



Northern News

NORTHERN SECTION, CALIFORNIA CHAPTER, AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

The urban campus and downtown revitalization

Katja Irvin, graduate student, San José State University

MARCH 2006

San José State University is playing a part in the transformation of downtown San José. The 88.5-acre campus is uniquely located between the historic central business district, where much redevelopment is taking place, and historic residential neighborhoods. After the 1995 Campus Landscape Master Plan was completed, campus form began to change with the transformation of 7th, 9th and San Carlos Streets from busy urban streets into landscaped pedestrian malls. These landscaped areas unify the campus environment and provide pedestrian connections. The "San José State University Master Plan 2001" strengthened this trend by setting a goal to "blend with the surrounding community and create linkages with the city."

SJSU, like many urban universities throughout the country, understands that the campus has an impact on the economic and social health of the surrounding area.

The master plan recognizes that "rising enrollment and the need for space coupled with the changes in downtown San José suggest that the campus can no longer be viewed

merely as a green island in the midst of the city, but rather as an integral part of the urban fabric." SJSU's full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment is similar to other California State University campuses that have far more land. San José State enrollment is projected to increase from about 22,000 to 25,000 FTE by 2008. In comparison, current FTE at San Francisco State University's 133.6-acre campus is about 21,000, and FTE at Cal State East Bay's 200-acre campus is about 12,500.

The area around San José State University is built-out, and land prices prohibit the purchase of land for expansion. To increase campus capacity without sacrificing open space, the master plan proposes to build up rather

than out, envisioning "a campus interior that remains roughly the same in terms of height and mass and a more densely developed campus perimeter." Recent projects on the campus perimeter are realizing this vision.

In fall 2003, the joint City-University Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library, SJSU's first joint-use project, opened on the northwest corner of campus. Such partnerships are seen as a way to overcome a lack of funding for capital projects (the master plan establishes guiding principles for identifying and pursuing joint projects). The eight-story, 475,000-square-foot King Library, which houses 1.5 million books, is an unequivocal success. The building connects the university to downtown and is a hub of activity for both students and the public.



SJSU Campus Village
Ninth Street mall crosses in foreground

The latest project at SJSU is the 15-story Campus Village housing project on the southeast corner of campus, which opened in fall 2005. It is "the largest capital project ever undertaken by the CSU system," a \$206 million project of 960,000 sq. ft., providing housing for over 2,000 students and about 200 faculty and staff ("On Campus," December 2002). The master plan envisions replacing all the existing housing on campus to accommodate growing enrollment. Additional housing options also enhance the University's ability to attract and retain the

(continued on page 4)

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE *by Hing Wong, AICP*

Much appreciation goes to San José State University's Urban Planning Coalition (and to UPC President Katja Irvin) for organizing the third APA Student Planning Conference held on February 10. Over 100 students attended, including a few from Southern California. Keynote speakers William Fulton and Paul Shigley discussed current planning trends in California that included smart growth and new urbanism, CEQA, transferable development rights, and planning law and policy. The conference had four sponsors (HMH Engineers, Jones & Stokes, Parsons Brinckerhoff / PB PlaceMaking, and RBF Consulting), included three breakout sessions (fiscalization of land use, neighborhood revitalization strategies, and high-rise housing trends and issues), incorporated two walking tours (the new joint city-university library and the downtown San José historic district), and concluded with a spectacular reception in the City Hall rotunda.

ONE OF OUR MAIN GOALS THIS YEAR is to reach out even more to planning students. For many years, we have allocated funds to the California Planning Foundation to assure there would be one \$1,000 Northern Section scholarship winner who attended one of the two accredited schools in our region. At this year's NSCCAPA retreat, we doubled that amount. There will now be two \$1,000 Northern Section scholarship winners—one from U.C. Berkeley and a second from San José State University. Discussions are already underway to create additional scholarship funds for planning students in the Northern Section who may not be attending either of the accredited schools.

HAVE YOU COMPLETED a planning project or know of one that deserves recognition from your peers? Do you know someone who has been a forefront advocate of planning, but hasn't been adequately acknowledged? This year's Awards nominations are due April 6, 2006. It's time to nominate outstanding planning projects, activities, and individuals. The purpose of our Awards Program is to encourage quality in planning as well as increase public awareness of the planning profession.

THE 2007 CCAPA CONFERENCE will be held at the Fairmont San José, and planning is underway. The first meeting was held February 25, and many more are scheduled for the upcoming months. If you are interested in being part of the organizing group for this event, please contact Juan Borrelli at (408) 535-7709 or juan.borrelli@sanjoseca.gov. We're still looking for many planners to lead and assist in key committees.

CONGRATULATIONS TO Gary Binger, Elaine Costello, Naphtali Knox, and Donald Rothblatt who will be inducted as Fellows of AICP at a ceremony and reception at the APA National Conference in San Antonio. We are especially proud that four talented and dedicated Northern Section professionals will receive such a tremendous honor. They have each made significant contributions to planning and society.

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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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Planning and watershed health

Rosalyn Stewart, AICP, MCP, MLA, University of California, Berkeley

Throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, watershed groups are developing assessments and action plans to clean up local streams, wetlands, and reservoirs. Watersheds—bounded hydrologic systems that carry surface water from uplands to outlets at rivers, lakes, and/or bays—provide a framework for considering and managing the impacts of land use activities on local water resources. Watershed processes and functions provide important services for local communities, and maintaining a healthy watershed is essential. These watershed processes include conveying runoff in channels and along hillslopes; storing stormwater in soil, floodplains, and other detention areas; transporting sediment and nutrients from headwater areas through the channel network downstream; and recharging groundwater basins.

As the region's population continues to expand, protection and conservation of local water resources—and their essential services—becomes increasingly important. Planners play an important role in effecting land cover changes that, in turn, determine the quantity and quality of surface runoff entering the hydrologic system. Key ways that planners directly influence watershed health include *land use policy* and *watershed planning* efforts.

Land use policy

Planners in local jurisdictions can take major steps to protect water resources by improving land development practices. Northern California planners can undertake land use policy changes that include:

- Developing creek setback ordinances to protect riparian corridors within both urbanized and agricultural areas.
- Developing water resources (or watershed) elements for the local general plan.
- Participating in watershed management planning by local watershed advocates.
- Developing stream corridor enhancement measures for use during development planning and/or recreation and trails design.
- Developing standard best management practices (BMPs) to be applied during subdivision, site planning, and construction for all urban development.

Initiating and following through on such land use policy changes at the local level is critical to protecting local streams, wetlands, and reservoirs. Coordination with regional water, wastewater, and flood control districts in developing the BMPs provides an even more robust approach for protecting water resources.

Watershed planning

Regionally integrated planning is vital for coordinated actions among stakeholders within a watershed. Water supply districts constructing reservoirs and storage projects, environmental groups supporting wetlands enhancement projects, wastewater districts discharging treated water into the stream channel, and ranchers implementing riparian buffers for livestock can all be brought together to discuss how dynamic stream processes will respond to anthropomorphic changes. A local planner's role in such regional processes involves participation “at the table” in considering cumulative land use activities within the watershed.

An exciting regional watershed planning project is currently underway. Led by the California State Coastal Conservancy, the Bay Area Watershed Plan (www.bayareawatershedplan.net) addresses watershed management, habitat protection, and restoration issues throughout the region. The Bay Area Watershed Plan identifies watershed issues and opportunities, and lists watershed projects that address regional objectives. Developing land use policies (such as those listed above) is considered a ‘project’ under this regional effort. Participation by local planners in this Watershed Plan is essential to address some of the larger land cover issues that result in hydrological, geomorphic, and biological changes in streams, wetlands, and reservoirs.

To protect water resources and services for local residents, planners are becoming increasingly involved in stakeholder efforts to advance watershed protection and restoration. Local land use policies and watershed planning efforts can contribute substantially to improving watershed health within the Bay Area and elsewhere in Northern California. Coordination among local jurisdictions is critical for proposed projects to be effective within the context of the entire watershed.



Urban campus *(continued from page 1)*

best students and faculty in the expensive Bay Area housing market. Therefore, the plan is to increase the number of beds on campus to 5,700 (from 1,700 in 2001).

The 15-story building steps down to 8 stories at the street. The Campus Village tries for more of a pedestrian scale at the edge of campus, with stoops and stairways entering from the street, and a façade articulated to address the building's relationship to residential neighborhoods across the street.

Campus Village appears to be a success. Although the Village is not yet fully occupied, there are more students living on campus than ever before. The project resulted in completion of the 9th Street pedestrian mall, and foot traffic in the southeast quadrant of campus and the surrounding neighborhood has increased substantially.

Both the King Library and the Campus Village create prominent landmarks which relate to both the university and the city and further enhance the pedestrian network created when streets were closed on campus. The master plan explains how future development will continue this trend: a new plaza connecting to the 5th Street mall and city hall; a new performing arts center and improved linkage to 4th Street; and an enlarged plaza and improved linkage to San Antonio Street at 10th Street.

Recent construction and future plans for development on San José State University's downtown campus are bringing focus to the university and strengthening physical connections between the campus and the city. SJSU, like many urban universities throughout the country, understands that the campus has an impact on the economic and social health of the surrounding area. A healthy and vibrant downtown will in turn enhance the stature of the campus and the institution. With the master plan as a guide, the transformation of San José State University will continue to improve the physical and social connections between the university and the city.



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Sources:

San José State University, *Master Plan 2001* (October 2001). <http://www.sjsu.edu/fdo/docs/sjsu_complete_master_plan_hires.pdf>.

San José State University. "New Campus Village: CSU's Largest Capital Project Ever," *On Campus* (December 2002). <<http://www.sjsu.edu/publicaffairs/docs/OC-11-25-02A.pdf>>.

William Dean Hinton. "The Little Campus That Could," *Metro, Silicon Valley's Weekly Newspaper*, 17-24 March 2004. Metro Publishing Inc. Photo, San José State University Housing Services, "Town Meeting: Getting Back on Track...," 29 September 2005. <http://housing.sjsu.edu/directorsTown%20Meeting%20September%2029,%202005.ppt>, slide 18.



Student planning conference a great success

Over 100 planning professionals and students—from as far north as Sonoma State and as far south as Cal Poly Pomona—attended the third California APA Student Planning Conference at San Jose State University on February 10.

The Friday conference—“Striking the Balance: Housing and Economic Development”—was sponsored by San Jose State’s Urban Planning Coalition, working with the NSCCAPA Board of Directors. The event featured:

- a keynote address by Bill Fulton and Paul Shigley on current planning trends and issues followed by a book signing for their recently published *Guide to California Planning, Third Edition*;
- three break-out sessions covering the fiscalization of land use, neighborhood revitalization strategies, and high-rise housing trends and issues;
- opportunities for attendees to speak with representatives from HMM Engineers, Jones & Stokes, Parsons Brinckerhoff/PB PlaceMaking, and RBF Consulting, the conference’s private sector sponsors;
- a reception;
- a tour of the joint City-University Martin Luther King Jr. Library; and
- a tour of the downtown San Jose historic district which is undergoing extensive redevelopment.

The conference highlighted San Jose’s recent architectural accomplishments with sessions in the King Library and a reception in City Hall’s famous glass

rotunda. Attendees—from students to professionals to speakers to professors—were pleased with what they learned and delighted with the networking opportunities. Professor Asha Weinstein, Assistant Professor in the University’s Graduate Urban and Regional Planning Department, said she “was very impressed with the quality of the speakers and panels, not to mention all the other fun events.”

The sponsors wish to thank all those who participated in planning and executing the conference: APA members; University faculty, staff, and students; speakers and moderators; facilities managers; and tour guides. In addition to the private planning firms that signed on as sponsors, others contributed significantly to enhancing the event: the University’s Spartan Shop donated the gifts for the speakers and moderators, and Zanotto’s Downtown Market contributed its staff time and many of the materials for the reception at no charge.

The conference was a great opportunity to hear a variety of perspectives on issues affecting the region. Vicki Elmer, UC Berkeley lecturer and one of the breakout session panelists, said, “I totally enjoyed myself and learned a ton preparing and listening to the other panel members—and of course from the audience as well!” San José State University is looking forward to hosting another student planning conference in the future.

Vineyard conversions and the fate of coastal California forestlands

Peter Baye, John Holland, and Chris Poehlmann, Friends of the Gualala River

Editor’s note: The opinions expressed below are solely those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by Northern News or its publisher, the Northern California Section of the American Planning Association, its officers, or agents.

The rising popularity and prestige of Pinot Noir wine is causing unprecedented and rapid land use changes in Sonoma and Mendocino Counties. For the first time, traditional forestry and ranching in coastal mountains are being displaced by intensive agriculture (viticulture). Sonoma County is now proposing new regulation of conversions to vineyard in coastal forestlands.

Entrepreneurs intent on capitalizing on this wine market trend have arrived in Sonoma’s coastal forests with plans to deforest ridge tops and plant vineyards. Last year more timber conversion applications were filed with the California Department of Forestry than in the last 10 years. The scale of proposed vineyard conversions ranges from a few tens of acres, to massive projects approaching 2,000 acres. Despite the unprecedented proposed scope of land use change in the region, no county or state agency has initiated either land use planning or analysis efforts.

Each vineyard proponent so far has pointed to the small individual size of their projects relative to the remaining forest land in the county (applying the impermissible “ratio approach” to cumulative impacts analysis) to argue their claim of no environmental impacts from their project. The lead CEQA agency for forest-vineyard conversion, the California Department of Forestry (CDF), has adopted this questionable cumulative impact perspective in its CEQA documents, and these have failed to withstand recent legal challenge. CDF has not required any true landscape-scale, geographic analysis of vineyard conversions in the Gualala River watershed, where most conversions are proposed.

(continued on page 6)



Photo captions L. to R.:
Keynote speakers Bill Fulton and Paul Shigley
Keynote session
Adam Binstock, Student Representative, with Cal Poly Pomona students Brian Albini and Hector Solis

Vineyard conversions *(continued from page 5)*

Sonoma County is updating its general plan, and is considering broad land use zoning restrictions on vineyard conversion in forestland. But as the regulatory language of a proposed conversion ordinance evolved, it changed from forest protection into a nominal "no net loss" compensatory mitigation system for vineyard conversion, with no geographic land use planning component. No natural resource experts, land use planning experts, state resource agencies (nor even trustee agencies) were consulted in formulating the ordinance.

The premise of the "no net loss" compensatory mitigation in the proposed ordinance is that "preserving" and "restoring" the timberland on two thirds of a development property would effectively mitigate for all direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of agricultural conversion within large, unbroken tracts of forestland. There was, however, no analysis of the scientific soundness of this premise. The effects of forest fragmentation, indirect effects of intensive agriculture, expansion of roads, or growth-inducing effects, were not addressed. How these cumulative and indirect impacts would be mitigated by a compensatory "no net loss" mitigation scheme is unclear. The approach lacks any watershed or landscape analysis—a recipe for irreversible and significant forest fragmentation.

Sonoma County asserts that the mitigation program of the ordinance is exempt from CEQA and its requirement for rigorous analysis of cumulative and indirect impacts. Exempt or not, the County could instead use CEQA affirmatively as an integrative land use planning and regulatory tool, with the assistance of resource agencies, qualified scientists, and land use planning professionals. However, emphasis on minimization of impacts is not popular with most project proponents, since it usually means look-

ing at ways to reduce the project size or configuration, diminishing profitability.

If they recognize all the scientific uncertainties about ecological restoration, permit agencies can't do business on the basis of compensatory forest mitigation. They have to assume that restoration of habitats will achieve what they promise and predict. Much commercial mitigation relies on ecological restoration measures that are essentially big, long-term experiments with limited control and monitoring. Almost all we know about "restoration" of redwood forests, for example, comes from very recent improvements in forest practices.

Proponents of mitigation have a vested interest in emphasizing the promises of ecological benefits they can finance with "restoration forestry." A rigorous, critical scientific evaluation of restoration forestry proposals is needed before "forest restoration" becomes a standard currency for mitigating vineyard conversions. The region also needs sound, scientific evaluation of how well natural forest regeneration, in the absence of short-rotation timber harvests, is contributing to recovery of forest habitats before we assume that "restoration" is either necessary or appropriate.

The primary goals of mitigation are avoiding and minimizing impacts through scientifically sound environmental analysis and affirmative land use planning. Will the emphasis on compensatory mitigation for vineyard conversions make land use planning and cumulative impact assessment moot?

Vigilant public participation will be essential to ensure that political and regulatory decisions about vineyard conversion, and its mitigation, are fully informed by rigorous public interest review, and the scientific scrutiny of independent experts and scientific review panels.



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2006 Northern Section Awards

Planning efforts are flourishing throughout our region. Now is the time to show off that project or program. Each year the American Planning Association, through its sections and chapters, conducts awards programs to acknowledge outstanding efforts and individuals in the profession. The **Northern Section** has been very successful over the years in obtaining state and national recognition for its local award winners. Individuals, planning agencies, and consulting firms are encouraged to submit applications.

Categories

Comprehensive Planning*	Planning Implementation*	Planning Projects
Diversity Service	Focused Issue Planning	Advocacy Planning
Contribution to Women	Education Projects	Journalism/Media
Distinguished Leadership	Distinguished Service	Academic
Distinguished Contribution	Innovative Use of Technology	

* Categories for both large (>100,000) and small (<100,000) jurisdictions

Criteria

The jury will be seeking the best examples of transferability, originality, quality and implementation.

Particulars

Awards will be presented at a gala event in May. Please visit www.norcalapa.org for more information, including nomination forms and program policies. A jury of planners from the Northern Section will review the nominations. Award winners will be automatically forwarded to the state award process. Be sure to read the Awards Program Policy and fill out the nomination form completely. Incomplete applications will not be considered. If you have other questions please contact Alex Amoroso (alex.amoroso@acgov.org) or Mark Rhoades (mar2@ci.berkeley.ca.us).

Deadline: Thursday, April 6, 2006

NORTHERN SECTION CALENDAR

March

- 8** AEP 2006 Spring CEQA Workshop Series, Santa Clara.
Contact (916) 737-2371 or visit www.califaep.org/workshops/ceqa-spring-2006.html for information.
- 22–24** Planners Institute 2006 and Mini Expo by League of California Cities, Monterey Conference Center. Visit www.cacities.org/events for details.
- 23** Second Early Registration Deadline for 2006 APA National Conference
- 24–26** Structures for Inclusion 6—Expanding Design by Design Corps, Morgan Auditorium, Academy of Art University in San Francisco.
Visit www.designcorps.org/SFI_Conference.htm for details.

April

- 5–7** 12th Annual California GIS Conference by CalGIS, Santa Barbara.
Visit www.calgis.org for details.
- 6** Deadline for submitting nominations for NSCCAPA awards.
- 22–26** APA 2006 National Planning Conference in San Antonio, Texas.
Visit www.planning.org/2006conference for information.

MARCH

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

APRIL

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

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