



JULY/AUGUST 2005

Northern News

NORTHERN SECTION, CALIFORNIA CHAPTER, AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

Greenbelt Alliance Says No to Sprawl, Yes to Good Development

Julie Cummins, Education Program Coordinator,
Greenbelt Alliance

The Bay Area is growing. The Association of Bay Area Governments predicts that the region will be home to over one million additional people in the next 15 years. Planning for this substantial growth will be a challenge. Is it possible to keep development from paving over the Bay Area's open space, clogging its roads, and polluting its air and water? One answer could be to fight all new development, and you might expect that from an environmental organization. But Greenbelt Alliance takes a different approach. Greenbelt Alliance, a Bay Area land conservation and urban planning nonprofit organization, is known not only for protecting the

greenbelt by stopping sprawl developments on the region's outskirts, but also for actively promoting good development in the region's cities.

Endorsed projects receive a letter of support from Greenbelt Alliance, and volunteers often speak at public hearings on the projects' behalf.

Greenbelt Alliance supports high-quality infill development that makes efficient use of land. We advocate for building affordable homes to reduce development pressure on the greenbelt. We also support transit-oriented development so people can walk or take transit instead of getting in the car for every errand.

Our Compact Development Team is responsible for endorsing good infill development. The committee of volunteers includes architects, planners, housing advocates, and other interested citizens, who meet monthly to review and vote on projects.

The endorsement process begins when developers submit projects to the team. A few team members research the project, then present what they've learned to the rest of the

group. The team discusses each project and votes to endorse it if it satisfies the following criteria:

1 Good Location—The project must be within an existing urban area, and not within the regional greenbelt or any other important natural resource area.

2 Reduction of Automobile Dependency—The project must be within 1/2 mile of a major transit service or job center, or within 1/4 mile of an historic town center that could provide a future location for transit service.

3 Minimum Density—The project should have an overall density of at least 20 units per net acre. Projects of lower density may be eligible for endorsement if they are significantly higher than the average local density.

4 Affordability—Housing and mixed-use proposals must make an effort to address affordable housing needs of moderate- to low-income households and/or very-low-income households as identified in the jurisdiction's Housing Element. This includes making a fixed percentage of the units affordable to these households or contributing land or other resources dedicated to such affordable housing.

5 Pedestrian-Friendly Design—The proposal should be planned to integrate with existing street patterns, walkways and bicycle paths, and to provide easy connection to services and public transportation. The project should be pedestrian-oriented and strengthen a sense of community identity. Innovative parking design is encouraged, such as using shared off-site parking, reducing surface parking, or reducing visual impacts using location and/or screening.

6 Size—The project should have at least 20 units, although smaller projects may be considered depending on our review capacity.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE *by Hing Wong, AICP*

Congratulations to our Local Host Committee for winning the CCAPA's 2005 Section Service Award! It's a great tribute for a team that has worked diligently for over two years producing one of the best National Planning Conferences. The City of San Leandro was honored with the 2005 Comprehensive Planning for a Small Jurisdiction on the East 14th Street South Area Development Strategy. The Northern Section was also credited with three Awards of Merit: City of Oakland for "Protect Oakland" on Focused Issue Planning; San Jose State University for "Planning in San Jose—A Community Guide" on Leadership and Service/Academic; and Gavin Moynahan for Distinguished Leadership/Student. Bravo to all the winners!

These awards will be presented at the CCAPA Awards Reception at the CCAPA Annual Conference. This year's conference will be in majestic Yosemite on October 30 to November 2. Please book your conference registration and lodging soon as spaces are almost filled up! Go to www.calapa.org for more information and to register. The Northern Section is also awarding four partial student scholarships for this conference. Please contact me at hingw@abag.ca.gov to find out more.

The California Planning Foundation (CPF) will be holding its annual auction at the conference to raise money for student scholarship. Over \$25,000 is awarded annually to students with a good portion of it going to students in the Northern Section! You're asking yourself, "How can I help out?" Suggested auction items can be planning-related such as old maps and books. Other popular items include bottles of wine, tickets to interesting events, bed and breakfast accommodations, weekend getaways, gift certificates to restaurants and book stores. Please contact me at hingw@abag.ca.gov by August 31 so that we can list your donation. All donations are tax-deductible.

Please join me in welcoming to the Northern Section many new Board members: **Michael Olin** (Administrative Director); **Rob Eastwood** (International Director); **Naphtali Knox** and **Ryoko Furuichi** (Newsletter Editors); **Maureen Hickey** (Student Representative from UC Berkeley); and **Wendy Tinsley** and **Darcy Kremin** (East Bay RACs).

The Northern Section and the Bay Area Automated Mapping Association (BAAMA) organized an informative session on "Planning in GIS" on July 21 at the USGS facilities in Menlo Park. There is a crossover between GIS professionals and planners as the room was almost filled up. Many who attended were members of both BAAMA and APA.. The Northern Section plans to join other professional organizations in hosting meetings and events together.



NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

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The deadline for submitting materials for inclusion in the **Northern News** is the 16th day of the month prior to publication.

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Call for NSCCAPA Treasurer

Are you looking to get more involved in your profession and meet many of your Planning-colleagues throughout the Bay Area and Northern California? The volunteer Board of the Northern Section, California Chapter of the American Planning Association (NSCCAPA) is seeking candidates for the elected position of Treasurer. We will be holding elections for this 2-year term (2006-2007) at the end of this year. Ideal candidates should have a working knowledge of profit and loss statements, balance sheets, reconciliation procedures, and Quicken or other accounting computer software programs. The Treasurer's duties typically include:

- Prepare an annual budget for submittal to the Section Director;
- Receive and be held accountable for all Section accounts and funds and make proper authorized disbursement of said funds;
- Submit bi-monthly financial reports to the Section Board; and
- Submit quarterly financial reports, including an end-of-year financial report, to the Chapter no later than April 15th, July 15th, October 15th, and February 15th (final Yearly Report).

Interest candidates should contact Juan Borrelli, AICP, Director Pro-Tem by e-mail at juan.borrelli@sanjoseca.gov no later than September 30, 2005.

Enroll in an urban planning course this fall at SJSU!

Do you want to develop your skills in a particular planning specialty, or are you considering applying for a Masters in Urban Planning program? If so, the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at San José State University invites you to enroll in one of its classes through SJSU's "Open University" program, which allows community members to take university classes for credit without having to apply for a regular university degree program. Almost all of the department's courses are open to community members through this program, including courses in environmental planning, transportation planning, historic preservation, geographic information systems, and facilitation and conflict resolution.

To see a list of the courses available this fall, go to <http://www2.sjsu.edu/urbanplanning/SJSU/Courses/index-c.htm> and click on the link to the "Fall 2005 Schedule of Classes."

For information about how to register for a course as an Open University student, see <http://www.openu.sjsu.edu/> or call 408-9245-2630.

For information about the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, go to <http://www2.sjsu.edu/urbanplanning/SJSU/Program/index-p.htm>

If you have questions, please feel free to contact the department at 408-924-5882 or urbplan@email.sjsu.edu.



TOD For Tree Huggers

By Robert R. Piper, Ph.D.

Summary

The essence of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is a mixture of uses close enough to one another that all can easily be reached on foot. Most trips can be made without recourse to a vehicle. The transit stop or station serves for longer journeys. Automobiles are not precluded but the need for their use is diminished. Many purported and proposed TODs fall shy of their potential because of flawed designs. Activities are not concentrated enough and there are too few residents to support viable commercial enterprises.

What Does Walkable Really Mean?

Discussion of TOD often posits a circular catchment area of one-half-mile radius around rail transit stations. A one-quarter-mile radius is similarly used for local bus stops. Both rules of thumb originated in measurements of how far transit passengers actually walk. Familiarity with the research is useful in applying the rules.

Survey results have consistently shown that fewer people walk long distances than

short. A plot of passengers vs. walking distance falls off with distance (where development exists right up to the station entrance, as at MUNI/ BART stations in San Francisco). The curve is effectively tangent to the abscissa at a half-mile. Very few riders walk that far. About half walk less than a quarter-mile. The outer quarter mile generates as many passengers but contains three times the area. The propensity to ride transit is only a third as great.

The pertinent distance is not determined by drawing a circle of one-half-mile radius on a map. Researchers measured actual walking distances, which include the deviations from a radial line that pedestrians must follow. Factors like steep slopes and locations of signalized crosswalks can play roles. If the street network is rectilinear, for example, the outer boundary is sort of a square with one-mile diagonals, not a circle. Distance is a proxy for time. At three miles per hour, a half-mile means 10 minutes, a quarter-mile 5 minutes.

Imperatives for TOD Design

Propensity to ride transit decreases with distance even faster than the number of passengers does. (Each succeeding ring from the

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Greenbelt Alliance... *(continued from page 1)*

7 Community Input—Projects for which the developer has made a good-faith effort to address neighborhood concerns will more easily receive a favorable review.

Endorsed projects receive a letter of support from Greenbelt Alliance, and volunteers often speak at public hearings on the projects' behalf. This outside voice of support can help make the difference in whether a project is approved. Excellent projects are sometimes opposed by neighbors who are resistant to change in their communities. An endorsement by Greenbelt Alliance helps to balance any opposition and encourage a city council or planning commission to approve the project. And it's appreciated: "Thanks to the efforts of Greenbelt Alliance... we were able to relish another small victory on behalf of the thousands of individuals and families in Silicon Valley who need affordable housing," said Fran Wagstaff, Executive Director of the Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition.

The Compact Development Team considers residential, commercial, and mixed-use projects, as well as specific plans that include housing or mixed-use developments. Greenbelt Alliance is currently drafting a new set of guidelines specifically for neighborhood-scale projects and plans. These guidelines address additional issues that arise with larger developments, such as displacement, community services, parks and open space, parking, and historic preservation.

Since its inception, the Compact Development Team has endorsed 130 projects and plans for 57,300 new homes, including 12,300 affordable homes. A few of its more recent endorsements include:

- In November, the Rincon Hill Plan, a proposal that will bring high-density housing and commercial space within walking distance of downtown San Francisco. This plan enhances the pedestrian environment through building design, open space, and street improvements. It also reduces automobile dependency by introducing parking maximums, instead of the standard minimums, and encouraging bicycle

parking and car-sharing. The Rincon Hill Plan will soon go before the Board of Supervisors for a vote.

- In December, Villa Montgomery, a 66-unit development located near downtown Redwood City. The homes in this exemplary project, unanimously approved by the City later that month, will all be affordable to very-low-income households. The developers are seeking LEED (green building) certification and discounted transit passes for residents.

- In May, the Hitachi Campus plan in San Jose. The innovative plan, approved by the City Council in June, will consolidate Hitachi's low-density industrial campus onto half of its original space, rezoning the remaining land for residential, retail, and open space. Adjacent to a Caltrain station and a light rail station, the development will include 2,930 homes, 20% of which will be affordable. The plan also calls for a public park and pedestrian- and bike-accessible pathways to the Caltrain station.

What will be the team's next endorsement?

Find out when you join the team: Greenbelt Alliance's Compact Development Team is recruiting! Planning experts are invited to join, particularly professionals who have experience in long-range planning. "I enjoy being a part of the Compact Development Team: I learn a lot when we discuss the projects and I feel like I'm making a real difference in how the Bay Area grows," said new volunteer Jessica Aloft.

To find out more about the team's work, visit www.greenbelt.org/whatwedo/prog_cdt_index.html. To join, please contact Julie Cummins at jcummins@greenbelt.org. Also, the Compact Development Team is always looking for projects to review; information about how to submit a project is on our website, www.greenbelt.org.



Compact Development Team in front of One Church Street Apartments, a 93-unit mixed-use, affordable development in San Francisco (photo by Aloft Photography).



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TYPICAL DUTIES PERFORMED: (Examples do not include all duties which may be assigned; position may not include all duties listed).

- Responds to public inquiries and requests for service, answers questions regarding the zoning and design codes.
- Performs plan checks for zoning and design compliance.
- Review and approve designated permit applications, assess fees.
- Prepares exhibits for City Council and Planning Commission meetings, such as maps, plot plans, renderings, charts, and graphs.
- Receives and evaluates site plan and design review permits and related applications.
- Assists planning personnel with current planning projects and activities, incl. research, compilation of information, inspections and preparation of special reports.
- Updates and maintains zoning information, record files, and other planning documents.
- Receives project applications, prepares project files, prepares closeout of project files.
- Participates in staff meetings and in-service training as required.
- Adheres to City and departmental policies and procedures.
- Performs other related duties

as assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Knowledge of: Planning and zoning methods, practices, and techniques; planning and zoning maps and records; record-keeping; applicable laws, codes, regulations, policies, and procedures; modern office methods, procedures and equipment; various computer programs and applications; correct English usage, spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Ability to: Communicate clearly and concisely, orally and in writing; follow applicable oral and written instructions; comprehend and carry out policies, procedures, and regulations; maintain effective working relationships with fellow employees and the public and work within a team-based system; exercise good judgment, courtesy, and tact with the public and staff; exercise initiative and make sound decisions in accordance with established regulations and work independently, without immediate supervision; present a clean, neat appearance appropriate to successful public contact; evaluate land use information in the field; utilize quality customer service skills and techniques.

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Experience: One year of relevant work experience in planning, architecture, or a related field. Additional work experience may be substituted for the required education on a year-for-year basis.

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FINAL FILING DATE: OPEN UNTIL FILLED. Applications available at City Hall and online. Completed applications may be submitted in person, by mail, fax, or e-mail.

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Christopher A. Joseph & Associates (CAJA), an environmental planning and research firm, is seeking a qualified, dependable, and self-motivated individual for our Petaluma office. CAJA specializes in the management and preparation of environmental documents in accordance with the CEQA and the NEPA. CAJA is a private consulting practice that has provided environmental planning services to public and private sector clients for over 17 years.

CAJA is currently seeking to fill an Environmental Planner position with a flexible, motivated, and goal-oriented professional with strong analysis and documentation skills. Excellent written skills, oral communication skills, and computer literacy are required. Professional experience in preparing CEQA and/or NEPA-based analyses is strongly desired. Primary responsibilities will include assisting Project Managers in the preparation of CEQA/NEPA documentation.

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TOD for Tree Huggers...

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center includes a larger area.) The consequences for TOD design are inescapable. Development much beyond a quarter mile away will fill few transit seats. In order to be transit oriented, development must be concentrated immediately adjacent to the station entrance. Where feasible, it should occupy air rights over the station (as on the MetroLink Gold Line in Pasadena, according to the June issue of PLANNING).

Another conclusion is that parking for both transit passengers and the TOD should be located outside the inner core. At the least, space for parking there should be minimized. The reader will recognize that this pattern is the opposite of BART and VTA practice at suburban stations.

The planning literature is rich in praise of mixing uses such as retail, education, health care, services, and entertainment within walking distance. It is less rich in discussion of the scale necessary to sustain these activities. If TOD is to reduce automobile use, its enterprises must offer sufficient selection at attractive enough prices that residents do not have to drive elsewhere to satisfy routine needs. Supermarkets must be bigger than a corner store and smaller than a big box. Such establishments are common in the dense portions of old cities like San Francisco and New York. They can even be found in Berkeley and Oakland. Each requires a critical mass of customers. If they are sited at the edge of the TOD core, next to parking, people driving in from the surrounding area will expand the customer base. So will customers who come by local, feeder transit, seniors, for example.

The commercial activity requires high density in order to be viable. Buildings taller than four stories are probably necessary. High density is also necessary if TODs are to absorb appreciable numbers of the forecast increase in regional population.

Jobs and residents are not interchangeable.

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TOD for Tree Huggers... (continued from page 5)

Both are necessary for a TOD to succeed. When only one is present, fewer transit seats are filled. Transit operating deficits swell. TOD residents who would like to walk to work are denied the opportunity.

A successful TOD must provide for delivery of goods and services and for convenient transfers by people whose origins or destinations lie beyond walking distance. Bus and shuttle stops and taxi stands should be clustered close to a station entrance and sheltered from the elements.

Station Design

Walking distance is important in design of the station itself. A platform length of 700 feet takes two minutes to walk. That is significant. It explains why urban transit systems, like BART and MUNI under Market Street, provide turnstiles at both ends of the station. Suburban stations with only one entrance sacrifice 20% of their walk-in catchment areas.

Underrated Benefits

Transit agencies hope that TOD will increase fare revenue from both contra-flow commuters and the 70% of trips, mostly off-peak, that are not between home and work.

Planners should appreciate that other goals of TOD are equally important.

Properly implemented, TOD increases the fraction of trips on foot and by bi-

cycle. These modal shifts may reduce annual vehicle miles per capita more than the increased transit ridership does. TOD also fosters sustainable communities in ways not associated with transportation. Those who choose to live in them consume fewer resources and generate less pollution than others. The reduced resource consumption makes workers more competitive by increasing their productivity off the job. As many writers have pointed out, TODs can reduce environmental degradation, lower energy consumption for heating and cooling, and lessen sprawl development elsewhere.

Amenity

Amenity matters. TOD must be functionally and aesthetically attractive to those who live, work, and do business there. Amenity by itself will neither bring about appreciable modal shifts nor foster sustainability. To achieve those goals, each TOD must include enough people and activities and they must all be concentrated closely at the station entrance(s).

Robert R. Piper, Ph.D.

Transportation consultant for 30 years. Co-Chair, Transportation and Compact Growth Committee, San Francisco Bay Chapter, Sierra Club, but the views expressed are his own.



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NORTHERN SECTION CALENDAR

August

27-29 Planning in China IV Workshop, San Francisco. Visit www.planning.org/APAinChina/workshops/05workshop.htm for information.

September

1 Northern Section Board Meeting at 6:30pm. Location to be announced.

15 Registration Deadline for November AICP Exam

15 Second Early Registration Deadline for CCAPA 2005 Conference at Yosemite. Contact Lynne C. Bynder, CMP at lbynder@dc.rr.com for information.

24 Urban Outing Smart Growth Walking Tour of Downtown San Jose, sponsored by Greenbelt Alliance with the South Bay RAC of NSCCAPA: For information contact Julie Cummings at 415-543-6771

October

5-8 League of California Cities 2005 Annual Conference and Exposition at Moscone Convention Center West, San Francisco. Visit www.cacities.org/ac for more information.

30-Nov 2 CCAPA 2005 Conference at Yosemite. Check out the details at www.calapa.org

AUGUST

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