



NORTHERN NEWS



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Northern
Making Great Communities Happen

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A hot degree? Maybe not

By Theresa M. Alster, Associate Editor, Northern News

Getting a degree in planning is like having one in journalism: graduates end up finding a job outside of the field due to scarcity and stiff competition. According to *U.S. News and World Report*, planning is one of the top “50 best careers” for 2011. *American City.org* touted planning as not just a good career choice. “The plain truth is that urban planning is hot.” (<http://bit.ly/e92UFN>)

Two fellow masters of urban planning—fairly recent graduates—have not felt that heat. Natalie de Leon graduated in December 2008; Riad El-Bdour, the following May. Both worked city internships while in graduate school as required, hoping they might land a job.



While interning at a mid-size South Bay city, de Leon thought the start to her planning career was set. “When I signed up, everyone whispered in my ear and tapped me on the shoulder and said, ‘You are going to be great; everyone who has interned here has gotten a job.’ I had that idea in my head—which wasn’t a good one” because she didn’t look hard for a job. Unfortunately, the city had budget problems and let all of the interns go early.

Afterwards, Natalie took some temp jobs and was very pleased when she landed a six-month internship with the City of San José. Next, she found a job at AmeriCorps. The pay was low but the job had similarities to planning.

“After a year, I said, ‘Oh, my God, I cannot support myself on this amount.’” Working with AmeriCorps, however, has been a helpful experience. “I’ve been exposed to a lot of organizations and now realize that planners work in a lot of jobs that are indirectly planning related—and are happy,” she said. “I have been expanding the scope of what I am looking for. I’m also talking to people more. I used to be a little embarrassed admitting I was unemployed.”

“I’ve come to terms with it,” she said. “There are a lot of people in the same place as I am. They say, ‘Hi, I’m so and so, I have this degree and that degree. Oh, by the way, I need a job.’” She is grateful to be employed and has warmed up to admitting her situation as well. “I’m looking for a

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(Directory continues, next page)

Hot degree? Maybe not *(continued from previous page)*

job and I sort of have one now. But I need another one," she explained. "I'm getting more comfortable with that."

Applying for jobs online was demoralizing for her. "I went to government and city websites; it was impersonal and meaningless," she said. De Leon has all but abandoned the city focus because it takes so long to get any response. "I was talking to another planner last night and we both were saying how we got the same rejection letter six months after applying for a Bay Area city job," she said. "Glad we weren't holding our breath. I will still apply but I'm not relying on this." She had a few callbacks, took a test in southern California, and had an interview or two. "All previous jobs have been through people I know," she said. "Going to a cold interview is traumatizing."

After some self-reflection, de Leon realized that maybe plan A won't work and decided to apply experience and passion for a better fit. "I didn't want to get so far away from planning that I couldn't come back," she said. "I wanted to be a planner. I still want to be a planner. At the same time, the clock is ticking," she said. "Should I abandon this? I am grateful for recent interviews."

Lately, she has been focusing on what she wants to do. Project management with a nonprofit looks like a possibility. "I will be more proactive and go out of my comfort zone—find out what would be a good fit," she said. Encouragingly, a hopeful possibility arose. "Sure enough, two planners I know sent me jobs to apply for in February. I was called in for first and second interviews. I think if it doesn't work out, I've had a confidence boost. The job can't be so far off."



As a fellow student of de Leon, Riad El-Bdour saw planning as the perfect career change. After serving in the military and working as a math teacher in a high school with a high drop-out rate, he wanted to pursue something satisfying. He sold his house in Sacramento to cover the cost of graduate school.

With the two year anniversary of graduation approaching, that hasn't happened. El-Bdour has worked a few internships, edited sales proposals for a start-up software company, and spent seven months working for the U.S. Census. There was also an internship for the City of Fremont, but the rest of his planning work has been unpaid.

The Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning is one of his current efforts. A group of around 30 residents hope to influence the city to more sustainable planning. In a year and a half, they have made a partnership with politicians, and members frequently speak at city council and planning commission meetings. Riad also helps with letter writing and offering advice to other members when needed. The Coalition recently held an informational event, "Building Green, Today and Tomorrow,"

(continued on next page)

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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* 10 times each year in PDF for the exchange of planning ideas and information. Current and back issues are available for download at <http://bit.ly/9YpPxS>. Entirely the effort of volunteers, the *News* is written and produced by and for urban planners in Northern California. Circulation (downloads per issue) averages 6,000.

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.

Deadlines for submitting materials for inclusion in *Northern News* range from the 12th to the 16th of the month prior to publication. The 2011 schedule can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/dHlgyM>.

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Hot degree? Maybe not *(continued from previous page)*

co-sponsored by Google, the U.S. Green Building Council, the City of Mountain View, APA Northern Section, and the Greenbelt Alliance.

Riad was happy to help with an event to introduce the coalition approach to a small group of Santa Clara residents looking to create a similar community based planning group. He also volunteers his time as an usher for the Mountain View Center for Performing Arts and helps with occasional community tree plantings.

Riad dedicates at least two full days a week to nothing but applying for jobs. "I have to be open to doing a lot more things. They always want more experience than I have," he said. "So I'm getting more involved in communities."

El-Bdour thinks that finding a paying planning job might be something he may have to let go. "I am seriously debating on going back to school and working on a teaching credential," he said. "I know I can find a job as a math teacher. That may be backtracking, but I will be picky selecting a school next time around," he said. "Before, I was grateful for having a job."

Regarding his job hunting, no bites yet. "I've lost count of the number," he said. "Usually I hear absolutely nothing. There was a planning tech job with the City of Vallejo, part-time. I spent about two days answering the supplemental questions. Within two hours, I got a rejection email," he said. "I was so frustrated about all of the effort. It was for 30 hours a week and required only an AA degree. Sometimes maybe it's better that I don't hear anything. A lot of experienced planners are applying for the same stuff I am. I saved enough money in the past so I can be underemployed longer than many. I'm not ready to give up on it yet."

Recently retired San José State Urban Planning Professor Earl Bossard wrote via email that a planning degree can be utilized in many fields. "One of the great advantages of a planning degree is that planning students usually develop professional skills enabling them to work with (bring together) persons with different perspectives and in the process often produce reasonable solutions to difficult problems," he explained. "While planners have traditionally used their skills to deal with land-use development problems, these skills can be used to deal with a wide variety of issues faced by community and public service organizations, as well as businesses."

Both de Leon and El-Bdour seem to have followed Bossard's advice by looking at other career options. Maybe the degree will serve to provide a broader scope of possibilities until planning really is a "hot" career again. Considering the current state of local government budgets, it may be a long wait.

Theresa M. Alster serves on the City of Campbell planning commission. She holds a Master of Urban Planning and a Bachelor of Journalism, both from San José State University. She can be reached at theresamalster@gmail.com.

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Lorraine Weiss

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

By Hanson Hom, AICP



The redevelopment debate. The harsh realities of the economic recession have severely impacted planning programs throughout the state. The most evident impact thus far is the curtailment of planning programs—including important advance planning and AB32/SB375 initiatives—and reduction of staff by many local governments. With the record State budget deficit, local governments are bracing for additional impacts despite the passage of several state propositions to safeguard local revenues, the latest being Proposition 22 passed in 2010. Redevelopment agencies—an important community and economic development tool in California for over 60 years—also have been targeted by the governor.

Because the issue is critical to the future of urban planning in California, the APA California Board voiced its concerns over the proposal to eliminate redevelopment agencies (see www.calapa.org/en/art/374/). “The Governor’s proposal to eliminate redevelopment agencies has presented an opportunity to discuss the important activities of redevelopment agencies that are very much intermingled with core planning functions and goals. These key planning functions and goals need to be protected and are vital to redevelopment even if the financing mechanisms change.”

While APA California opposes the elimination of redevelopment agencies, emphasis is on advocating alternative mechanisms to replace the important goals and functions of redevelopment agencies. APA California opines that “eliminating important redevelopment tools without the development of alternate regulatory and financing tools for local agencies to use in their place will make it even harder for local agencies to address California’s critical planning, affordable housing, SB 375, and economic development goals.”

Cumulatively, tax increment funds from California’s redevelopment agencies are estimated to be \$5.2 billion in FY 2011-12 according to the State Legislative Analyst’s Office. Many argue that this dedicated revenue source diverts property tax funding needed for essential State operations, city and county governments, K-14 school districts, and special districts. The governor’s latest proposal recognizes existing agency debt obligations and preserves accumulated tax increment funds for affordable housing (20 percent set-aside funds). Therefore, about \$3 billion in redevelopment funds are at stake in the political

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE *(continued from previous page)*

tug-of-war for redistribution, which includes existing “pass-through” funds to school districts, counties, and special districts. The main beneficiary appears to be the State which would receive an additional \$1.7 billion in property tax revenue.

Proponents for eliminating redevelopment agencies point to the lack of accountability and alleged abuses by some agencies that have lured developers to questionable blighted areas with lucrative financial incentives and cost-sharing agreements. Overshadowed in the political dialogue are the positive results of billions of dollars of redevelopment funds that have been earmarked for infrastructure projects and housing/community improvement programs in low-income neighborhoods and blighted commercial districts. In many cases, these urban areas had experienced decades of economic disinvestment and neglect and have benefited immensely from the infusion of redevelopment funds.

I fully endorse APA California’s position on this issue. It is important that planners voice their own perspective—whatever it might be—by contacting California’s legislators on the impact of the governor’s proposal on the future of planning in our state. ■



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Photo by Caroline Teng (Answer on page 9)



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TOD parking redux

March's TOD parking article (*Northern News*, page 1) generated this question on LinkedIn (APA) from Steve Duran, community and economic development director, city of Richmond:

"What does the study consider over-parked? How many spaces for a one-bedroom or studio unit, and how many spaces for a 2 or more bedroom unit?"

Justin Meek responds: The study determined that residential projects near rail stations in Santa Clara County are "over-parked" because, on average, 1.7 spaces per dwelling unit were supplied, while only 1.3 spaces per dwelling unit were actually used. The study did not analyze occupancy rates for different sizes of units (e.g., studios or one-bedroom versus two-plus bedrooms).

That said, co-authors Eduardo Serafin (ITS, UC Berkeley) and Robert Swierk (VTA) and I believe the study results suggest that cities may confidently be able to reduce their parking requirements for TOD residential projects by as much as 25 percent, based on the average parking supply vs. parking demand rates found in the study.

For cities wishing to reduce multifamily residential parking requirements near rail stations and looking for guidance on appropriate parking rates, Eduardo Serafin and I offer the following framework for reducing parking rates at residential TODs.

In order to achieve an average of 1.3 parking spaces/dwelling unit, local jurisdictions may want to consider the following reduced parking rates for TOD residential projects:

- Studio: 0.75 parking space/dwelling unit
- One bedroom: **1.0** parking space/dwelling unit
- Two bedrooms: 1.5 parking spaces/dwelling unit
- More than two bedrooms: **1.75** parking spaces/dwelling unit

Note: Any parking requirement of 2.0 parking spaces/dwelling unit or higher would result in an oversupply of parking for the project.

If a TOD housing project were to have an equal number of studio units, 1-BR, 2-BR, and two-plus-BR units, the above parking rates would yield an average of 1.25 parking spaces/dwelling unit. This result is within the range of the study's findings for TOD sites near VTA and Caltrain stations in the South Bay (average of 1.3 parking spaces used/dwelling unit) and Robert Cervero's 2009 study for TOD sites near BART stations in the East Bay (average of 1.2 parking spaces used/dwelling unit).

Here's another way of presenting post-research input from the study regarding the potential to reduce TOD housing parking requirements in Santa Clara County or the South Bay, with slightly different numbers:

Housing Type	Parking spaces per dwelling unit		
	Typical parking requirements	26% reduction for TOD housing	Reduced parking requirement
Studio unit	1.0	0.26	0.74
One bedroom	1.5	0.39	1.11
Two bedrooms	2.0	0.52	1.48
Two-plus bedrooms	2.5	0.65	1.85

Source: Eduardo C. Serafin, PE, AICP; SJSU DURP Adjunct Lecturer ■

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BOOK REVIEW

New Urban Development: Looking Back to See Forward, by Claude Gruen

Reviewed by Andrew Crabtree

In his book, *New Urban Development*, economist and consultant Claude Gruen provides a rigorous argument for changing current land use planning practices to allow and encourage increased housing development. The basis of his argument is that a broad range of land use regulations, including such diverse items as traditional Euclidean zoning, urban growth boundaries, and inclusionary housing policies, have been developed and intentionally applied to raise housing costs and promote economic segregation. Constraining housing supply through these policies has artificially inflated costs, creating undue barriers to potential homeowners.

Over several decades, rising housing costs led Federal officials, with the goal of maintaining home ownership rates, to gradually reduce their regulation of the mortgage industry, eventually contributing to the recent housing market crash. To regain America's economic vitality, Mr. Gruen suggests that decision makers consider 13 urban policy changes, each intended to help reduce housing costs.

The book is a dense compilation of arguments in support of the overall thesis. These arguments include an exploration of the mechanics of the mortgage default crisis, an in depth review of how land use policies affect housing supply and cost, and a critical history of the evolution of land use regulation.

The latter begins with consideration of the arguments used by Alfred Bettman in *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.* [Supreme Court of the United States, 272 U.S. 365 (1926)], deliberately selected to appeal to a Court known for its conservatism. The author observes how the consequence of this case, a land use regulatory tool intended to protect property values and separate people of different incomes, led to the establishment and consistent application of an exclusionary framework for land use policies in this country. The author provides multiple examples of regulations or statutes, such as California's Proposition 13, that have the effect of pushing up housing prices, and which particularly impact people who aren't already property owners.

Mr. Gruen's analysis of land use regulation and related social trends is conducted from a tightly focused economic perspective. He evaluates several policies—generally considered to serve broader

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BOOK REVIEW

Collaborative Rationality *(continued from previous page)*

purposes—strictly in terms of their economic impact. For example, he describes environmental land use regulations as merely one more tool used by existing home owners to restrict new housing supply in order to raise their property values. In the same vein, he critiques planners' efforts to foster community participation in planning processes as a means for planners to avoid meeting their responsibility to proactively plan for growth. Mr. Gruen argues, in cursory fashion, against several commonly held land use principles, including the belief that housing—and in particular, low-density or “sprawl” development—creates a negative fiscal impact. He then states that most objections to sprawl could be addressed through better infrastructure and land use planning and through better project design.

Mr. Gruen's 13 “Suggested Changes for a Strengthened Economy” are all intended to support housing affordability by establishing a policy framework friendly to housing developers, reducing the costs placed upon those developers, and in some cases transferring those costs to other sources (e.g., taxpayers). In summary, his 13 suggestions are:

1. Plan and zone for housing growth in excess of forecast demand.
2. Provide sufficient land for mixed-use development, including transit-oriented development.
3. Require higher densities (e.g., 12 or 14 dwelling units per acre) for new suburban “sprawl” development.
4. Create finance mechanisms for and build infrastructure to support infill development.
5. Require new development to bear only the net fiscal impacts of providing public services for the project based on existing levels of service.
6. Repair and expand national transportation and communication infrastructure systems, including freeways, to meet consumer demand for mobility and to support economic development.
7. Use taxation—including gas taxes and capture of induced land value increases—to finance infrastructure improvements.
8. Directly subsidize affordable housing production and eliminate “inclusionary” zoning, rent control, or other measures that impose costs on housing developers.

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Answer to "Where in the world?" (Page 5)

Puente de la Mujer ("Woman's Bridge"), Buenos Aires, Argentina, designed by Santiago Calatrava. The single mast with cables suspend a portion of the bridge which rotates 90 degrees to allow water traffic to pass.

Photo by Caroline Teng

BOOK REVIEW

Collaborative Rationality (continued from previous page)

9. Provide tenants displaced by redevelopment with equivalent value rent subsidies.
10. Change tax revenue distribution to make housing a more fiscally desirable land use.
11. Establish private competition and revenue sharing as part of the urban redevelopment process.
12. Reform the mortgage industry.
13. Cultivate public support for well-planned growth.

In summary, Mr. Gruen's book includes numerous, thought-provoking arguments for how land use restrictions on housing production have resulted in negative economic and social impacts, with increasing cumulative impact upon our nation's overall prosperity. While some readers will be dissatisfied with the book's quick dismissal of various established planning principles, such as the negative impacts of urban sprawl, and an often patchy and cumbersome style of argument, others will find his arguments relevant and useful, particularly as an advocacy for a more equitable and affordable supply of housing to accommodate future population growth. The ideas presented by Mr. Gruen merit further discussion and consideration by land use planners seeking to improve the overall quality of life for the local community.

Andrew Crabtree is a senior planner for the City of San José, currently managing the city's comprehensive general plan update, Envision San Jose 2040 (www.EnvisionSJ2040.org). Andrew can be reached at Andrew.Crabtree@sanjoseca.gov

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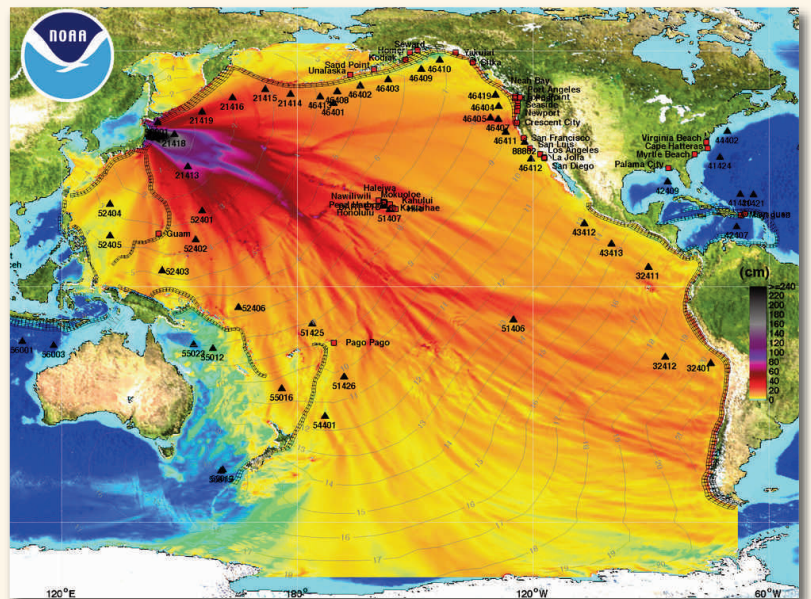
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Northern California roundup

Crescent City harbor devastated. “Visit Crescent City and you see a mural commemorating the 1964 natural disaster [a tsunami] that reshaped this small city near the Oregon border. A 2006 earthquake off the coast of Japan triggered a wave of water that destroyed at least three docks and caused millions of dollars of damage to the area. The Crescent City harbor, which used to be home for up to 238 boats, had enough space for 190 vessels after the 2006 tsunami, which local residents say doesn’t even compare to the latest devastation [which left] next to zero dock spaces intact. Waves also damaged the Santa Cruz harbor, but the damage was most pronounced in this city of 4,000 that lays claim to being the state’s most active commercial fishing port north of Monterey. The 198 slips that were in the harbor until March 11 are for boats that provide livelihoods, with crews of two to four people each. The waterfront’s lone processing plant employs as many as 180 workers during crab season. The blow to the fishing industry occurs in a city where the unemployment rate already is 13 percent.” (Sources: Matt Drange, *Eureka Times-Standard*, March 13, 2011, <http://bit.ly/dLYASf>. John King, “Another tsunami jars Crescent City’s psyche, economy,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 13, 2011, <http://bit.ly/FLCZDy>. Time lapse video at <http://bit.ly/hw92z2> (2 min).



Tsunami energy plot, March 11, 2011. Source: NOAA.

Palo Alto lawsuit tossed. In February, “the city dodged a bullet when a judge threw out a challenge to the below-market-rate housing ordinance. A Superior Court judge did not buy the argument by Classic Communities that the requirement to devote 15 to 25 percent of its project to below-market housing or pay an in-lieu fee equal to 5.4 percent of the price for each market-rate unit sold amounted to an illegal ‘special tax’ against developers. Another claim, that Palo Alto

(continued on next page)

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Northern California roundup *(continued from previous page)*

is 'unlawfully' forcing developers to bear the costs for the city's shortage of affordable housing, was also dismissed. A successful case against the ordinance would have threatened the very foundation of Palo Alto's affordable housing policy, as well as similar programs in many nearby communities. The city faces many hurdles to reach its quota of affordable housing due to the limited land available and high property values." ("Affordable housing dodges a bullet," *Editorial, Palo Alto Weekly*, February 24, 2010, page 14, <http://bit.ly/g8gglz>.)

Thirteen admitted to AICP. Thirty-one California planners were admitted in February to the American Institute of Certified Planners. Please join us in congratulating these new AICP members in APA California's Northern section:

Joshua Channell	Marni F. Moseley
Peter M. Costa	Steve Prosser
Andrew D. Crabtree	Anthony P. Rozzi
Jean E. Eisberg	Laura Saunders
Erica Hess-Mensch	Leigha Schmidt
Melinda Hue	Kristin Vahl
Kevin J. Jackson	

For more information about AICP certification, certification maintenance (CM credits), or advanced specialty certification, see the APA website, <http://www.planning.org/aicp/index.htm>.

For information about APA California Northern's exam preparation workshop or study groups, see Calendar ([page 17](#)) for the dates of upcoming workshops.

Broketown. "Vallejo offers a sneak preview of the latest version of economic disaster. When the foreclosure wave hit, local tax revenue evaporated. The city begged the public-employee unions for pay-cuts—to no avail. In May 2008, Vallejo filed for bankruptcy. The filing drew little national attention; most people were too busy watching banks fail to worry about cities. But while the banks have largely recovered, Vallejo is still in bankruptcy. The police force shrunk from 153 officers to 92. Three of the city's firehouses were closed. Last summer, a fire ravaged a house in one of the city's better neighborhoods; one of the fire trucks came from another town, 15 miles away. Is this America's future?" —Roger Lowenstein, "Broke Town, USA," *The New York Times Magazine*, March 3, 2011, <http://nyti.ms/hUepAb>.

San José and San Francisco—green but emitting. "If per capita carbon emissions in China and India rose to car-happy U.S. levels, global emissions would increase by 127 percent, according to the International Energy Agency. If their emissions stopped at the levels found in hyper-dense Hong Kong, world emissions would go up less than 24 percent. As the Asian economies prosper, the United States should hope that they embrace the skyscraper more than the car, and we should reform our own policies that subsidize sprawl. Even the greenest U.S. metro areas, such as San José and San Francisco, emitted almost 12 times as

(continued on next page)

Onward and upward

Kristine Gaspar was appointed to the Northern Section board as the new North Bay Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Chair for APA California – Northern. She replaces Ladd Miyasaki. Kristine earned her bachelor's and a master's degree from Sonoma State University and is a senior environmental planner at Winzler & Kelly in Santa Rosa.



Janet Palma, MS, AICP, has been appointed to the San Leandro Board of Zoning Adjustment as an at-large member. She is an environmental health technician for the San Francisco Department of Public Health, and principal at J. Palma & Associates. Janet also prepares the high-speed rail column (*HSR notes*) for *Northern News*. ■



LETTERS

Editor:

Tried the *Issuu* version of NN and loved it. But I'm still gonna print it out; I'm not all the way on board with reading from screen. Call me "old school."

Emy Mendoza ■

Northern California roundup *(continued from previous page)*

much carbon as the Chinese metropolitan areas. Hong Kong is one of the richest places on the planet, with incomes roughly comparable to the U.S. and higher than much of Europe. Yet, its per-capita emissions are one-third of those in the U.S. and barely higher than China's today. Singapore is even wealthier, and its emissions are half the levels in the U.S. We should eliminate the mistaken policies that artificially subsidize sprawl. The home mortgage interest deduction induces people to leave urban apartments, which are overwhelmingly rented, and move to suburban homes. Because the deduction scales up with the size of the mortgage, it essentially pays people to buy bigger, more energy-intensive homes." —Edward Glaeser, *The Los Angeles Times*, "Not a carbon copy of the U.S.," *The Korea Herald*, March 3, 2011, <http://bit.ly/eA3dPM>.

Mountain View: keep Caltrain station at TOD. City officials "voted unanimously March 1st to send a letter to the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board asking the Caltrain operator not to bypass the San Antonio station, one of 10 depots the transit agency is threatening to cut from its service to solve a budget deficit. The Crossings townhome development near the station was built with mass transit in mind, the letter says, and the city is reviewing plans to redevelop part of the San Antonio Shopping Center, which also is billed as transit-oriented. The new general plan the city is working on also emphasizes housing near transit centers." —Diana Samuels, "Mountain View officials urge Caltrain to keep San Antonio Station open," *Mercury News*, March 3, 2011, <http://bit.ly/eeWBNF>.

(Ed. Note: *The Crossings* is a 360-unit TOD designed by Calthorpe Associates in 1991 and completed in 1996. In 2002, the American Planning Association at its national conference presented the Outstanding Planning Award for Implementation to the Mountain View Plan for Integrated Transit-oriented Development.) Meanwhile, as a first step to close a \$30 million budget deficit, Caltrain's board of directors declared a fiscal emergency on March 3rd. Board members will decide April 7 which cuts to make, with the possibility of closing up to seven stations between San José and San Francisco by July.

Redwood City to Los Altos. US Rep. Anna Eshoo's Congressional District 14 is the happiest place in the country. "Gallup has been compiling the 2010 results of its daily Gallup-Healthways Well-Being survey, which asked 1,000 randomly selected Americans daily about their quality of life: whether they're smiling, exercising, eating their vegetables, enjoying their jobs, feeling safe walking home alone at night and so on. The results are put into an index that tries to measure the elements of 'the good life.' California's 14th district, one of the highest-income districts in the country that also happens to include most of Silicon Valley, ranks at the top." —Catherine Rampell, "The happiest man in America, annotated," *The New York Times*, March 7, 2011, <http://nyti.ms/hilUA6>. (Ed. Note: By and large, the Bay Area is a pretty happy place. You can see a scalable map of the 2010 results, sorted by Congressional districts at <http://nyti.ms/dJ8Uhy>.) ■

HSR notes

Assembled and reported by Janet Palma, MS, AICP

In the continuing saga of Bay Area High-Speed Rail (HSR) as a potentially history-making project, we find SPUR encouraging smart land-use planning while others question whether HSR is what we need or want. Meanwhile, the deadline has passed for small, disadvantaged, and disabled veteran businesses in California to submit "Expressions of Interest" to the High-Speed Rail Authority to participate in the project. Below are excerpts from recent news on high-speed rail likely to affect Northern California.

January 3. "California cities anticipating the rewards of new high-speed rail stations may fail to reap the full economic and environmental benefits without key land-use planning, according to a SPUR study. For the 26 cities designated as future HSR stops, the new statewide rail system presents a once-in-a-century opportunity to reshape their local economies and set the course for more compact, less automobile-dependent growth. The study, *Beyond the Tracks*, identifies specific land-use planning strategies that will contribute to the success of HSR and help cities, and ultimately California, realize the full potential of the multi-billion-dollar system." (SPUR, "Beyond the Tracks: How smart land-use planning can reshape California's growth," January 3, 2011, <http://bit.ly/gAlFz9>.) "The paper was reviewed, debated, and adopted as official policy by the SPUR Board of Directors on October 20, 2010. *Committee:* Emily Ehlers, Jerry Goldberg, Gabriel Metcalf, Michael Reilly, Paul Sedway, Mike Teitz. *Staff lead:* Egon Terplan."

March 3. "Kent Conrad, the deficit hawk and Democratic chair of the Senate Budget Committee, gave a big endorsement to high-speed rail. Conrad said US infrastructure investment is already way behind where it was in its 1960s heyday, and that's not what needs to be cut to shrink the \$1.5 trillion deficit. Republicans have high-speed rail, and hence California's hopes to build one of the country's biggest systems, high on their target list. 'We're not the Individual States of America,' Conrad said. 'I don't think the test can be. *It's got to be in my state or I'm not going to support its funding.*'" (Carolyn Lochhead, *San Francisco Chronicle*, "High-speed rail draws key ally," March 3, 2011, <http://bit.ly/hRgrog>.)

March 3. "Tired of being a national 'laughingstock' on high-speed rail, a splintered group of San Mateo County cities is joining to form a lobbying effort they hope will put them on equal footing with San Francisco and San José. The officials behind the idea think the county's 12 cities along the Caltrain line can relay their concerns about California high-speed rail to the state and federal governments more easily as a unified group. The problem is that many of the cities don't necessarily agree on many aspects of the massive project. While leaders in Burlingame are fighting to slow down the project, for instance, their neighbors in Millbrae are pushing for the rail line

to come to town as quickly as possible. Yet there is some common ground. San Mateo Public Works Director Larry Patterson recently asked San Mateo County cities for a list of their high-speed rail concerns, and he found each jurisdiction's problems fell into five categories: track alignment, adjacent property impacts, land use and economics, traffic and construction. Patterson, who is leading the coordination between cities, said one goal of the group is to make peace between the various cities, a process that is typically difficult regardless of the issue." (Mike Rosenberg, *Contra Costa Times*, "Peninsula cities face uphill battle in trying to join forces over high-speed rail," March 3, 2011, <http://bit.ly/h15KRa>.)

March 8. "House Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) said his state should not get more money to build a high speed rail there, despite speculation that it stands to gain from Florida's rejection of \$2.4 billion in federal funds. McCarthy, the third-ranking House Republican, said he did not want Florida's rejected rail money to be re-routed to California. 'They don't have enough money to build it now,' he said. State leaders in California had already requested the money when Florida's Gov. Rick Scott first said he would reject the funding [in February], but several senators from northeastern states have also expressed desires that the money be sent to their states. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood has not said where Florida's money would be redirected [while he] maintained his commitment to high-speed rail." (Keith Laing, *The Hill*, "California Congressman doesn't want extra bullet train funds," March 8, 2011, <http://bit.ly/fnCrok>.)

March 9. As we saw in the March issue of *Northern News* regarding Tracy and Pleasanton, some cities seem to want HSR; others fear it will ruin their aesthetics or split their towns. It remains to be seen whether elected federal representatives will support or buck local desires. Central Valley cities continue to grow in population and may be able to exercise clout in pushing HSR forward with the promise of jobs to come. But Central Valley politicians are still wary. Kevin McCarthy, House majority whip (Bakersfield) and Jeff Denham (Fresno/Modesto) are negative on the project. "Allie Brandenburger, a spokesperson for Denham, said 'He believes it could provide jobs but we can't afford to wait until 2020.'" (Casey Miner, *KALW News*, March 9, 2011, via *The other side of the tracks* (Jeff Wood) and *Transportation Nation* ["California's high-speed rail: Census shows the 'train to nowhere' may actually be the train to the boom towns," <http://bit.ly/gp1sG6>].)

Janet Palma, MS, AICP, works in Environmental Health Services for the San Francisco Department of Public Health and is Principal at J. Palma & Associates, an environmental planning concern. She currently serves on the City of San Leandro Board of Zoning Adjustments as the At-Large member. You can contact her at janetpalma@comcast.net. ■

Longtime planner Bert Muhly honored



Colleagues, former and current planning students, planning professors, and siblings, children, and grandchildren filled a banquet room in Santa Clara on March 11 to honor **Louis B. “Bert” Muhly, FAICP**, a granddaddy of California land use and environmental planning.

Speakers included San José State University urban and regional planning chair Dayana Salazar and former chair Don Rothblatt; former students Art Henriques and Scott Lefaver; Bruce Barracco and Bud Carney, among Bert’s students who received their MUPs from SJSU in 1972; and three of Bert’s students at UC Santa Cruz in the 1980s—former Coastal Commission planners Les Strnad and Bill Allayaud, and Pat McCormick, Santa Cruz County LAFCo executive director. All extolled Bert’s smiling demeanor, energy, and loquaciousness, and his influence on the planning profession and on the planning careers of his students.

Muhly received a BS degree in business administration (1948) and a Master of City Planning (1952), both from UC Berkeley. He served as director of planning for Tulare County (3 years), Kern Engineering Corporation (2 years), and Santa Cruz County (1961–70). He was the first Director of the Central Section of the California Chapter of the American Institute of Planners (AIP) and California Chapter president 1966 and 1967.

Muhly began his teaching career in 1970 at SJSU and simultaneously played a significant role in the development and promotion of legislation to protect the California Coast (Proposition 20, the California Coastal Protection Act, 1973). He served eight years on the Santa Cruz city council, 1973–81, including one year as mayor. Muhly has been actively involved in projects for the empowerment of the Nicaraguan people since 1982, and has visited Nicaragua more than 25 times.

Bert’s planning bona fides were summed up during his induction to the AICP College of Fellows in 2000: During “Bert Muhly’s outstanding professional career as an urban and regional planner, innovative university planning educator, leader within his professional organization, and mayor and city council member, he demonstrated great vision, tenacity, courage, and an abiding faith in the power of an informed and active citizenry to effect beneficial change.” ■



Regional Advisory Councils

Monterey Bay. Elizabeth Caraker, AICP. The Monterey Bay RAC supported the efforts of Monterey Bay AEP in organizing their state conference which was held March 6–9 at the Monterey Plaza Hotel. The RAC is working with AEP and the Monterey Unified Air Pollution Control District to organize a workshop on the new methods for determining Air District compliance for local projects.

Peninsula. Surachita Bose, AICP. The Peninsula RAC planned two events:

- A panel discussion, **Land Use and Climate change: A regional and local perspective**, on March 30 in Redwood City, focused on opportunities and constraints associated with climate change legislation, CEQA, and ongoing strategic planning efforts by cities and regional planning agencies in the Bay Area. Panelists Sigalle Michael, BAAQMD; Michael McCormick, PMC Consulting; and Deborah Nelson, City of San Carlos. ([page 17](#))
- A March 31 **Diversity and Peninsula RAC Social Mixer** held in San Mateo in partnership with Miroo Desai, AICP, Diversity Director, to encourage exchange of ideas and networking among planners of color and their participation in APA events. ([page 18](#))

Redwood Coast. Stephen Avis, AICP. The region continued to hold its monthly brown-bag lunch lecture program. Recent topics included rural blueprint planning, links between public health and planning, role of DFG regarding emerging issues in aquatic habitat conservation, and recent CEQA case law review. In February, Redwood Coast co-sponsored a three-day certificated training in the *NCI Charrette System™*. In March, the Region co-sponsored with the Prevention Institute (Oakland) a training on how to *Link Public Health* concerns to local land use decisions and transportation planning. Redwood Coast recently hosted a tour of *California’s last Company Town* (Scotia), the vintage 1920s theater, museum (former bank), and the historic Scotia Inn where we gathered to sample craft brews from the region.

San Francisco. Brian Soland, AICP. The RAC Chair met with the SPUR public programming manager and identified three upcoming events as candidates for collaboration:

- April 21, Exploring Transportation series, From Jersey City to LA: TODs in the US
- April 28, On the Waterfront series, America’s cup and the SF Waterfront
- May 19, The New Regionalism series, Paying for regional transit. We are applying for CM credits for these events.

South Bay. Katja Irvin, AICP. South Bay RAC is planning an educational event for Monday, April 18, on SB 375 (Bay Area SCS Vision Scenario), 6 PM at San José City Hall. ABAG, MTC, and VTA will be present. Sponsored by M-Group and Fehr & Peers. 1.5 CM Law credits pending. (See calendar, [page 20](#).) ■

What others are saying

What can we learn from Japan? “Japan is a rich, high-tech nation with much rough experience of seismic rumblings: those factors have led it to plan well for disaster, with billions spent over the years on developing and deploying technologies to limit the damage from temblors and tsunamis. The sobering fact is that megadisasters like the Japanese earthquake can overcome the best efforts to protect against them. No matter how high the levee or how flexible the foundation, nature bats last. All technology can do in the face of such force is to minimize damage to communities and infrastructure. Much depends on people’s own preparedness to face up to disaster—but that mental infrastructure is in even poorer shape than the nation’s roads and bridges. ‘We seem to not have the ability or the willingness to do that right now,’ said Dr. Irwin Redlener, director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University. ‘At a time when states are facing \$175 billion in deficits and the federal government is trying to deal with long-term debt and deficits, the likelihood of our being able to mobilize the resources to significantly improve disaster readiness is limited.’” —John Schwartz, “The limits of safeguards and human foresight,” *The New York Times*, March 13, 2011, <http://nyti.ms/dEnd3V>.

“Sustainability as a criterion for all HUD funds. Shaun Donovan foresees—and is working to bring about—a future in which prospective homebuyers routinely receive not only energy-efficiency ratings and annual cost projections on houses they are considering, but also estimates of energy consumption for a commute to work. In combination, these disclosures should help them better understand which houses are energy guzzlers and which locations expose them to higher fuel costs to get to work and back. Such knowledge, he believes, could significantly affect consumers’ decision-making about where they want to be and how big a house they need and can afford—perhaps leading them to the conclusion that smaller, denser, and closer-in are better. Ultimately, builders and local governments should get the same message.” —Kenneth Harney, “Shaun Donovan’s Demand: Embrace sustainability, if you want federal money,” *Urban Land*, February 10, 2011.

Scott Edmondson, co-Chair, Northern Section Sustainability Committee, comments: Donovan’s enthusiasm is admirable, but will it be sufficient in a market where other factors play a larger role in location decisions? Adding information on real costs of fuel (\$12/gal.) and forecasts (shortages/price spikes) would enhance his idea. In addition—at the local level—create zoning and settlement patterns that don’t trade-off house price and locational decisions against poor quality schools, higher crime rates, etc. At the national level, tax carbon and other pollution (things we *don’t* want); cap and trade; and increase research and development for renewables. Add those, and sustainability begins.

Brownies but no cookies. “Savannah-area Girl Scouts are getting a tough lesson in business regulation and competition—one that is taking them away from selling cookies in front of the childhood home of their founder, Juliette Gordon Low. After decades of selling in front of the house, Girl Scout troops have moved to other high-traffic locations

to sell Thin Mints. Randolph Scott, Savannah zoning administrator, [found] the girls were setting up their table on the public sidewalk, which violates city ordinance. He looked for solutions [unsuccessfully]. ‘I know it doesn’t look good,’ Scott said. ‘However, other businesses are going to say, Why can’t I sit out front and solicit business?’ On a good weekend, girls could sell about 250 boxes in front of the Low house. [Moved to] the Savannah International Trade & Convention Center on Hutchinson Island, Kristen, age 10, who sold last year outside the Low house, prefers the downtown site. ‘It’s just really busy and stuff,’ she said. ‘And I liked being able to sit out front. I got to meet tourists and Girl Scouts from other states.’ Alderman Van Johnson, whose district includes downtown Savannah, thinks City Council would entertain granting a variance to allow temporary sales during the annual cookie season. ‘Juliette Low brings thousands of tourists from around the country. Juliette Low is known for Girl Scouts, and Girl Scouts are known for cookies,’ said Johnson. ‘Let’s be reasonable. Let them sell their cookies.’” —Lesley Conn, “Savannah rule bans cookie sales at Girl Scouts’ home,” *Savannah Morning News*, February 26, 2011, <http://bit.ly/hHcEyh>.

The California economy. “California lost 51,500 government jobs in 2010 and 26,300 in the construction sector. Outside of these sectors the state added 160,400 jobs for a gain of 1.5 percent, outpacing the comparable national job gain. All things considered, the state’s economic base came through the recession intact. The data confirm that construction and government sector job losses were the cause of the state’s relatively poor job performance during the Great Recession... The economic recovery will be led by tech, trade, tourism, and the creative energy of Californians in a variety of sectors. Most of these jobs are on the coast. The state’s recovery will be held back by the lack of recovery in housing—probably at least a year away—and by continuing job losses in government. —Steve Levy, “California jobs picture dragged down by construction, government,” *HealthyCal.org*, March 6, 2011, <http://bit.ly/fSKGQb>. (Steve Levy is director of the Center for the Continuing Study of the California Economy, Palo Alto.)

“Effective economic development. Studies have shown that tax incentives like those provided by redevelopment agencies to attract jobs from elsewhere cost about \$100,000 per job. There are more cost-effective programs. Clean energy investments can create new jobs at about \$50,000 per job. A recent evaluation showed that the commercial corridor program in San Francisco—a program that focuses on quality of life and marketing in low-income retail areas—created jobs at a cost of less than \$10,000 per job. Many small business development programs are equally effective. Though model redevelopment agencies (such as San Francisco’s) have funneled token support to such programs, why not make them the cornerstone of every city’s economic development strategy?” —Karen Chapple, “Redevelopment is dead, long live revitalization!”, *The Bay Citizen*, March 8, 2011, <http://bit.ly/ijDIUh>. (Karen Chapple, Ph.D., is an associate professor of city and regional planning at UC Berkeley. She specializes in community and economic development, metropolitan planning, and poverty.) ■

2011 APA California Northern Section Awards Celebration



Sip...Eat...Cheer...Celebrate the winning projects, programs, and people at the 2011 Awards Dinner

When: Friday, May 20, 2011, 6:30 to 9:30 PM

Where: Scott's Seafood Restaurant, Jack London Square,
2 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94607

Menu: No-host bar on Mezzanine—includes one free drink ticket per person

- Salad: *Mixed Greens with choice of dressing*
- Entrées (choose one):
 - Tuscan Chicken: with spinach, ricotta and pine nuts*
 - Salmon Alla Bella: dipped in egg and parmesan batter, lemon sauce*
 - Vegan Mixed Grilled Vegetables*
- Dessert: *Raspberry Sorbet*

BART: BART to Oakland 12th Street Station, proceed south down Broadway 12 blocks to 2 Broadway, Jack London Square. Scott's is on the left. Use 72 AC Transit bus from/to BART.

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Reservation: **\$40 per person by 5 PM Wednesday, May 18:** Reserve online via PayPal (<http://bit.ly/i7fgUM>), or by check with the completed reservation form below.

After 5 PM Wednesday, May 18: \$50 per person for late reservations or at the door; **and** your reservation request must be emailed to Eileen Whitty, ewhitty@ebmud.com. Your reservation is a contract to pay. Entrée selection may be limited by restaurant.

If you need financial assistance, please contact Eileen Whitty at (510) 287-1109.

Print form and mail 

Mail-In Reservation Form (please print and send with your check):

Please reserve _____ places @ \$40 each for the APA California Northern Section Awards Celebration and Dinner.

My check made payable to "APA California Northern Section" is enclosed.

Mail to *Eileen Whitty, EBMUD, 375 11th Street, MS808, Oakland, CA 94607.*

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone: (_____) _____ Email: _____ @ _____

Number of Chicken entrées _____ for Name(s) _____

Number of Salmon entrées _____ for Name(s) _____

Number of Vegan entrées _____ for Name(s) _____

Total enclosed: \$ _____

NORTHERN SECTION CALENDAR

To list an event in the Northern Section calendars (*Northern News*, monthly; *eNews*, every two weeks), go to <http://bit.ly/fp5soO> to see the required template (at top of page), the current listings, and where to send your formatted item.

ONGOING

Symposium, 1909–2109: Sustaining the lasting value of American Planning. This four-hour symposium on May 21, 2009, brought together federal officials, planners, academics, and grassroots advocates to focus on the achievements of America's first 100 years of planning. See a video of the symposium (**free**) and earn CM credits. Visit <http://bit.ly/ekrzEY>
CM | 4.0 may be earned by viewing all four parts of the symposium video

MARCH

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

MARCH

- 3/24 Building Green, Today and Tomorrow.** 7–9 PM, The Googleplex, 1600 Amphitheatre Way, Mountain View. Learn about visionary new trends in green building and practical methods to make existing homes energy efficient and comfortable. Get a brief update from the City of Mountain View on local efforts to build green and retrofit existing homes. Sponsored by Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning, Google, Greenbelt Alliance, the Sierra Club, and the US Green Building Council. Visit <http://bit.ly/i0auVH> to register. For more information, contact Natalie de Leon or Lindsey Virdeh at norapaypg@gmail.com
- 3/30 Land Use and Climate Change: A regional and local perspective.** 6:30 PM networking; program 7:30–8:30 PM. Redwood City Main Library, 1044 Middlefield Road, Redwood City. Panel discussion on regional and local issues, opportunities, and constraints associated with climate change legislation, CEQA, and strategic planning efforts by cities. Panelists include experts from BAAQMD, PMC Consulting, and city planners. For more information or to RSVP, contact Surachita Bose at surachitab@gmail.com. **CM | pending**
- 3/30 Grand Boulevard Initiative: Envisioning the Future of El Camino Real in Sunnyvale.** 7–8:30 PM, Sunnyvale City Hall, Council Chambers, 456 W. Olive Avenue, Sunnyvale. Speakers from Valley Transportation Authority, Strategic Economics, and Reconnecting America will discuss the future of bus rapid transit, strategies for clustering jobs and housing, and solutions for successful corridor development. Additional sponsors include Urban Habitat, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, Greenbelt Alliance, Grand Boulevard Initiative, Sunnyvale Cool, City of Sunnyvale, and APA California Northern. **Free.** Questions? Contact Vu-Bang Nguyen at vubang@urbanhabitat.org. **CM | pending**

(continued on next page)

MARCH						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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3/30–4/1 **California Redevelopment Association Annual Conference and Expo.** McEnery Convention Center, 150 West San Carlos St., San José. Registration: \$555 members; \$715 non-members. More information at <http://bit.ly/g46WrA> or call (916) 448-8760. **CM | pending**

3/31 **Diversity and Peninsula RAC social mixer.** 6–8 PM, Windy City Pizza, 35 Bovet Road, San Mateo. This is a first call-out for planners of color! Meet, network, and exchange ideas with other planners over pizza and beer. Explore the possibility to create a forum for planners of color to share practices that reflect our experiences. No-host bar. For more information or to RSVP, contact Miroo Desai at mdesai@emeryville.org or Surachita Bose, surachitab@gmail.com

3/31 **Healthy Communities Forum, Don Weden.** 6:30–8:30 PM, San Mateo City Council Chambers, 330 W 20th Ave, San Mateo. Don will present “Building Healthy Places for a Healthier Future,” discuss major structural changes we face, and offer solutions to the way we plan cities. Following the presentation, engage in meaningful dialogue with invited visionaries on their visions of a healthy community. Sponsored by the City of San Mateo, County of San Mateo, Housing Leadership Council, Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, and Sustainable San Mateo County. **Free.** For more information contact Lindsey Virdeh or Natalie de Leon at norapaypg@gmail.com.

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4/7 **Infilling California, Seminar 1: Policies and Programs for Sustainable Urban Futures.** 6:30–8:15 PM, Wurster Auditorium, UC Berkeley. **Free**, no registration necessary. Gain insight into public policies and initiatives for creating sustainable patterns of future urban growth from architect/urban designer Peter Calthorpe and urban planners who have been creating and managing infill strategies in San Diego and Portland. Sponsored by the Center for a Sustainable California and IURD, and co-sponsored by the Urban Land Institute of San Francisco, the Association of Bay Area Governments, the California Infill Builders Association, and the Center for Law, Energy, and the Environment at Berkeley Law. More information at <http://bit.ly/g8uZCX>.

4/9 **AICP Exam Preparation Workshop.** 10 AM–3 PM, San José State University. Free parking in garage at 4th and San Fernando on Saturdays. Questions? Contact Emy Mendoza, emymendoza@earthlink.net or (510) 326-1919. This class was rescheduled from April 2nd.

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4/11 Diversity and East Bay RAC Social Mixer. 6–8 PM, Pacific Coast Brewing Company, 906 Washington Street, Oakland.

This is a second call-out for planners of color! Meet, network, and exchange ideas with other planners over pub grub and beer. Explore the possibility to create a forum for planners of color to share practices that reflect our experiences. Everyone welcome! No-host bar. For more information or to RSVP, contact Miroo Desai at mdesai@emeryville.org or Jane Wardani at jane.wardani@gmail.com.

4/14 Infilling California, Seminar 2: Best Practices in Infill Development. 6:30–8:15 PM, Wurster Auditorium, UC Berkeley. **Free**, no registration necessary.

California infill builders have created large- and small-scale infill developments in urban and suburban communities throughout the state. Learn from those who have worked successfully with local government policymakers, planners, and neighborhood groups. Sponsored by the Center for a Sustainable California and IURD, and co-sponsored by the Urban Land Institute of San Francisco, the Association of Bay Area Governments, the California Infill Builders Association, and the Center for Law, Energy, and the Environment at Berkeley Law. More information at <http://bit.ly/gvQvSa>.

4/15 Food of Life: Agricultural Panel. 6:30–9 PM, Lizarran Tapas Restaurant, 7400 Monterey Street, Gilroy (<http://bit.ly/gc5CvZ>).

Free event; dinner available for purchase. A panel will discuss the opportunities and challenges facing South Santa Clara County agriculture. Event co-sponsored by Greenbelt Alliance and the Committee for Green Foothills as part of a series exploring the issues facing South County. The hope is to plan for a future where farms, natural resources, and attractive towns thrive side by side. To RSVP, contact Erin McDaniel at emcdaniel@greenbelt.org or (831) 345-4375. More information at www.greenbelt.org. **CM | pending**

4/16 Quality of Life: Urban Tour. 9:45 AM–1 PM, Diana Avenue and Butterfield Boulevard, Morgan Hill. **Free** event; complimentary lunch provided.

Begin at Morgan Hill Community Garden and continue through Morgan Hill to highlight elements of a vibrant community designed around people. Opportunity to envision a creek walk. Address watershed and farmland connection to urban form, place-making, and downtown living. Event co-sponsored by Greenbelt Alliance and the Committee for Green Foothills as part of a series exploring the issues facing South County. To RSVP, contact Erin McDaniel at emcdaniel@greenbelt.org or (831) 345-4375. More information at www.greenbelt.org. **CM | pending**

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4/18 SB 375 Update: Bay Area Vision Scenario. 6–8 PM, San José City Hall, West Wing 118/119. 200 East Santa Clara Street, San José. **Free.** Light refreshments provided. Speakers will present the Bay Area Vision Scenario for the regional Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)—the primary implementation mechanism for SB 375 which requires integration of land use, housing, and transportation planning to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Thanks to our sponsors, Fehr & Peers and M-Group. For more information or to RSVP, contact Katja Irvin at katja.irvin@sbcglobal.net or (408) 569-8214. **CM Law | 1.5 pending**

4/21 Infilling California, Seminar 3: Urbanizing Strategies in the Suburbs. 6:30–8:15 PM, Wurster Auditorium, UC Berkeley. **Free**, no registration necessary. A select group of California cities have developed policies that helped create successful, economically vibrant, diverse, attractive, and walkable mixed-use districts and neighborhoods. Learn about the successes of Livermore and Santa Monica. Presenters include public officials and professional consultants. Sponsored by the Center for a Sustainable California and IURD, and co-sponsored by the Urban Land Institute of San Francisco, the Association of Bay Area Governments, the California Infill Builders Association, and the Center for Law, Energy, and the Environment at Berkeley Law. More information at <http://bit.ly/em779b>.

4/28 Infilling California, Seminar 4: Creative Financial Tools and Techniques for Infill. 6:30 PM–8:15 PM, Wurster Auditorium, UC Berkeley. **Free**, no registration necessary. Some infill sites lack sufficient road capacity or transit service. Infrastructure may be undersized or deteriorated. This seminar focuses on regional and local financial strategies used to support the installation of transit infrastructure, street and pedestrian improvements, utilities, and open-space facilities essential for successful infill development. Sponsored by the Center for a Sustainable California and IURD, and co-sponsored by the Urban Land Institute of San Francisco, the Association of Bay Area Governments, the California Infill Builders Association, and the Center for Law, Energy, and the Environment at Berkeley Law. More information at <http://bit.ly/hL85ER>.

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5/3

Infilling California, Seminar 5: Retrofitting Suburbia.

4:30–6 PM, Wurster Auditorium, UC Berkeley. **Free**, no registration necessary. Infill need not be limited to cities. Suburban sites also can be creatively transformed and adaptively re-used. Hear how a mix of urban design, regulatory, fiscal, and organizational strategies can be used to re-inhabit, redevelop, and re-green auto-centric and mono-cultural suburbs. Sponsored by the Center for a Sustainable California and IURD, and co-sponsored by the Urban Land Institute of San Francisco, the Association of Bay Area Governments, the California Infill Builders Association, and the Center for Law, Energy, and the Environment at Berkeley Law. More information at <http://bit.ly/fnL8dC>.

5/5

APA California – Northern, regular Board Meeting.

6–9 PM, Location TBD. RSVP to Hanson Hom at hansonapa@gmail.com

5/6

Infilling California, Seminar 6: “Hidden” Density – the potential of small-scale infill development.

6:30–8 PM, Wurster Auditorium, UC Berkeley. **Free**, no registration necessary. The construction of self-contained, smaller second units—either attached or free-standing on the lots of existing homes—can create infill without altering neighborhood character. The Institute of Urban & Regional Development’s Center for Community Innovation is assessing social and individual benefits of second units and their potential to meet the East Bay’s future housing needs. Sponsored by the Center for a Sustainable California and IURD, and co-sponsored by the Urban Land Institute of San Francisco, the Association of Bay Area Governments, the California Infill Builders Association, and the Center for Law, Energy, and the Environment at Berkeley Law. More information at <http://bit.ly/ftx7mV>.

5/14

Components of Life: Community Design Day.

11 AM– 2 PM, Granary Building, 17500 Depot Street, Morgan Hill. Closing event in a series exploring issues facing South Santa Clara County. Bring your ideas from the previous Greenbelt Alliance events to this community design day! Led by professional designers and land use planners using maps and visual imagery, participants will help create designs to inspire decision-makers of the region’s future. **Free** event cosponsored with Greenbelt Alliance and the Committee for Green Foothills. To RSVP, contact Erin McDaniel at emcdaniel@greenbelt.org or (831) 345-4375. More information at www.greenbelt.org.

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5/18–5/20 WTS (Women’s Transportation Seminar) 2011 International Annual Conference. Hyatt Embarcadero, San Francisco. With a theme of Building Bridges, the conference will span a host of technical transportation topics, bridge the professional development divide, and provide opportunities to connect with international transportation leaders. Go to <http://wtsinternational.org> and click on the 2011 conference site under Annual Conference for updates. Sponsorship opportunities available. For assistance, contact Jane Bierstedt at j.bierstedt@fehrandpeers.com

5/20 2011 Planning Awards Celebration, APA California – Northern. 6:30 PM, Scott’s Seafood Restaurant, 2 Broadway (Jack London Square), Oakland. For more information, download an event flyer at <http://bit.ly/giXRMu>. Reserve online through May 18. For more information, contact Awards Co-Directors Eileen Whitty at ewhitty@ebmud.com or Andrea Ouse at Andrea.ouse@lsa-assoc.com. ■

Plan-it sustainably *A report by Katja Irvin, AICP*

One thing sustainability planning experts are talking (and blogging) about these days is how to develop a shared vocabulary for practitioners in various fields to enable collaboration and effective sustainability planning. For starters, what exactly is *Sustainable Development*?

We have all heard the Brundtland Commission definition: Sustainable Development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (United Nations, 1987). This definition encapsulates the theory of sustainability but does not offer a framework for action. Fortunately, inspired academics have developed operational definitions and frameworks. Two powerful approaches are *Natural Capitalism* and *The Natural Step*.

Natural Capitalism (Amory and Hunter Lovins, Rocky Mountain Institute, Paul Hawken, 1999) advocates three central strategies for business and community sustainability:

- **Radical resource productivity** resulting in reduced operational costs, capital investment, and time. Planning-related examples include energy efficiency, water efficiency, downtown revitalization and infill, local businesses, and community supported agriculture. Savings can be invested to implement the next two strategies.
- **Biomimicry** (closed-loop systems) where every output is returned harmlessly to the ecosystem as a nutrient, or becomes an input for another process or use. Planning-related examples include building salvage, waste reuse, stormwater capture, and business expansion and retention programs.
- **Reinvest in natural capital** to prevent eroding of the basis of future prosperity. Planning-related examples include ecosystem restoration, urban ecosystems, eco-tourism, protecting and enhancing wetlands and vegetative cover, and preventing chemical contamination.

Source: Michael Kinsley, “Building Community Prosperity Through Natural Capitalism,” 2007.

The Natural Step (TNS) framework for strategic sustainable development specifies four system conditions for a sustainable society in the biosphere.

In a sustainable society, nature is not subject to systematically increasing:

1. concentrations of substances extracted from the earth’s crust,
 2. concentrations of substances produced by society, or
 3. degradation by physical means;
- and, in that society,
4. people are not subject to conditions that systemically undermine their capacity to meet their needs.

TNS is a complete methodology for mapping these conditions to a specific situation. The method uses *backcasting*, a three-step process that includes developing a vision of the sustainable future we want, assessing current conditions, and brainstorming and implementing actions to bridge the gap between our current reality and our desired future.

Source: <http://www.naturalstep.org/the-system-conditions>.

Isn’t this what we as planners already do? Generally it is, but often absent sustainability success strategies and the ongoing innovation required for success. Strategic frameworks like *TNS* and *Natural Capitalism* might provide the shared vocabulary that helps us go beyond regulatory compliance (general plans and climate action plans) into the realm of collaborative leadership.

Stay tuned. Future columns will delve more deeply into both of these models (and others) and provide examples of how they are being used in communities throughout Europe and North America.

Committee update. We’re working on a website that will tell you more about who we are and what we hope to contribute to sustainability planning in northern California. Look for a link in May.

Recommended Event of the Month. APA Sustainable Community Planning (SCP) Interest Group reception at APA National Conference in Boston. <http://sustainableplanning.net>.

Recommended Resource of the Month. Sustainable Cities Collective, <http://sustainablecitiescollective.com> ■