



August 2007

Links to articles inside this issue:

Director's Note	2
Mail delivery of <i>Northern News</i> has ended	4
Onward and upward	4
Profile: Alicia Parker wins Outstanding Student award ..	5
Business Roundtable climate change statement	5
Where in the world?	6
PATH leads to transportation equity	8
From our London correspondent	9
Taking a walk in Alameda County	10
Jobs	11, 12
Calling Cards	12, 13
Calendar	14

China's great leap forward

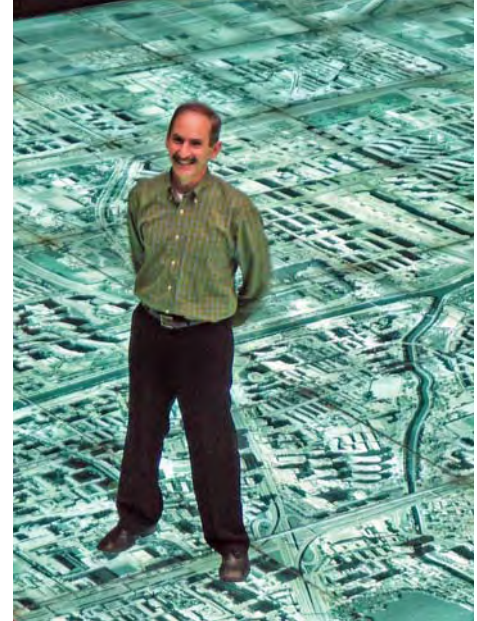
By Barry Miller, AICP

During May and June, 34 Northern California planners traveled to China for an eight-city whirlwind tour. Organized by the NSCCAPA Board, the 17-day itinerary was designed to see China through an urban planning lens. The tour combined visits to popular attractions such as Beijing's Forbidden City and Xi'An's Terra Cotta Warriors with visits to local planning departments, consulting firms, and development sites.

The trip proved so popular that we were split into two delegations, with one group departing on May 7 and a second on May 23. Although our programs were almost identical, the stories we brought home were unique. For each group, the words "mind-blowing", "staggering", and "surreal" became part of our daily vocabulary even more quickly than "nihao" (hello).

The trip began in Hong Kong, where we eased in gradually to the chaotic atmosphere of Asian cities. In fact, Hong Kong was the easiest city to navigate and the most familiar in many ways. Language was not an issue, and the street scenes resembled Bay Area Chinatowns at their best. The city's density and physical beauty impressed us all, as did the efficient public transportation, contemporary architecture and all-around hip vibe. Yes, they have pomegranate martinis there too.

Our planning itinerary included a walking tour of the CBD, a visit to the Planning and Infrastructure Museum and a meeting with HOK Consultants. A full day was spent visiting the former Portuguese colony of Macao, about 40 miles to the west. After arriving by hydrofoil, we walked several miles through the colony's narrow streets before ending up in the Vegas-style casino district. There we toured a new waterfront development that included full-scale replicas of Bourbon Street, South Beach and the Roman Coliseum.



The author, standing on aerial photos of Beijing at the Planning Museum.

Hong Kong was followed by a long weekend in Yangshuo, 350 miles to the west. Getting there took the better part of a day, and involved a hike, a ferry, an airport shuttle, a plane and, finally, a 90-minute bus ride. By the time we arrived, we were sure we'd reached the end of the earth.

Yangshuo's landscape appears borrowed from the pages of Dr. Seuss, with towering limestone pinnacles and oxbow rivers in every direction. Our three days were packed with activities, including a cooking class, a tai chi lesson, a bike ride through the countryside, bamboo rafting, a vigorous hike, and a boat cruise on the Li River. This segment of the trip was about having fun, from the beers we shared with Yangshuo's Planning Director to our dinner with a Zhong family in a small village nearby.

Safety standards are different

Some of the more adventurous in our group went on a hot air balloon ride, convinced it would provide an aerial education on the land use pattern of rural China. In fact, the real lesson learned was that American

(continued on page 3)

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE *by Juan Borrelli, AICP*

Please join me in welcoming our newest Northern Section Board Members—Membership Director Lucy Armentrout, AICP, Peninsula Regional Advisory Committee Chair Surinder Sikand, and UC Berkeley Student Representative Laura Cacho. We appreciate Christopher Wolf's four and a half years of service on the board as Membership Director, and the contributions of Lisa Peterson, one of last year's Student Representatives.

In 1970, The California Chapter of the American Planning Association (CCAPA) established The California Planning Foundation (CPF) as a nonprofit, charitable corporation with the goal of furthering the professional practice of planning across California. Its primary focus is to provide **scholarships and awards** to California university students in financial need. Each year, CPF awards over \$30,000 in student scholarships by inviting eligible students from nine accredited undergraduate and graduate planning programs (including San José State University and UC Berkeley in the Northern Section) and eight non-accredited planning programs (including San Francisco State and Sonoma State in the Northern Section) to compete for a number of scholarships and awards.

Each year, CPF hosts a gala auction to raise money for the scholarships and awards. This year's CPF Auction will be held during the **2007 CCAPA Conference** September 30 – October 3, 2007, in downtown San José. Northern Section is honored to support this important program. Donations to the CPF Auction, on behalf of the Northern Section, are now being accepted. To donate auction items, please contact our Immediate Past Director (and CPF Board Member) Hing Wong, AICP, at hingw@abag.ca.gov by August 31, 2007. Crowd-pleasing auction items such as bottles of deluxe wine, gourmet gift baskets, tickets to interesting events and popular venues, weekend getaways and travel packages, bed-and-breakfast and boutique hotel accommodations, fine restaurant and bookstore gift certificates, art, crafts, planning-related books and historic maps are greatly appreciated. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Northern News is now being provided to you exclusively in electronic format, and more changes are on the horizon. The board recently authorized Webmaster Pierce Macdonald and a website committee to work with Web Designer Audrey Feely of Firebox Media to update the look and feel of the Northern Section website. Proposed website enhancements will improve its interface and usability for our members and advertisers. Please check out our new and improved website in the near future.

Lastly, the Northern Section Board is looking for a few good volunteers to help plan the 2007 Holiday Party. If you are interested in helping to organize this enjoyable Northern Section event, please contact our 2007 Holiday Party Committee Chair, Andrea Ouse, AICP, at andrea.ouse@lsa-assoc.com or Director Elect Darcy Kremin, AICP, at dkremin@entrix.com. ■

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

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Northern News is published 10 times each year by the Northern Section, California Chapter, American Planning Association. It is a medium for the exchange of ideas and information among planners from Monterey County to Del Norte County, including the San Francisco Bay Area and San Benito County.

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China's great leap forward *(continued from page 1)*

safety standards do not apply overseas. When we realized this, of course, we were adrift at 3,500 feet with liquid propane flames scorching our heads. The consumer safety issue would come up again and again on the journey, from brushing our teeth (was it antifreeze or tooth-paste?) to crossing the street (would we survive?).

From Yangshuo, we traveled by air to Shanghai. The anticipated culture shock finally hit as we snaked through gridlock on city streets. Skyscrapers sprout like weeds in this city of 18 million, many adorned with spaceship-like rooftops. The entire city appears to be a gigantic construction zone, with all the dust and disruption that comes with that distinction. Shanghai is preparing for Expo 2010 (i.e., the World's Fair), as well as the arrival of five million new residents. The city is building 17 new subway lines and several new towns of a million residents each within its 2,500-square mile city limits.

Our Shanghai itinerary included a walking tour with a pair of Australian planning consultants, a visit to the Xintiandi mixed use development and a trip to the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition with a guide from EDAW. The exhibition features 200,000 square feet of display space on the city's past, present and meticulously planned future. The pièce de résistance is an eye-popping 1:2000 scale model of the city that covers an entire floor. Another floor is devoted to the city's general plan, with display case maps and dioramas corresponding to the plan's elements. All of us scratched our heads and wondered why we have nothing even remotely like this in the United States.

Old Shanghai is disappearing

Our time in Shanghai was too brief. Much of the time was spent walking around in a daze, feeling overwhelmed by places like the 90-story Jin Mao Tower, the "instant city" of Pudong, and the

pandemonium of the Nanjing Road pedestrian mall. One shared observation was that the fine-grained fabric of Old Shanghai is disappearing. While there is a growing appreciation for the narrow alleys and shops of Old Shanghai, the zeal for ultra-modern and ultra-slick rules the day. This is a city that clearly wants to be more New York than New York itself.

From Shanghai, our group traveled by bullet train to Suzhou, a city of two million residents once known for its silk factories but now renowned as China's high-tech capital. Suzhou is also known for classical gardens, including several World Heritage sites. Our group visited two of the gardens and received an informative presentation from the local Parks Department. Our time in Suzhou also included a boat ride on the Grand Canal and a dinner featuring the cuisine of Western China. Who knew mutton could be prepared so many ways?

Inside a Chinese planning department

The next stop was Nanjing, a city of five million people about 100 miles west. We spent a half-day with the Jiangsu Provincial Planning Office, where we heard five presentations by senior staff. Despite sketchy translations, this was the closest we came to experiencing life inside a Chinese planning department. The planners seem to operate with a great deal of autonomy, working on a scale unheard of in the United States. I think all of us felt a curious mix of envy and horror as we contemplated what it must be like to plan in a place where the government controls all.

Nanjing impressed us as a livable city, with beautiful parks, an attractive lake, a handsome skyline, a brand new subway, functioning freeways, prestigious universities, a bustling tourist quarter and a dense tree canopy.

We had the opportunity to visit the Mausoleum of Sun Yat Sen, which appeared to be the Chinese equivalent of the Lincoln Memorial.

After two days in Nanjing, we continued by air to Xi'An, 600 miles to the west. As in all other Chinese cities, construction cranes appeared everywhere, with 30-story towers on all points of the horizon. Highlights included visits to the Wild Goose Pagoda, the Great Mosque, the Muslim Quarter and the Terra Cotta Warrior Museum. Xi'An's city walls, first erected during the Ming Dynasty in 1370, have been restored and again encircle the city. Despite 100-degree heat, several of us rented bicycles and did the 12-mile perimeter ride along the top.

Startling contradictions

Xi'An appeared to be in the midst of its own cultural revolution, with startling contradictions around every corner. On one block, shopkeepers in Muslim garb sipped tea and sold pistachios; on the next, stylish young shoppers raced in and out of Giorgio Armani clutching Starbucks chai lattes. And the city's most famous landmark—a 120-foot bell tower erected in 1384—sits in the middle of an enormous traffic roundabout, accessible only via a subterranean mall.

We left Xi'An via a comfortable overnight train that deposited us in Beijing at 7 AM. During our three days in the capital, we enjoyed visits with two consulting firms, a tour of the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square and a day trip to the Great Wall. We visited the Beijing Urban Planning Museum, where we were amazed by yet another gigantic city model.

Beijing was a difficult place to grasp in 72 hours. Despite spending time on buses, subways, taxis, foot, and even rickshaws, we left feeling that we'd just had a fleeting glimpse. I think we expected the nation's capital to resemble Washington or Paris, but in many ways the city was more like Houston or Los Angeles. As Beijing scrambles to get ready for the 2008

(continued on page 4)

China's great leap forward

Olympics, it is clearly struggling to change its image—scrubbing itself clean and putting on a cosmopolitan face for the world. From what we saw, its biggest challenge is air quality; the brown smoggy sky was ubiquitous.

Many of us returned from this trip with a sense that we'd witnessed something incredibly important and profound. A month later, we are still "processing" just what that something was. I imagine it has to do with seeing first-hand the transformation of the largest country on earth from rural to urban at warp speed.

(continued from page 3)

Perhaps it was seeing development on such an immense scale. Maybe it was the unsettling combination of communism and 19th century capitalism, causing us to contemplate a coming new world order. Maybe it was the hyperkinetic and intoxicating energy of Chinese cities.

Or maybe it was just something in the toothpaste.

Barry Miller, AICP, is a planning consultant in Oakland. He can be reached at Barry@BarryMiller.net ■

Onward and upward

Hanson Hom, AICP, NSCCAPA Ethics Review Director, recently joined the City of Sunnyvale where he oversees the city's planning, economic development, housing, building, and neighborhood preservation functions as Director of Community Development. He was formerly Community Development Director for the City of San Leandro for seven years.

Mark Rhoades, AICP, has resigned his post with the City of Berkeley, effective August 9. One of Berkeley's youngest managers (Mark is 40), he has worked for the city for 10 years managing a 30-member planning division that includes both policy development and project review and zoning. He is refocusing his activities from City Hall to pursue opportunities to spend more time with wife **Erin (Banks) Rhoades, AICP**, and their two young sons. Mark was Co-director of NSCCAPA's 2006 Awards program, Co-chair of the 2005 national APA conference in San Francisco, CCAPA Northern Section Director 1999–2000, and Editor of Northern News 1995–96.

Charity L. Wagner, NSCCAPA Communications Director, has joined the RRM Design Group as senior planner in their Sausalito office, where she will provide contract planning and CEQA services. Charity had been a senior planner in the Berkeley office of LSA Associates for the past two years. ■

Mail delivery of Northern News has ended

In each of the past three issues, we prominently offered delivery of Northern News by US Mail to readers who sign up to pay an annual subscription fee of \$49. The fee was based on cost recovery for monthly printing and mailing of 100 to 200 copies 10 times a year.

As fewer than five persons requested printed copies by mail, the NSCCAPA Board voted on July 12 to abandon subscription-by-mail.

Where now?

We will continue to publish 10 issues per year. The deadline for news articles and job ads will remain the 15th of the month.

Beginning with the November issue, we'll be experimenting with a new format to make it easier to read Northern News on your computer screen. We will reformat the newsletter from the current two- and three-column layout to a continuous single column of text. You will see the familiar masthead at the top of the first page, followed by a table of contents (TOC) with live links to each article.

Following the TOC, the lead article will be presented in its entirety in a single column, followed by the second article in a single column, and so on.

(In other words, you no longer will see "continued on page x.")

We also expect to relocate the calling card ads from pages 10 and 11 and to arrange them vertically along one side of the articles.

While you will still have to download a PDF (which will happen automatically when you click on the link we will email you), you'll find the type will be larger; reading on-screen will be easier than it is now; you'll be able to print all pages, a few pages, or none; and you will be able to file, archive, or email the PDF. We will continue to archive all issues as PDFs on the Section web site. Back issues are available from June 2002 forward.

All NSCCAPA and Chapter-only members will be notified by email each time a new issue is posted. Please make sure your correct email address is on file at <http://www.planning.org/myapa/> or at <http://www.calapa.org/> if you are a California Chapter-only member. If for some reason you don't get a monthly email telling you the News has been posted on the web, please remember that you can always find Northern News on the chapter's web site (www.norcalapa.org). ■

Profile: Alicia Parker wins Outstanding Student award

By *Connie Galambos, University Liaison, NSCCAPA*

Northern News readers might already be familiar with Alicia Parker, recipient of this year's AICP Outstanding Student award. A December 2006 graduate of the Master in Urban Planning program at San José State University (SJSU), Alicia has co-authored key studies on Bay Area planning issues. One study, "Housing Silicon Valley: A 20 Year Plan to End the Affordable Housing Crisis," co-authored with Professor Shishir Mathur, assistant professor in the SJSU Urban and Regional Planning Department, employed an extensive stakeholder process and economic impact analysis to develop a strategy for dealing with the South Bay's workforce housing needs.

A more recent study, "Condominium Conversions and GIS: A Policy/Planning Support System," established a GIS-based economic model of condominium conversions in San Francisco to demonstrate how a city can systematically take on a review of its planning policies. "This study really filled a gap—both in academic circles and professional practice," Alicia notes. It was co-authored with Professor Mike Pogodzinski, acting chair of SJSU's Urban and Regional Planning Department.

Alicia's first exposure to the field of urban planning was as an undergraduate at Cal Poly—San Luis Obispo in the Forestry & Natural Resources Department. There she connected with the Association of Environmental Professionals, who shared her strong commitment to the environment. She also took some introductory urban planning classes that focused on the connection between the natural and built environment.

Over time, Alicia worked on watershed issues and supported CEQA projects in the Fresno area. While in the Valley, she worked in the public and private sector, and faced the political reality of planning in a community where large landowners wield tremendous power. "Fewer people are politically active there than in the Bay Area, and there's less of a nonprofit infrastructure to respond to those pressures."

Upon graduation, Alicia and her brother embarked on a two-month backpacking adventure south of the border. Starting in Mexico City, they wandered through Oaxaca, down the Yucatan Peninsula, and through every country in Central America. The built environment, with its communal outdoor spaces based on Spain, intrigued Alicia. "The towns are built around a clear central point, usually a church on a plaza, and always filled with people." Health and safety regulations were lacking though, evidenced through the overflowing transportation and food vending sectors.

Back in the U.S., Alicia is now looking for a full time position in long range urban planning, public policy, or current planning close to her current home, San Francisco's East Bay. ■

Business Roundtable climate change statement

"Business Roundtable (www.businessroundtable.org) is an association of chief executive officers of leading U.S. companies with \$4.5 trillion in annual revenues and more than 10 million employees. Member companies comprise nearly a third of the total value of the U.S. stock markets and represent over 40 percent of all corporate income taxes paid."

Business Roundtable adopted a "climate change statement" in July 2007. A quarter of the four-page, 1430-word statement is excerpted below.

"Because the consequences of global warming for society and ecosystems are potentially serious and far-reaching, steps to address the risks of such warming are prudent now even while the science continues to evolve. Business Roundtable supports collective actions that will lead to the reduction of GHG emissions on a global basis with the goal of slowing increases in GHG concentrations in the atmosphere and ultimately stabilizing them at levels that will address the risks of climate change." ...

"Although we support actions to address global warming, there is a range of views and preferences among our members about the policy tools that will best achieve that objective." ...

"Building on the leadership efforts of many U.S. companies, more companies should commit to making emission reductions a priority and report publicly on their progress in achieving these reductions...."

"... U.S. companies should work collaboratively with the government to improve energy efficiency in buildings, equipment, appliances and manufacturing, as well as in the electricity sector. Energy and carbon efficiency in the transportation sector should be increased by improving the fuel efficiency of vehicles through development and deployment of energy efficient vehicle technologies, increased use of renewables, and pursuing policies that reduce growth in vehicle miles traveled." ...

"Research, Development and Demonstration (RD&D) investment in new low-GHG technologies must be increased in the public and private sectors to levels commensurate with the magnitude of the climate challenge...."

"... Investment in climate science must therefore continue at a high level so that we can better understand and predict the magnitude and timing of future warming of the planet, its potential effects on ecosystems and human activities, its impacts on the economy, the role of different factors in causing global warming and the potential benefits and costs of mitigation and adaptation strategies. A continued U.S. leadership role in climate science is essential." ...

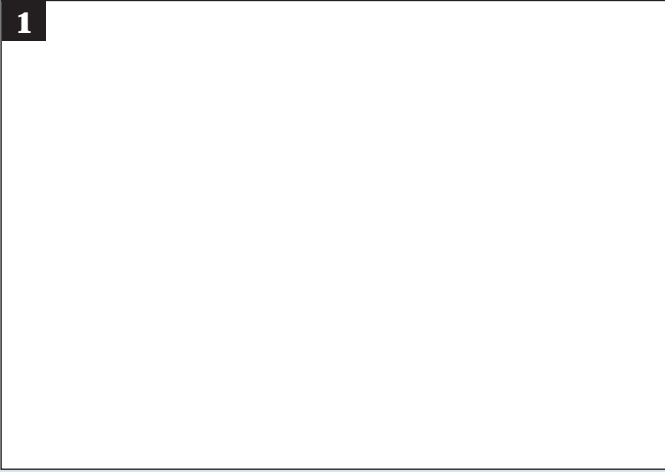
"... An equitable and effective global framework for addressing climate change should be put in place under which all major emitting countries (including China, Brazil and India) are committed to appropriate emission reduction goals ... U.S. leadership in establishing this global framework is essential."

The complete Climate Change Statement can be found at http://www.businessroundtable.org/pdf/Environment_Technology_Economy/Business_Roundtable_Climate_Change_Statement.pdf

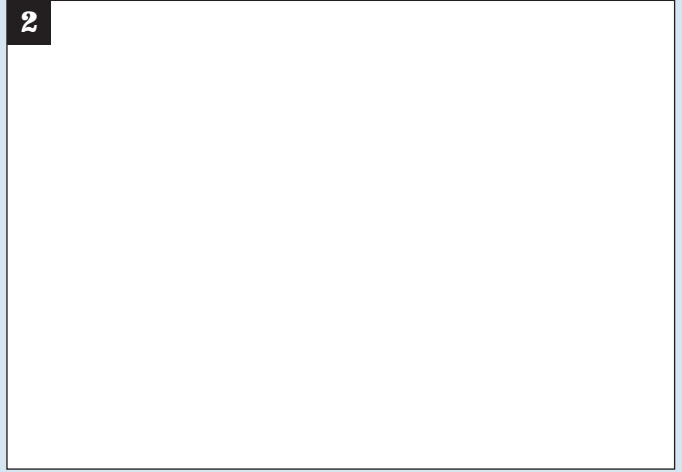
The list of Business Roundtable member companies and CEOs can be found at <http://www.businessroundtable.org/aboutUs/Memberlist.aspx> ■

Where in the world?

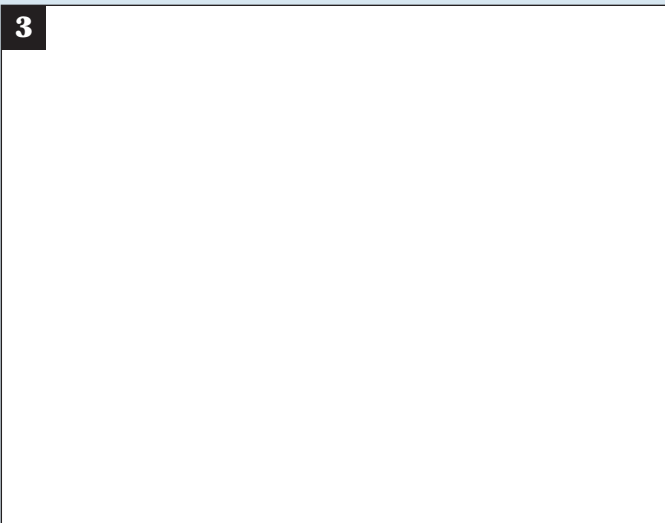
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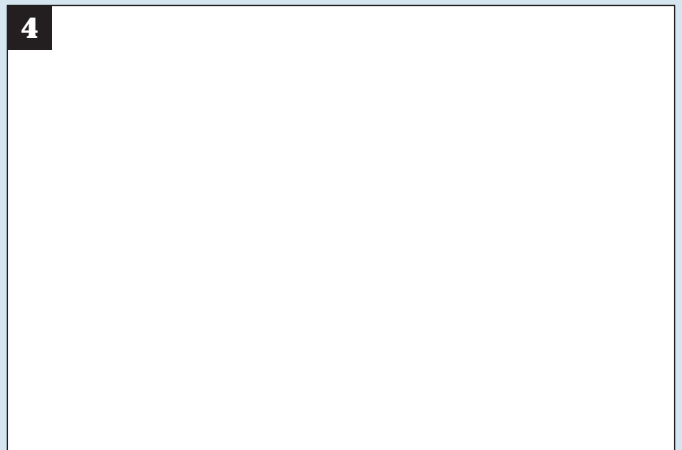
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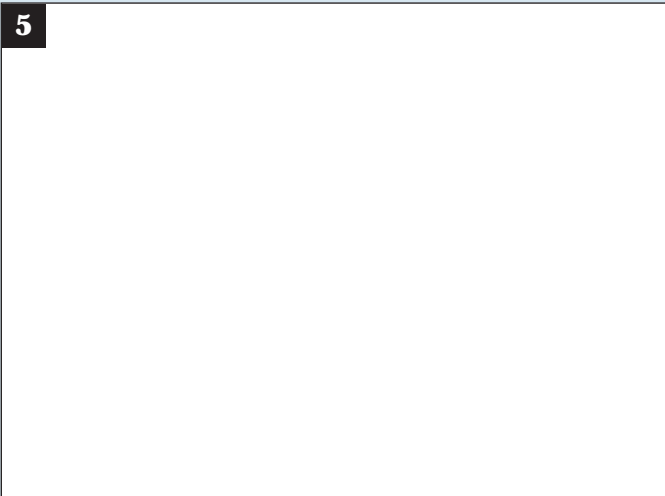
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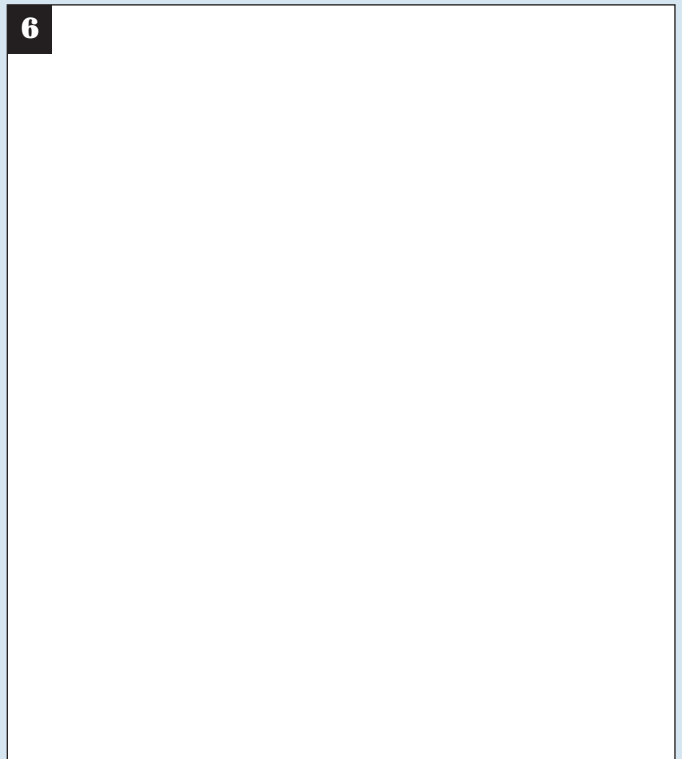
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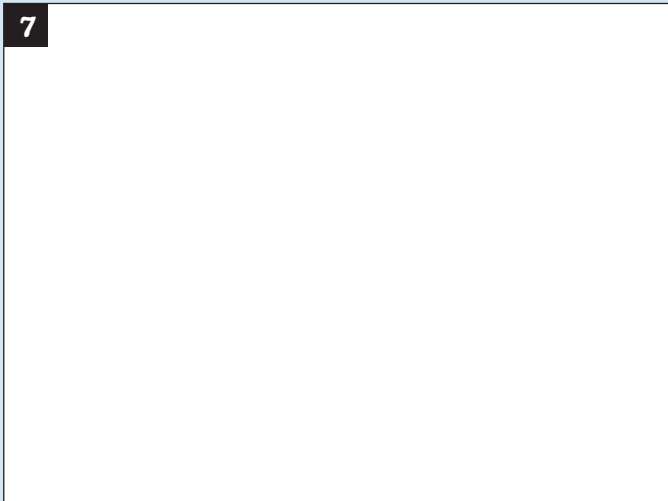
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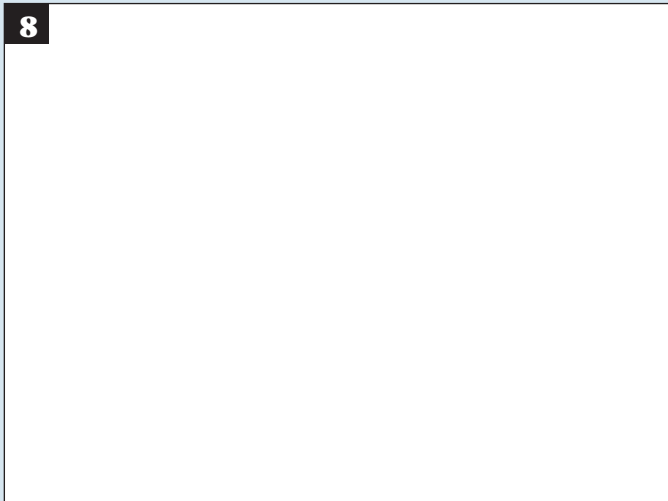
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Where in the world? *(continued from page 6)*

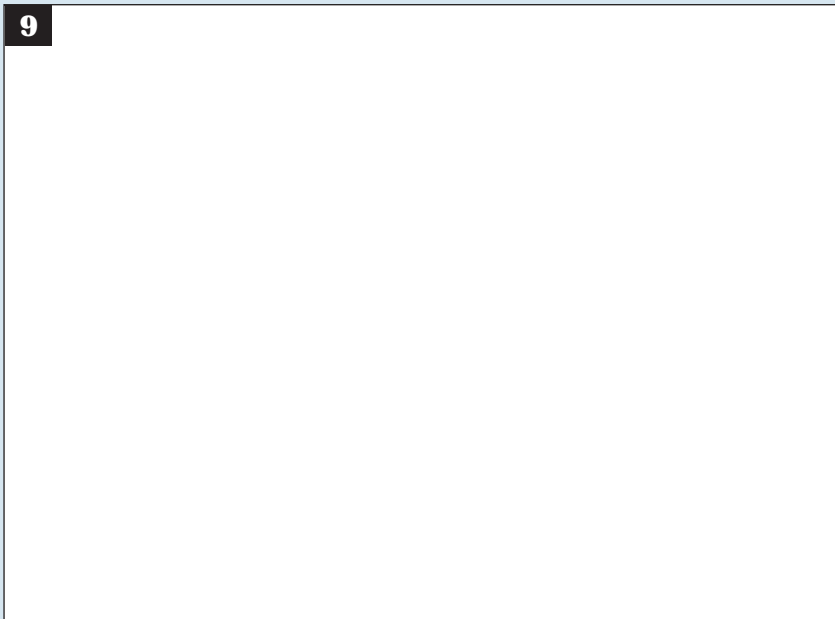
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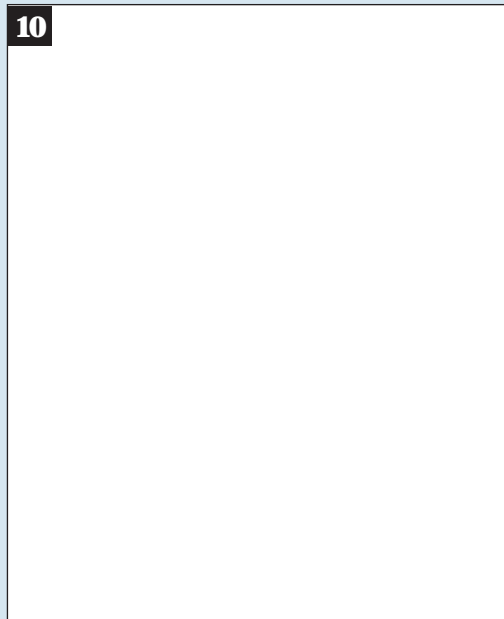
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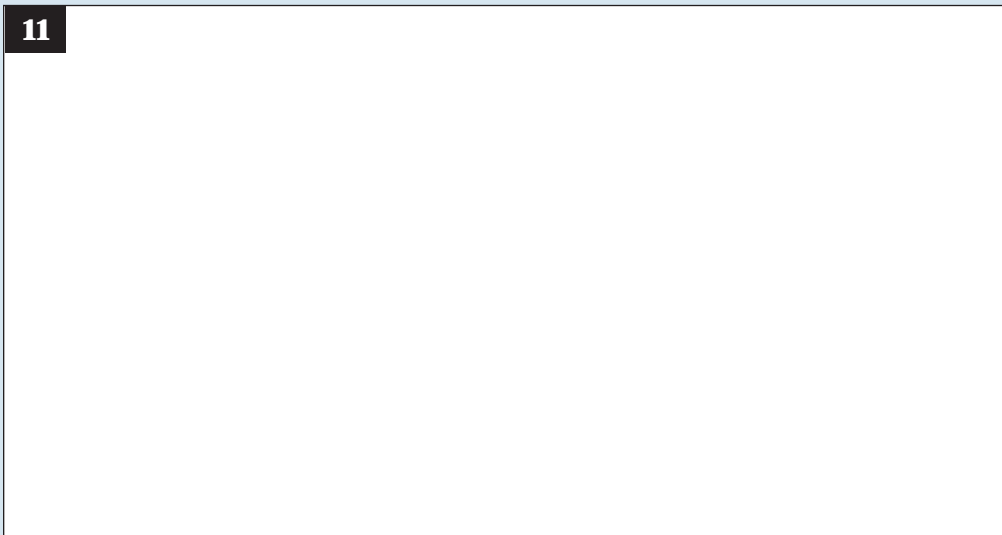
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11



Answers on page 12.

PATH leads to transportation equity

By Jennifer Rice, Redwood Community Action Agency

The Redwood Community Action Agency in Humboldt County won the 2007 NSCCAPA Leadership Advocacy Planning Award for its effort to develop practical measures for improving the equity of transportation decisions and investments. Its effort is called PATH—Planning for Active Transportation and Health.

Regional transportation planning agencies and planning departments are increasingly being challenged to meet Civil Rights Act and Environmental Justice regulations while still addressing the needs of their communities. This project was an effort to incorporate Planning for Active Transportation and Health (PATH) into decision-making processes as a way to address these regulations and improve overall access for community members.

The PATH model is not a revolutionary concept intended to overhaul existing planning processes. It is an evolution of conventional processes, designed to help planners and decision-makers comply with federal and state regulations, while still providing their respective communities with opportunities for equal access. The model recognizes that:

- Transportation, land use, and economic development decisions are inextricably linked, and
- Transportation investments affect public health and social equity.

A new perspective

To collectively modify the standard tools, policies and funding programs that contribute to inequitable, unhealthy and unsustainable transportation decisions, a new perspective is needed on how to:

- Efficiently get people where they need to go—plan for community access to services, employment, and education. In the PATH model, enhancing mobility is not the goal, but is instead one strategy among many toward achieving the overarching goal of improved equitability through increased access.
- Consider everyone's needs—establish a planning process and system for investments that clearly considers, includes and addresses the needs of the whole community, including transportation-disadvantaged populations.
- Look ahead—proactively consider the impacts of transportation decisions and investments on public health, social equity, land use and economic development, and involve a diverse spectrum of professionals and stake holders to assist in the transportation planning process.
- Learn from ourselves—periodically review progress, adapt to 'best practices' information, and evaluate and adjust planning and design practices to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of transportation planning and investments.

Guide to the project

The PATH effort includes a series of in-depth reports and supporting resources. The following documents and online resources are a product of a Caltrans Environmental Justice

Program-funded grant to the County of Humboldt and Redwood Community Action Agency.

- A Summary of Research, which also includes a literature review and preliminary discussion of Humboldt County transportation issues.
- Numerous gatherings of transportation, land use, health, social service and economic development professionals between November 2005 and May 2006.
- A Best Practices Report that provides rural regions with ideas about transportation equity, multi-disciplinary planning efforts, promoting access and active transportation, and highlights numerous planning and decision-making tools.
- The Humboldt County Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations Report featuring intriguing GIS maps of disadvantaged populations, bicycle- and pedestrian-vehicle collisions and access to public transit services.
- The PATH Guide, a compilation of ideas, examples and resources to help rural governments shift decision-making perspectives to find affordable, practical ways to improve transportation equity.
- Recommended strategies to improve public participation, active transportation and community access in Opportunities for Improving Transportation Equity in Humboldt County.

These documents and resources can be viewed at www.nrscaa.org/path.

The PATH model

The PATH model outlines six basic procedural steps.



At first glance, the model may look similar to conventional transportation planning processes, but there are several differences, including an emphasis to:

- Link transportation goals to broader community goals for equity, public health, economic development and land use.

(continued on page 9)

PATH leads to transportation equity

(continued from page 8)

- Consider a diversity of planning inputs (e.g., hard data, qualitative information, maps of target populations, personal stories).
- Use inclusive, innovative public participation techniques to understand actual community needs.
- Consult the latest 'best practices' and research to help prioritize which transportation investments will achieve strategic goals.
- Create funding partnerships to get multimodal projects moving forward and build local stewardship.
- Ensure accountability in planning, contracting, and construction management so multimodal projects are delivered intact.
- Evaluate outcomes to ensure transportation investments are cost-effective in achieving community goals, and revise investment as necessary to better achieve goals.

Next steps

In the last decade, a broad effort was made to incorporate the words 'pedestrian' and 'bicycle' into standard transportation planning documents, manuals and actions. The PATH project proposes a next step in the U.S. transportation paradigm: incorporate transportation equity into those documents, manuals and actions.

It takes time to evolve standard decision-making processes. Working toward proactive planning, design and implementation of transportation systems that promote improved social, economic and public health will require further experimentation, innovative perspectives and, most importantly, new multi-disciplinary partnerships.

What matters most is that individuals working at every level of the process ask critically how their respective efforts can more functionally promote equitable transportation decision-making. Such an achievement is by no means an unattainable goal, especially when approached strategy by strategy, and if it is acknowledged as a priority at every level of government, with the support and participation of community stakeholders and the community as a whole.

Jennifer Rice is Co-Director of the Natural Resources Services Division, Redwood Community Action Agency, in Humboldt County. ■

From our London correspondent

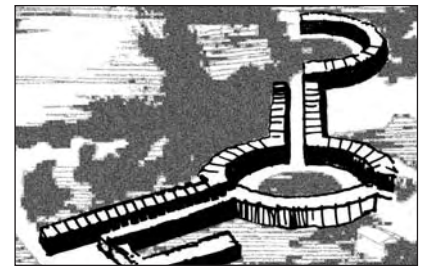
By Chandler Lee, AICP

Named and best known for its Roman baths circa AD 48, Bath (the city) is far more interesting. A model of British town planning, it is a compact, walkable place lined with perfectly preserved Georgian buildings. To get a sense of the exquisite layout of the city, try "flying over" Bath using Google Earth.

The Bath Spa depot is about 90 minutes by train from Paddington Station. We started our walk by purchasing a bird's eye map that shows the overall plan of Bath, its parks, buildings, paths, focal points and a thoughtfully designed walking tour. The majority of sights can be viewed on foot in two to three hours. We generally followed the recommended pedestrian route but often strayed off course to check out inviting alleys, hidden cafes, and particularly well designed buildings and plazas.

At the town center, about three blocks from the train station, are Roman baths, an information center, and Bath Abbey—all clustered around a small square. The baths are reputed to be the best preserved of their kind in Britain, although quite touristy. The nearby Abbey is spectacular inside and out.

From the baths, stroll around town as you like, but don't miss the Circus—the first perfectly circular space in British town planning; the Royal Crescent—flanked by a little used private park and the publicly accessible and lushly landscaped Royal Victoria Park and Botanical Gardens (circa 1829); and the parks and walking paths that line the River Avon. One can walk about 20 miles along the River



The Circus and The Royal Crescent, Bath, England. John Wood the Younger, 1764-69

Avon from Bath to Bristol following a riverside trail in use since 1730.

Farther from the town center but within easy walking distance is Sydney Gardens—Britain's only surviving 18th Century Pleasure Garden. A view of the Gardens and Holburne Museum is precisely framed at the end of Great Pulteney Street (proclaimed as a great Georgian street but very wide by modern pedestrian standards). Walking through Sydney Gardens, we crossed the railroad tracks leading to London and the Avon Kennet Lock System—a series of canals and locks formerly used for transporting coal. The canals—now used by houseboats—provide a "back roads" walking path linking the town center with its extensive greenbelt.

Following the canal tow path, we came across a huge open space network (managed by the National Trust) that extends from the elaborate mansions along Cleveland Walk, past the local golf course and up to the ridgeline of the Bath Hills. From there you can walk for miles through verdant meadows, vast expanses of wildflowers and dense woodlands. The walk affords magnificent views of the famed English countryside replete with Gothic churches, small villages, and picturesque farmlands. For a walker and a planner, it doesn't get much better than this. (More information is available at www.visitbath.co.uk).

Chandler Lee, AICP, an inveterate globetrotter, is on sabbatical from his consulting planning practice in San Francisco. You can reach him at ChandlerLe@aol.com. ■

Taking a walk in Alameda County

By Victoria Eisen and Niko Letunic

The Alameda Countywide Strategic Pedestrian Plan won this year's NSCCAPA Focused Issue Planning Award. The Plan represents one of the most comprehensive countywide pedestrian planning efforts undertaken to date, particularly in a county as large and diverse as Alameda County.

Every day in Alameda County, over 500,000 trips are made on foot. That's 12 percent of all trips. After driving, walking in is the second most popular way to get around the county. Walking is a fundamental, age-old form of transportation, which today links people to all other forms of transportation. In Alameda County, 90 percent of trips to AC Transit and 25 percent of those to BART are made on foot.

While these numbers indicate the popularity of walking, the number of pedestrians has actually decreased over the past few decades. Physical inactivity is now widely understood to play a significant role in the most common chronic diseases, including heart disease, stroke and diabetes, all of which are leading causes of death in Alameda County. Further, pedestrians account for one-quarter of all transportation-related deaths in Alameda County, double the percentage of people who are walking. These tragic numbers reveal a critical need for safe and vibrant pedestrian environments that inspire walking and are at the center of healthy communities.

Mandate for countywide pedestrian plan

With these circumstances as backdrop, and with a mandate from Alameda County voters that walking, bicycling and public transit must be essential elements of the county's transportation system, in 2005 the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA) commissioned a countywide pedestrian plan. The agency—which is

responsible for implementing the voter-approved transportation sales tax measure—had two primary motivations:

1. Elevate the value and importance of walking as a legitimate transportation mode. The steps toward achieving this objective were to create a snapshot of walking in Alameda County today, catalog institutional obstacles to walking, provide a vision of the countywide pedestrian environment in 2030, and develop goals and strategies needed to attain that vision.
2. Craft a plan to guide ACTIA's expenditures for pedestrian improvements. Alameda's countywide bicycle plan had for years defined priority investments in the bicycle network. ACTIA wanted a corresponding document that would guide its investment in creating walkable communities and would halt unfocused spending on pedestrian projects. To do so, the agency sought to identify countywide priorities, estimate costs and compare these costs to projected revenue.

To undertake the study, the County hired the planning firm of Eisen | Letunic which partnered with Alta Planning + Design for technical skills and Lohnes+Wright, map and GIS specialists.

The Plan and its Toolkit

While local pedestrian master plans identify needed improvements at specific locations, the Alameda Countywide Strategic Pedestrian Plan concentrates on identifying and prioritizing pedestrian projects, programs and planning efforts of countywide significance. These fall into three categories:

1. Access to public transit
2. Activity centers (including downtowns and commercial districts)
3. Inter-jurisdictional trails

Using the categories, local jurisdictions can assess how best to improve their own pedestrian environments and determine worthwhile improvements.

The Plan is original in its countywide coverage and in the provision of a companion "Toolkit for Improving Walkability in Alameda County" to facilitate implementation. The Plan has detailed discussions of walk access to public transit, the relationship between walking and public health, programs that have been shown to encourage a long-term shift to walking, and detailed cost estimates that demonstrate the enormous gap between spending on the pedestrian environment and the amount needed for such improvements.

The quality, usefulness, accessibility and presentation of these documents benefited from ACTIA's extremely committed staff and Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee and from a very involved technical working group, which included traffic engineers, transportation planners, trail planners, pedestrian advocates, transit access specialists and public health professionals.

How is the Plan being used?

Although the Plan was adopted less than a year ago, it is already being used to allocate Measure B (transportation sales tax) funding. Beyond funding, the Plan is guiding ACTIA's internal work plan in prioritizing staff efforts and internal funding. For instance, the agency has appointed a pedestrian working group to continue to tap into the energy generated by the Plan's working group, and is planning a walking promotion campaign, training sessions for traffic engineers and others, and technical assistance for local governments.

A third outcome is that ACTIA is initiating nontraditional alliances with other governmental agencies and advocates, particularly in the fields of public health and community livability. Beyond ACTIA, municipalities, transit agencies, park districts and others are turning to the Plan for the detailed data it provides, are using this information to help identify and prioritize the most effective ways to create communities that invite and celebrate walking, and are

(continued on page 11)

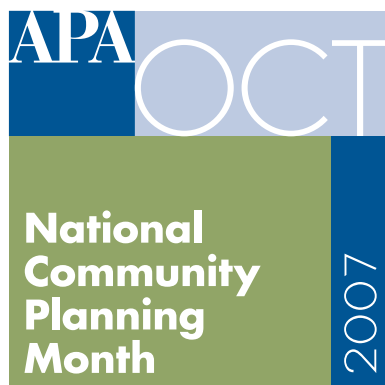
Taking a walk in Alameda County *(continued from page 10)*

gathering arguments for elevating the importance of pedestrian planning.

Walking into the future

ACTIA is already thinking of ways in which the first Plan update—scheduled for 2011—can be even more useful than the original. By the time the update is prepared, 2010 Census data will begin to become available. In five years, programs funded as a result of ACTIA's newly defined priorities—such as TravelSmart and Safe Routes to Schools—will have had sufficient track records to establish their effectiveness, or lack thereof. By 2011, processes and methodology may be available for improved collision statistic analysis. Lastly, in concert with significant investment planned for Bus Rapid Transit and BART extensions in Alameda County, there will be ample opportunities to allocate Measure B funds according to the priorities laid out in the Alameda Countywide Strategic Pedestrian Plan.

The authors, with a combined 30 years of public sector planning experience, established the partnership of Eisen | Letunic in 2005. A significant portion of their background is in the fields of bicycle and pedestrian planning and advocacy, smart growth, and closely related disciplines. ■



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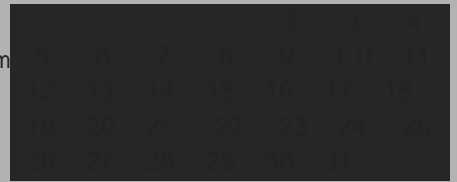
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- 30 2007 CCAPA Annual Conference, Sunday, September 30 to Wednesday, October 3, Fairmont Hotel, Downtown San JosŽ. Sessions start 8 AM. Gala opening reception, Tech Museum of Innovation, 6:30 to 10 PM.
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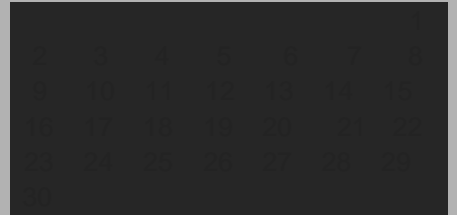
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