

Northern News

NORTHERN SECTION, CALIFORNIA CHAPTER, AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

New Research on Sustainable Development IMPLICATIONS FOR URBAN SPRAWL

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FEBRUARY 2000

By Rebecca Rose-Smith

The urban growth boundary (UGB) measures that appeared on the November 1999 ballot in Livermore, San Ramon, and Pleasanton are indicative of citizen concern about urban sprawl in the Tri-Valley area. Located approximately 50 miles southeast of San Francisco along I-580, the Tri-Valley has

been subject to intense growth pressure since the 1960s. Today, with the combined high-tech boom and housing shortage in

Silicon Valley, the Tri-Valley is experiencing more growth pressure than ever before.

The ballot measures sparked a lively debate and highlighted some valid points about the impacts and limits of growth management. There seemed to be widespread agreement that UGBs would promote infill development and protect some rural and open space areas from being developed. However, there was concern that the proposed UGBs would force development to move farther out into prime agricultural land. In an unusual political split, the Sierra Club supported the three measures, while the Greenbelt Alliance opposed. Voters ultimately rejected the initiatives in all three cities. The question remains: how can urban sprawl be prevented? This question is pertinent not only to the Tri-Valley area, but to high-growth areas throughout California and nationwide.

Rationale

A UGB around a single city can push growth farther out into areas with fewer or less stringent controls. This suggests that a regional

UGB may be more effective, as implemented in Portland. However, such strong regional controls may be difficult to achieve, given the tradition of local land use regulation in the United States. At the local level, controlling sprawl seems to be more a matter of changing how we develop and less a matter of drawing lines. Concepts of sustainable development seem to hold the most promise for accomplishing that task.

The Study

I recently completed a thesis study that involved the design and analysis of a decision-making matrix for achieving sustainability at the local level. Traditionally, many planning decisions are guided by economic impact to the local area. Although this has served us well in terms of economic growth, it has neglected important environmental and livability issues.

In my research, I found that a new method for project assessment could be implemented, using sustainability as the standard. The suitability of land use would be based on a model rather like Ian McHarg's map overlays or through a GIS application. The land itself would dictate how it is used. This standard could help prevent sprawl and potentially eliminate the need for growth boundaries.

The method chosen for the research is a decision-making matrix made up of principles (goals) of sustainability, trends of the area targeted for development, and community objectives for sustainability. The trends are represented on the y-axis of the matrix and are assigned a value that represents their change over time. For instance, in the case study examined in the thesis, the population

In my research, I found that a new method for project assessment could be implemented, using sustainability as the standard.

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EDITORS NOTE

The February issue of the *Northern News* has an environmental focus. The lead article this month tackles the issue of urban sprawl and proposes a new tool for making sustainable planning decisions. A playful piece by David Dietz reviews the ways that agencies have circumvented CEQA, one of our main mechanisms for limiting growth impacts on the environment.

On a more personal note, this issue will be one of my last as *Northern News* Editor. I recently accepted a position with a consulting firm in New York City. Working on the *Northern News* has been an excellent, albeit brief, experience, and I look forward to doing more APA-related work in the New York area. I hope to see some of you at the APA Conference in New York this spring.

Joseph Ferrucci
Northern News Editor

INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED WITH THE CAL APA NORTHERN SECTION?

WORK FOR THE NORTHERN NEWS

The *Northern News* is looking for a new Editor and Advertising Coordinator. Working for the *Northern News* is a great way to stay abreast of current issues, meet other planners, improve your writing and editing skills, and provide support to the Northern Section, which relies almost entirely on volunteer work. Interested? Contact Jerry Haag, Communications Director, 2029 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704; phone 510-644-2016; fax 510-548-6123; email jerryhaag@aol.com

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED

ANNOUNCING REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The University of California, Merced intends to issue a Request for Information (RFI) to environmental consulting firms interested in preparing EIRs related to the planning and development of its new campus north of the City of Merced. Based on responses to the RFI, UC Merced will develop a short list of firms to receive a Request for Proposal for a program-level EIR on the campus Long Range Development Plan. In addition, UC Merced will use the RFI responses to develop a consultant pool from which to draw candidates for future project-level EIRs and other environmental documents.

To receive a copy of the RFI, please mail, fax, or email your name, street address, telephone number, fax number, and email address to: Pamela Moody, University of California, Merced, 1170 West Olive Avenue, Suite I, Merced, CA 95348-1959; fax 209-726-9707; email pamelam.moody@ucop.edu. Statements of Information will be due in February 2000; more detailed information on schedule will be available at www.ucop.edu/ucmerced. Every effort will be made to ensure that all persons, regardless of race, religion, sex, color, ethnicity, and national origin have equal access to contracts and other business opportunities with UC Merced.

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

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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.



BULLETIN BOARD

NORTH BAY REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

BROWN-BAG PRESENTATION

Housing Element Law Update and Those Darn ABAG Numbers

Please join us for a presentation and discussion on housing elements. We will discuss recent changes in housing element law and how to get a housing element certified. Then we will hear about the housing need numbers and ABAG's Projections 2000.

Speakers:

Jeff Goldman, Parsons Harland
Bartholomew & Associates

Alex Amoroso, Association of Bay
Area Governments

Where: Town of Windsor
Town Council Chambers
Civic Center Building 400
9291 Old Redwood Highway

When: Friday, February 11, 2000,
11:45AM-1:00 PM

Please bring your own lunch. Drinks and
goodies will be provided.

For more information and to RSVP, contact:
Kristine Bickell at 707-838-5383.

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NORTHERN SECTION AWARDS PROGRAM 2000

The Northern Section is currently receiving submissions for its annual planning awards. Each year, the Northern Section recognizes notable achievements of planners and agencies throughout the Bay Area, North Coast, and Central Coast regions. The Northern Section awards program gives you and your organization the opportunity to receive professional recognition for your noteworthy efforts and others a chance to learn from your experience.

For additional information and an application package, contact:

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PROFESSIONAL NOTES

Michael Bethke, AICP. Mr. Bethke recently joined the Los Altos firm of Young California Homes as their Planning and Development Manager. He previously served as Planning Director for the cities of Half Moon Bay and East Palo Alto.

Tom Conrad. In February 1999, Mr. Conrad retired from the planning arena after 22 years with the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency and a total of 37 years in the planning profession. He is currently managing a non-profit housing development corporation in central Contra Costa County, which works to develop transitional housing for families coming out of emergency homeless shelters.

Joseph Ferrucci. Mr. Ferrucci recently accepted a position as a Planner with the firm of Abeles Phillips Preiss & Shapiro in New York City. He previously worked with the firm of Dyett & Bhatia in San Francisco. He recently served as the Acting Editor of the *Northern News*.

You can send your Professional Note to:

Joseph Ferrucci, 90 Chenery Street #1, San Francisco, CA 94131;
phone 718-729-6543; email josephferrucci@earthlink.net

Please limit your note to 40 words.

The Bulletin Board section of the Northern News is intended to provide a forum for individuals to inform members about events or current topics. If you would like to submit an item for the Bulletin Board section, contact the Newsletter Editor at (718) 729-6543.

Sustainable Development... *(continued from page 1)*

of Berkeley was discovered to be decreasing over the last ten years. The value for this trend was "decreasing". All other trends were assigned a value in the same manner. The principles of sustainability and the impact measures were organized along the x-axis.

Trends are then analyzed for their impact on community objectives for sustainability. For example, the trend of decreasing population would have a positive impact on the objective to decrease per capita consumption of scarce resources, assuming constant consumption rates. Each objective is analyzed in this manner. Further analysis is conducted across, between, and down the cells of the matrix to determine: 1) the overall impact of trends on the sustainability of the area; 2) the relationship of trends between themselves and with the objectives; and 3) the movement of the community toward or away from sustainability.

Local Application

The matrix was applied to a case study to test the thesis. The 1995 Conceptual Long Term Plan for People's Park was chosen for this dubious honor! The plan was chosen, in part, because it is in keeping with the principles of sustainability, in that it represents a consensual process between shareholders, which include the City of Berkeley, UC Berkeley, and People's Park Use Standards and Evaluation Advisory Committee. A baseline was first drawn to determine the sustainability of the park as is. The plan for development was then subjected to the matrix and analyzed. The results were surprising in many ways. It was found that if the plan were implemented as is, it would move the Southside neighborhood (the area around People's Park) toward sustainability.

The matrix process worked even better than expected. The data generated was found to be potentially useful in the decision-making process for People's Park, and the information may be used to further the goals of sustainability at the local level. It was also clear that the process is very complex and takes a considerable amount of time. The complexity and time can be controlled by limiting the number of trends and/or impact measures included in the matrix.

Summary

Using this research and other studies like it, might we as planners, decision-makers, developers, environmental groups, and citizens be able to find solutions to the problems of urban sprawl? Although the study was not conducted specifically to address urban sprawl, I believe it can be applied successfully to the issue.

The negotiation process between local governments and developers seeking approval for their projects can take a variety of forms. It can range from a rote procedure to an ambiguous battle. City officials will be applying a set of criteria in determining whether or not to approve a developer's plan. Principles of sustainability can be used to establish these criteria, making approval dependent upon the sustainability of the project. If a project is developed according to sustainability principles, it should not contribute to urban sprawl.

Rebecca Rose-Smith is the owner of Fine Gardens Sustainable Urban Landscapes, a consulting and design/build company in Berkeley. She holds an MS in Urban and Regional Planning. For more information on her thesis, you can contact Ms. Rose-Smith at 510-496-6019 or rr@sustainablelandscapes.com



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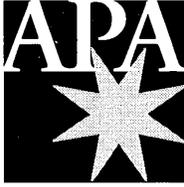
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Associate Planner, Current/Advance Planning

City of Santa Cruz

Salary: \$4,372-\$5,580/month, plus benefits.

The Associate Planner position provides an opportunity to ensure high-quality development and architectural design in Santa Cruz, a progressive city with a vibrant, rebuilt downtown and an extensive shoreline. Responsibilities include reviewing large commercial and residential projects, conducting zoning and plan review, and overseeing corridor plans, criteria for downtown development, beach revitalization, and neighborhood conservation. Requires a Bachelor's degree in city planning or a related field and three years of professional planning experience. A Master's degree in planning may be substituted for two years of the required experience. Deadline 2/22/00. For application materials, call 831-420-5040 or 800-735-2929. EOE/ADA



SUBSCRIBE TO ZONING NEWS

Zoning News, APA's four-page monthly newsletter, is devoted entirely to monitoring trends in local land use controls. *Zoning News* keeps you up-to-date on zoning trends around the country and can help you find answers to questions like:

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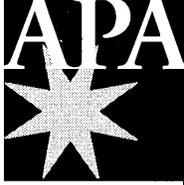
Universities in Community Planning and Development

A research project is underway, supported by AICP, to investigate the current and future role of universities in community planning and development. The Principle Investigator directing the research is Dr. Gene Bunnell, Ph.D., AICP, who was awarded the third annual AICP Research Fellowship. Specific research topics include:

- University/community land use conflicts and controversies.
- Efforts to coordinate campus planning with local and regional planning.
- University-sponsored housing development and/or other beneficial projects.
- University-sponsored planning and development in inner-city neighborhoods, aimed at stabilizing or revitalizing the community around the university campus.
- Real estate development undertaken by universities for revenue-generating purposes, not directly related to educational programs and facilities.
- Planning and technical assistance rendered to a community by faculty that produced a demonstrable outcome or a beneficial land use change or development.

An important product of this research will be a series of case studies profiling and evaluating specific university/community planning issues. A follow-up conference on the subject is also possible. APA and AICP members who would like to work on preparing a case study for the publication are encouraged to contact Dr. Bunnell.

APA and AICP members who have had experience dealing with university/community planning issues, and/or have insights or pertinent information are invited to contact Dr. Bunnell, 204 Dante Avenue, Tuckahoe, NY 10707; phone 914-793-9283; email gbunnell@mindspring.com



Announcements

AUDIO CONFERENCE TRAINING SERIES

Transfer of Development Rights Revisited — February 9

Urban Parks and Green Space — May 25

All programs are one hour and start at 4:00 PM EST.

There are two options for registration. **Option A:** Live Audio Program and Course Book, \$80. **Option B:** Live Audio Program, Course Book, Tape, and Transcript, \$110.

For more information and a registration form, contact Jerieshia Jones at 312-431-9100; web site www.planning.org/educ/audiocon.htm

MAY 13th AICP EXAM TEST SITE REGISTRATION AND FEE

Applicants approved for the May 13th AICP exam must submit the test site registration form and fee. There are two ways to obtain the registration form:

- 1. AICP Fax On Demand Service.** Approved applicants can retrieve a complete registration packet from this toll-free service by dialing 800-800-1589. When prompted, key in Document # 4017. Then enter your fax number. The service will send you forms with 30-40 minutes.
- 2. AICP Online Registration.** Approved applicants can also register online at the APA/AICP web site www.planning.org. You will need to enter your APA Member ID and create a personal password.

Both services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You will need a VISA or MasterCard as a form of payment. Deadline for submission of test site registration form and fee is 3/6/00. Postmarks will not be accepted.

For more information, contact the American Institute of Certified Planners, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue NW, 4th floor, Washington DC 20036; phone 202-872-0611; fax 202-872-0643; email AICP@planning.org

**Associate Planner**

Town of Los Gatos
\$4621-\$5897/month

The Associate Planner will perform journey-level professional planning duties and may require managing and training other personnel. Responsibilities include: reviewing zoning applications; advising the public on planning and zoning issues; assisting with special studies; attending meetings of the Planning Commission and committees; and investigating complaints of zoning violations. Requires two years of professional experience in city planning and the equivalent of a Bachelor's degree in planning or a related field. A Master's degree may be substituted for one year of experience. For application materials, contact the Town of Los Gatos, Personnel Office, 110 East Main Street, Los Gatos, CA 95030. Deadline 2/4/00 5:00 PM. Postmarks will not be accepted.

Associate Planner

City Of Daly City
Salary: \$4143-\$5036/month

The Associate Planner will perform a wide variety of planning work, including preparing staff reports and presenting reports to the Planning Commission and Design Review Committee. Position will be responsible for both advanced and current planning projects. Requires three years of experience in public or private planning office, community development or redevelopment; a Bachelor's degree with a major in city planning, architecture, public administration, or a related field; and a valid Class "C" California Driver's License. This is not a civil service position. For application materials, contact the City of Daly City, Human Resources Department, 295 89th Street #103, Daly City, CA 94015; phone 650-991-8028. Deadline 2/29/00. EOE/AA

Associate Planner

City of San Rafael, Community Development Department

Salary: \$4,580-\$5,258/month, plus benefits.

The City of San Rafael sets high standards for project design and has received numerous APA awards. This position is an excellent opportunity for an individual who seeks a challenging position and opportunities for taking lead roles in project development. Requires a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major coursework in planning, urban studies, geography, architecture, or related field; two years of full-time professional planning experience; background in architecture, urban design, or CEQA review. For application materials, contact the City of San Rafael, Department of Human Resources, 1400 5th Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94915-1560; phone 415-485-3433; fax 415-485-3191; website www.human.resources@ci.sanrafael.ca.us. Open until filled with first application review scheduled for 2/2/00.

COLLEGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS AWARD

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2000 CED Alumni Association Distinguished Alumnus Award. Nominees must be alumni of CED and must have attended the college for the equivalent of at least one academic year. Due to the diversity of careers of CED alumni, a nominee is not required to be working in the field of environmental design. Nominees shall have made outstanding and significant contributions in professional, social, academic, artistic or other areas that the awards committee feels are appropriate for recognition. Nominees should be living.

For nominations forms, contact Sheila Dickie, CED Alumni Relations Director, College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley, 230 Wurster Hall #1820, Berkeley, CA 94720-1820; phone 510-642-7722; email sdickie@uclink4.berkeley.edu. Deadline for submission of nominations is 2/28/00. Please note the process is strictly confidential and nominees should not be contacted.

AIDS MEMORIAL COMMITTEE, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

AIDS MEMORIAL COMPETITION

The AIDS Memorial Committee announces a competition for the design of a memorial in remembrance of Berkeley students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends who have died of AIDS. The winner will be awarded \$1000 and will have the opportunity to negotiate a contract to prepare construction documents for the estimated \$50,000 project. Two additional prizes of \$300 and \$200 will be awarded to second- and third-place entries. The competition is open to all; UC affiliation is not required.

To enter the competition, individuals or teams must register with the committee. To register, please send your name, address, phone number, fax number, and email address to the AIDS Memorial Design Competition, University of California, Berkeley, Morrison Library, 101 Doe Library, Berkeley, CA 94720; fax 510-642-6699. Or complete the online registration form at www.campus.chance.berkeley.edu/BAMC

The competition packet, including program, rules, site photographs, and drawings, will be posted on the competition web site and will be mailed to all registered applicants on 2/25/00. Deadline for submission of entries is 3/24/00. Winners will be announced 4/7/00.

CIRCUMVENTING CEQA

By David Dietz, AICP

I recently gave a lecture to an environmental law class at Sonoma State University entitled, "Ways to get around CEQA: Grey Areas, Dodges and Plain Ol' Cheating." It was intended to describe the many ways I have seen agencies interpret CEQA: some legal, some questionable, and some clearly illegal. The lecture was a fun way to convey a simple lesson: use caution in interpreting CEQA regulations. I thought that my fellow planners might find my list entertaining.

1. Make approval of a project a ministerial act. If a project is permitted "as of right" there is no discretionary act and therefore no CEQA review. You can build a nuclear power plant with CEQA review if all it requires is design review and a building permit. Early in my career, when CEQA was relatively new, I saw this approach used for small industrial parks.

2. Use very high thresholds of significance. You can sometimes borrow thresholds of significance from statutes or regulations that were established for one purpose and misuse them for another. My favorite is the use of 65 dB CNEL as a standard for noise compatibility around an airport. The State and various federal agencies established this standard as the absolute, rock bottom threshold for compatibility between airports and existing residential development. Why any planner would use this to guide the siting of new residential development is beyond me.

3. Be very narrow in defining "reasonably foreseeable" impacts. If one does not look very hard, very few impacts are foreseeable. The courts tell us that a "naked" CEQA checklist is illegal; try a "thin" one.

4. Build projects in areas where little field data is available. If data is lacking on the current status of a potential impact topic, it may be possible to conclude that there will not be any impacts. This is generally difficult to do with "bugs and bunnies," because there is usually some data available, but it is relatively easy with prehistoric cultural resources, which are often very poorly documented.

5. Hide new data in an addendum to an EIR. One is not required to circulate an addendum. Therefore, it is much easier to gloss over awkward new data. This is especially easy if the use is being modified rather than the physical facilities.

6. Refuse to prepare a supplemental or subsequent EIR. The threshold for judicial review is higher for follow-up EIRs. The threshold changes from "fair argument" to "substantial evidence." This is a high profile approach, but can work when the data is so limited that providing the substantial evidence will be difficult.

7. Build a project without considering CEQA at all. Sometimes governmental agencies do not give their own projects the same scrutiny as private ones. Limited-purpose agencies and departments are especially prone to forgetting CEQA.

If you nodded your head when you read this, consider yourself a seasoned professional. If you sadly nodded your head, you are probably in mid-career. If any of this outraged you, you are an environmental virgin. I am always looking for ways to expand the list. If you have any additions or especially juicy examples, I would love to hear from you. I can be contacted at 707-526-5010 or sma@sonic.net

David Dietz is the Director of Planning Projects for Shutt Moen Associates, a firm that provides planning and engineering services for airports and the communities that around them. He lives in Healdsburg and is not quite as cynical as he may sound.

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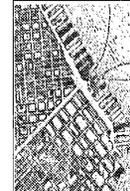
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NORTHERN SECTION CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

- 9 Audio Conference Training Series "Transfer of Development Rights Revisited."
- 11 North Bay Regional Advisory Council Brown-Bag Presentation in Windsor. "Housing Element Law Update and Those Darn ABAG Numbers."
- 28 Deadline for submission of nominations for the 2000 UC Berkeley CED Alumni Association Distinguished Alumnus Award.
- 28-March 1 "Forging New Alliances for Waste Reduction" Conference in Los Angeles. For more information, call 877-279-8388 or 301-345-4237; fax 301-345-4768; web site www.raymond.com

MARCH

- 1-3 Sixth Annual California GIS Conference in Palm Springs. For more information, contact Doug Abramson at 949-855-3691; email info@calgis.org; web site www.calgis.org
- 6 Deadline for submission of test site registration form and fee for applicants approved for the May 13th AICP Exam.
- 20-21 The Complete Management Course for Planning Directors in San Diego. For more information, contact Paul Zucker, AICP, at 800-870-6306; fax 619-260-1138; web site www.planning.org/educ/complete.htm
- 24 Deadline for submission of entries for the UC Berkeley AIDS Memorial Competition.

FEBRUARY						
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APA Northern News
 EDITORIAL OFFICE
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 90 Chenery Street #1
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