: \$4,840 - \$5,608/ month

Reporting to the Planning Manager, this position will supervise the Advance Planning Section. Requires: graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in planning or related field and four years of increasingly responsible professional planning experience that has included advance planning responsibility.

All positions: Apply by 5:00 p.m., Friday, November 21, 1997. City application required for each position; application supplement required for the two Senior Planner positions. Application material may be obtained from the City of San Rafael, Human Resources Department, 1400 5th Avenue, Room 210, San Rafael, CA 94915-1560. Phone: (415) 485-3063. EOE

Transportation Coordinator

Marin County Community Development Agency

Salary: \$6,255-\$6,565/month

Duties include developing a multimodal transportation implementation strategic plan and implementation program for the county and coordinating the development and implementation of the interdepartmental and inter-agency transportation program. Reqs: related college degree and five years of professional transportation policy analysis, project planning, engineering/transportation management or transportation planning experience, including experience in an administrative capacity. Filing deadline is November 7, 1997. County application required. Marin County HRD, Room 403, 3501 Civic Center Drive, San Rafael, CA 94903. Phone: (415) 499-6104. EEO/AE/TTD

NSCCAPA Board Elections

Two individuals are currently seeking election to two of the four open NSCCAPA Board positions. Please mark and return the ballot below to:

Wendy Cosin
2118 Milvia Street
Berkeley, CA 94704

Board positions of Communications Director and Administration Director are also currently vacant.

BALLOT

For Director Pro Tempore

_____ Mark Rhoades, AICP

- Currently Acting Director Pro Tempore
- Former NSCCAPA Newsletter Editor and Communications Director
- Recently joined City of Berkeley as an associate planner

For Treasurer

_____ Jeri Weiss Ram, AICP

- Currently associate planner, City of Dublin
- Former commissioner, City of Stockton Redevelopment Commission
- Former treasurer of City of Galt employees' association

DIRECTORS CORNER

(continued from page 2)

affect their decisions and do not necessarily reflect their constituencies. Complexity of legal issues — court decisions have been difficult to understand and to apply; decision makers are often overly cautious due to potential financial liabilities. Hidden losses — the results of bad environmental decisions are not always tangible and the public often doesn't see what is lost, i.e. public land dedication, coastal access.

The focus of Douglas' remarks was on the "clear and present danger" of the current property rights debate in the legislature and courts. Hopefully, H.R. 992 and H.R. 1534, the "Private Property Rights Implementation Act of 1997", have been buried. Both bills seriously threaten planning in California by shifting local land use cases from state and local courts to federal courts. Many people are not aware of these bills and it is important that planners and local elected officials contact their congressional representatives. Fighting this issue should be an easy sell to both sides of the political spectrum — even if your Council members won't go out on a limb for planning, they usually will for local government control. Check the National APA Web site for a status report on these bills and a template of a letter to Congress.

Despite these problems and issues, both Douglas and Press were confident that the tide is turning and that planners can make a difference. It helps to be reminded about the bigger picture since we often get buried in the details of our particular projects. The Monterey Conference provided sustenance on many levels — specific "how to" sessions, lessons from experiences of other planners, stepping back to look at how and why we plan the way we do, and inspiration about the future. Hope to see you next year in Costa Mesa!

Thank You

Many people are to thank for helping make the Monterey Conference such a success. The Monterey conference committee was comprised of individuals from the following jurisdictions and planning firms— Monterey, Monterey County, San Jose, Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz County, Seaside, Salinas, Sand City, Pacific Municipal Consultants, Robert Bein, William Frost and Associates, and EMC Planning Group, Inc. The Northern Section thanks these jurisdictions, firms, and, most importantly, the people from each of them for their dedication and commitment to this event!



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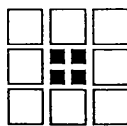
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NOVEMBER						
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December

5 NSCCAPA Holiday Party, San Jose
See insert and Bulletin Board for details

6 Planning Seminar, Sonoma State University
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DECEMBER						
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