



NORTHERN NEWS



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CleanPowerSF—a renewable energy alternative on its way to San Francisco

*By Caroline Teng, Associate Editor,
Northern News*



Clean energy supporters in San Francisco can breathe a little easier this year. CleanPowerSF, the long-awaited renewable energy alternative to PG&E's electric generation, will take effect later this year and grant all San Franciscans access to greener energy, increased consumer protections and local control, and the ability to choose between energy service suppliers.

The program allows residents and businesses within San Francisco to live and operate in significantly greener ways with little effort. As San Francisco's custom-tailored Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program, CleanPowerSF takes on the task of acquiring renewable energy so that individual households and businesses are not burdened with the costs and complexities of the alternative energy market. It also propels the city toward a more aggressive renewable energy goal: CleanPowerSF aims to be 51 percent renewable by 2017 while maintaining rates competitive with PG&E. Another key component of the program is the goal of 107 megawatts of demand-side energy management, including conservation and increased energy efficiency efforts.

CleanPowerSF represents an innovative way of getting to the root of a problem—establishing a more sustainable energy generation system within a local jurisdiction. By feeding greener energy into the electrical grid, CleanPowerSF will supplement the additional energy efficiency and on-site renewable energy efforts made by individuals and businesses. Eventually, simply by locating within San Francisco, developments will “have a leg up” on reaching LEED and green building goals. San Francisco—along with Marin County which also is implementing a CCA program (“Marin Clean Energy”)—can be models for other local governments that seek community-based decision-making when it comes to energy generation.

How it will work

CleanPowerSF will be administered by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), the city's water, sewer, and municipal power utility, which has a long, successful history supplying San Francisco with essential

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Co-Webmasters		
Pierce Macdonald	(510) 459-6092	piecemac@hotmail.com
Raquel Paniagua	(707) 363-9725	raquelpaniagua@gmail.com

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Jane Wardani	(510) 260-7180	jane@ecocitybuilders.org
Monterey Bay		
Meryka Blumer	(916) 201-0201	Meryka.Blumer@yahoo.com
Elizabeth Caraker, AICP	(831) 372-1314	caraker@goldenstateplanning.com
North Bay		
Ladd Miyasaki	(707) 935-3145	ladd@sonomaecologycenter.org
Peninsula		
Surachita Bose, AICP	(650) 393-4481	surachitab@gmail.com
Redwood Coast		
Stephen Avis, AICP	(707) 725-1407	savis@ci.fortuna.ca.us
San Francisco		
Daniel Serrano	(619) 850-1527	serranochile@hotmail.com
South Bay		
Katja Irvin, AICP	(408) 569-8214	katja.irvin@sbcglobal.net

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CleanPowerSF—a renewable energy alternative on its way to San Francisco *(continued from previous page)*

public services. The SFPUC already generates approximately 20 percent of the city's energy needs through renewable resources like solar power and hydropower that produce zero greenhouse gas emissions.

CleanPowerSF will have minimal impact on how customers currently receive their electricity and bills. Unlike a full public power system, PG&E will continue to own and operate the electrical grid in the city and distribute electricity to residents and businesses. San Franciscans will not have to go out of their way to be part of the municipal energy program, and PG&E will continue to send customers monthly bills. The difference is that the generation line-item component of the bill will now come from CleanPowerSF. Customers will not perceive a change in their daily electricity service but will be receiving cleaner, more renewable energy.

CleanPowerSF will not affect taxes, as the program will be self-funded: The money that customers currently pay to PG&E for energy generation will now fund CleanPowerSF and more renewable energy resources. Individuals and businesses who do not wish to be part of the program will not have to contribute any money to it.

Benefits of CleanPowerSF

Cleaner, more renewable energy. CCA programs allow cities and counties to pool their citizens' purchasing power to buy electricity. Thus, CleanPowerSF will provide San Franciscans with tangible environmental and consumer benefits that are difficult for individual households and businesses to obtain. The goal of 51 percent renewable by 2017 far exceeds the state's minimum renewable energy requirements—and is significantly greener than PG&E's current energy which is generated from nuclear, coal, natural gas, and other sources. In fact, PG&E has not met state laws which require that 20 percent of the energy they provide come from renewable sources by this year. According to [PG&E's website](#), 14 percent of their energy comes from renewable resources, 22 percent comes from nuclear plants, and 39 percent from natural gas (2008).

Consumer protections and choice. CleanPowerSF aims to inject an element of competition into San Francisco's energy markets by giving consumers an alternative choice to PG&E's energy generation—a choice where none currently exists. Increased competition can help mitigate the ills of a monopolistic market, such as high prices, limited regulation, disincentives to innovation, and ultimately lower-grade products. After years of being told by PG&E what is and is not possible, San Francisco has an opportunity to craft an environmentally-sound energy generation system that better aligns with its role as a national leader and a system that will provide for public participation in determining which technologies will be used to meet local electricity needs.

Long-term price stability and energy independence. From the start, CleanPowerSF will have rates similar to PG&E's energy generation rates. Renewable energy resources like solar and wind never run out, which translates into long-term price stability for San Franciscans. Community

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NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

Editorial

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

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

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

Advertising Director/Jobs

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

Newsletter Designer

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

ADDRESS CHANGES

Membership Department
APA National Headquarters
122 South Michigan Ave, Suite 1600
Chicago, IL 60603-6107
Tel: (312) 431-9100
www.planning.org

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

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

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

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

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

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CleanPowerSF—a renewable energy alternative on its way to San Francisco *(continued from previous page)*

investment in renewable energy generation will provide a natural hedge against increases and instabilities in future fossil fuel costs. (When blackouts rolled across California during the energy crisis of 2000 and 2001, self-governing municipal utilities fared much better than PG&E and other investor-owned utilities. Ironically, PG&E ended up filing bankruptcy, and customers are still paying off their debt.)

Local benefits from local control. With a long-term goal to build renewable energy generating facilities, CleanPowerSF will eventually create green jobs to bolster San Francisco's economy. As a not-for-profit public service, the program will be committed to establishing energy efficiency and education programs that go beyond minimum requirements. Local control also means that future energy decisions can be made with the people of San Francisco's best interests in mind, rather than investor interests.

Environmental equity. Historically, low-income and minority communities have borne the brunt of pollution generated by power plants within the city. The Bayview Hunter's Point neighborhood recently won its battle to close the Potrero Power Plant; investing in clean energy sources will help ensure that disadvantaged communities will not have to fight such battles again. More importantly, CleanPowerSF will give San Franciscans universal access to clean energy, and low-income discounts will still apply.

Current status

The SFPUC is finalizing the terms of the program and negotiating a contract with the top energy service provider. In the meantime, SFPUC in conjunction with the San Francisco Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo), has embarked on a citywide public education campaign so San Franciscans can fully understand CleanPowerSF and make an informed decision to stay with the program when it rolls out later this year. PG&E, under the guise of "Common Sense San Francisco," has launched a mailer campaign against San Francisco's CCA program. It is SFPUC and LAFCo's goal to dispel misinformation and ensure that residents and businesses know the facts.

Ed. Note: Common Sense San Francisco is funded by the Coalition for Reliable and Affordable Electricity, whose president is Dan Richard, PG&E's former senior vice president for public policy and government relations. Nancy McFadden, a senior vice president and senior adviser to PG&E's CEO Peter Darbee, is listed as a director. Steven S. Lucas—the coalition's principal officer—is treasurer of the Yes on 16 political action committee.

For more information and updates on CleanPowerSF, email cleanpowersf@sfgwater.org or call (415) 554-3289; or look online at <http://cleanpowersf.org>, www.facebook.com/CleanPowerSF, or www.twitter.com/CleanPowerSF.

Caroline Teng is community development coordinator for the San Francisco LAFCo and associate newsletter editor, *Northern News*. She can be reached at carolineteng@gmail.com. ■

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

By Darcy Kremin, AICP



Chapter election results.

Congratulations to **Kevin Keller, AICP**, and **Virginia Viado** on their election to the APA California board as President-Elect and Vice President Administration, respectively. **Hing Wong, AICP**, with his depth of institutional knowledge, will continue to support APA California and Northern Section in his various capacities and will be advising Kevin. We look forward to working with Kevin and Virginia and the other members of the APA California board.

Employers: you can help. This is the time of year when students are graduating and looking for gainful employment. Based on my limited unscientific survey, it seems there are quite a few job openings in the energy and transportation fields—at least for more seasoned planners. On the other hand, from the inquiries I've received, younger and graduating planners are more interested in sustainability and transit-oriented development. Although the job seekers and openings may not align perfectly, perhaps with some creativity, opportunities can be created by employers who expand their job descriptions and who are willing to take a chance on less-experienced but enthusiastic folks. If you know of any job opportunities, please share those with the planners seeking employment (see [page 14](#)).

Expanded social networking. Please join us on our social networking sites, [LinkedIn](#) and [facebook](#). We have two groups on facebook—one for the [Section as a whole](#), and one for the [Young Planner's Group](#). These sites are invaluable. Use them to learn about upcoming events and to network with other planners in the area.

RSVP for Awards Celebration now. May is here, and so is the Northern Section awards banquet. We anticipate another lovely evening at the Sir Francis Drake Hotel, May 14th, 6:30 PM. This year we received a good number of award submittals, and our panel of jurors deliberated very carefully before choosing the best projects and people to represent outstanding planning in the Section's geographic reach. Tickets are available now. To reserve via PayPal by May 12, [click here](#). We ask that you consider making a donation along with your ticket purchase so that we can sponsor students. I look forward to seeing everyone there! The June issue of *Northern News* will list the award winners along with complete descriptions of the winning projects. ■

Darcy Kremin



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Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities

Highlights of US agency leaders' comments at *New Partners for Smart Growth*, February 4, 2010

By Ellen J. Greenberg, AICP, and Kimberly Seigel, LEED AP

*"When it comes to housing, environmental, and transportation policy, it's time the federal government spoke with one voice."
(HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan)*

In June 2009, three US agencies—Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)—announced an interagency partnership for Sustainable Communities. The partnership's mission is to better coordinate federal transportation, environmental protection, and housing investments, and to advance livability principles. The three agencies are working together for the first time through the newly-created and funded Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities, described by Donovan as the "center point of all HUD sustainability efforts." The office is directed by Shelley Poticha under Deputy HUD Secretary Ron Sims.

Principles. Improved coordination between federal transportation, environmental protection, and housing investments is a foundation of the Partnership. Importantly, the coordination role is complemented by new funding sources and an expression of Partnership principles that echo and extend the principles of Smart Growth already articulated by the EPA. Partnership principles are to:

- Provide more transportation choices.
- Promote equitable, affordable housing.
- Enhance economic competitiveness.
- Support existing communities.
- Coordinate policies and leverage investment.
- Value communities and neighborhoods.

The HUD/DOT/EPA partnership will:

- Enhance integrated planning and investment.
- Provide a vision for sustainable growth.
- Redefine housing affordability and make it transparent.
- Redevelop underutilized sites.
- Develop livability measures and tools.
- Align HUD, DOT, and EPA programs.
- Undertake joint research, data collection, and outreach.

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Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities

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The Partnership effort is backed by significant funding commitments. HUD's Office of Sustainable Housing and Sustainable Communities has a \$200 million budget this fiscal year:

- \$100 million for metropolitan planning grants.
- \$40 million for local government "challenge grants" to provide capital funds to implement regional plans and to integrate economic development, land use, transportation, and water infrastructure investments.
- \$50 million Energy Innovation Fund focused on taking an energy efficient mortgage product to scale.
- \$10 million to assist with developing a tool to measure location efficiency in support of new definitions of affordability.

The three partner agencies will participate in making decisions on funding awards for these and other monies directed to the sustainable communities effort from the partner agencies.

Agency secretaries together at February 2010 Smart Growth Conference

On February 4, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, DOT Secretary Ray LaHood, and Assistant EPA Administrator Mathy Stanislaus made an unprecedented joint appearance at a meeting of US planning professionals. They spoke to the 1,700 attendees at the ninth "New Partners for Smart Growth" meeting, describing their priorities and announcing just-approved funding for the Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities. Donovan's talk was the most substantial with respect to new directions for federal policy relating to planning and community development. LaHood's comments emphasized DOT's commitment to working with the new Partnership, and referenced some specific funding initiatives including funding for high speed rail and discretionary grants funded through the Recovery Act (federal stimulus program.) Deputy EPA Administrator Mathy Stanislaus brought to the session a more focused perspective stemming from his own responsibilities for EPA's brownfields program.

Updating and extending planning agendas

The Partnership's principles, funding programs, and activities advance the Smart Growth agenda and add meaning to the ideal of sustainable communities. In their presentations at New Partners for Smart Growth, each of the Secretaries' comments elevated themes that haven't been consistently included in the Smart Growth Vision, but that need to be made central to sustainable communities. In so doing, they brought a "3 Es" perspective to the Partnership's work, inclusive of equity, environmental, and economic concerns.

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Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities

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Here are the highlights:

Economic development and access to jobs are central to sustainability. Shaun Donovan emphasized economic development and job creation as keys to sustainability, declaring in his introduction that “most important of all I want to discuss how all this work—investing in energy efficient homes and buildings, in renewable energy and in next-generation infrastructure, is helping lay the foundation for the clean energy economy America needs to compete and create jobs in the 21st century.” These themes are evident in the way the Partnership principles are described, for the first time incorporating economic competitiveness, transportation cost, and energy security into the Smart Growth framework.

No more “Drive till you qualify.” HUD is newly associating the quality of housing with access to broader opportunities including access to jobs, schools, and safe streets. Donovan repeatedly referenced the US real estate and mortgage industries’ penchant to promote “drive till you qualify” as a fundamental problem for US households. “Location-efficient” housing emerges as a public policy goal, replacing an earlier paradigm in which housing affordability was judged solely on the basis of rental cost without regard to accessibility and affordability of job and educational opportunities. This more integrated view of affordability is reflected in federal funding being directed to economic and spatial tools that examine housing and transportation opportunities and costs together. Nonprofit organizations including the Chicago-based Center for Neighborhood Technology, Reconnecting America, and the Brookings Institute are leaders in the development of analytical approaches that support these refined policy aims.

“Communities where opportunities for people of all ages, races, incomes, and ethnicities are never determined by their zip code.” The secretaries emphasized the Partnership’s commitment to environmental justice, fairness, and efforts to eliminate concentrated poverty and segregated development patterns. Public health issues related to community design also received attention. Donovan specifically referenced upcoming changes in the formal definition of Fair Housing to include “not only the racial makeup of housing but also its orientation to opportunity, to public transportation, and to job centers” to help communities with new development strategies and targeted technical assistance, thereby “affirmatively furthering fair housing.” This prominent integration of social justice concerns is another positive evolution from early Smart Growth definitions, which had a more exclusive focus on the physical characteristics of neighborhoods. Notably, however, housing

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Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities (continued from previous page)

affordability has consistently been advanced as part of the Smart Growth principles. See www.epa.gov/smartgrowth.

“The incubators for creative ideas are in the communities” (Ray LaHood). The secretaries repeatedly emphasized the different perspectives on sustainability that prevail in different communities, as well as the local communities’ role as innovators. This positioning is not surprising in light of the sensitivities to federal involvement in local land use policy. EPA Assistant Administrator Stanislaus declared that “We, the federal government, have to provide the tools for you, but cannot dictate the end result.”

Ellen Greenberg is Associate Principal at Arup and leader of the firm’s integrated planning practice in San Francisco. *Kimberly Seigel* is a sustainability consultant at Arup. ■

Where in the world?



Photo by Jason M. Burke, AICP, Oakland
(Answer on [page 11](#))



BOOK REVIEW

Collaborative Rationality

A review by Larry Susskind, AICP

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In their extraordinary new book, *Planning With Complexity* (Routledge, 2010), Judith E. Innes and David Booher make the case for a new way of knowing and deciding. They call this new approach collaborative rationality. Instrumental rationality—the traditional way of making the case for what needs to be done and why in the public arena—has given way to collaborative approaches to generating and justifying decisions. Innes and Booher point to negotiation theory as the foundation for this approach and use complexity science to explain why it works. They have nicknamed their theory DIAD because it builds on Diversity, Inter-dependence and Authentic Dialogue. Anyone who works in the public policy arena needs to know what Innes and Booher have to say about collaborative rationality.

Diversity. Complexity science says that complex adaptive systems need to involve large numbers of individual agents connected through multiple networks. These agents interact dynamically, exchanging information. Even if some agents only interact with a few others, the effects of these connections ripple through the system. As a result, the system has a memory that is not located at a specific point, but is distributed throughout the system. There are many direct and indirect feedback loops; the overall system is open. The behavior of the system is determined by these interactions, not the components; and the behavior of the system cannot be understood by looking only at the components. Complex adaptive systems display both the capacity to maintain their viability and the capacity to evolve.

So, Innes and Booher suggest that to make collaborative processes more effective, they should be self-organizing, with diverse agents, involving many interactions and non-linear dynamics. These are the keys to making them creative and adaptive. The inclusion of all agents (i.e., full participation of all relevant stakeholders) is required for coherent and novel patterns of action to emerge. They also argue that “the condition of diversity implies that a collaboratively rational process must include not only agents who have power because they are “deal makers” or “deal breakers,” but also those who have needed information or could be affected by outcomes of the process.”

Interdependence. The condition of interdependence holds that agents must depend to a significant degree on other agents. That is, as is true in all successful negotiations, each agent (or

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BOOK REVIEW

Collaborative Rationality *(continued from previous page)*

stakeholder) has something that the others want. This condition ensures that participants maintain a level of interest and energy required to engage each other and push for agreement. Negotiation theory tells us that interdependence among interests is the key to moving past zero sum games to mutual gains agreement. Such interdependence means that players cannot achieve their interests on their own, and that given their diversity some participants will value certain results more than others. As a group, therefore, they can pull together a "package" that allows every participant to get more of what they value without reducing the value that accrues to others.

Authentic dialogue requires that agents engage with each other in deliberations that adhere to Habermas' ideal speech conditions. That is, deliberations must be characterized by direct engagement so that the parties can test to be sure that claims are accurate, comprehensible, and sincere. Deliberations cannot be dominated by those with power outside the process, and everyone involved must have equal access to all the relevant information and an equal ability to speak and be listened to. (This is what I have described as Joint Fact Finding in previous blog entries.) In authentic dialogue, all participants can challenge the assumptions or assertions put forward by others. Nothing is off the table, and the reasons people give for what they are arguing matter a lot. Authentic dialogue relies on (1) what participants know from their everyday lives and not just on specialized, scientific expertise, and (2) knowledge constructed jointly through interaction and shared inquiry. Many processes that are dubbed "collaboration" fail to meet these conditions, and, thus, do not involve authentic dialogue.

Complexity science explains why collaborative rationality works. Innes and Booher write: "The complexity and rapid change in contemporary society have created an increasing awareness among policy leaders of the limits to hierarchical control by government agencies and to formal expertise in solving problems. This awareness leads to growing uncertainty about policy and a new focus on the need to manage uncertainty, rather than create programs and regulatory regimes that deny its existence. As society has become more culturally diverse, decision makers have to deal with an array of publics with different values, perspectives, cognitive styles and worldviews. Complexity is also reflected in growing inter-dependence among government players, as agencies find they cannot be successful, even on their own limited agendas if they continue to work unilaterally."

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LETTERS

The articles on parking (April 2010) were very well-done. I especially appreciate the effort and care that Theresa Alster took to understand and share the perspectives of someone who put the pieces together to make a very, very risky revitalization effort over an extended period of time come to fruition. Providing a realistic view about the role parking played in its various aspects in the revitalization of Old Pasadena is a service to those engaged in similar efforts. No silver bullets, I'm afraid.



Marsha V. Rood, FAICP

Answer to "Where in the world?" (Page 8)

Brasov, Romania: Black Church, Council Square, and Old Town Hall (1420)

Photo by Jason M. Burke, AICP, Oakland

BOOK REVIEW

Collaborative Rationality (continued from previous page)

Collaborative rationality sees the world as inherently uncertain and assumes that all decisions are necessarily contingent. "In this view, planning and policy are not about finding the best solution—indeed there is no one best solution, though there may be many better ways of proceeding than the status quo. Collaboratively rational processes are about engaging with other members of a community to jointly learn and work out how to get better together in the face of conflict, complex changing conditions, and multiple conflicting sources of information. Such processes are not only about finding new ways to move forward, but they are ultimately about guiding community and governance capacity to be resilient in the face of the inevitable new challenges."

A **resilient system** is one that can withstand shocks and surprises, absorb extreme stresses, and maintain its core functions. Resilience (according to Berkes and colleagues, 2003) refers to the amount of change a system can undergo and still retain the same controls on function and structure; the degree to which a system is capable of self-organization; and the ability to build and increase the capacity for learning and adaptation in the system. Thus, sustainability is a dynamic process and not an end product.

Now, every time someone suggests a collaborative (bipartisan?) approach to public policy-making, you can assess their authenticity by applying the elements of the DIAD model. Are they really committed to collaborative rationality, or are they just traditionalists hiding behind the mask of collaboration?

Lawrence Susskind, AICP, is Ford Professor of Urban and Environmental Planning, MIT, and Director, Public Disputes Program and Visiting Professor, Program on Negotiation, Harvard Law School.
<http://www.lawrencesusskind.com/>

Planning with Complexity: An introduction to collaborative rationality for public policy. Judith E. Innes and David E. Booher (Routledge 2010). Paperback \$29.95. 256 pages.
ISBN: 9780415779326

Judith E. Innes is professor of city and regional planning at the University of California, Berkeley. She holds a Ph.D. from MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning and an undergraduate degree in English from Harvard University. David E. Booher is a planner and consultant in collaborative policy, an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Public Policy and Administration at California State University, Sacramento, and a part time instructor at the University of California, Berkeley. He holds Master degrees in political science from Tulane University and in planning from the University of Tennessee. ■

JOB ADS

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Qualifications include a Master's degree in urban planning, environmental sciences, economics, public policy, or equivalent experience (such as policy director for labor or advocacy organization). Knowledge and experience working on land use planning policies and programs (for example inclusionary zoning implementation, analysis of planned land use alternatives, EIR and CEQA review) and climate change policies and action programs (for example, development of climate change actions plans). Hands-on experience in policymaking, advocacy, implementation, or evaluation at varying levels of government (for example, local, regional, state, and national). Capacity to utilize a wide array of research methods (for example, Internet searches, public information requests, government reports, telephone inquiries, and key informant interviews). Demonstrated ability to effectively communicate policy analysis and research results, and develop conclusions and persuasive arguments for individuals outside the organization, as appropriate.

Demonstrated experience developing and leading policy campaigns and/or programs focused on environmental, social, and/or economic justice. Strong commitment to environmental, social, and economic justice issues. High level of proven leadership and ability to manage complex tasks in a timely and professional manner. Excellent written and verbal communication skills. Ability to work well under tight deadlines and in a team environment.

For a more complete description, [click here](#).

Email your cover letter and résumé, AS ATTACHMENTS, to ClimatePolicy@urbanhabitat.org.

Urban Habitat is an equal opportunity employer. People of color are strongly encouraged to apply.

(continued on next page)

Notes on California high-speed rail

A "trio of plans" for San José HSR station area. On March 28th "in the glittering capital of Silicon Valley, big ideas were atomized into a thousand Post-it notes. About 50 people showed up at San José city hall for the second in a series of workshops designed to give public input on the city's next big design project. Pierluigi Oliverio, whose City Council district will become the pre-eminent transportation hub in Northern California if the BART extension to San José and the state's plan for high-speed rail happen, told the crowd, 'We're looking for the big ideas, the brainstorming, the vision.' That's exactly what he—along with architects, design consultants, and city staff—got. 'Connectivity' was the buzzword of the day. People seemed to yearn for a pedestrian-friendly 'urban district' connecting the new transit and entertainment hub to downtown. The designs that were presented focused on a core area covering about 240 acres around the Diridon railway station. Almost everyone wanted a European-style train station that would be 'iconic' in design yet not cost too much." —Bruce Newman, "[Eager citizen planners descend on San Jose City Hall to dream up ideas around Diridon Station](#)," *Mercury News*, March 27, 2010.

Caltrain broke, on track to demise. While Peninsulans argue about whether to allow high speed rail unless it goes underground, Caltrain—their century-old passenger rail system from San Francisco to Gilroy—is going under. Unlike most other rail systems, Caltrain has no independent, dedicated funding source. "Caltrain's financial state has long been declining. The agency has lost \$10 million in funding from the state each of the past three years." The most likely result is that train service will be cut to commute hours only by mid-2011. On April 1st, "Caltrain CEO Mike Scanlon told the agency's board of directors 'there's a possibility this railroad could go away.' Officials stopped short of saying they expected to close the railroad, which has been carrying passengers since 1904, but [called] into question the operator's ability to survive. Scanlon said the agency's business model is simply not sustainable." —Mike Rosenberg, "[Caltrain goes broke, will likely wipe out weekend, night, and midday trains](#)," *Mercury News*, April 2, 2010.

But HSR will move ahead. "Rail authority Deputy Director Jeff Barker said although there are plenty of benefits to sharing the corridor with Caltrain, the state can still build its high-speed railroad should Caltrain shut down or drastically cut its operations. Barker said it would be theoretically possible to upgrade the existing Caltrain corridor and use it for high-speed trains if Caltrain folds. Such a

(continued on next page)

URBAN HABITAT, Oakland

Coordinator, Social Equity Caucus (SEC)

Salary commensurate with experience

Open until filled

Full time position with full benefits. Reports to the Director of Education and Coalition-Building.

Urban Habitat's Social Equity Caucus (SEC) Coordinator leads and coordinates all aspects of the Bay Area SEC. He/she works with a diverse group of organizations (community-based organizations, intermediaries, policy groups, government, labor, and youth groups) to promote the development and implementation of a regional vision for social equity. The SEC Coordinator organizes and facilitates quarterly meetings to advance the goals of the SEC. He/she is also responsible for increasing and retaining participation in the SEC throughout the nine Bay Area counties and coordinating relevant training for all SEC members. A thorough understanding of a variety of environmental justice issues, including workforce and economic development, housing, transportation, and land use, and their impacts on historically disenfranchised communities is necessary. The SEC Coordinator facilitates the SEC Steering Committee and must be able to work collaboratively with UH staff in a team environment to ensure that programs and/or priority campaigns are integrated and aligned with UH's mission.

Qualifications include a Master's degree or equivalent experience in urban planning, community development, or related field with at least three years of experience coordinating activities for multi-issue, multi-sector coalitions or membership based organizations. Excellent written and public speaking skills. Demonstrated ability to effectively engage with grassroots organizations, elected officials, and decision-makers as well as an ability to build partnerships and relationships with key campaign players. Demonstrated experience working with low-income communities of color, preferably in the San Francisco Bay Area. Capacity to establish goals and priorities along with the ability to manage multiple projects to achieve deadlines. A team player who works well with others as well as independently. Proficient in Microsoft Office with graphics applications experience and familiarity with online publishing systems and software.

For a more complete description, [click here](#).

Email your cover letter and résumé, AS ATTACHMENTS, to SECcoordinator@urbanhabitat.org.

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Notes on California high-speed rail
(continued from previous page)

scenario could prevent the expansion of the corridor, thereby eliminating the possibility of property-taking, which has contributed heavily to concerns over the project among Peninsula communities. He said the point of high-speed rail is to take passengers quickly from one metropolitan area to another, which in the case of California means connecting the Bay Area to Los Angeles. If the bullet trains were to stop at several stations from San Francisco to San Jose—Caltrain stops at 19 stations each weekday—the trip to Southern California would take too long and cease to be competitive with air travel.” —Mike Rosenberg, “[Caltrain or not, high-speed rail chugs ahead](#),” *Mercury News*, April 6, 2010.

Peninsula Rail Program releases Context Sensitive Solutions

Toolkit. The Peninsula Rail Program (PRP), a partnership between Caltrain and the California High-Speed Rail Authority, has released its Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) toolkit. The toolkit provides an opportunity for greater public participation in the design and implementation of high-speed train service and the proposed Caltrain modernization project in the San Francisco to San José corridor. The CSS toolkit is a core component of the community engagement process. It offers processes and formats for cities and communities to communicate with the project team to shape desirable, feasible, and achievable solutions for both projects. The toolkit will be an essential part of the development and evaluation of project alternatives, which will take place over the next 18 months through the environmental review process. The CSS toolkit website provides reference documents and two exercises (mapping context and grade separations/vertical options). More information and exercises will be added to the toolkit over the life of the project, and all will be available on the PRP website

http://www.caltrain.com/peninsularailprogram_csstoolkit.html.

Planners and citizens can get involved with the future of rail transit in the Caltrain corridor by completing the evaluation worksheets provided in the toolkit and submitting them to the PRP (prp@caltrain.com). You can also request an e-mail news subscription for the PRP by sending e-mail to prp@caltrain.com. At present there is no deadline for the public to submit comments via CSS.

Trains and brains made in China. California's High Speed Rail Authority is looking to China and six other countries with money and expertise for a partner to help engineer and pay for the \$43 billion project. “China—which is moving rapidly to connect almost all of its provincial capitals with bullet trains—is offering not just to

(continued on next page)

Planners seeking employment

APA California Northern wants potential employers to know about urban, regional, and environmental planners who are unemployed and available. Members of Northern Section APA can post a brief ad here (67 words maximum). Ads for the June issue must be received no later than 5 PM Wednesday, May 12th, at Editor, *Northern News*, knoxnaph@gmail.com.

Land Planner/CEQA/Project Management.

Over 25 years experience. Previous employers: City of Alameda (17 years), Alachua County Florida (3 years), Pasadena Texas (5 years), San Joaquin County (4 years). MS Environmental Management, University of San Francisco, BA Inter-American Studies, BA Human Ecology. Contact comstockeliason@yahoo.com or (510) 483-1666.

Land Planner/Urban Designer. 9 years experience in project entitlement and neighborhood and commercial layout, specific plans, and graphics. Part- or full-time, flexible availability. Recent Employers: MacKay and Soms, Pleasanton (3 years); Randall Planning and Design, Walnut Creek (2 years). Salary history on request. AICP, LEED AP. Master in City Planning, MIT. BS, Planning and Development, USC. Contact kelsey_moldenke@yahoo.com.

Land Planning & Entitlements; Advance Planning/General Plans; Community Planning/Specific Plans; CEQA; LAFCo.

25 years experience. Recent employers: Arnaiz Development Co. Inc., 6 years; City of Stockton, 5 years; County of Sacramento, 14 years. Salary history upon request. MA and BA Geography, California State University, Fresno. Contact ttruskowski@comcast.net or (831) 915-1980.

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Notes on California high-speed rail (continued from previous page)

build the 465-mile rail line from San Francisco to Los Angeles but also to help finance its construction. China's rail ministry has an international reputation for speed and low costs, and is opening 1,200 miles of high-speed rail routes this year alone. The Chinese government also has signed a cooperation agreement with General Electric. Japan, Germany, South Korea, Spain, France, and Italy have also approached California's High Speed Rail Authority. The seven countries have each signed agreements to team up with the rail authority as potential investors and become the brains behind California's bullet trains. The agency has made no decisions on whose technology to choose, and any deal with a partner is years away."

—*Mercury News* wire reports, "[California searches abroad for partners before saying all aboard on high speed rail](#)," April 8, 2010.

Also see Keith Bradsher, "[China is eager to bring high-speed rail expertise to the US](#)," *The New York Times*, April 8, 2010.

Robert Cruickshank, writing in the [California High Speed Rail Blog](#) on April 9th said, "It really shouldn't have to come to this. Our anti-tax, anti-government spending policies are turning California into a Third World state. We ought to build and operate HSR entirely with public funds. But since that doesn't seem likely, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's public-private partnership policies have created an open door for China to get involved. Given the compelling logic for both China and the CHSRA to take this proposal seriously, we California HSR supporters will have to take it seriously as well—and assess it closely and critically to ensure it is in our best interest." (Ed. Note. My parents bought me my first train set 70 years ago, and it was made in China.)



Siemens Velaro China in Tianjin station (Wikimedia Commons)

Northern California roundup

Change? In Berkeley? “Downtown Berkeley could be getting a major makeover. But first the city’s leaders and residents will have to come to terms on how they want that facelift to proceed. Obtaining that consent will be no easy task. The Council approved an earlier version of [Mayor Tom] Bates’s downtown plan last summer, only to see a citizens coalition collect 9,200 signatures to force a referendum. The new blueprint calls for a handful of taller buildings and greater population density, especially around the city’s Bay Area Rapid Transit station. It would allow five buildings taller than the current height limit of 75 feet—half as many tall buildings as were permitted in the original plan. ‘Twenty percent to 25 percent of the people here are against any change whatsoever to anything,’ Mr. Bates said in a [mid-March] interview.” —Daniel Weintraub, **“A new Berkeley plan, but still old concerns,”** *The New York Times*, March 21, 2010.

A quarter (38) of the 147 local jurisdictions in Northern Section now have certified housing elements. California jurisdictions along the north coast and in the San Francisco and Monterey Bay areas were required to adopt updated housing elements in 2009. Congratulations to those newly added to HCD’s list of **communities with certified housing elements** as of April 13, 2010: CAPITOLA, FOSTER CITY, SAN MATEO, SANTA ROSA, SCOTTS VALLEY, and SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO. Previously certified jurisdictions in the Northern Section are Contra Costa, Del Norte, and Sonoma counties and the cities of Arcata, Campbell, Cloverdale, Dixon, Fairfield, Fort Bragg, Fremont, Gonzales, Greenfield, Healdsburg, Hillsborough, Hollister, Lakeport, Marina, Monterey, Napa, Oakley, Petaluma, Portola Valley, San Carlos, San José, San Ramon, Soledad, Suisun City, Sunnyvale, St. Helena, Walnut Creek, Windsor, and Yountville.

As previously reported in Northern News (**April**, page 16, “Pleasanton housing cap violates law”), an Alameda County Superior Court judge “struck down voter-approved housing caps in the City of Pleasanton and ordered the city to zone more land to accommodate the city’s fair share of housing. The ruling ... applies only to one city. Unless the case is appealed and a Court of Appeal publishes a similar decision, no legal precedent for any other city has been established. Still,

the ruling ... emboldens affordable housing advocates, and it may portend future skirmishes as regional planning imperatives continue to take hold in California. I strongly suspect that many of the cities dodging the housing law are hoping Pleasanton does not appeal [the judge’s] decision because a similar ruling by an appellate court could establish a precedent that those cities don’t want to see.” —Paul Shigley, **“Regional Planning scores victory over local control in Pleasanton,”** *California Planning & Development Report*, March 26, 2010.

NUMMI shutdown a blow to up to 25,000 workers. The NUMMI plant in Fremont closed April 1st, putting “4,700 people out of work [and sending] some of its suppliers scrambling to create new markets and products. Alameda County, which stands to lose more jobs than any other county, hired a San Ramon consulting company to assess its NUMMI suppliers and devise a plan to help them stay in business. The study concluded that only 2 of the 13 companies surveyed were diversified and innovative enough to survive NUMMI’s closing. But six or seven others might survive if they received money to help them restructure. [If they] succeed, they and their products will reflect the new face of manufacturing in the Bay Area. In the decades after World War II, the region was filled with factories producing cars, trucks, and heavy machinery. That gave way in the 1980s and ’90s to plants making computers and printers. Those production lines have moved out of state or overseas, and most Bay Area manufacturers now produce small component parts or offer engineering, design, and production services.” —Frances Dinkelspiel, **“Closing of auto plant forces suppliers to scramble,”** *The New York Times*, March 26, 2010.

In a related development, the federal government, through the Commerce Department, has awarded \$330,000 to the city of Fremont “for studies on how to redevelop the 370-acre site of the former NUMMI auto plant, or decide if the plant should be torn down.” The city council discussed the matter on April 13th and expects to hire consultants in June and have studies completed by 2011. (Associated Press, “Fremont getting federal money for NUMMI study,” *Mercury News*, April 10, 2010.)

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Ghost fleet to shrink. “After years of dispute and delay, the federal government has said it will remove a decaying armada from the San Francisco Bay estuary that has shed toxic substances into the water for decades. The U.S. Maritime Administration settled a lawsuit on March 30th and agreed to remove most of the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet, known as the ‘ghost fleet’ from Suisun Bay. The 20 ships in the poorest condition will be removed by September 2012, and the entire mothball fleet will be gone in seven years. Some of the removals have already begun, with four ships taken out since last November. In all, 52 ships will be recycled at various yards by September 2017.” —“[Ships to be removed from Suisun Bay](#),” KCBS.com, March 31, 2010. Listen to reporter Dave Padilla ([audio](#)).

More: “Studies by the administration have suggested the old warships have dumped more than 20 tons of copper, lead, zinc, and other metals into the estuary, a critical

habitat for a number of endangered species. Still, cleaning up the damage that has already been done is impossible, as Suisun Bay is a tidal environment, so the paint that has peeled off the ships is now mixed in with sediments throughout the bay. The federal agency plans to keep more than a dozen of the ships anchored in the bay that are in better shape or still considered useful, including the iconic battleship USS Iowa that once served as transport to President Franklin D. Roosevelt.” —“[Rotting ships to be removed from Suisun Bay](#),” Jason Dearen, Associated Press, March 31, 2010.



Mothball Fleet, Suisun Bay. Ingrid Taylar, Wikimedia Commons ■

What others are saying

Truth in comics. “Leadership is the art of trading imaginary things in the future for real things today.” —Scott Adams in *Dilbert*, March 31, 2010.

“Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet. Author Bill McKibben talked with Kai Ryssdal (*Marketplace*, *NPR*) on April 13th about his new book, why he chose that title, and what we have to do to cope with how we’ve changed our planet.” Here are some excerpts:

Ryssdal: “Environmentalist and author Bill McKibben says it’s already too late to prevent global warming. What we have to do now is find a way to cope with our new reality.”

McKibben: “We really have built a new planet. This earth that we live on now has 5 percent more moisture in the atmosphere than the one 50 years ago. Its oceans are turning steadily acid. We’re seeing dramatic increases both in terms of drought and deluge. This is a different world. We need to do two things: One, put a price on carbon so that we really begin to wean ourselves aggressively from fossil fuel. Even when we do that, we’d be very wise to reexamine our economic life. Stop thinking constantly about expansion and start thinking more about security. What economists have failed to realize from the beginning is that the economy is a subset of something else, and that ‘something else’ is the natural world. There comes a point in which infinite growth no longer works. This is the moment finally when those limits are at hand.” [Click here](#) to listen to the entire story, “A new reality for living on ‘eaarth’,” on National Public Radio’s “Marketplace.”

I stopped buying gas at Valero when I learned that Valero Energy Corporation and at least one other Texas oil company have contributed heavily to a ballot initiative that would halt the implementation of AB 32, which was signed into law in 2006. The ballot initiative—which also is backed by gubernatorial candidate Meg Whitman—“would prevent the law’s taking effect until

unemployment in California falls to 5.5 percent or lower for four consecutive quarters. The state’s current unemployment rate is 12.6 percent. The average statewide unemployment rate in 2006 was 4.9 percent. Governor Schwarzenegger has said he considers the climate change law one of the signal achievements of his administration and wants to see it put in place. Valero has also been active in opposing federal cap-and-trade regulations. In response to the climate bill passed by the House last June, Valero organized a ‘Voices for Energy’ campaign against the bill and placed signs at its gas stations around the country depicting Uncle Sam warning drivers that the legislation would increase gasoline prices.” —John M. Broder and Clifford Krauss, [“Texas oil firms oppose California climate law,”](#) *The New York Times*, April 8, 2010.

“Many sectors will prosper under the greenhouse gas limits. California’s overall economy will not suffer, and many parts of it will prosper under the state’s landmark global warming law, according to an analysis by the California Air Resources Board that rebuts an industry-led ballot effort to suspend the regulations.” The CARB report was released March 24th. “‘This shows we can implement the law and that growth in the California economy will be large and unabated,’ said board Chairwoman Mary D. Nichols, who acknowledged that ‘shifting the economy away from fossil fuels and toward more renewable energy means that some businesses, including green technology, will benefit, while others will see their costs go up.’ A group that includes the California Chamber of Commerce, the California Manufacturers & Technology Assn. and various companies issued a report ahead of CARB’s release saying that implementing the climate law could cost the state 485,000 jobs by 2020, a sharp contrast to the air board’s finding that the law would yield a net increase of 10,000 jobs.” —Margot Roosevelt, [“Climate law won’t hurt California economy, report says,”](#) *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 2010. ■

Go ahead for downtown Berkeley eco-plaza

By Sven Eberlein and Jane Wardani

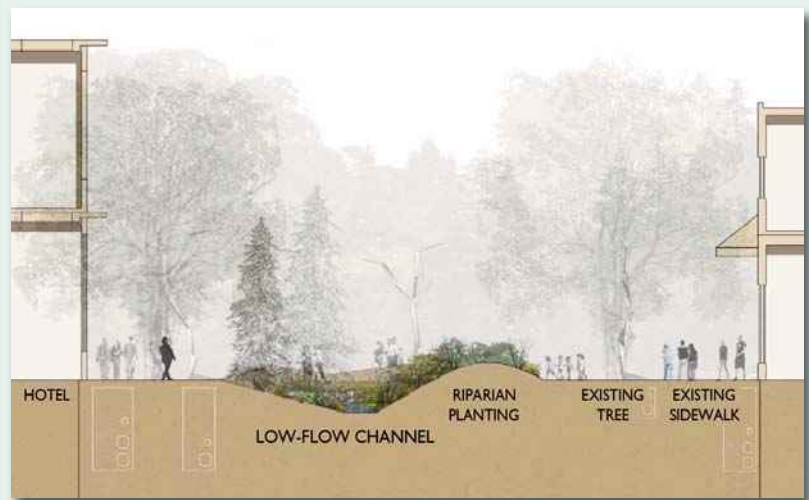
On March 23, the Berkeley City Council endorsed a decades-old citizens' proposal for a pedestrian plaza on Center Street downtown. Having successfully obtained community buy-in at every major Berkeley planning process since 1997, the wheels are now in motion to daylight a portion of Strawberry Creek and create a pedestrian-oriented gathering space integrated with local businesses and upcoming projects, such as the Berkeley Art Museum. Within the realities of California's ballooning population, climate change and land use regulations, and available green technologies, the project provides a multi-functional urban model emphasizing place-making, pedestrianism, transit use, and "low-impact design" (LID) stormwater interventions.

The eco-plaza is proposed along the main pedestrian thoroughfare—and key opportunity site—between Downtown Berkeley BART station and the UC Berkeley campus. The project, it is hoped, will attract funding for its myriad social, environmental, economic, and infrastructure benefits to Berkeley's residents and visitors for generations to come. Project proponents Ecocity Builders, an ecological planning, design, and development nonprofit, and Citizens for a Strawberry Creek Plaza, a grassroots community group in Berkeley, suggest the project could become one of the greenest corridors in the U.S. "This visionary proposal will not only help revitalize our downtown but will bring nature into the heart of our city and serve as a model for the region and the world," said councilmember Jesse Arreguín, one of the sponsors of the city council resolution that directed staff to move forward with the project.

What gave the project a green light was the persuasive design approach by award-winning landscape architect Walter J. Hood, Jr., ASLA, commissioned by Ecocity Builders to design the plaza in 2007. His recent work includes San Francisco's de Young Museum gardens and Oakland's Lafayette Square Park. "Hood fuses ecological symbolism and smart urbanism," wrote [John King in the San Francisco Chronicle](#) about the Center Street design. "He understands that a seductive urban space can be a catalyst that makes the future come alive." For Richard Register, Ecocity Builders' president, "the future" looks far less like the drab and anonymous concrete jungles of the last five decades and more like the vital urban habitats that will link commercial, service, and cultural hubs in proximity to creeks, greenways, and urban agriculture. Hood was able to engage people's imaginations to see ways to connect humans and the natural world. That won support from residents, businesses, and city officials.

Hood emphasized that the plaza would provide opportunities for diverse users. "It's good to touch water, but it's also good to have lunch or have a direct path to hurry to class."

The final three design strategies, of more than 30 initial schemes, reintroduce Strawberry Creek as a natural living system while accommodating planning and code requirements, such as access for emergency and delivery vehicles. Hood's design would divert a small volume of water from Strawberry Creek to flow by gravity through Center Street in a series of water features, including a dissipation pool and low flow channel with naturalized or native plantings, before reentering the existing stormwater system at Shattuck Avenue. A pedestrian plaza with porous pavers would weave through the water features, over an underground stormwater storage cistern.



Cross-section of Center Street at low-flow channel

Strawberry Creek Plaza demonstrates how cities can not only reduce their carbon footprint but also nurture their ecological health, and that sound ecological design can benefit all stakeholders and boost the local economy. Among its multiple benefits, the project:

- restores the creek and watershed's ecological and hydrological functions;
- reduces air pollution and CO₂ emissions;
- attracts visitors and boosts retail and hospitality;
- creates a community gathering space;
- provides a sense of identity for downtown ("placemaking");
- offers public spaces for cultural and artistic expression;
- brings new business and investment to the area; and
- inspires members of the community to steward the ecosystem of which they are a part.

Ecological urban design and planning is more than just a good idea; it is rapidly becoming a necessity for cities to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. For more than a decade, planners, designers, and the Berkeley community have met and reasoned together to make vision a reality and take a pivotal step toward becoming a model ecocity.

Sven Eberlein is a freelance writer and ecocity advocate living in San Francisco. He blogs about urban and other types of ecology at <http://svenworld.wordpress.com>. Jane Wardani is development and projects associate with [Ecocity Builders](#), Oakland. ■

NORTHERN SECTION CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Planning for Healthy Places with Health Impact Assessments. Now through Tuesday, June 30, 2010.

A how-to guide for conducting health impact assessments (HIAs) developed by the American Planning Association and the National Association of County & City Health Officials and sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This free online course—available through June 30, 2010—will explain the value of and the steps involved in conducting an HIA. To participate, visit

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

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APRIL

4/30

CPF's fourth annual Sustainability Walking Tour.

9 AM–4 PM. Meet at San José city hall, 200 E. Santa Clara St, by the water feature in front of the dome. Lunch on your own, Noon–1 PM (restaurants nearby). Learn about San Jose's award-winning "Green Vision" and tour the award winning city hall and civic center, downtown commercial historic district, theater arts and entertainment district, and the historic Diridon Station area. Cosponsored by APA California – Northern. \$100 for APA members, \$135 nonmembers, \$35 students. To confirm your space, contact Theda Justiniani, theda@mintierharnish.com or (916) 446-0522. Onsite registration starts at 9 AM. Welcome and context presentation start promptly at 9:15 AM. For more information, visit www.californiaplanningfoundation.org.

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MAY						
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MAY

- 5/6** **APA California – Northern, Regular Board Meeting.** 6 PM–9 PM, PMC, 500–12th Street, Suite 240, Oakland. RSVP to Hanson Hom at hhom@ci.sunnyvale.ca.us.
- 5/14** **2010 Awards Celebration, APA California – Northern.** 6:30 PM, Sir Francis Drake Hotel, 450 Powell Street, San Francisco. For further information, [click here](#) to download the flier. To reserve via PayPal by May 12, [click here](#). Or contact the Awards Co-Directors: Eileen Whitty, ewhitty@ebmud.com, or Andrea Ouse at Andrea.ouse@lsa-assoc.com.
- 5/15** **AICP Exam Prep Workshop.** 10 AM–3 PM, San José State University. To register, contact Don Bradley, dr.donbradley@comcast.net or (650) 592-0915.
- 5/19** **APA Young Planners Group Mixer.** 6 PM–8 PM, Santa Cruz location TBA. Free; no-host food and drink. Network with your fellow planners and get involved in YPG events for 2010. For more information and to RSVP, contact Natalie de Leon or Lindsey Virdeh at norapaypg@gmail.com or (408) 313-2662 or (909) 204-1886. Be sure to visit us on [facebook](#).

JUNE						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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JUNE

- 6/17** **Walking Tour/Mission Dolores Neighborhood.** 4–5 PM. Learn about the Mission, the neighborhood, the lake that vanished, and the spot many consider the birthplace of SF. Tour leader: Tam Tran—transportation planner, APA member, and volunteer guide for San Francisco City Guides. Free to APA members. Space is limited. Tour will end with no-host networking from 5–7 PM at Elixir, 3200 16th Street near Guerrero (two blocks from 16th Street BART). Come by even if you can't make the tour. For meeting location and RSVP, contact Danny Serrano at serranochile@hotmail.com.
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- 6/27–6/30** **Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) 2010 Western District Annual Meeting.** 8 AM–5 PM, Palace Hotel, 2 New Montgomery Street, San Francisco. Come learn about the latest technical innovations and state of the art practices in transportation planning and engineering in the Western States at this annual conference. In addition to technical sessions, there will be focused training sessions and an exhibition hall. Sponsorship and vendor opportunities are available, as well as one-day, group-discount, exhibit-hall-only, and full registrations. For more information, go to www.westernite.org. ■