



NORTHERN NEWS



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California Chapter
Northern
Making Great Communities Happen

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How will California's 2010 propositions play out in local planning?

By Delilah Leval

California voters weighed in on nine propositions in 2010. Most seemed to be in response to this year's severe \$20 billion state budget shortfall. Props 19, 21, and 24 proposed to raise revenue from marijuana, vehicle registration, or by repealing business tax breaks. Conversely, Props 22 and 26 proposed to make it more difficult to raise or re-allocate fees and taxes. The last of the budget-related bunch, Prop 25, gave voters a chance to penalize state legislators outright for notorious budget delays.

Only three non-budget related measures were on the ballot. Props 20 and 27 proposed alternative destinies for the recently approved Citizen's Redistricting Commission—20 to expand its role and 27 to dissolve it. Prop 23 was odd-man-out, proposing to delay California's plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Four ballot measures passed; five failed. Here's what it could mean for planning in California.

Prop 19 – Rejected. Would have legalized, regulated, and taxed marijuana in California. Medical marijuana dispensaries will continue to operate under SB 420 (2003) and Prop 215 (1996) as codified in Health and Safety Code §11362.5(c). The Obama administration has stated that, so long as state laws are enforced, it will refrain from enforcing federal restrictions that supersede California's. Under existing state laws, persons with valid county-issued ID cards may possess small amounts of medical marijuana. Cities and counties have the authority to place restrictions on dispensaries that provide marijuana; local regulations vary. In Berkeley, a 2.5 percent sales tax on medical marijuana has just passed. Learn more at the California State Association of Counties website, <http://bit.ly/9pMUBD>. Also see "California cities wrestle with rules for pot dispensaries," by Ann Jarmusch, *Planning Magazine*, May/June 2010, p 6, <http://bit.ly/9Grv9j>.

Prop 20 – Passed. Authorizes the Citizen's Redistricting Commission to redraw congressional district boundaries. California voters authorized a Citizen's Redistricting Commission in 2008 to redraw the boundaries of state assembly and board of equalization districts. The passage of Prop 20 gives the commission the additional task of redrawing federal congressional districts. The 14 commission members are currently being selected through a complex, multi-stage process that carefully accounts for political affiliation of members. (The first eight have been selected, and include APA Northern Board

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How will California's 2010 propositions play out in local planning? *(continued from previous page)*

member Connie Galambos Malloy—see [page 12](#).) The redistricting could lead to changes in party affiliation and distribution of seniority in Sacramento and for California's congressional delegation. One of Prop 20's requirements is that districts have homogenous standards of living. This requirement may concentrate and empower voices that are diluted when partitioned across multiple districts, as described by CalTech Professor Morgan Kousser (PDF, <http://tinyurl.com/2fjn518>). UCLA law professor Daniel Lowenstein, however, contends there is no foreseeable benefit (<http://bit.ly/btGk51>). The Commission's official website is <http://www.wedrawthelines.ca.gov/>.

Prop 21 – Rejected. Would have used \$18 vehicle registration surcharge to fund state parks. Presumably, the additional revenue from vehicle registrations could have paid for a backlog of state park maintenance projects that currently have no dedicated funding source. Instead, the current arrangement will continue—with State parks funded through the General Fund, parking fees, and regulatory fees, and no prospect for ending the deep service and maintenance cuts at 150 state parks. In return for the \$18 surcharge at time of annual vehicle registration, day-use fees would have been waived for all cars registered in California. The State Parks Foundation asserted that, had the measure passed, \$130 million in General Fund that currently supports parks would have been available for other state programs. Learn more at the State Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) website (<http://bit.ly/dD4az3>) or the California State Park Foundation's website (<http://www.calparks.org/takeaction/>).

Prop 22 – Passed. Restores dedicated tax revenues to local governments. Portions of fuel tax and property tax originally intended for public transit, road systems, and redevelopment have been taken, in recent years, from city and county governments to fill budget gaps in unrelated state programs. The amount of funding redirected by the State totaled \$4.2 billion just from 2008 to 2010. Prop 22's passage protects these funds for their originally designated purposes. Expect more robust funding than in previous years for local redevelopment, transportation, and transit projects, with some moving quickly to implementation. On the other hand, State-funded programs could suffer cuts on the order of \$1 billion per year. Education, for example, may be hit particularly hard, as its funding is based on the total budget of the state general fund. See "Allies take opposing stands on Prop. 22," by Marisa Lagos, Chronicle Sacramento Bureau, *SFGate.com*, July 27, 2010, <http://bit.ly/9inGQh>.

Prop 23 – Rejected. Would have delayed implementation of the state's Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32). Expect AB 32 to continue to be rolled out according to its original timetable, requiring California to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. Among its specific requirements, AB 32 mandates that California utility companies (e.g., PG&E and SoCal Edison) use renewable energy sources instead of coal or gas to supply 33 percent of electricity by 2020. Presumably California municipalities will strive to meet their own

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NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

Editorial

Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP
Tel: (415) 699-7333
knoxnaph@gmail.com

Mika Miyasato, AICP
Associate Editor
Tel: (510) 587-8677
mmiyasato@hntb.com

Caroline Teng
Associate Editor
Tel: (909) 967-5400
carolineteng@gmail.com

Advertising Director/Jobs

Hannah Young, AICP
Tel: (510) 847-9936
hannahyoung.mrp@gmail.com

Newsletter Designer

Nancy Roberts
Tel: (408) 723-3200
tproberts@sbcglobal.net

ADDRESS CHANGES

Membership Department
APA National Headquarters
205 North Michigan Ave, Suite 1200
Chicago, IL 60601
Tel: (312) 431-9100
www.planning.org

The American Planning Association, California Chapter Northern, offers membership to city and regional planners and associated professionals primarily living or working in California, from Monterey County to Del Norte County, including the nine county San Francisco Bay Area and Lake and San Benito Counties. APA California Northern promotes planning-related continuing education and social functions in order to:

- Provide an arena for communication and exchange of information about planning related activities;
- Raise member awareness and involvement in APA affairs;
- Increase public awareness of the importance of planning;
- Encourage professionalism in the conduct of its members; and
- Foster a sense of community among the members.

APA California Northern publishes *Northern News* online in PDF 10 times each year as a medium for the exchange of ideas and information among its members. Circulation (complete web downloads per issue) is 8,500.

Northern News welcomes comments. Letters to the editor require the author's first and last name, home or work street address and phone number (neither of which will be published), and professional affiliation or title (which will be published only with the author's permission). All letters are subject to editing. Letters over 250 words are not considered.

The deadline for submitting materials for inclusion in *Northern News* is the 15th day of the month prior to publication.

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How will California's 2010 propositions play out in local planning? *(continued from previous page)*

emissions targets: Attorney General Brown set a precedent of prosecuting cities and counties that failed to consider the environmental impacts of carbon emissions in CEQA analyses of revised general plans.

Prop 24 – Rejected. Would have reinstated certain business tax liabilities. State analysts predicted the measure would have increased State revenue by \$1.3 billion for fiscal 2012–2013 by reversing three tax rules introduced in 2008. The first allows businesses to shift tax liability to previous or coming years by as much as 20 years. The second allows unused tax credits to be shared among businesses in a group. The third allows businesses operating in multiple states to choose among three methods—property value, payroll, or gross sales—to calculate their tax liability. Had the measure passed, about half of the tax revenue would have come from companies that operate in more than one state, with a significant portion intended for education. The LAO evaluation can be seen at <http://bit.ly/c9zgVI>.

Prop 25 – Passed. State budget to pass with 51 percent; legislators to lose pay for late budgets. Although a supermajority (67 percent) is still required to pass tax increases, the overall budget will now pass with a simple majority (51 percent) instead of two-thirds. And for each day past June 15 that legislators fail to submit a budget to the governor, they will not be paid. State analysts expect salary savings of \$50,000 for each day the budget is delayed. Expect a speedier budget process. The LAO evaluation can be seen at <http://bit.ly/bXRDzX>.

Prop 26 – Passed. Requires 67 percent to pass fee increases; redefines "tax" under California law. A UCLA study finds Prop 26 could "erect significant barriers" to implementing California health, safety, and environmental laws by creating confusion in setting business fees at the local and state level. However, political science expert Shaun Bowler of UC Riverside suggests litigation may neutralize Prop 26, at least temporarily. In the past, he notes, referenda have been thrown out as a consequence of mixed signals from the voters. In this case, a combination of voter rejection of Prop 23 and no clear definition of "fee" in Prop 26 may do it in. See "Calif.'s little-noticed Prop 26 squeaks through in dead of night," by Colin Sullivan, *The New York Times*, November 3, 2010, <http://nyti.ms/cXoOpm>; UCLA report, *Paying for Pollution*, by C. Horowitz, S.B. Hetch, and M.R. Enion, <http://bit.ly/dDvrHk>; and "Tax or fee? Local governments hash out the consequences of Prop. 26," Loretta Kalb, *Sacramento Bee*, November 22, 2010, <http://bit.ly/gY3QoH>.

Prop 27 – Rejected. Would have dissolved the Citizen's Redistricting Commission. See discussion of Proposition 20.



Delilah Leval holds a master's degree in city and regional planning from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo (2010) and now resides in the Bay Area. ■

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

By Darcy Kremin, AICP

A BIG thanks to everyone for another fantastic holiday party at Farmers Market Bistro in Oakland. Look for a wrap-up with pictures in the February 2011 issue of *Northern News*. A special thanks to our sponsors for their contributions on behalf of the California Planning Foundation: RBF Consulting, LSA Associates, Cardno ENTRIX, Eisen | Letunic, Urban Planning Partners, PMC, Dyett & Bhatia, and others. Every year the Section donates \$3,000 to CPF for students in our Section, and contributions from this event help us with that. And of course, we could not have organized this event without our amazing volunteers: **Eileen Whitty, AICP, Tania Sheyner, AICP, Jane Wardani, Justin Meek, Allen Tai, AICP, and Emy Mendoza**. Please take a moment to thank them for a great party.



APA California elections are underway. Please help us support **Juan Borrelli, AICP**, in his bid to become the next Vice President, Professional Development. Juan has been an asset to the state as the Northern California Programs Director on the state Professional Development Team. He has contributed untold hours to the state and to Northern Section as Section Director, Co-Chair for the 2007 APA California conference in San Jose, and Steering Committee Chair for the 2005 APA National Planning Conference in San Francisco, among other things. In addition, there are two candidates running for APA California Vice President of Conferences, **Brooke Peterson, AICP**, and **Janna Minsk, AICP**. The Northern Section board voted to endorse Brooke Peterson based on her track record for organizing conferences, her responsiveness, her ethics, and her sensitivity to the local section's needs. Please take this election seriously and remember to vote. Your voice counts!

You should have received an e-mail with our **membership and sustainability survey**. Please take a moment to **fill it out online**. We will be compiling your responses and using them to set our 2011 goals during the Board retreat. At that time, we will also adopt our budget to meet the goals your survey responses will help us develop. Our annual retreat is open to all APA members and will be held in the beautiful Redwood City library on January 22 from 10 am to 3 pm. RSVP to Hanson Hom (hhom@ci.sunnyvale.ca.us) if you'd like to attend.

We extend our thanks to several board members who are stepping down at this time: **Meryka Blumer**, Monterey Bay Regional Advisory Co-Chair; **Daniel Serrano, AICP**, San Francisco Regional Advisory Chair; and **Raquel Paniagua**, Co-Webmaster. Each made significant contributions to the Section and to our members this year. As noted

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES *(continued from previous page)*

in **Onward and upward** ([page 12](#)), **Connie Galambos Malloy** has been selected to serve on the California Redistricting Commission in 2011. Because she will be quite busy, she is stepping down as the Northern Section Planning Diversity Director. Associate Director **Miroo Desai, AICP**, will become the Director, but she is looking for a Co-Director. Please contact me at darcy.kremin@cardno.com if you are interested in that post or if you want to become more involved with your professional association in any other way. We are always looking for event coordinators, committee volunteers, and new board members.

It has been my true pleasure to serve as your Section Director for the past two years. As I look back on my term, I am extremely proud of the diverse events, social gatherings, and contributions to the planning profession made by the Section's board members and volunteers. We have had successful Awards Programs, fun holiday parties and RAC socials, and professional development events that presented the cutting edge of planning and related issues. Our Section now has a Young Planner's Group, a mentorship program, a sustainability subcommittee, and a dedicated board of 36 people. Starting in January, **Hanson Hom, AICP**, takes over as Section Director. I'm sure he will do a fabulous job steering the ship. Thanks to everyone for making my term a successful one. I couldn't have done it without you.

Darcy Kremin

Where in the world?



Photo by Linton Atlas (Answer on [page 19](#))



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BOOK REVIEWS

Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet, *Bill McKibben*

Green Metropolis: Why Living Smaller, Living Closer, and Driving Less Are the Keys to Sustainability, *David Owen*

Reviewed by Janet Palma, AICP

Why "Eaarth" (with two "a"s)? And how does Bill McKibben's bad news about our beloved planet relate to David Owen's contrarian view of sustainability, urban development, and the cornerstone of environmental problem fixes, the U.S. Green Building Council LEED certification? McKibben doubles one internal letter to spotlight the immensity of our reach as humans as well as the ongoing increase of our impacts on the environment we inhabit. Owen pokes gaping holes in LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) while maintaining his running theme that it is neither Portland, Oregon, nor Snowmass, Colorado, but New York City that is the greenest community in the United States.


While McKibben is the author of more than a dozen books about the environment and wrote about climate change in 1989 when it was known as the *greenhouse effect*, Owen's books and articles for *The New Yorker* have studied more wide-ranging topics, such as golf, home improvement, and the birth of the Xerox company.

By McKibben's account, we are past the point of no return, having entered a new phase of habitability on our planet, which should now be renamed Eaarth, Monnde, or Tierre. Our world now faces drier, longer droughts in places like Australia and Africa, as well as more intense deluges such as hurricanes Katrina and Gustav in the Southeast. Ketsana, a cyclone that dropped record rain in the Philippines and Vietnam, and typhoon Morakat, which dropped 9.1 feet of rain on Taiwan in 72 hours, are becoming the weather norm rather than the exception.

McKibben blames the politics of the rich industrial nations for inaction at the recent Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. Food and water will be scarce in poorer countries such as Bangladesh, Brazil, Nepal, and Uganda. Adaptation is key, as farmers throughout the world experience first-hand the impacts of less snow and water, and warmer weather. Farmers in Kenya are learning new systems such as *push-pull* to compensate. (The system uses everything produced, including chicken coop waste to feed a fishpond.) On the bright side of climate change, new wine-grape growing areas are sprouting in Washington and Oregon where the summer of 2010 was extraordinarily warm.

McKibben's world is dire and rife with shrinking resources that seem nearly insurmountable given continued population growth rates. Droughts have returned to the United States, even as water suppliers

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BOOK REVIEW

Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet

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push for conservation. Thirty-six states face water shortages in the next five years, increasing the tension between farmers and environmentalists who wish to preserve fish habitat.

"Think Globally, Act Locally" has never been more crucial for the planet's survival. In his final chapter of *Eaarth*, McKibben offers practical ideas for coping with the new Eaarth we humans have created. All depend on decentralization. Examples include:

- Eliminate industrial mega-farming
- Return to smaller, local farms and food production
- Replenish nutrient-deficient soils with non-synthetic fertilizers
- Incentivize more local land trusts that will turn over land to small farmers
- Continue to encourage slower traffic and multi-modal transportation
- Utilize multiple sources of renewable energy

While these ideas are not new, McKibben urgently stresses their importance for our continued survival. We have accepted megamansions at the expense of plots of land that could at least partially sustain a family with home-grown crops. McKibben drives home the point that the huge size of corporate agricultural production is unsustainable, but a new era of community living, food production, and energy production is possible. He proves it through his "350" awareness project around the world (350 parts per million of carbon dioxide is the maximum atmospheric concentration compatible with maintaining the planet as we know it). I can attest that a 5,200 square foot lot with a 984 square foot home leaves enough land to compost, grow food, and raise chickens for eggs.

In Green Metropolis, Owen concurs with McKibben that decentralization is crucial. He makes a clear case for why Living Smaller, Living Closer, and Driving Less Are the Keys to Sustainability. He cites McKibben as one of the notable promoters of the modern transit success story in Curitiba, Brazil. Owen agrees with McKibben that Curitiba's bus system includes many features that ought to be copied by transit authorities everywhere. (In *Northern News*, September 2009, Suzanne Diaz reviewed *Contemporary Urbanism in Brazil: Beyond Brasilia*, which also discusses urban design and development in Curitiba.)

Owen notes, however, that even prosperous Curitiba has suffered the usual modern ills. The city has a high rate of automobile ownership despite its enviable bus system. While

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BOOK REVIEW

Green Metropolis: Why Living Smaller, Living Closer, and Driving Less Are the Keys to Sustainability (continued from previous page)

McKibben focuses on the future consequences of our already changed planet on food and water availability for human survival, Owen offers similar practical conclusions based on the historical promotion of cars and oil dependency in the United States. In his opening chapter, Owen summarizes the McKibben solutions as “living smaller, living closer, and driving less.”

Owen’s main thesis is that cities should be “more like Manhattan.” He discusses how and why we came to consider automobiles and sprawl as the image of success in the United States. The major premise of his argument is that cars are the bane of our existence, which seems reasonable if you compare the number and use of cars in the U.S. to cities in Europe. Unfortunately, cities like New York arose not through thoughtful planning, but through “historical accident” based on Manhattan’s location as an island and the perfect port. To plan another New York City would be virtually impossible today, leaving us to retrofit the sprawling communities already in place.

The goal of Owen’s “Manhattanization” is to consume less electricity and own fewer cars per person. (Personal motorized transport is the major source of greenhouse gas emissions everywhere other than Manhattan.) The idea of moving out of suburbs and back to the city was initially in conflict with the environmentalist anti-urban stance and disdain for dirty, unsafe cities.

Our dependence on oil is no longer a secret, especially to those of us living in the United States. Everything we use depends on (and includes the cost of) oil, from production to transport of goods. Gas prices have been manipulated through speculation to keep us dependent on cars. The mandated promotion of ethanol as an



Midtown Manhattan as seen from the GE Building, December 2005.
Source: Wikimedia Commons. Photo: Daniel Schwen

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BOOK REVIEW

Green Metropolis: Why Living Smaller, Living Closer, and Driving Less Are the Keys to Sustainability *(continued from previous page)*

“alternative fuel” proved to be a debacle. In 2006, the U.S. consumed 20 percent of its corn crop for ethanol production, while federal subsidies and import restrictions led to higher prices for both gasoline and groceries. At a Habitat for Humanity meeting not long ago, notes Owen, he criticized LEED and the USGBC for giving environmental credit for alternative fuel stations, citing the lack of alternative fuels as a clear contradiction to the concept.

Owen’s main discussion on transportation and urban planning is in chapter three. Even in New York City the relationship between traffic and transit is not well understood. Attempts at reducing car travel by programs such as High Occupancy Vehicle/ High Occupancy Toll lanes (HOV/HOT), City Car, and Congestion Pricing only serve to waste gas by increasing congestion in other places. (The newest idea for San Francisco to manage peak hour traffic and boost revenue is to charge cars for ingress and egress to the financial district, and to the city at the San Mateo County line.)

Owen says we can blame computers for an increasingly sedentary lifestyle that keeps us indoors and inside our cars. Less walking also means poorer health and an increase in energy consumption. Owen states that only two major cities promote walking as transit: New York City and San Francisco among a few others (Chicago and Boston perhaps). Even within high density New York, streets are sometimes deliberately used as “border vacuums.” For instance, Park Avenue with its wide grassy median divides pedestrians between the east and west sides of the street. (In Washington Heights—the neighborhood where I grew up in the 1950s and 1960s—Broadway was a dividing line between the whites, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans on one side and African-Americans on the other.)

Today, people are less than keen to walk, play, or exercise outside. Owen quotes from a recent book by Douglas Farr called *Sustainable Urbanism: Urban Design with Nature*. Farr writes, “The unpleasant characteristics of today’s outdoor spaces are especially harmful in close urban settings, actually deterring people from spending time outdoors and reinforcing the tendency to stay indoors and close the windows.” But if the downside of high density is poorer air quality and increased traffic congestion, why subject your family to those conditions if there is an alternative? As McKibben also states, there may soon be no alternative and we may have to adapt to a lifestyle not to our current aesthetics.

In the final two chapters of *Green Metropolis*, Owen takes on LEED certification and makes a case for tall buildings such as 4 Times Square as a major breakthrough in urban construction. Tall buildings have what Owen calls “embodied efficiency,” with much less exposed exterior surface per square foot of interior space than

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BOOK REVIEW

Green Metropolis: Why Living Smaller, Living Closer, and Driving Less Are the Keys to Sustainability *(continued from previous page)*

broader, lower buildings. LEED-certified corporate campuses such as the headquarters of Sprint Nextel in Kansas are the antithesis of urbanism.

Owen cites other buildings and projects that received recognition from the U.S. Green Building Council but were built on undeveloped land and constitute sprawl. Within the San Francisco Bay Area, attempts at self-sustaining new cities such as Mountain House failed because all the pieces never came together. And other LEED-certified buildings have recently been accused of having poor indoor air quality as they are “sealed up” and made from recycled materials that contain toxic chemicals.

Near the conclusion of *Green Metropolis*, Owen describes his travels to China and India, where growing prosperity has produced extensive road building and urbanization. These countries are now facing a large rural migration into the cities. Birthrates are dropping in China, Chile, Thailand, and Iran. Then there is Dubai, which Owen considers one of the least walkable cities in the world. Going anywhere in Dubai, he says, requires getting into a car and battling intense traffic jams.

Owen sums up “the shape of things to come” with a hit to locavorism or locally grown food, a cornerstone of McKibben’s ideal society. Owen’s concern is that the promotion of “vertical farms” belies the need to stack people—as opposed to producing groceries—in places like Manhattan. What Owen seems to want to prove is that people may agree that they need to live closer and drive less, but the challenge is how to do that efficiently and in ways that appeal to a sufficient number of people.



Janet Palma, MS, AICP, is an Environmental Health Technician with the San Francisco Department of Public Health, and Principal at J. Palma & Associates, an environmental planning concern. She can be contacted at janetpalma@comcast.net.

Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet, Bill McKibben, published February 2010 by Henry Holt and Company, LLC, New York. Hardcover: \$24.00

ISBN 978-0-8050-9056-7. 253 pages. For more information about the book:

<http://us.macmillan.com/eaarth> or <http://us.macmillan.com/author/billmckibben>

Green Metropolis: Why Living Smaller, Living Closer, and Driving Less Are the Keys to Sustainability, David Owen, published October 2009 by Penguin Group New York.

Hardcover: \$25.95. ISBN 978-1-59448-882-5. 357 pages. For more information about the book, visit http://www.davidowen.net/david_owen ■

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Palo Alto's hate affair with High Speed Rail

By Jumana Nabti

Nowhere does HSR seem more hotly contested than on the Bay Area's San José to San Francisco segment. On this portion of the alignment, the rail authority's preferred option would put the rails on an elevated berm along the current Caltrain route, with a Mid-Peninsula station in Mountain View, Palo Alto, or Redwood City. Palo Alto's University Avenue Caltrain Station is probably the best candidate: it has the second highest number of Caltrain boardings and good access to regional job centers at Stanford University, Hospital, and Research Park; Palo Alto and Menlo Park downtowns; and California Avenue. The station and Palo Alto Transit Center—less than a mile from San Mateo County—provide an excellent interchange for rail, Santa Clara County VTA, and SamTrans feeder/distributor bus services. Unfortunately, there is little or no support for a Mid-Peninsula station (and outright hostility) in Palo Alto.

Without good information on how high the berm would be, the sound impacts, the amount of land take required, the affect the project will have on Caltrain commuter rail service, or the amount of traffic that will be attracted to a station, Peninsula residents are bracing for the worst. They see increased traffic and emissions caused by those driving to the station, a huge dent in city budgets to pay for the required parking, and a visual and physical barrier splitting their cities. Outspoken Peninsula residents seem to be doing everything they can to keep HSR away or kill it altogether, rather than addressing the specific issues they find most difficult to accept.

I've heard few positives about the project on the Peninsula and in Palo Alto. In fact, however, HSR would:

- put much needed funding into Caltrain's capital budget;
- provide an anchor for alternative transportation on the Mid-Peninsula, such as VTA's planned El Camino Real BRT;
- attract business and increase city tax receipts; and
- in Palo Alto, redevelop the pedestrian dead-zone between downtown, El Camino, and Stanford Shopping Center.

Not to mention offering convenient three hour-service to Los Angeles.

I attended a recent Palo Alto City Council meeting on whether to support an HSR station at the University Avenue Caltrain Station. Council members barely acknowledged the potential benefits of the project, and instead focused on a CHSRA requirement for 3,000 parking spaces at or near the station, for which the city would have to provide the funding. The Council feared that the traffic generated by the station and the parking would bring Palo Alto to a standstill. Also a concern were the emissions from increased traffic, and the development opportunities that would be lost with so much land area dedicated to parking.

If these are the issues, Palo Alto hasn't focused on solving them in their communications with the Authority. Rather, Palo Alto has

(continued on next page)

Onward and upward

Christina Ratcliffe, AICP, is Senior Planner at Neal Martin & Associates, where she is currently serving as interim Planning Manager for the Town of Atherton. Christina previously was Senior Associate at PMC for eight years, and before that was Associate Planner, City of Berkeley, 2000–2002. She holds a BA in Urban Studies (San Francisco State University) and a Master in City and Regional Planning (UC Berkeley, where she also was awarded the “Rosie the Riveter ‘We Can Do It’ Award” by her fellow students). Christina was Northern Section’s Professional Development Director from 2002 to 2004 and from 2009 to October 2010.



Adrian M. Jones has joined ESA as Director of ESA’s San Francisco Bay Area Region Airports Group. Adrian previously worked 11 years with Ricondo & Associates, Inc., San Francisco, a nationally recognized aviation consulting firm, most recently as Director. Before that, he was an associate with Leigh Fisher Associates, San Mateo. Mr Jones’ experience includes preparing and managing aviation-related environmental assessments and environmental impact statements pursuant to CEQA and NEPA, with particular expertise in land use compatibility planning, aviation noise assessments, and air quality modeling and planning. A member of AEP, he holds a BA in Urban Studies and Sociology and a Master in City and Regional Planning, both from the University of Pennsylvania.



Connie Galambos Malloy is among the first eight chosen for the 14-member California Citizens Redistricting Commission. She and seven others were sworn into office on November 30th in Sacramento. The Commission must complete its work in mid-2011, with maps approved by August 15. (See Prop 20, [page 1](#)). Connie joined the Board of APA California Northern Section in fall 2005 as University Liaison and is now the Section’s Planning Diversity Director. She has a Bachelors Degree from La Sierra University and a Masters Degree in City and Regional Planning from UC Berkeley (2005). Connie has worked with a number of California organizations on urban planning issues and is currently Director of Programs, Urban Habitat. Urban Habitat builds power in low income communities and communities of color by combining education, advocacy, research, and coalition-building to advance environmental, economic, and social justice in the Bay Area. ■



Palo Alto’s hate affair with High Speed Rail

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challenged the validity of having a Mid-Peninsula station and has joined other Mid-Peninsula cities in suing the CHSRA over EIR numbers. CHSRA’s parking “requirements” for the station are based on assumptions regarding station access mode split. If the assumptions change—because of improved alternative mode access, for example—then the parking requirement would decrease.

Palo Alto should know that it is possible to have targeted growth without hugely increasing traffic. The city has insisted on a Stanford University policy of no net increase in traffic and has seen the University implement a portfolio of creative programs to do just that. Moreover, it is often cheaper to provide alternative programs than to build and maintain multi-story parking garages—and perhaps the cost savings could go toward putting the tracks in a trench.

In reality, Palo Alto and the Bay Area see traffic increases year after year. The way to slow, stop, or even reverse the trend is not to expand freeway and road capacity, but to plan and implement improved service and facilities for alternative modes and integrate the improvements with good urban design and appropriate land-uses. High speed rail is one such alternative mode, and a station in downtown Palo Alto offers the perfect opportunity to integrate excellent alternative transportation with excellent urban design.

Indeed, the existing and growing traffic is a major reason why a Mid-Peninsula station makes sense. On any transit route, planners need to balance the conflicting needs of *access time* (the time it takes to get to and from the stop) and *travel time* (the time spent traveling on the train or bus). With more stops, getting to a station will take less time, but travel time in the vehicle will take longer. With fewer stops, the reverse is true. To balance the two, stops are placed more closely in dense areas (think BART in downtown San Francisco) where the access time affects a large number of people relative to the total number of people traveling on transit.

The same is true for high speed rail, but on a larger scale. Since one of the purposes of HSR is to reduce traffic, GHG, and other emissions, it makes sense in a major metropolitan area (assuming some passengers will drive or be driven to the station) to reduce the distance a passenger must travel to access a station by placing stations closer together, thus reducing vehicle miles traveled (and thus, traffic). Since the trains will be well below maximum speed within the urban area, the proportion of time for the “added” stations will be low compared to the total passenger travel-time. The closer people can get by train to their homes and businesses, and to the major destinations that already exist in and near Palo Alto, the less they will need to drive in and through the city. Presumably, a station in Palo Alto would be close enough to local origins and destinations that it will be reasonable to walk, take a bus, or bike to and from the station.

The rail authority isn’t helping matters. Apparently one CHSRA consultant mentioned to a Palo Alto Councilperson that an HSR station is like putting a regional airport in your downtown. I heard the same thing at a recent transportation conference. Who would want a regional airport next door to their beautiful, walkable, successful

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Announcements

New Circulation Element Guidelines. On September 30, 2008, Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 1358, The California Complete Streets Act. AB 1358 added the following to Government Code Section 65302(b):

(2)(A) Commencing January 1, 2011, upon any substantial revision of the circulation element, the legislative body shall modify the circulation element to plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of the streets, roads, and highways for safe and convenient travel in a manner that is suitable to the rural, suburban, or urban context of the general plan.

(2)(B) For the purposes of this paragraph, "users of streets, roads, and highways" means bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, motorists, movers of commercial goods, pedestrians, users of public transportation, and seniors.

In response, OPR developed a *Draft Update to the General Plan Guidelines: Complete Streets and the Circulation Element*. The draft guidelines are available for download at www.opr.ca.gov. A public review and comment period concluded November 19, 2010.

TIGER II grants announced in October 2010 included awards to three Bay Area projects. A capital grant of \$10,200,000 went to the *East Bay Pedestrian and Bicycle Network*. Planning grants went to *Grand Boulevard: Removing Barriers to Livable Communities* (\$1,097,240) and to the *Oakland Army Base Infrastructure Master Plan* (\$2,000,000). A complete list of capital grant recipients (with project descriptions) can be downloaded at: <http://www.dot.gov/docs/tiger2grantinfo.pdf>. A complete list of planning grant recipients can be viewed at <http://www.dot.gov/docs/tiger2planninggrantinfo.pdf>.

A white paper, *Creative Placemaking*, is available for download at the webpage of the National Endowment for the Arts (<http://arts.gov/pub/pubDesign.php>). In a 10-minute video on the same webpage, Dr. Ann Markusen talks about the subject. In 2008, Markusen, then Professor of Urban Planning and Policy Development at Rutgers, participated in San José's *Great Cities Speaker Series*. She discussed how cities and regions—given heightened place-based competition—must plan strategically for their economic futures. Now Markusen and Anne Gadwa have coauthored "Creative Placemaking" (NEA 2010, 77 pp). The white paper was prepared for The Mayors' Institute on City Design, a leadership initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the United States Conference of Mayors and American Architectural Foundation. ■

Palo Alto's hate affair with High Speed Rail

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downtown? Clearly this was one reason the Council voted unanimously against a station. But an HSR station is nothing like a regional airport:

- The combined noise impact of HSR plus an electrified Caltrain will likely be less than the current diesel-powered Caltrain.
- The space required for an HSR station is significantly less than for an airport.
- Height restrictions for a train station and surrounding land uses are the opposite of those for an airport—the denser, the better.
- A rail station can be fully stitched into the urban fabric; and
- Urban and suburban rail stations increase nearby land values, while airports decrease them.

At that same conference, a participant asked why the CHSRA was focusing so much on car parking at stations and so little on fostering alternative modes by providing amenities like convenient bike parking. Perhaps because the responding consultant was working on a segment in the Los Angeles region (and I paraphrase) the answer was the need to plan for how people are going to get to the station, and most people aren't going to bike. Who would want to bike five miles to a meeting with a suitcase? But one size does not fit all. At Palo Alto stations, nearly 8 percent of passengers board Caltrain *with* bicycles, and many more park their bikes at the station. (Caltrain Bicycle Access and Parking Plan, 2008). Even if CHSRA doesn't budge on parking requirements, 3,000 spaces can be rebuilt or repurposed in 20 years. Modifying land or building use is easier and less costly than changing a transportation corridor.

One thing is clear, there is neither the trust nor communication between the City and the Authority to effectively address critical issues. With so much of the City's effort being used to say "no" to a Palo Alto Station, a Mid-Peninsula station, or even a Peninsula alignment, none of the real issues are being discussed. And lost is the opportunity to build better transportation infrastructure for everyone.

The positions and decisions that Peninsula residents and their city councils are taking now are based on conditions that exist or are apparent today. High speed rail is not a short term, or even a 30-year investment; rather it is a 50-, 100-, or 150-year investment.

Accurate models don't exist for how long this infrastructure will be valuable, if not critical, to our economy. With so much uncertainty about oil, the environment, and governmental budgets, why are we saying no so quickly? Refusing a place on the line or killing HSR altogether will be the biggest mistake Peninsula residents have made since San Mateo County said no to BART.



Jumana Nabti was born and raised in Palo Alto. She holds masters degrees in City Planning and Transportation from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and served as the Senior Specialist in Public Transport Policy and Strategy for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Jumana recently returned to the Bay Area to start her own transportation planning firm, SwitchPoint Planning. She can be reached at jumana@switchpointplanning.com. ■

San José city, schools, and developers grapple over proposed housing and taxes

HOW HIGH CAN TAXES RISE BEFORE DEVELOPERS BALK AT BUILDING INFILL HOUSING?

By Theresa Alster

On November 23, the Santa Clara Unified School District (SCUSD) Board of Education voted unanimously to put formation of a Mello-Roos Community Facilities District (CFD) in the North San José area on the ballot for public approval in March 2011. The CFD would be used to fund new schools to serve approximately half of the new housing proposed in North San José. December 10 was the deadline for SCUSD action for the Mello-Roos district to be on the next ballot, March 8.

The Mello-Roos law—passed in 1982—was introduced by and named for former legislators Senator Henry Mello of Watsonville and Assemblyman Mike Roos of Los Angeles. “It was a blatant—and ultimately successful—attempt to find a narrow constitutional path through the thicket of Proposition 13 that would permit public financing of new infrastructure.” (*Guide to California Planning*, third edition, by William Fulton and Paul Shigley, 2005, Solano Press Books, Point Arena, CA 95468, www.solano.com). For example, a Community Facilities District can be created in order to levy an increase in property taxes within the CFD to fund schools and infrastructure required by new development.

Developers don’t like the idea of additional taxes on housing units in their developments because it raises the price of the product and makes it harder to sell. They came to the SCUSD Board meeting to suggest that the way the district was developing or using student generation rates (SGR) was inflating the number of students, resulting in a significant tax burden for new housing units. Ultimately, the SGR—the average number of students generated by each household—would determine whether new schools would be needed and if so, how many, for the 15,000 high density units planned within the SCUSD and proposed CFD boundaries.

Bruce Dorfman of Thompson/Dorfman Urban Residential Development provided a letter to the Board of Education prior to the meeting and addressed the board. He suggested that a City of San José ordinance that forgave requirements for affordable housing units in North San José before next October is driving development in the area. Dorfman said that the student generation rates determined by the school district are faulty. He referenced a 2004 Shiels (now SGI Consulting) study used by the district, for example, which documented the average SGR for apartments as 0.05 students per unit. He noted, however, that SCUSD settled on an SGR of 0.11 per student in their 2010 Long Range Facilities Master Plan, citing the same Shiels study as its source.

In addition, in a separate 2007 Schoolhouse Services (SHS) report, SCUSD used a higher SGR because affordable housing units were projected to produce a rate of 1.07 students per unit. The SHS report also stated that the number of students would be significantly lower if the

units were “adult oriented at a density of 55 to 90 units per acre.” However, Dorfman stated in his letter, “San José passed an exemption from its inclusionary housing ordinance for any development that starts construction before October 2011 and for subsequent phases that are commenced before October 2014. It is due to the terms of this exemption that the developers are accelerating their developments in North San José, and not due to market conditions.” Since no affordable units will be constructed during the first phase of development, and since the density is proposed at a very high 55 units per acre, the SGR should have been lower rather than higher, said Dorfman. Quite simplistically, “The district is using a 0.16 SGR in its long range plan based on an average of the Shiels and SHS reports,” he explained; these rates are not intellectually honest.

In the same vein, a letter to the SCUSD board of April 2, 2008, from San José’s City Manager Debra Figone and Redevelopment Executive Director Harry S. Mavrogenes stated that the school district’s estimate of potential new students was overestimated by possibly 400 percent, as more than half of the units were planned as studio or one bedroom. “Actual enrollment figures from comparable developments already built in other parts of San José demonstrate far lower student generation rates than the District estimates.” They expressed concern that a \$30,000 cost per unit resulting from the Mello-Roos CFD could “ultimately threaten our ability to achieve major job growth in this part of San José.”

Shiloh Ballard, vice president of housing and community development for the Silicon Valley Leadership Group (SVLG) agreed and added, “We’re concerned that [the additional tax] will kill housing.” SVLG is intent on providing homes affordable to the entry level engineers who will work and live in North San José. With a finite supply of housing (and an extra tax from the Mello-Roos district), the cost will go up, she said, and affordability will go down.

“It’s all linked together,” explained Ballard. “The housing is needed to help fund the infrastructure. The housing needs to be built in order to make the plan work. The EIR mitigation measures depend on having housing near the jobs or there will be greater traffic impacts.”

Ballard explained that, about the time developers began planning the first round of the 32,000 units, SCUSD—based on their calculations of SGR multiplied by the number of housing units proposed in their district—was planning on putting a Mello-Roos CFD on the 2008 ballot. SVLG brought the City of San José, developers, and school district together. The City and their redevelopment agency offered \$75 million to the school district which diminished the need for the Mello-Roos CFD. As an incentive to spawn development, the City also eliminated the affordable housing requirements for the area until

(continued on next page)

Key Vision North San José Goals

Vision North San José is a long-range planning effort, addressing future potential growth and development needs. The key goals for the effort are to:

- Proactively plan for growth to allow more industrial development in a way that benefits current San José residents.
- Allow up to an additional 27 million square feet of research and development and office space in North San José.
- Bring up to 83,000 new jobs to San José, providing additional job opportunities for San José residents.
- Concentrate up to 16 million square feet of the new research and development and office space in a 600 acre Urban Corporate Center core area along the North First Street light rail corridor, between Brokaw Road and Montague Expressway.
- Develop an average 1.2 FAR in the core area with typical buildings of 6-10 stories.
- Focus on high-tech and corporate headquarters development.
- Create a rich pedestrian environment within the core area to encourage use of the transit system.
- Generate approximately \$520 million in funding for the construction of local and regional transportation improvements.
- Provide new high-density residential development (up to 32,000 units) in close proximity to employment centers.

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning/nsj/>

October 2011. Subsequently, "The RDA lost \$75 million to the state, and property tax assessments took a nosedive," said Ballard. "The RDA doesn't have the money anymore. Developers started pulling permits. The city couldn't uphold its end of the bargain."

Roger Barnes, director of bond projects at SCUSD, said that the Mello-Roos must be passed before the first units are built or the school district would miss the window of opportunity for collecting fees from those units.

Board President Andrew Ratermann said that the Mello-Roos discussion began in 2004 or 2005. He attempted to "cut a deal" with San José at the time, and 17 developers came up with a compromise. "The RDA always found an obstacle," he said. "Roger worked on this for four years. This isn't brand new stuff. Public education is paid by all, whether or not people have kids." There are 16,000 new housing units proposed for the district. Without infrastructure to support the students, they will be left in a bad situation, he added.

Barnes acknowledged that in November 2008, the district considered the Mello-Roos CFD until the City of San José offered the \$75 million (that was later withdrawn). A Mello-Roos election victory in March 2011 would ensure funding for a long range facilities plan including K-8 schools and a high school. The anticipated costs are around \$190-200 million to cover the buildings, classrooms, offices, storage rooms, infrastructure, furniture, fixtures, and architects. The district has asked for alternatives, but no one has offered any viable options.

Consultant Erik Schoennauer, representing a group of developers for North San José, said a typical Mello-Roos CFD in California taxes on average \$100-\$500 monthly per unit. The fees in North San José would run around \$2,000 per year just for the schools. He added via email "that this type of tax often includes a wide range of neighborhood infrastructure, including streets, sidewalks, sewers, street lights, parks, common area landscaping, perimeter sound walls, maybe libraries and community centers, and sometimes the neighborhood school. Often these Mello-Roos taxes are on high-value, single-family detached housing subdivisions, not high-density rental housing. So, over \$2,000 a year in tax per apartment or condo unit just for schools is on the high end. And for our type of housing in particular, this level of taxation makes projects financially infeasible." He said that in Santa Clara, housing density is typically five units per acre; the North San José area would be built to 55 units per acre.

Ballard said there is a link between recruiting a workforce and where people want to live, work, and play; that includes housing they can afford and a good educational system. Instead of taking into consideration what the market could bear, the school district tried to calculate a "sweet spot" that would allow development to move forward and get the schools built, she said.



Theresa Alster serves on the City of Campbell planning commission and site and architectural review committee. She holds bachelor of journalism and master of urban planning degrees from San José State University. Theresa has worked for newspapers and magazines as a writer, editor, and graphic designer. You can reach Theresa at morrissey94@gmail.com.

See sidebar outlining development plans for North San José. ■

California Department of Conservation awards Excellence in Reclamation to Canal Quarry

Canal Quarry, a 25-acre site previously mined for construction aggregate, is now a reclaimed open space property in Richmond, California. The project, located adjacent to East Bay Regional Park District lands, was recently recognized with the Excellence in Reclamation Award granted by the State Department of Conservation, Office of Mine Reclamation (OMR). The Excellence in Reclamation Award represents the highest honor in the first-ever annual OMR awards program.

Prior to reclamation, the site contained numerous environmental hazards that urgently needed to be addressed, including a number of geotechnical, drainage, archeological, and revegetation issues that threatened adjacent public lands. These hurdles called for a comprehensive reclamation strategy that would remedy public safety concerns and be aesthetically pleasing and harmonious with environmental principles.

The process leading to successful reclamation of the former quarry began with a Reclamation Plan prepared by a team of experts in geotechnical and civil engineering, cultural resources, and landscape architecture led by **Mignone Wood, AICP**, of LSA Associates. Some of the troubling geotechnical issues on which the Plan needed to focus included hazardously unstable toppling rock at the top of the slope and severe erosion throughout the hillside. As part of the Plan, a rock bolt wall was designed directly below the unstable rock to mitigate rotational or translational movement. Another problem was an existing archeological site—a Native American shell mound—covered with non-native plants. As part of reclamation, the plants had to be eradicated and the process monitored by cultural resource experts to minimize disturbance to the site. The revegetation section of the Plan included area-specific planting programs to encourage native plant growth while providing adequate erosion control. In 2006, the Plan was adopted by the State Mining and Geology Board, and reclamation for Canal Quarry could commence.

Through careful planning, project management, and coordination between the City of Richmond, the East Bay Regional Park District, the State Department of Conservation, and the reclamation team, Canal Quarry has become a model of adaptive and creative reclamation planning practices. Today Canal Quarry boasts a grassy hillside of lush native vegetation flourishing on the face of the formerly over-steepened, severely eroded slopes. The award from the Office of Mine Reclamation recognizes the innovative reclamation planning techniques implemented at Canal Quarry. ■



Before: Severe erosion on slopes



During reclamation



Reclaimed site

The election is over—climate loses

Just about everything below has been compiled from The New York Times, October 21–November 28. If it isn't in quotes, nine times out of 10 it has been paraphrased. For context and completeness, visit the source page and read the original. [Ed.]

Generation and gender gaps: who voted how. If you haven't yet analyzed who voted for the sweeping Congressional change, *The New York Times'* Marjorie Connelly writes that in 2010 "The generational divide exposed in the 2008 election was more pronounced. Voters under 30 were the only age group to support Democrats but made up just 11 percent of the electorate. By contrast, voters aged 60 and older represented 34 percent of voters, their highest proportion in exit polls since 1982. For the first time since 1982, when exit polls began measuring support for Congressional candidates, Republicans received a majority of women's votes." —"Rightward, march," *The New York Times*, November 7, 2010, <http://nyti.ms/buqLMt>. Click on the graphic for a full page of charts of exit poll data for the 2010 midterm elections collected by Edison Research for the National Election Pool; or go directly to <http://nyti.ms/arzqgE>.

"Cap and trade is likely dead for the foreseeable future. Skepticism and outright denial of global warming are among the articles of faith of the Tea Party movement across the country. For some, it is a matter of religious conviction; for others, it is driven by distrust of those they call the elites. And for others still, efforts to address climate change are seen as a conspiracy to impose world government and a sweeping redistribution of wealth. But all are wary of the Obama administration's plans to regulate carbon dioxide, which will require the expansion of government authority into nearly every corner of the economy. [With] dozens of new Republican climate skeptics swept into Congress, the prospects for assertive federal action to control global warming gases, including regulation by the Environmental Protection Agency, will grow dimmer than they already were." —John M. Broder, "Climate Change doubt is Tea Party article of faith," *The New York Times*, October 21, 2010, <http://nyti.ms/aMC7EZ>.

Portrait and portent of worsening drought. "There is plenty of concern about the economic future we're leaving for our children," writes *New York Times* columnist Peter Applebome. "As for urgency about the planet we're leaving them, that can slide until a more convenient time. A study by Dr. Aiguo Dai [National Center for Atmospheric Research, Climate and Global Dynamics Division, 'Drought under global warming: a review,' October 19, 2010, <http://bit.ly/bAWW8r>] concluded that, over the next 30 years, warming temperatures associated with climate change were likely to create increasingly dry conditions in the United States ... on levels seldom seen before. Most of the western two-thirds of the United States will be significantly drier by the 2030s, and large parts of the nation may face an increasing risk of extreme ... Dust Bowl-style drought within two decades. Barack Obama ... said his election would be historic on health care and climate change. Two years later,

you can barely find the phrase 'climate change' on the Web sites of Democrats running for office, and for Republicans it has become an item of faith to be a skeptic on the science and a critic of cap-and-trade. Despite debate, the scientific consensus has not changed. But the politics have changed, recast as a Republican wedge issue based around opposition to cap-and-trade." —Peter Appelbome, "Ignoring the planet won't fix it," *The New York Times*, October 27, 2010, <http://nyti.ms/cxWBQZ>. Also see, "An almanac of extreme weather," by Jack Hedin, *The New York Times*, November 28, 2010, <http://nyti.ms/eV970J>

The US elections notwithstanding, November was quite a month for policy debates on climate change. As the month ended, the 16th Conference of the Parties on Climate Change (COP16/CMP6) began in Cancún, Mexico.¹ Any agreements reached on reducing emissions that contribute to global warming will be announced when the conference concludes December 10.

As November began, nations that signed the 1987 Montreal Protocol on ozone met in Bangkok. The Montreal Protocol effectively phased out 97 percent of 100 ozone-depleting chemicals. In Bangkok, among many other things, the Parties considered a proposed expansion of the treaty to phase out the production and use of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). Ninety-one countries signed a declaration of intent to pursue further action.

Northern News culled and reassembled the following points on HFCs from *The New York Times* and the Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development. Sources are footnoted.

- Global warming is caused by two separate types of pollution. One is the long-term buildup of carbon dioxide, which can remain in the atmosphere for centuries. The other type includes methane, some hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), and dark soot particles. These pollutants stay in the atmosphere a decade at most, but contribute about 80 percent of the warming amount that carbon dioxide causes.²
- Big cuts are possible in HFCs, many of which are used as refrigerants and were invented to replace the chlorofluorocarbons regulated under the Montreal Protocol starting in 1987. The warming effect of HFCs is at least 1,000 times that of carbon dioxide.²
- It makes no sense to pin all our hopes for averting climate change on a diplomatic process (Kyoto¹) that is difficult to negotiate and impossible to ratify.³
- There is little hope for a global climate change agreement this year; therefore, some policy experts proposed including HFCs under the verifiable 1987 Montreal Protocol.⁴

(continued on next page)

The election is over—climate loses

(continued from previous page)

- Some of the ozone-depleting chemicals regulated by Montreal are also climate warmers. While phasing out ozone-depleting chemicals, the Montreal Protocol—as a side benefit—eliminated the equivalent of more than five years' worth of total global warming emissions.⁴
- By the conclusion of Bangkok, 91 countries had declared their "intent to pursue further action under the Montreal Protocol aimed at transitioning the world to environmentally sound alternatives" by adding HFCs to the chemicals already being phased out under the treaty. Those countries agreed to positions by China, India, and Brazil to discuss the amendment further at the Montreal treaty's next working group meeting in mid-2011.⁵

Footnotes:

¹ COP16/CMP6 is the 16th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP: 193 State Parties including USA) and the 6th Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP: 184 State Parties; does not include USA).

² Veerabhadran Ramanathan and David G. Victor, "To fight climate change, clear the air," *The New York Times*, November 28, 2010, <http://nyti.ms/hmiQdL>

³ Bruce Usher, "On global warming, start small," *The New York Times*, November 28, 2010, <http://nyti.ms/i3BEeY>

⁴ John M. Broder, "A novel tactic in climate fight gains some traction," *The New York Times*, November 8, 2010, <http://nyti.ms/b7eBxC>

⁵ Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development, "Call for climate protection under ozone treaty," <http://bit.ly/eCwjRX>. NOTE: This is a good site to visit to follow climate policy developments. ■

HSR notes

Below are snippets of what has transpired in the past two months with regard to High-Speed Rail in or affecting the Bay Area. For the near future, less will be happening in the Bay Area—rather than more—as the focus switches to laying rail in the Central Valley from Borden (just south of Madera) to Corcoran (see map, next page). The thrust is to get under construction by 2012 and use as much as possible (about \$4.15 billion) of the federal money granted to the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) to date (\$4.3 billion). There will be no HSR job stimulus in the Bay Area to speak of, and Caltrain won't be able to look to HSR for electrification or the monetary assistance needed to pull the local commuter line out of its downward financial and service spiral.

In related developments, a new group, Friends of Caltrain, has formed to find a permanent and dedicated source of operating funds for the commuter line. (Palo Alto Weekly, November 10, 2010, <http://bit.ly/fCnvBb>.) And the mayors of Palo Alto and Burlingame are organizing a draft letter they hope all Peninsula cities will send to state and federal officials, offering a common vision for HSR on the Peninsula. (MercuryNews.com, November 24, 2010, <http://bit.ly/fgzFqv>.)

If you would like to volunteer to write this column, please email me, Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP, editor, Northern News, at knoxnaph@gmail.com.

October 22: California High-Speed Rail Authority CEO Roelof van Ark told officials from several Peninsula cities that the state's bullet trains won't be running through tunnels or covered trenches in their area. The under-grounding—which is being urged by cities that fear disruption of their suburban fabric—is not possible for anything other than very short stretches, he said, because freight trains running on the same line need ventilation. A tunnel is planned for San Francisco, however, where freight trains will not run along the proposed high-speed rail tracks. (Mike Rosenberg, *San Mateo County Times*, "High-speed rail boss to Peninsula: forget about tunnels," October 23, 2010, <http://bit.ly/aNSJ0e>.)

October 28: The US Department of Transportation announced that California would receive \$715 million for either the Merced-to-Fresno or Fresno-to-Bakersfield sections of the state's HSR route. Also awarded was \$16 million for improvements to the 4th and King Street Station in San Francisco to serve the existing commuter rail service and high-speed rail. (CHSRA press release, <http://bit.ly/ckHsSo>.)

October 30: Declining the role of scapegoat, a representative of the companies that use freight from San Francisco to San José said diesel trains *can* run underground—and do so in several parts of the country. It's a matter of spending enough time and money to install proper ventilation. (Mike Rosenberg, *San Mateo County Times*, "High-speed rail: Freight companies challenge information on tunneling," <http://bit.ly/9Vqi7P>.)

November 4: Just in case there was any question, federal officials clarified that the entirety of federal funding California has received so far (\$4.3 billion) must be spent in one of the two Central Valley sections of the project. Reporter Mike Rosenberg, who covers HSR for the *San Mateo County Times*, noted that Caltrain is "perhaps the biggest loser. The commuter rail line will switch to electric trains once the Bay Area portion of the bullet-train project is complete [but] it can't afford the \$1.5 billion electric switchover without high-speed rail funds." (Mike Rosenberg, "Central Valley picked for first segment of high-speed rail project," *MercuryNews.com*, November 4, 2010, <http://bit.ly/c8eKmt>.)

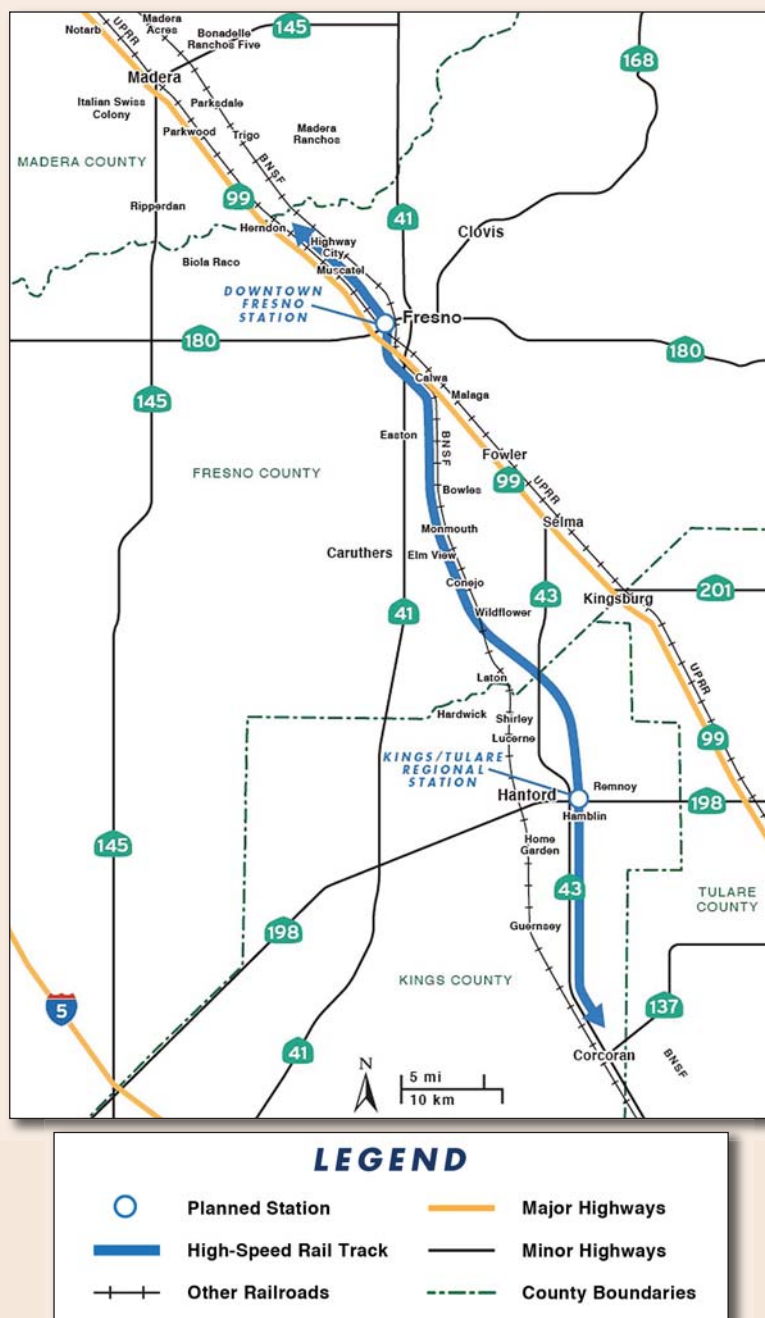
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November 24: "Authority CEO Roelof van Ark noted that the first segment to enter construction would make the best use of the \$4.3 billion in currently available construction funds and meet all state and federal legal requirements. Spanning about 65 miles, the recommended segment would start near Madera, include the construction of stations in downtown Fresno and east of Hanford, and continue south to Corcoran." (CHSRA press release, November 24, 2010, <http://bit.ly/hx7GGE>.)

"No construction can begin until the Authority completes its environmental reviews of the project. The federal deadline for completing these reviews is September 2011, and construction is expected to begin in 2012 and finish in 2017." (CHSRA press release, December 2, 2010, <http://bit.ly/eNFFMd>.)

November 24: "Do the multiple roles [of two CHSRA board members] enrich the board or set the scene for conflicting interests?" LA Times reporter Rich Connell asked that question about Curt Pringle, chairman of the CHSRA board—who is the mayor of Anaheim and also serves on the Orange County Transportation Authority—and CHSRA board member Richard Katz, who also sits on the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority and Metrolink commuter rail board. As *Northern News* reported last issue, an April 2010 letter from the state Legislative Counsel Bureau was obtained late in September by Palo Alto-based Californians Advocating Responsible Rail Design. In the letter, the Legislative Counsel Bureau found the fact that both men serve on the rail board while also serving other governmental agencies in Southern California creates a potential for conflict of interest. (Gennady Sheyner, "Rail officials wrestle with 'conflict' finding," *Palo Alto Online*, September 29, 2010, <http://bit.ly/aAfM90>).

Six weeks later, in mid-November, "Pringle noted he will be termed out as mayor in December and will give up his seat on the Orange County transportation board. And Katz said he would resign from the state rail panel Dec. 1 rather than jeopardize his ability to work on a host of local transit projects." There's that and much more in Rich Connell's article, "E-mails reveal clashes over high-speed rail project," *Los Angeles Times*, November 24, 2010, <http://lat.ms/fUPOMr> (via and thanks to ReconnectingAmerica.org, *The other side of the tracks*). ■



Start of California's HSR system. Construction will begin with 65 miles in the Central Valley. Tracks will be laid from near where trains turn west toward San José, south through Fresno toward Bakersfield, to form the system's backbone. Source: CHSRA

Answer to "Where in the world?" (Page 5)

Xian, China. Looking north on Dongda Street from the Bell Tower to the Anyuan Gate.

Photo by Linton Atlas

What others are saying

Costly micro-response to sea-level rise in Virginia. The city of Norfolk, Virginia, “has hired the Dutch firm Fugro to evaluate options like inflatable dams and storm-surge floodgates at the entrances to waterways” to stem sea-level rise. “Tidal flooding is increasingly disrupting life here and all along the East Coast. But Norfolk is worse off. It is bordered on three sides by water. Norfolk was built on filled-in marsh. Now that fill is settling and compacting. In addition, the city is in an area where significant natural sinking of land is occurring. The result is that Norfolk has experienced the highest relative increase in sea level on the East Coast—14.5 inches since 1930. [Residents in one area] lobbied the city to address the problem, and last summer it broke ground on a project to raise a street by 18 inches and to readjust the angle of the storm drains so that when the river rises, water does not back up into the street. The city will also turn a park at the edge of the river back into wetlands. The cost for the work on this one short street is \$1.25 million.” —Leslie Kaufman, “Front-line city in Virginia tackles rise in sea,” *The New York Times*, November 26, 2010, <http://nyti.ms/i92KKq>. Followup blog by Ms. Kaufman, “Explaining Norfolk’s creeping tides,” <http://bit.ly/hvD241>: “An assortment of factors is thought to play a role in how localities experience sea rise, but scientists agree that land sinkage alone does not begin to answer why the tide is encroaching on Norfolk.”

No fuel like an old fuel. “Three summers ago ... the book ‘Twilight in the Desert,’ by Matthew R. Simmons, seemed to sum up the conventional wisdom: the age of cheap, plentiful oil and gas was over. ‘Sooner or later, the worldwide use of oil must peak,’ the book concluded, ‘because oil, like coal and natural gas, is nonrenewable.’ Just as it seemed that the world was running on fumes, giant oil fields were discovered off Brazil and Africa, and Canadian oil sands projects expanded so fast, they now provide North America with more oil than Saudi Arabia. In addition, the United States has increased domestic oil production for the first time in a generation. Energy experts now predict decades of residential and commercial power at reasonable prices. And while moderately priced oil and gas bring economic relief, they also make renewable sources of energy like wind and solar relatively expensive and less attractive to investors unless governments impose a price on carbon emissions.” Even with a worldwide “effort to reduce future carbon emissions sharply, the International Energy Agency projected oil demand would peak around 2020, then decline to 81 million barrels a day in 2035—just fractionally less than today’s consumption.” —Clifford Krauss, “There will be fuel,” *The New York Times*, Energy and Environment, November 17, 2010, <http://nyti.ms/aqGIY0>.

Commercial building moving in the right direction.

“Billings by U.S. architects, a barometer of demand in commercial real estate, rose in September for the first time in almost three years, suggesting a recovery in construction spending might be under way. The Architecture Billings Index increased to 50.4 from 48.2 in August, the first gain in fees since January 2008. Any reading above 50 indicates an increase in billings. The Architecture Billings Index is based on a survey of firms owned by members of the American Institute of Architects. Participants are asked each month whether their billings rose, fell, or stayed the same in the month just ended, and their responses are used to generate the index score. Residential accounts

for about 15 percent of the overall index, and institutional for 45 percent to 50 percent.” —Hui-yong Yu, “U.S. architect billings increase for the first time since 2008,” *Bloomberg*, October 19, 2010, <http://bit.ly/c8B3MQ>. See **The late news**, bottom [page 21](#).

For those who went on APA Northern’s 2008 China trip. “Imagine a city government building reminiscent of a Chinese emperor’s palace. This building stands in front of my eyes. Accessed by long and broad steps, this massive three-story structure features a Chinese roof with overhanging, upturned eaves, huge scarlet wooden gates, and exquisitely painted traditional patterns on its exterior. It was designed in 1931 as the Shanghai Municipal Government Administrative Center and was the signature building in the ‘Greater Shanghai Plan’—the first urban planning project in Shanghai (late 1920s, early 1930s). Since downtown Shanghai was mostly occupied by foreign concessions, planners looked instead to a vast area in the city’s northeastern Jiangwan Town to build a new center. The Shanghai Municipal Government Building (now the Shanghai Sports Academy) was the most important structure in the plan. Approximately 10 buildings in this style remain in Shanghai, including the former Shanghai Library (now in Tongji High School) and the former Shanghai Museum (now Changhai Hospital’s Screening Building).” —Michelle Qiao, “Visiting Shanghai’s first city hall,” *The Globalist*, October 25, 2010, <http://bit.ly/bVifla>. Short slide show at ShanghaiDaily.com: <http://bit.ly/9rrNfZ>.

For those who went on APA Northern’s 2010 India trip.

The November 2009 photo (below) was published one year ago in *Northern News* as part of December’s lead article, “What we saw and learned on our planning tour of India.”



27-story single-family residential under construction.
Bombay, 2009

(continued on next page)

Have you seen the 1906 Market Street film?

Last March, an email was circulating with a link to a wonderful seven-minute silent film of Market Street before the earthquake of April 1906. You can see it on YouTube at <http://bit.ly/99iNtE>. (I found it necessary to turn off the sound which someone added.)

This film had been lost for many years. It was taken by camera mounted on the front of a cable car. Market street had no traffic lights, no cross walks, no painted lanes, no road signs, and apparently no vehicle or pedestrian regulations or police.

The film was originally thought to be from 1905 until David Kiehn figured out exactly when it was shot, using New York trade papers that announced the film showing. (Mr. Kiehn is the museum manager and film historian at Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum, Fremont, California, <http://www.nilesfilmmuseum.org>.) Kiehn analyzed the wet streets (indicating recent heavy rainfall), the building shadows (indicating time of year), historical records of actual weather conditions, and determined from license plates when the cars were registered. With this evidence, he concluded the film was made only four days before the 1906 quake, and that it was shipped by train to New York (possibly for processing) the evening before the 1906 earthquake. The filmmaker's building and files were destroyed in the quake the next day.

Now the film has reached television, in a markedly clearer version. "Historic Film: Market Street 1906," aired in a 12-minute segment on CBS' "60 Minutes" on October 17, 2010: "Morley Safer reports on a mystery that was solved about a 100-year-old film that we now know was made on San Francisco's Market Street just days before the 1906 earthquake." It seems that not all of the film was aired, but the clarity, interviews, and presentation are worth it. Go to <http://bit.ly/9Kj7CK>. For more on David Kiehn, see Edward Guthman, "Historian David Kiehn traces old Bay Area films," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 6, 2010, <http://bit.ly/iazbam> ■

What others are saying (continued from previous page)

The building—the house of Mukesh Ambani, chairman of Reliance Industries—was the subject of a front-page article in *The New York Times* by Jim Yardley: "Soaring above India's poverty, a 27-story single-family home," October 29, 2010, <http://nyti.ms/dAG0wi>. Yardley writes: "The newest and most exclusive residential tower for this city's superrich is a cantilevered sheath of steel and glass soaring 27 floors into the sky. The parking garage fills six levels. Three helipads are on the roof. There are terraces upon terraces, airborne swimming pools, and hanging gardens. There are nine elevators, a spa, a 50-seat theater, and a grand ballroom. Hundreds of servants and staff are expected to work inside. Now, after several years of planning and construction, the residents are about to move in. All five of them. Mr. Ambani, his wife, Nita, and their three children are expected to move into the building after a housewarming party with 200 guests scheduled for Nov. 28." For more photos, see <http://bit.ly/92Fr6g> and <http://bit.ly/am87R0>.

More (more profoundly) on India. The *Globalist* (<http://www.theglobalist.com>) recently published "Reconciling the Two Indias" (<http://bit.ly/cxqSt0>), an article by Patrick Smith, author of *Somebody Else's Century*. Smith writes, "Those Indians who have benefited from the country's economic boom often focus too much on preparing for prosperity instead of worrying about poverty. There are slightly more than 600,000 villages in India, and ... roughly eight million Indians move from village to city in a typical year... In Delhi, [at] an urban-planning seminar ... full of scholars, bureaucrats, bankers, lawyers, executives, and experts in the life of cities, I found myself jotting down a few of the observations made. 'The need is to shift from poverty eradication to planning for prosperity,' a professor of urban studies said. 'We don't really have an urban plan at all,' a housing expert said, 'but if we want to develop, we will urbanize.' A scholar from Harvard said, 'In Shanghai they are building upward. In New York we are building upward.' A banker said, 'The idea that India will remain a rural environment is simply not realistic.' Then the housing expert again: 'We have to start moving people faster and faster.' This is the new India thinking aloud. It is sequential India. It finds itself caught up in a process, and there is no talk of managing the process itself—only of how to cope within the process, as if the process were immutable. No one stops to think that human agency made the process, and human agency can alter it." *Somebody Else's Century* by Patrick Smith (\$25.95, Pantheon, Hardcover, ISBN 9780375425509, 256 pp, August 2010)

The late news. One problem with a monthly news publication—especially with departments like "What others are saying"—is that attempts to capture the latest developments are soon overtaken by later news. Sometimes the findings are reversed. Such is the case with an item on the previous page, where we noted:

Commercial building moving in the right direction. "Billings by U.S. architects, a barometer of demand in commercial real estate, rose in September for the first time in almost three years, suggesting a recovery in construction spending might be under way."

That was not to be. *The Architect's Newspaper* reported on December 6 that "the numbers slipped back below the all-important 50 mark in October, confirming widespread evidence of a stop-start recovery." September's gains "were all but wiped out in October as the index dropped nearly two points to 48.7." You can read the update, "Rough ride for AIA billings index," in *The Architect's Newspaper*, <http://bit.ly/hil5WF>. ■

NORTHERN SECTION CALENDAR

To list an event in the Northern Section calendars (*Northern News*, monthly; *eNews*, every two weeks), go to <https://docs.google.com/Doc?docid=0AexaSG3Vebr9ZGR3Z216d3dfMjNoZjZqcjhrbQ&hl=en> to see the required template (at top of page), the current listings, and where to send your formatted item.

ONGOING

Planning for Healthy Places with Health Impact

Assessments. Now through December 31, 2011. A how-to guide for conducting health impact assessments (HIAs), developed by the American Planning Association and the National Association of County & City Health Officials, and sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This free online course will explain the value of and the steps involved in conducting an HIA. To participate, go to

<http://professional.captus.com/Planning/hia/default.aspx>.

CM | up to 6.0

Symposium, 1909–2109: Sustaining the Lasting Value of American Planning. This four-hour symposium on May 21, 2009, brought together federal officials, planners, academics, and grassroots advocates to focus on the achievements of America's first 100 years of planning. See a video of the symposium (**free**) and earn CM credits. Visit

<http://www.planning.org/centennial/symposium/>

CM | 4.0 may be earned by viewing all four parts of the symposium video.

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DECEMBER

12/15 Redwood Coast Holiday Party. 6:30–10 PM, Eureka Women's Club, 1531 J Street, Eureka. The \$5 donation can be waived for current APA members. Please bring a bottle of wine to share. Raffle ticket sales offset food costs. For more information, contact Stephen Avis at (707) 725-1407 or savis@ci.fortuna.ca.us

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| JANUARY | | | | | | |
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JANUARY

- 1/11 Redwood Coast Region's Brown Bag Lunch Series: Latest CEQA Case Law Update.** Noon–1 PM, location TBD. This month's speaker is Robert J. (Bob) Brown, AICP, Streamline Planning Consultants, Arcata. **Free.** For more information, contact Stephen Avis at (707) 725-1407 or savis@ci.fortuna.ca.us
- 1/15 AICP Exam Preparation Workshop.** 10 AM–3 PM, San José State University. To register, contact Don Bradley, dr.donbradley@comcast.net or (650) 592-0915.
- 1/20 Redwood Coast RAC Social Mixer.** 5:10 PM, Six Rivers Brewery, 1300 Central Avenue, McKinleyville. Socialize with fellow planners. For more information, contact Stephen Avis at (707) 725-1407 or savis@ci.fortuna.ca.us
- 1/22 APA California, Northern Section Board Retreat.** 10 AM–3 PM, Redwood City Public Library. The Board will set its goals and budget for the year. All APA members welcome. RSVP to Hanson Hom at (408) 730-7450 or hhom@ci.sunnyvale.ca.us
- 1/29 2011 Annual Environmental Legislative Symposium, "California 2020, A Vision for the Next Decade."** Presented by Planning and Conservation League (PCL) and PCL Foundation. 9 AM–5 PM, Sheraton Grand, 1230 J Street, Sacramento. An open forum to brainstorm ideas, understand issues, and advance solutions for issues heading into the next decade. **Sessions with CM credits include:**
- General Plans—Still critical, still contentious.
 - What is next for California water?
 - Natural resource economics.
 - Perspectives on energy siting.
 - CEQA 201—A look at 2009/2010 and rollback preventions.
 - Groundwater—What lies beneath?
 - Water wars—Present and future.
 - Getting Smart Growth where it needs to be.
 - Roads, wildlife, and wilderness.
- Registration: \$100 for PCL Members; \$120 Government Rate; \$140 Non-member; \$50 Student. Prices higher after December 31st. For more information, go to: <http://www.pcl.org>. **CM | up to 3.75 (Law, up to 2.5)**
- 1/29 2011 Annual League Day, League of Women Voters Bay Area.** 9 AM–2 PM. MTC, 101 Eighth Street, Oakland. This year The League presents "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Let's Take it to the Next Level." Up to nine speakers will talk about regional and local conservation steps taken by government, science, and a local high school. Hear the latest on electric cars, alternative fuels, sustainability programs, deconstructing buildings, and energy use in California. Registration: \$30 in advance or \$35 at the door. Includes light breakfast and sandwich lunch. Registration is available online through January 24 at www.lwvbayarea.org. **CM | 4.0 pending**

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| FEBRUARY | | | | | | |
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FEBRUARY

- 2/5** **AICP Exam Preparation Workshop.** 10 AM–3 PM, San José State University. To register, contact Don Bradley, dr.donbradley@comcast.net or (650) 592-0915.
- 2/8** **Redwood Coast Region's Brown Bag Lunch Series: Public Health and Rural Community Planning – How Close a Connection?** Noon–1 PM, Humboldt County Public Health Office Conference room, 908–7th Street, Eureka. Speakers include Ann Lindsay, MD, County Public Health Director. **Free.** For more information, contact Stephen Avis at (707) 725-1407 or savis@ci.fortuna.ca.us
- 2/17** **Redwood Coast RAC Social Mixer.** 5:10 PM, Meet in front of River Lodge located at 1800 South 12th Street, Fortuna. After walking along the river, socialize with fellow planners at Eel River Brewery at 1777 Alamar Way, Fortuna. For more information, contact Stephen Avis at (707) 725-1407 or savis@ci.fortuna.ca.us
- 2/26** **AICP Exam Preparation Workshop.** 10 AM–3 PM, San José State University. To register, contact Don Bradley, dr.donbradley@comcast.net or (650) 592-0915. ■