

# Northern News

NORTHERN SECTION, CALIFORNIA CHAPTER, AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

## Rail on the Bay Bridge: A Major Component of a Sustainable Bay Area

By Ken Norwood, AICP

APRIL 1999

RECEIVED

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The time has come for Bay Area planners to realistically address what it will take to assure that California and the San Francisco Bay Area will enter into world class status. Among all of the agency reports, news articles, letters, editorials, and columns there has been a smorgasbord of misinformation and special interest politics concerning the replacement of the East span of the Bay Bridge, its design, and whether it should include rail. It is a certainty that most people in the East Bay and San Francisco do not like

the Caltrans bridge design. Voters in four prominent cities approved in high majorities the "Rail on the Bridge" ballot issue last November.

comprehensive regional planning void and that suggests the opportunity for the Northern Section APA to contribute to the language of a sustainable Bay Area.

The issue of earthquake-prompted urgency raised by MTC, Caltrans, and the media comes disturbingly late, after the Caltrans tardy responses to the State bridge repair mandate following the 1971 Sylmar earthquake which contributed to the Cypress freeway collapse, the 8 years of procrastination to declare the Bay Bridge unfixable after Loma Prieta, and the decades of <sup>vibration</sup> ~~vacillation~~ <sup>vascilation</sup> on freeway median barriers, and more. Objections such as cost of heavy rail, length and speed of trains, end of bridge connections, and a station stop on Yerba Buena Island should not be considered as constraints, but as criteria for an immediate comprehensive study that integrates rail on the bridge as part of a seamless transit system.

I particularly disagree with the shortsighted proposal to retrofit the existing bridge just for life safety to save costs. I am convinced that such a retro-fitted bridge will not be reusable after a major quake. But to design it for full reuse afterwards is another huge jump in cost, if even possible. And what would we have but an ugly duckling clobbered with Rube-Goldberg devices applied to shore-up a bridge designed over 75 years ago.

Critical factors that the Northern Section APA Board and members can bring to Governor Davis, legislators, ABAG, MTC, Caltrans, and concerned citizens and organizations are the following:

*Northern Section planners need to become advocates for the quality of life aspect of the Bay Bridge...*

The process for getting an aesthetically acceptable bridge design that incorporates autos, rail, bicycles, and walkers should be integral with a comprehensive regional planning goal that unifies land use, housing, jobs, and economic development with a multi-mode transportation system. The bridge rail line would create the necessary Oakland/East Bay link for the high speed train and a broader network of local lines on new and existing rail lines that would give rise to compact pedestrian based mixed use transit oriented development (TOD). The bridge design is inextricably linked with a sustainable Bay Area, yet we witness state, regional, and local agencies and organizations squabbling over the gridlock crises while urban sprawl eats up farm land. There is a compre-

*(continued on page 4)*

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## THE EDITOR'S CORNER ...

I took the position as your editor with a sense of excitement about being able to influence the dissemination of news and information specific to planners in Northern California. In so doing, I anticipated an experience of learning and keeping abreast of issues and daily challenges faced by planners.

Few issues in local planning have so successfully captured the front pages lately as that of the design of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. As Ken Norwood points out in his article this month, the design of SFOBB has ignited the general public in the realization that it may contribute to the overall status of the Bay Area as a "world class" urban environment. In making a plea for planners to get involved, Ken makes the point that the bridge design, rather than being a purely esthetic or safety consideration, might affect the "quality of life" of this area, and can bring "cultural, social, and recreational benefits", indeed, that it might represent the "soul" of the populace.

It doesn't take extraordinary observational skills to see that our use of this earth, whether in cities or in more natural settings, falls far short of optimum. Obviously the quality of our lives could be significantly enhanced by a healthy dose of planning and a careful study of pertinent issues. And issues abound, whether in the arena of land use, housing, transportation, community development, urban and regional economics, or simply in your daily work as a planner.

I hope that you will avail yourself of this medium in which to express yourself, whether in response to Ken Norwood's article, or about similar issues which you face as a planner. What better use of your newsletter than for learning and keeping abreast of issues and daily challenges faced by planners? Please email me with your comments or to discuss future article ideas—over a thousand of your fellow northern California planners are hungry for your insights!

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## NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

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



## CoHousing Exhibit and Tour at Seattle APA Conference


APA/AICP members attending the April National Conference in Seattle can visit up to four outstanding examples of Cohousing communities in the immediate Seattle metro area. Several are infill and mixed income. This is a rare opportunity since Seattle and the Northwest are having a boom of this innovative cluster housing based on the Danish model. Sign up for the voluntary donation tours at the CoHousing/Shared Living Resource Center exhibit and literature table in the Nonprofit Exhibit area at the APA Conference. Volunteers from several Seattle CoHousing communities will be at the table to discuss their experiences and the benefits of this increasingly popular innovation in housing. Ken Norwood, AICP, of SLRC (Shared Living Resource Center) in Berkeley will also be available at the table.

## Training Course in Environmental Dispute Resolution

CONCUR, Inc., a leading practitioner in environmental dispute resolution, will be offering an intensive training course in «Negotiating Effective Environmental Agreements» on May 5th and 6th on the Clark Kerr Campus of U.C. Berkeley. The \$450 course fee includes course materials, lunches, refreshments, and parking.

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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) 642-3258. 

## PEOPLE in the NEWS

### Congratulations

to Michael Neuman, AICP, for having received the 1998 Best Feature Award from the Journal of the American Planning Association, for his commentary "Does Planning Need the Plan?" (Vol. 64, No. 2). Michael will be honored at the 1999 National Planning Awards Luncheon to be held at the APA's Annual Conference in Seattle, on Tuesday, April 27, from 11:45 am to 2:00 pm at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center.



### Paul Sedway Admitted to Planners Inaugural College of Fellows

Paul Sedway, Managing Principal of Sedway Consulting, San Francisco, has been admitted to the inaugural class of the newly created College of Fellows of the American Institute of Certified Planners. His consulting firm has been active in California for 34 years, with offices in San Francisco and Los Angeles. He is among 45 professional planners admitted throughout the nation, with four from California, and is the sole admittee from the San Francisco Bay Area.

Sedway served as national vice-president of the American Institute of Planners, the predecessor organization to AICP, and was on the national board of the APA. His firm prepared plans and programs for a new state capital city for Alaska, the Island of Oahu, the Los Angeles rail system, San

Francisco Downtown, and Denver Stapleton Airport Reuse. It is presently preparing plans for the Disney World area in Florida and the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The honor was announced in Chicago on January 21, as "a well-deserved recognition of his achievements and excellence in planning practice and his accomplishments in advancing the planning profession." Sedway will be formally inducted at the annual national conference of the APA in Seattle, on April 24, 1999. The College of Fellows will provide assistance with management of the AICP Endowment, mentoring activities, and other leadership functions.

Sedway resides in San Francisco with his wife, Lynn, president of Sedway Group, a real estate economics consulting firm.



## Rail on the Bay Bridge ...

(continued from page 1)

- A coordinated study is needed of existing and future regional land use, public transit, placement of jobs and housing in proximity to each other, and prevention of urban sprawl, as the underlying basis for the planning and design of the Bay Bridge.
- Projected increases in auto traffic are far in excess of a realistic capacity of the highway network and the bridges to accommodate the increases. Rail lines on the Bay Bridge connecting to rail networks throughout the Bay Area is but one solution.
- There is a high level of Bay Area public acceptance of rail transit, compared to other modes of transportation, which provides us a wonderful opportunity for making changes.
- A regional goal for expanded rail networks must include initial planning now for a world class, multi-modal transportation terminal in downtown San Francisco and in Oakland to accommodate rail lines on the SFOBB, including the high-speed S.F./L.A. train equally serving San Francisco and Oakland.
- Treasure Island must be considered a regional resource including public recreation and cultural facilities. The inclusion of rail, pedestrians, and bicycles on the SFOBB must be matched by appropriate off ramps to Treasure Island, including a train station on Yerba Buena Island.

- The proposed pedestrian and bicycle lanes on the SFOBB must be conceived as a social and recreational experience and that protects users from the wind and rain and allows 360 degree viewing of the bay.

Northern Section planners need to become advocates for the quality of life aspect of the Bay Bridge and the cultural, social, and recreational benefits that an integrated design of the new bridge can bring. Should we daily the next cry will come from an irate public and concerned officials objecting to the mediocrity of the bridge and for declaring a moratorium on new development, anywhere. It is time for planners to speak out about comprehensive regional planning and a bridge design that will take us 100 years into a sustainable world class future. The proposed Oakland Bay Bridge replacement must not be approached merely as a highway bridge engineering project but as a holistic solution and cultural expression representing the spirit and "soul" of the people of the San Francisco Bay Area.

*Ken Norwood, AICP, is an Architect and Planner, and is the Executive Director of the Shared Living Resource Center, Inc. (SLRC), Berkeley, CA. SLRC is a non-profit educational organization committed to studies, education, publications, and consultations regarding ecologically sustainable community-oriented housing, neighborhoods, and urban development.*



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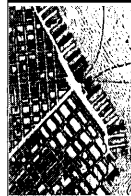
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# NORTHERN SECTION CALENDAR

## April

- 10 1999 Spring Forum and Job Fair  
UC Berkeley, Dept. of City & Regional Planning
- 15 Demonstration of HAZUS by Risk Management Solutions,  
Menlo Park: Contact Laurie Johnson, (650) 617-6487
- 16 Deadline for submission of CCAPA Award Nominations
- 24-27 APA Annual Conference, Seattle

## May

- 5-6 Environmental Dispute Resolution course,  
UC Berkeley
- 20 Tour of San Francisco City Hall, 6:00 p.m.  
(Meet at bottom of grand staircase in Main Rotunda.)
- 22 Planning Commissioner's Forum  
ABAG, 9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
For more information: Meera Nagaraj (925) 439-4047

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## Northern News

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