



NORTHERN NEWS



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California Chapter
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Redevelopment without redevelopment



Redevelopment as we've known it is gone. The issues it was designed to address are not.

William Anderson, FAICP, Jan. 16, 2012

California Redevelopment is facing dissolution. Attempts to delay its demise remind me of the line in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, where the serf on the body cart claims "I'm not dead yet," until the Collector (in this case, the State) knocks him in the head until he's gone.

While groups try to salvage Redevelopment, whether or not they're successful in abating the dissolution process, it's clear that redevelopment will not be the same, whether by virtue of a life-saving amendment of the existing structure, or, in time, a reconstituted Redevelopment law.

As Californians, including our own planning profession, debate the merits of redevelopment, we should ask three questions:

- Is place-based directed investment of State interest, even if it redistributes economic activity within the state?
- If the answer is "yes," for what public purposes and under what conditions and terms?
- With or without a revised Redevelopment law, are other tools needed to finance urban infrastructure and community regeneration?

When the Governor proposed to terminate Redevelopment and return tax increment to the taxing jurisdictions, one of the arguments made was that redevelopment activity enabled investment that, to a large degree, transferred economic activity from one part of the state (i.e., areas outside redevelopment project areas) to another part of the state (i.e., areas within redevelopment project areas). Therefore, the argument went, California's economy as a whole did not gain, since much of the economic activities were simply subsidized transfers.

In part, this is a reasonable observation. I remember hearing this argument in graduate school regarding enterprise zones. Particularly for large redevelopment project areas, some of

the lift in value was attributable to general macro-economic conditions that affected all properties, within and outside redevelopment project areas, rather than directly attributable to redevelopment activities. It's for this reason that some states limit tax increment to individual development projects rather than whole areas.

However, this argument is less persuasive when redevelopment activities promote base-sector, export-oriented activity that otherwise would not have occurred, such as tourism brought to the state with convention facilities. Sure, if the trade didn't go to San Diego, it might have gone to Los Angeles, San Jose, or San Francisco instead, but it might just as easily have gone to New Orleans, Chicago, or Las Vegas.

What about redevelopment activities that support infrastructure for industrial trade sectors that export? Sadly, there aren't enough examples of redevelopment used for industrial development and the good jobs they bring. Even when such development did occur, some argue it might have happened elsewhere in California anyway without Redevelopment assistance.

What about the private capital that Redevelopment attracted? While some of the private capital came from Californians, much came from investors located outside California. Some of this capital would have followed development activities wherever it occurred in the state, so long as there was an adequate profit to be made. Other national and international capital funds, however, were attracted to California instead of opportunities in another state or nation because the California investments were leveraged by redevelopment activities.

For argument's sake, let's concede that some (not all) redevelopment activities are transfers within the state. Is this a reason not to encourage private investment in a particular area through public investment?

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Redevelopment without redevelopment

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National APA Conference in Los Angeles, April 14–17

Remember to register for the national conference, <http://bit.ly/oFYmzB>. Deadline for early registration is February 16. It has been almost 20 years since the national conference was last held in Los Angeles. Along with a multitude of educational sessions, the local host committee has planned an ambitious series of mobile workshops and social events to showcase the urban transformation, evolving neighborhoods, and architectural landmarks in the Los Angeles basin. Hope to see you there!

Welcome, new Board Members!

The Northern Section is beginning the year with several new Board Directors. Congratulations to **Jeff Baker**, who has been elected to fill the remaining Director-Elect term vacated by **Allen Tai, AICP**. Allen had to resign because of competing work and personal obligations, and we thank him for nearly four years of dedicated service on the Board as Administrative Director and Director-Elect. Jeff is no stranger to the Board, having capably served as Treasurer for the past six years. He will move up to Director on January 1, 2013. Succeeding Jeff as Treasurer is **Laura Thompson** who was elected to the position in December. Welcome also to **Ruth Miller** who succeeds **Michelle Thong** as the Student Representative from UC Berkeley.

At the state level, three very deserving Northern Section Directors have been elected/appointed to state level positions. Congratulations to **Darcy Kremin, AICP**, who was elected to the California Planning Foundation (CPF) Board. Among other activities, CPF conducts important fundraising efforts to award scholarships to planning students throughout the state. **Hing Wong, AICP**, was appointed Vice President Public Information, and **Andrea Ouse, AICP**, was appointed State Awards Coordinator (North) on the Chapter Board. The three

directors will bring new ideas and fresh energy to their respective positions, and we look forward to giving them them our full support.

Opportunities regularly arise to become associated with the Northern Section Board. Please contact me if you are interested in joining the Board and getting involved in Section activities. You would be working with a group of energetic and dedicated planners.

APA California Chapter Board Retreat

As Northern Section Director, I participated in the annual Chapter Board Retreat on January 13–14. It was a productive two days with a packed agenda covering a wide range of topics affecting the Chapter membership.

Reflecting the struggling economy, the Chapter is unfortunately not immune from the fiscal challenges confronting most organizations today. While our fiscal picture is improving, the Chapter nevertheless continues to face budgetary challenges. A key goal is to identify efficiencies and economies of scale for delivering a full array of services and programs to members. Discussion centered on exploring options and strategies for maintaining core membership services while wrestling with reduced revenues, and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the Chapter and Sections.

Although the Chapter has trimmed operating costs in the last several years, additional cost-saving opportunities will be explored, such as reducing the cost for managing the Chapter's website while improving it. Diverse viewpoints and ideas were shared at the retreat which led to a healthy debate. The universal goal among Board members, however, is a commitment to delivering quality services to members. The retreat concluded with a list of action items for follow-up resolution in the coming months. I will report back on the future deliberations of the Chapter Board. ■

"Infrastructure is everything the city owns that doesn't move."
—Ray Bacchetti

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Lorraine Weiss

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Redevelopment without redevelopment

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I would argue that there is a State interest to incentivize reinvestment to particular areas; we do it all the time with State and local policies.

- Is it of State interest to bring retail services and groceries closer to lower-income residents in our urban communities, many of which experienced commercial flight many decades ago? Yes, if the State is interested in livable and healthy communities.
- Is it of State interest to underwrite affordable and workforce housing near transit to reduce the transportation cost burdens of lower income households? Presumably yes, given calls for location-based mortgages, and California Tax Credit Allocation Committee and Strategic Growth Council criteria that influence the location of affordable housing investment.
- Is providing good job opportunities closer to the workforce, and access to capital, particularly in communities with higher unemployment and poverty, of State interest, even if the businesses are locally traded companies that otherwise could occur in suburban business parks? I think so. At least the Federal government thinks so with its CDBG goals and the Community Reinvestment Act.

Indeed, many of our State-enabled planning and zoning laws are place-based policies to discourage sprawl, manage growth, leverage positive relationships, minimize negative relationships, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions — though one could argue that these laws result in transfers of economic activity within a region and the state that otherwise would have occurred elsewhere within the state if the market was left to laissez-faire devices — as is argued in cities elsewhere in the country with limited land use and zoning laws.

So, if the answer to the first question is “yes,” — that place-based directed investment is of State interest — the next questions are when, for what purposes, and under what terms.

This is precisely what the next iteration of the redevelopment debate should address, whether there is a reconstitution of redevelopment law or new enabling mechanisms:

- Is it back to the basics — affordable housing, ameliorating true blight?
- Does it include new state imperatives, such as infill public infrastructure to support SB375 and AB32?
- Does it allow for any assemblage of land for private investors and developers, allowed by the US Constitution, but controversial with the public?
- Does it limit any take from taxing agencies that don’t want to participate?

If Redevelopment is reconstituted in the future, do we pull the reins on its financing capacity, e.g., by limiting redevelopment projects and tax increment collection to just the redevelopment activity themselves (and maybe adjacent properties directly affected) rather than whole areas that are several miles across and include properties for which there is a questionable nexus?

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Undoubtedly, there would have to be a new tax increment distribution formula and terms to protect the fiscal operating revenue of different taxing jurisdictions, unless they choose on their own to forgo some of their share. With smaller project areas, bonding will be more difficult unless the revenues are tied to a larger bonding vehicle, like the Statewide Community Infrastructure Program (SCIP) that finances impact fee revenues.

What if Redevelopment is not revived until several years down the road? Many local jurisdictions formed redevelopment project areas and aggressively sought tax increment because they wanted to finance new infrastructure and stimulate private reinvestment, mostly in urban communities that previously had trouble attracting capital because of extraordinary costs and risks. When Redevelopment is gone, what tools are left to finance urban and infill infrastructure, and are they sufficient? Or are new tools needed? If California is to create more sustainable cities and regions, e.g., by clustering future growth into portions of existing urban areas that are walkable, near transit, and closer to jobs, it must have ways to finance improvements to urban infrastructure, facilities, and amenities.

Special district mechanisms that already exist in California, such as Infrastructure Financing Districts, Community Facility Districts, Benefit Assessment Districts, and Business Improvement Districts may be used more often now that the more powerful alternative — Redevelopment — is no longer an option. However, these special districts have constraints that have limited their use for urban infill. Some amendments will be needed to make them more effective and easier to form.

Jurisdiction-wide measures are not sufficient. To match obligation with need, we need tools that can be applied to sub-districts of a jurisdiction, even sub-districts that cross neighboring jurisdictional boundaries. With jurisdiction-wide measures, it's difficult to get people who have already paid for their facilities through impact fees or are making Mello-Roos annual payments to agree to tax themselves to finance infrastructure that serves older communities. And with a two-thirds majority threshold to approve special taxes, the real politics are challenging.

Impact fees for urban infill may be taken more seriously in the future and used to keep up with actual costs. Jurisdictions will be forced to consider carefully their general plan standards for facilities and find ways to provide them more efficiently so as not to overwhelm development with fees that discourage reinvestment.

Planning and zoning tools — such as bonus or incentive zoning, or public benefit requirements — may be used more often in exchange for an increase in entitlements, density, and height allowances that enhance residual land values. In Vancouver, British Columbia, they call this capturing the “lift” in value granted with entitlements. In designated high-density, transit-oriented districts in Arlington, Virginia, they recapture the lift with a fee for a portion of the estimated imputed land value associated with each floor of additional entitlement granted — with the proceeds reinvested in public infrastructure and amenities. Downtown Los Angeles uses transfer of development rights to purchase additional, leasable floor-area from properties with historic or public resources.

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Jurisdictions may well become more strategic with their capital improvement and grant investments to create value that attracts private investment, e.g., by strategically placing urban parks and plazas to enhance the value of adjacent private properties, thus recapturing some of that value enhancement to fund the park's development, programming, and maintenance.

Land assembly may be more difficult, and reliant on private, cooperative sales. However, graduated zoning, as proposed by Dr. Donald Shoup, FAICP, may provide the economic incentive. Public agencies will still be able to use eminent domain for public infrastructure, such as for transportation and park improvements. There will be more focus on land that is already assembled or has few owners, such as obsolete shopping centers and industrial properties.

Good and careful planning has a role in applying all of these tools effectively. With Redevelopment as we've known it removed from the tool box, it's time for the State to give local jurisdictions alternative tools to generate new revenues to be used, if they so choose, to finance urban infrastructure and public facilities without burdening the State and unwilling taxing jurisdictions. While Redevelopment may be gone, the issues it was originally designed to address are not.

William (Bill) Anderson, FAICP, is a Principal/Vice-President with AECOM, former Director of City Planning & Community Investment for the City of San Diego, former Assistant Executive Director of the San Diego Redevelopment Agency, a member of the California Planning Roundtable, and is on the Board of Directors of the American Planning Association. You can reach him at William.Anderson3@aecom.com ■

The voters chose wisely when they voted an alternative to the road congestion that is a drag on the state's competitiveness. For the sake of the state's economy and quality of life, I hope they can keep the faith. —Petra Todorovich, director of the rail advocacy group America 2050, <http://bit.ly/vhjkmd>



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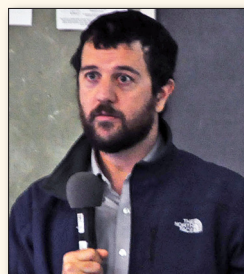
Planning professionals at SJSU symposium advise on how to find a planning job

By Theresa Alster, associate editor; photos by Jason Su

A majority of the current San Jose State University planning students and dozens of former graduates attended a campus symposium on November 5. Planning professionals from the private, nonprofit, and public fields shared their views of the future of the planning profession in California, and what students and young professionals can do to make themselves more competitive in the job market. The event was sponsored by the Urban Planning Coalition at the university.



Individual speakers and panelists focused on how to obtain a planning job in today's economic climate. "The current state of planning: navigating new roles and careers in planning," featured Bay Area planning professionals. The first panel discussion, "Major events shaping planning," focused on economic changes and other major events that led to reshaping the field. Three subsequent sessions were dedicated to the specific skills needed for working within the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.



Panama Bartholomy delivers the keynote address on 2020 energy plans for California

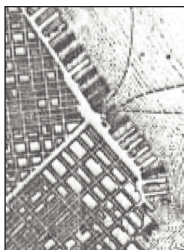
The keynote speaker was Panama Bartholomy, deputy director for the Efficiency and Renewables Division of the California Energy Commission, where he works on climate change, land use, renewable energy, transmission, green building, and biofuels. Bartholomy discussed the need to change the perception of energy production and what it means to make renewable energy environmentally sustainable. He spoke about

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Planning professionals at SJSU symposium advise on how to find a planning job *(continued from previous page)*

the state's plan for 2020 with an energy target of homes producing more energy than they consume. He added that land use is the weakest part of the green building code. Some simple measures can produce energy savings. For example, attention to building orientation in a subdivision can improve efficiency by 30 percent, he said.

A significant energy concern for California will be moving energy from production sources to the end users. Bartholomy explained that Governor Brown ordered 8,000 megawatts of new renewable energy be produced in the state. With seven square miles of solar fields planned for the Mojave Desert, moving this energy to the end users is a top priority for the 2020 plan.

First panel: Events shaping planning

Hanson Hom, AICP, Sunnyvale's community development director, led a discussion on events shaping planning. Panelists included Richard Davies, vice president of Hatch Mott MacDonald; Bruce Appleyard, faculty member at the University of Utah; Jaime McLeod, AICP, a Santa Clara City Council member and an environmental planner with the Santa Clara Valley Water District; and John S. Rahaim, planning director for the City and County of San Francisco.



Richard Davies



Bruce Appleyard



John S. Rahaim

McLeod explained that planning is evolving. One change is reflected by how the internet is changing the sense of community. She noted it is important to stay engaged and to communicate with the public.

Rahaim added that regional issues are very important and planners need to control and influence the environment in which a city develops. "It is important to communicate long-range goals. Detroit is an example of planning based on short term gains," he said. In order to communicate effectively and to be able to overcome fiscal problems, planners must understand economics. Rahaim encouraged "robust" grant writing and explained that grant funds pay for San Francisco's planning; the taxpayers don't.

Appleyard said it is important to understand how to analyze information, communicate to decision makers, and help people prioritize what needs to be done. Understanding economics is necessary in order to overcome fiscal problems.

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Redevelopment agencies used many strategies. Some of them worked, and some of them didn't. The same agency that made Mission Bay happen also gave out money to community groups in other areas without as much to show for it.

—Gabriel Metcalf, SPUR, <http://s.t/15759>

Planning professionals at SJSU symposium advise on how to find a planning job *(continued from previous page)*

Wrapping up the discussion, Hom said that planning needs to change, and he acknowledged that there is an anti-planning sentiment during these economically challenging times. "A key item is to maintain the integrity of the planning profession," he said. "Advocacy planning needs to be more proactive."

Second panel: How to land a job

Darin Dinsmore — urban planner, landscape architect and teacher at UC Davis extension on green building, and CEO of Crowdbrite — led the discussion. He spoke about the virtual community meeting software offered by Crowdbrite as an example of innovation providing significant cost savings. "Be a self-starter, use new tools, and take the initiative," he said. "Planners do a poor job of selling themselves." He recommended getting creative with job applications by submitting a PowerPoint presentation or a portfolio on video. And always have a cover letter and writing sample, he explained.



Michelle Yesney

Michelle Yesney, principal and vice president of David J. Powers and Associates, with 30 years of hiring experience, stressed what she looks for in employees. "The most important skills are writing, listening well and hearing what people are saying, speaking well with the right tone, with a logical mind that can solve problems," she said. One required skill is to create a consensus among people who haven't met each other. Her top recommendation to job hunters is to be "the brightest, most enthusiastic communicator." She also recommended learning design software like InDesign or SketchUp and to go to informational interviews. For those lacking experience, list skills at the top of the résumé. Women are often too modest and self-deprecating, she explained. "Don't worry; you can learn almost anything once you get hired. Just don't have spelling mistakes on your materials; and whatever you do, don't whisper during the interview."

On a different note, Kelly Kline, economic development director for the City of Fremont, said that specific skills are needed when serving as a public/private liaison as she does. For her position, someone would need to be a problem solver, a universal translator, and be able to treat the development community with the respect they deserve. She encouraged job seekers to educate themselves on economic development. The most valuable tool a city has is to incentivize the right kind of development for the community. The development community is always more interested in having an engaged, cooperative staff than in receiving financial incentives from the city. Relationships



Kelly Kline

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Correction

In the December 2011/January 2012 issue of *Northern News*, the “t” in the last name and the email address of Avalon Schultz was omitted in several instances. The correct spelling is Avalon Schultz, and the correct email address is Avalon.Schultz@gmail.com. Ms Schultz is the recently elected co-director of Northern Section’s Young Planners Group, YPG. ■

Planning professionals at SJSU symposium advise on how to find a planning job *(continued from previous page)*

are a major component for economic development, she said. One must meet key people who will work in the project and know their kids’ names so they will feel they have an insider in the city.



Whitney McNair, AICP

Echoing a similar sentiment, Whitney McNair, AICP, a principal with Metropolitan Planning Group, said that those who consider planning a regulatory position with rigid rules and offer no opinion will get bored and won’t get promoted. “You won’t be seen as a problem solver. Figure out how you can make this work,” she said. “Understand the economics. Planners tend to not know the economics. Be able to talk about it. Know the CEQA laws.”

Planning jobs in the private sector

Darcy Kremin, AICP, a senior environmental planner now at URS, opened the discussion by explaining that in the private sector there is opportunity to be well paid and shine. “If you are a star, you will get promoted,” she said. In her career, Kremin specialized in air quality and environmental justice where she discovered that NEPA and CEQA are typically learned on the job. She added that it is imperative to be a good writer, which cannot be taught on the job. It is also important to be able to speak and listen. Employees must be able to analyze and work through problems, and it is worthwhile knowing Microsoft Project. “Private companies expect employees to sink or swim,” she said. “The environment is fast-paced, where you’ve got to pick things up quickly. There is no hand-holding.”

Pallavi Saxena, transportation planner with Hatch Mott McDonald, attributed her job success to networking, working internships, and attending informational interviews. She said that communication, technical competency, and being able to change with the wind are essential skills. “Sell yourself in the interview as though you want to do this for the rest of your life,” she said.



Pallavi Saxena

Ray Hashimoto, AICP, development manager at HMM Engineers, recommended that job seekers follow the business news by reading *The Mercury News* and the *Business Journal*. He also said that knowledge of AutoCAD and site planning skills were essential.

Edessa Bitbadal, vice chair of the San Jose Planning Commission and downtown business specialist for Redwood City, stressed the importance of problem solving, knowing the codes, facilitating, and developing good relationships. Like many other panelists, she stressed writing and overall communication. She also recommended learning GIS. Job seekers who have done their research (including on the person who does the interviewing) fare better. She also recommended talking to workers, doing mock interviews, and having friends look over résumés.

(continued on next page)

16 Northern Californians join AICP

By Juan Borrelli, AICP, APA California Vice President of Professional Development and Northern Section Historian

Sixty-four California planners sat for the November 2011 AICP Exam. Of those, 44 (or 69 percent) passed, including 16 planners from the Northern Section. Nationally, 512 planners sat for the exam, with 331 (65 percent) passing.

Passing the AICP exam is a tremendous accomplishment and a mark of professional distinction. Passing also allows application for AICP membership and its commitment to a professional code of ethics and continuing education.

The Northern Section Board of Directors extends sincere congratulations to all of Northern Section's newest AICP members:

Rebecca Atkinson

Geoff Bradley

Nisha Chauhan

Leatha Clark

Chris Ford

Ronny Kraft

Yatman Kwan

Jennifer Lau

Hannah Lindelof

Judith Mayer

Ian S. Moore

Aubrey Rose

Sage Schaan

Ben Stupka

Kimberly D. Voisin

Nicole A. West

For more on the AICP Code of Ethics, Professional Development, or Certification Maintenance (CM) Credit, you can visit Northern Section's professional development page at <http://bit.ly/A3iNUd>, the national AICP page at <http://bit.ly/Apv2dM>, or California Chapter's professional development page at <http://bit.ly/wgoDAQ>

Planning professionals at SJSU symposium advise on how to find a planning job *(continued from previous page)*

Tiffany Chew, business development employee for City of Mountain View, mentioned the value of networking and discussing issues pertinent to the field with coworkers.

Jobs in the public sector

Rodrigo Orduña, AICP, Senior Planner at the Alameda County Planning Department, said that job seekers should keep focused and continually expand their knowledge base. "Don't lose sight of why you went into this," he said. "Go to lectures, read articles. You must keep up with topics. Know all of it. Make it your expertise. Have private development expertise, analyze different perspectives."



Rodrigo Orduña, AICP; Hanson Hom, AICP; Robert Swierk, AICP; and Miroo Desai, AICP, discuss planning careers in the public sector

He also recommended developing public speaking skills, negotiation skills, and knowing who you are talking to. Join the American Planning Association and go to conferences, he said.

Hanson Hom, AICP, who oversees planning, policy planning, land use, sustainability, and budgetary issues in Sunnyvale, said "It is good to be passionate, but idealism can eat you up. Maintain what is right, but be able to see both sides." Be objective, balanced, and filter as needed. "Get all of the sides together to get a reasonable solution. This is a complex role. It is what makes planning challenging."

Miroo Desai, AICP, City Planner, City of Emeryville, said that community members see planners as bureaucrats, but perception ratings have gone from very bad to neutral. "If you are looking for constant gratification, the public sector is not for you." She said she has rarely been paid compliments over her career. Her recommended skills for job seekers included writing, land use planning, planning law, and negotiation.

As a final recommendation, Robert Swierk, AICP, Senior Transportation Planner at VTA (the Valley Transportation Authority), advised becoming an expert in a specific area.

(continued on next page)

Redevelopment update from *Housing California*

Barring action by the Legislature, redevelopment agencies will dissolve on February 1. While many of the details are unclear, dissolution will make it harder to build homes for Californians of modest means.

The Supreme Court's decision on redevelopment has its roots in the economic crisis, the overconfidence of Proposition 22, the rushed passage of AB 26x and AB 27x (the redevelopment bills), and the decision by the California Redevelopment Association and the League of Cities to challenge the legislation in court. Affordable housing has become a casualty of California's governance problems and the lack of revenue to run the state.

In the short term, two bills related to redevelopment have been introduced.

SB 654 (Steinberg) clarifies that any Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund balances will be transferred to the successor housing agency for use under current redevelopment law. (AB 26x contained conflicting sections on this point.)

SB 659 (Padilla) would extend the deadline for redevelopment agencies' dissolution from the current February 1 deadline to April 15. This bill could provide the time needed to craft a compromise that keeps redevelopment and the affordable-housing funds.

Things will be changing rapidly over the coming weeks. Now is a great time to remind your legislator how important the redevelopment housing funds have been to making sure that all Californians have a safe place to call home.

Contact Karen Naungayan at *Housing California*, knaungayan@housingca.org ■

Planning professionals at SJSU symposium advise on how to find a planning job *(continued from previous page)*

Impressions

Overall, the symposium was informative with a warm sense of support from the speakers for the students and unemployed graduates. Many students mentioned that they had a difficult time even finding unpaid internships, let alone career jobs to utilize their skills and education. One panelist echoed this concern when she said, "The way to get a job in the public sector..." then muttered, "if there were jobs in the public sector" before finishing her statement. In a way, this was reassuring for those whose job searches ended up as exercises in futility. Her comment brought a laugh and some relief to the audience that someone understood the frustration of having the necessary skills but nary a job offer in sight.

The symposium also hosted a job expo and networking sessions, providing opportunities for attendees to connect with organizations and meet new people. Look for upcoming Urban Planning Coalition events at www.theupc.org. ■

Where in the world?



Photo by H. Pike Oliver, AICP (Answer on page 13)

"We're at a complete deadlock on carbon dioxide. Dealing with the short-lived pollutants [black carbon, methane] might really be a way to bridge some of the differences, both between the two sides in the United States and between the developed and the developing world." —Dr. Drew Shindell, a climate scientist at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies and at Columbia University. <http://nyti.ms/y12LC0>