



Northern News

NORTHERN SECTION, CALIFORNIA CHAPTER, AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

AUGUST 2006

Portland, OR leads U.S. sustainable cities *From SustainLane.com, June 1, 2006*

Are our biggest, most vibrant cities preparing for tomorrow? Not all of them. A ranking released last month by San Francisco's SustainLane.com reveals which cities are increasingly self-sufficient, ready for the unexpected—and which are opting to mortgage their futures to satisfy immediate demands. The 2006 Sustainable Cities Ranking measures America's 50 largest cities in order from the most prepared to the least prepared. This year's index ranks Portland, Oregon, as America's most sustainable city.

What makes a city ready for tomorrow's challenges? Cities must have an ability to maintain healthy air, drinking water, parks and public transit access, combined with a strong,

complementary economy, even when faced with sudden, unpredictable events like skyrocketing energy prices and natural disasters. A robust sustainable local economy includes green building, downtown and neighborhoods

that are easily walkable, farmers markets, renewable energy and alternative fuels.

"If your city out-sources everything from fuel to electricity and food, where are you left during a crisis?" asks SustainLane.com CEO James Elsen. "Cities shouldn't rely only on volatile outside resources, but rather need to take the initiative to develop more self-sufficient economies. Doing so will prevent their jobs and quality of life from being left high and dry if hard times arrive."

The 15 Sustainable Cities in the West and their rankings are:

1. Portland, OR
2. San Francisco, CA
3. Seattle, WA
5. Oakland, CA

13. Sacramento, CA
17. San Diego, CA
19. Albuquerque, NM
20. Tucson, AZ
22. Phoenix, AZ
23. San Jose, CA
25. Los Angeles, CA
27. Las Vegas, NV
30. Long Beach, CA
33. Fresno, CA
47. Mesa, AZ

The 2006 SustainLane.com Sustainable Cities Ranking is a peer-reviewed benchmark study measuring each city's cumulative performance based on 15 economic and quality-of-life categories. The index integrates almost 2,000 data points from public and non-governmental organizations including U.S. EPA, U.S. Census, Environmental Working Group, Smart Growth America, Trust for Public Land, Risk Management Solutions, The Texas Transportation Institute, Texas A&M and the Public Policy Institute of California. The study also includes primary research conducted with more than 200 city officials and experts.

Categories of data and information analysis used for ranking purposes include:

- Air Quality
- City Housing Affordability
- City Innovation
- City Knowledgebase/ Communications
- Green Economy
- Energy/ Climate Change Policy
- Green (LEED) Building
- Local Food and Agriculture
- Natural Disaster Risk
- Planning/Land Use

"More than ever, cities are recognizing the necessity of sustainable approaches and technologies"

(continued on page 4)

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE *by Hing Wong, AICP*

Please welcome our newest Board members: Charity Wagner (Communications Director); Erin Dando, AICP (Newsletter Associate Editor); Adam Binstock (South Bay RAC Director); Emy Mendoza and Lisa Peterson (Student Representatives). We appreciate Jerry Haag's eight years of service on the Board (primarily as Communications Director) and Maureen Hickey, one of last year's student representatives.

The Nominations Committee (Andrea Ouse, Juan Borrelli, and Hing Wong) will be accepting names of those who might be interested in running for either Director Elect or Administrative Director. Please submit names by August 31 to one of us. We're also looking for someone to become Advertising Director (an appointed position). Please contact me if you are interested in that position. The responsibilities for all positions are listed in the Bylaws on our website <www.norcalapa.org>.

Early deadline to sign up for the CCAPA Conference is August 15. The conference will be held October 22–25 in Orange County. Go to www.calapa.org for more information and to register. We'll be setting up a table at the conference to promote next year's CCAPA Conference in San José that will be hosted by Northern Section. To help offset the high cost for students attending this year's conference, Northern Section will again offer up to four \$150 student scholarships to those who agree to write a 600-word article for the Northern News. Details will be sent to students or student members who contact me.

This year, the California Planning Foundation (CPF) will award over \$30,000 in scholarships. Students in four Northern Section universities with planning programs will be receiving some of the money. We are proud to support this worthwhile program. At last year's auction, Northern Section raised the most money of any of the eight sections. Let's do it again! The big ticket items were generous donations from the Benziger Family Winery (a one-night package for four people) and Mark Hopkins (a two-night package). Please support these establishments.

Donations to CPF—on behalf of the Northern Section—are now being accepted. Please contact me by August 31 if you have items that you would like to donate for the Auction, to be held at the CCAPA Conference. In addition to planning-related items like old maps and books, other crowd-pleasing donations have included bottles of wine, tickets to interesting events, bed and breakfast accommodations, weekend getaways, and gift certificates to restaurants and book stores. Art is always popular, as are posters, bird houses, or any craft work you love to do on your off-time.

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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.



Send us your best

Your editors strive to give you a variety of quality articles in each issue of *Northern News*. It seems our planning colleagues in other states like our offerings.

L. Robert (Bob) Ulibarri's May-June article on "Working with tribal governments" was republished and featured in the [July-August 2006 ILAPA Illinois Chapter News BLAST!](#)

The February issue of Utah Planner reprinted "Heartfelt thoughts" (*Northern News*, December 2005), and Utah Planner's April issue reprinted the Berkeley staff's updated renditions of Mother Goose rhymes (*Northern News*, February) and added appropriate illustrations. <http://utah-apa.org/newsletter/2006%20Newsletters/April%202006.pdf>

Write for us—be read broadly!

Review: Going green underfoot

From the publisher's press release, March 6, 2006

American lawns are more than just a few square feet of filler outside the old homestead. They are a challenge, a calling, and an art form. In *AMERICAN GREEN: The Quest for the Perfect Lawn* [W.W. Norton and Company], author and environmental historian Ted Steinberg takes on our obsessive preoccupation with lush, velvety, green lawns and the people who carefully edge them and treat their sod better than their wives. By his measure, America's 40 million acres of lawn are tended by 58 million lawn owners. He unlocks the mystery of the all-American landscape and winds up mowing down the turf-care industry along the way.

Steinberg plumbs the origins of the lawn, from its lofty birth as a Victorian status symbol to its proliferation thanks to Levittown, Long Island, not far from where he grew up. There William Levitt mass-produced landscape to go along with the suburban housing. Through the fifties and sixties, the lawn became a symbol of class, and a sign of family values, diligence, and Cold-War, anti-Communist sentiment. The book highlights the important cultural roles played by the US government, the

popularity of golf, and the lawn-care industry in making certain that Americans adored a thick, mantle of green.

Steinberg indicts the lawn-care industry itself. He shows that companies are masters of marketing, convincing us that we need the perfect, manicured lawn, while simultaneously making it impossible to attain:

- Companies market grasses which have trouble thriving in North American climates.
- They sell consumers on the need to buy chemicals to kill what they call "weeds"—plants that, in reality, help to keep turf healthy and green.
- They recommend far too many fertilization treatments and often at the wrong time of year, sacrificing root growth for shoot growth.

On the other side are those who want to go back to using the native plants that existed at the time of Columbus. After all, planting and maintaining a lawn requires significant amounts of non-renewable resources, including water and petroleum.

Steinberg proposes a balance—we can have our lawn and mow it too: Plant climate-appropriate grasses, let the lawn go brown in the late summer, and allow grass clippings to self-fertilize the yard. He doesn't ask that we reshape the American landscape, but that we adopt realistic expectations about how yards should look.

Ted Steinberg teaches history at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. The 2006 Zucker Fellow in environmental studies at Yale University, Steinberg is the author of Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History and Acts of God: The Unnatural History of Natural Disaster in America. His essays have appeared in The Chronicle of Higher Education, Natural History, and The New York Times.

AMERICAN GREEN, by Ted Steinberg. 224 pages, ISBN 0-393-06084-5

Where in the world? *By Chandler Lee, AICP*



Portland, OR leads...

(continued from page 1)

Solid Waste Diversion

Tap Water Quality

Transportation and Commuting

Sustainability practices are increasing among city leaders nationwide, especially in light of recent spikes in gas prices. "More than ever, cities are recognizing the necessity of sustainable approaches and technologies," said Elsen. "It's cities like Portland and Denver with their expansion of public transit systems and ridership, Philadelphia with its strong local food network, Chicago with its commitment to renewable energy and Seattle with its climate change leadership that have produced effective results. These are some of the leaders in this important shift, and other cities are encouraged to follow their successful approaches."

SustainLane.com helps connect cities, citizens and entrepreneurial businesses with three integrated content offerings: healthy lifestyle information, an annual sustainable city ranking, and a local living directory and shopping guide.



Letters to the Editor

I enjoyed your lead article ("Live sustainable or die," July 2006).

For now, sustainability basically means "good." Which is OK for a start, but it needs a concrete, operational formulation that distinguishes the sustainable from the unsustainable, and from many environmental and planning practices that are "good" but make little if any contribution to sustainability. More often than not, the word is used in a marketing or persuading context as "apple pie" rhetoric. Again, that's OK as far as it goes, but we're running out of time and we really need to get some transformational initiatives in place. Planning as a profession can be [a] key driver of the transformation to sustainability, but it would require a different mode at the level of institution as well as individual.

*Scott Edmonson, AICP
San Francisco*

Cheap prices, high quality experience

Time is running out to register early for the CCAPA 2006 Conference at the beautiful Hyatt Orange County, October 22-25. The preliminary conference brochure—available online—outlines a fantastic program that includes intriguing mobile workshops, special sessions and discount tickets to nearby Disneyland.

Early registration prices end August 15th. Register online today at www.calapa.org. Accommodations are only \$129/night.

Exhibit and sponsorship opportunities are available through August 15th. For details go to www.calapa.org and contact Lynne C.

Bynder, CMP at lbynder@meetingsxexceptional.com.

See you in Orange County in October!

Onward and upward

Steve Alverson has been promoted to Director of ESA Airports, the national airport consulting services practice of Environmental Science Associates. Alverson has been Director of ESA's Central Valley/Sierra Regional office in Sacramento, since joining ESA in 2004.

Connie Galambos, Northern Section's University Liaison, has left the Sustainability Indicators Program at Redefining Progress to coordinate the Social Equity Caucus (SEC) at Urban Habitat. SEC—a coalition of 80 organizations—builds bridges between government leaders, social justice advocates, environmentalists, and the business community on urban planning issues throughout the Bay Area.

Ladd Miyasaki, our North Bay RAC director, is now a Planner with Winzler & Kelly, Santa Rosa, working on environmental review and associated permitting for public projects.

Curtis Williams, AICP, is Palo Alto's Chief Planning and Transportation Official. Williams previously served as Planning Director for Los Altos Hills and Woodside, and had been consulting to Palo Alto on its zoning ordinance update.



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Friday, August 25, 2006 by 4:00 p.m. Applicants must complete an official City of Cupertino application and return it to the City of Cupertino, Human Resources Division, 10300 Torre Avenue, Cupertino, CA 95014. To obtain more information or an application, please visit the City's website at www.cupertino.org/jobs or call Human Resources at (408) 777-3227. EOE

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Survey of the status of women and men in planning

By Michele Rodriguez, Planning Diversity Director, NSCCAPA

APA's Planning and Women Division (www.urban.uiuc.edu/apa-pw) initiated a survey in March regarding equity issues in the planning profession. The purpose of the research was to gather information and data about the status of pay, position, race, and gender equity among planning practitioners and academics, not only in the United States, but also internationally. The survey results summary can be found at <http://www.urban.uiuc.edu/apa%2Dpw/Survey/Summary.html>. Responses have now reached 1,640.

Among the findings:

Seventy percent of the respondents would like to see the Planning and Women Division's (PWD) newsletter (PW Exchange) include "professional profiles, i.e., meet a prominent female member of the planning field"; 84 percent were interested in the issue, "status of women within the planning profession"; and 73 percent were

interested in having PWD sponsor sessions on "public policy affecting women." According to Division Chair Patti Petrie, PhD, AICP, (and, Chair, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Illinois), the survey results will be used to shape the future direction of the Division.

Respondents were given an opportunity to freely comment at the end of the survey. Some examples: "There are planning/design issues specific to women (and children) that are not usually addressed by traditional planning methods. For example, the growing number of women without partners who are rearing children alone"; and "the Planning and Women Division's mission [should] include a stronger emphasis on the cultural disparities of gender and class, which are more static than 'related to the changing roles of women and men.'"

Do you have thoughts on the subject? Contact me, Michele@boggis.com

AWARDS

Two planning students win national awards

Each year, the American Institute of Certified Planners provides accredited planning schools the opportunity to recognize the achievements of their students.

Receiving the AICP Outstanding Student Award from San José State University is Mariya Hodge of Sunnyvale. Mariya had a distinguished academic record in the Master of Urban Planning program, maintaining a 4.0 GPA. She has also contributed significantly to the Urban Planning Department and the metropolitan community through her numerous volunteer planning-related activities.



Receiving the AICP Outstanding Student Award from the University of California at Berkeley is Jackie Tsu-Ling Tsou. Jackie holds a Community Development Work Study Fellowship through HUD and has maintained a 3.927 GPA in her coursework. Cited for being a true leader among her students, she was active in various organizations, particularly those dealing with recruitment and diversity issues.



How blue is my valley

The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce recently wrote to Monterey County Administrative Officer Lew Bauman complaining that a county planner should not have written an op-ed column about the county's general plan update.

County senior planner David Lutes, who lives in Salinas, works for the county in a job that does not deal with the general plan update. Nevertheless, the Chamber apparently felt it was inappropriate for Lutes to opine on the six-year-old update in *The Salinas Californian*.

Lutes, who says he penned the column as a private citizen, wrote:

"From my view, we cannot afford to live the Wild West myth that land is abundant and can be developed piecemeal by staking a claim under a loose general plan. This opens the door to what we have today—deal-making and litigation ...

Instead, Lutes supports "smart growth"—reinvesting pro-growth measures within contained urban boundaries in the form of complete and integrated communities containing affordable housing, shops, work places, schools, parks and civic facilities essential to the daily life of the residents, designed within easy walking distance of each other. It's time to stop believing that we can carry on for the next 20 years, as we have been, with our reliance on fossil fuels to sustain current, piecemeal growth patterns and watershed imbalances."

After receiving a copy of the

Chamber's June 23 letter, a reporter for *The Salinas Californian* contacted Jeffrey L. Soule, FAICP, APA's Policy Director in Washington. The Californian quotes Soule as saying that having planners submit opinions benefits public discussion. "I'd like to see more planners take a stand on these things," he said. "I don't think it's the business of the Chamber of Commerce to decide who can have an opinion." Soule went on to advise that the AICP code of ethics says planners "should support the public process, which includes differing opinions."

Opposing the Chamber's planning stance is LandWatch Monterey County. LandWatch executive director Chris Fitz, in a February 24 article in the *San José Business Journal*, wrote: "The radical pro-growth majority on the Board of Supervisors ... does not want a general plan that identifies places where growth should not happen. They want a plan in which the answer to development, throughout the entire unincorporated county, is either 'yes' or 'maybe.' They want a plan that 'never says no.'"

Northern News invited LandWatch and the Chamber to comment for this article, but neither group responded. In verifying the accuracy of this article and Jeffrey Soule's remarks, Mr. Soule noted that "APA now has the planner's communication toolbox on the APA website, as a resource to help members get their positions across and work with the media." It's a member only feature: <http://www.planning.org/communicationsguide/index.htm>

Answer to "Where in the world": Central Stockholm.



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August

- 18 North Bay RAC, Hot August Night—Summer Social. 5:00 PM at the Bounty Hunter, 975 First Street, Napa
- 19 2007 CCAPA Conference Steering Committee. 10:00 am to Noon, San José City Hall, 200 East Santa Clara Street, San José
- 24 APA to China Planning Meeting. 7:00–9:00 pm. Location to be determined. Contact Rob rob.eastwood@pln.sccgov.org for more information.
- 25 Summer soiree in The City. 6 to 8 pm at Zebulon, 83 Natoma (2nd Street), near Montgomery BART/MUNI. RSVP Kenya Wheeler at fwheele@bart.gov or (510) 287-4782.
- 25–27 15th annual Planners Sierra Retreat, hosted by Central Section. For details, contact Bruce O’Neal <boneal@pesc.com> or (559) 256-4250, or Mike Waiczis <mrw36@csufresno.edu> or (559) 434-8637.
- 27 AICP exam prep workshop. Contact dr.donbradley@comcast.net

September

- 24 AICP exam prep workshop. Contact dr.donbradley@comcast.net

October

- 15 AICP exam prep workshop. Contact dr.donbradley@comcast.net
- 28 2007 CCAPA Conference Steering Committee. 10:00 am to Noon, San José City Hall, 200 East Santa Clara Street, San José
- TBD Transbay Terminal JPA will host a panel discussion on the Terminal project and area redevelopment. Contact Kenya Wheeler, fwheele@bart.gov

AUGUST

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