

# UPDATE: Plan-it sustainably

A report by Katja Irvin, AICP, and Scott Edmondson, AICP

We hope you are as excited as we are about Northern Section's new Sustainability Program approved by the Board January 22nd. Our goal for 2011 is to establish a Northern Section learning and practice network in sustainability planning. The network will highlight examples of leading edge, innovative sustainability planning; create opportunities for members to act as resources for other members in their areas of expertise; organize easy access to learning resources; and encourage a dialogue among members. The Committee and network are forming to accelerate innovative practice in the Northern Section as part of the wider quickening response from planners and others (*Northern News*, November 2010, p. 16,

<http://www.norcalapa.org/assets/chapter/newsletter/Nov10.pdf>).

Many thanks to the Sustainability Proposal Committee for its work this past fall (Hanson Hom, AICP, Katja Irvin, AICP, Justin Meeks, Tania Sheyner, AICP, Kay Cheng, and Scott Edmondson, AICP). The committee used results from our recent Membership Sustainability Survey to develop a program to meet your needs. Those 195 of you who took the survey—a 13 percent response rate—indicated a need for specific information and technical analysis, practical solutions, and workshops that focus on specific topics or promote networking and coordination with multiple stakeholders. You also requested education for and outreach to elected and appointed officials and the public.

About two-thirds of the survey respondents are involved in a wide range of sustainability-related projects and activities. Interestingly, a majority did not distinguish between traditional planning and new sustainability challenges. At the same time, many said addressing climate change (implementing SB375 and AB32, climate action plans, measuring GHGs, renewable energy, and climate adaptation) is a new challenge.

Respondents also said they most need access to self-learning, best practices, and case studies related to sustainability (59 percent); sustainability knowledge and resources in general (55 percent); and training workshops (51 percent). Stay tuned for more updates as we flesh out the sustainability program based on the survey results, research, and outreach (including collaboration with students at San Francisco State University).

Continuing Sustainability Committee members Katja, Kay, and Scott, and new member Caroline Teng invite you to join the core group of volunteers launching this effort in:

- deepening our understanding and expertise of sustainability planning,
- producing our newsletter column,
- creating content for the web-based resource, and
- developing other aspects of the network over time.

To volunteer, please contact Scott Edmondson, [scott-e@sustainability2030.com](mailto:scott-e@sustainability2030.com), or Katja Irvin, [katja.irvin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:katja.irvin@sbcglobal.net).

As the network evolves, you can access resources as you need them in your daily work or become an expert resource on a particular area of sustainability planning. You can help us expand the dialogue among members by sharing your thoughts, ideas, and questions about sustainability planning and the Committee's program. To those ends, we will have more powerful technology in the near future, including a website. In the meantime, send us your questions and examples of innovative projects and plans you feel would be valuable resources for other planners, or volunteer to be a resource. We will use your questions to inform our work and will respond individually to as many as we can. ■