



# NORTHERN NEWS



American Planning Association  
California Chapter

Northern

Making Great Communities Happen

A Publication of the Northern Section of the California Chapter of APA



## OCTOBER 2011

Links to articles in this issue:

### FEATURE ARTICLE

- 15** More-complete streets: Expanding the vision by integrating green streets

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 3** Call for Nominations, Section Treasurer

### OUR PROFESSION

- 8** APA California awards  
**13** SB 450 (Redevelopment) sails to governor  
**14** CPF Scholarships and Awards for Northern Section

### DEPARTMENTS

- 2** Director's note  
**3** Who's where  
**4** Norcal roundup  
**9** What others are saying  
**12** Where in the world?  
**13** Letters  
**19** HSR notes  
**21** Calendar  
**26** Directory



Campbell planning commissioners Gibbons and Alster

## Planning job: no pay, great fun

My experience as a Campbell Planning Commissioner

By Theresa Alster

I was appointed to the Campbell Planning Commission by the city council a month after graduating from San Jose State with a master's in urban planning. With a nonexistent job market, this seemed like an opportunity to experience planning by influencing policy without having to keep my opinions to myself (not my strength).

A meeting in January 2009 was my first. I intended on just listening for a few meetings before speaking. The long-range Winchester Boulevard plan was discussed. Liz Gibbons, a highly experienced architect, shared her concerns against proposed high-density housing and the use of like materials on future commercial properties. My heart was pounding as I hit my speaker light. I nervously mentioned state-mandated housing requirements and how like materials would not restrict design. Staff members looked at me with wide eyes while the city attorney grinned. Michael Rocha, a commercial real estate professional, leaned over to me and said softly, "I didn't speak for the first six months."

This verbal nudge to know my place seemed to reflect genuine concern—which I ignored with reverence. Frankly, we disagreed often but always with respect for our comrades across the dais. Four original members remain today including Mark Ebner, an estate appraiser who grew up in Campbell, Bob Roseberry, a developer, Gibbons, and I. Three new members have cycled in since then—Paul Resnikoff, a former software engineer and budding enrolled agent, Phil Reynolds, a lineman with AT&T, and Brian Brennan, a Silicon Valley Leadership Group executive.

The most interesting application that was brought before us was a use permit for a pole dancing facility in the industrial area. The female business owner had "organically" converted a food service to a pole dancing facility by first

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## Planning job: no pay, great fun

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installing a single pole so she could exercise while working. She added more poles and started teaching female patrons the beneficial exercise of dancing with pole.

I attended the meeting expecting the typical sparse audience of fewer than a dozen people from the community. The room was filled with well dressed and, frankly, sexy women. Many spoke about how pole dancing had changed their lives. One woman explained that she had lost nearly 100 pounds and that the other dancers were friendly to her—unlike the cold reception that she had felt at other workout facilities. Another choked back tears as she explained that pole dancing had saved her marriage. These women were fit, happy, and passionate about pole dancing. A well-coifed woman spoke with a sultry voice, batting her eyelashes at the male commissioners while explaining her personal gains from twirling the pole. The commissioners had questions about safety and lighting. The permit was granted.

The only discussion that brought a larger crowd was a study session for a proposed private hospital needing a language change in the zoning ordinance. Somehow, many residents had been convinced that if the hospital came to town, medical care would be free for them. One woman was very angry when she said that we would rob her grandchild's future free healthcare if we voted against the application. The commission needed to leave the dais and spend time in the adjacent room for the hot-tempered crowd to disperse before the regular meeting that followed. The application never resurfaced.

After particularly heated meetings, we have walked downtown to sip beverages and reconnect as a group that not only agrees to disagree but also sometimes prefers to. The discourse is never personal but genuinely about what each of us believes to be the correct land use decision or what is best for the city.

Gibbons and Ebner usually disagree with me concerning parking. They want more than I believe is necessary. The final parking standards meeting—after more than a year of parking studies—was very heated. Gibbons accused the Chair of violating Robert's Rules by interrupting her. Gibbons and Ebner wanted to separate the multifamily housing component from the rest of the parking standards for the vote. I felt that the discussion and study sessions gave us enough history for a complete motion, which I made. It passed. After the meeting, we all walked downtown to laugh off the tension until our next difference of opinion.

Theresa Alster is associate editor, Northern News. ■

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

By Hanson Hom, AICP

I just returned from the annual state APA conference in Santa Barbara. The conference theme—aptly titled on several levels—was “Mission: Possible.”

APA and the planning profession are confronting challenges from economic factors that have required public agencies and planning consultants to innovate in order to survive current fiscal realities. Additionally, political pressure is mounting that challenges the basic principles of sustainable planning—the foundation of the profession. Despite these somber times, with the sunny climate as an influencing backdrop, the mood of the conference was upbeat and forward thinking.

It was fully evident as one roamed the conference that the core survivalist and idealistic instincts of planners continue to thrive despite the recent and current battering. The conference provided an important opportunity for planners to collectively reinforce why we all chose to enter the profession. At the same time, it offered encouragement to younger planners struggling to establish a foothold in the profession.

Sessions reflected the problem-solving disposition of planners with diverse topics covering community-building, energy and resource conservation, climate change, sustainable planning, and professional development. Particularly inspiring was a keynote address by Susan Anderson, who oversees the City of Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. Adding “sustainability” into the name of the department underscores the mission to embrace and fully integrate the principles of sustainability into all facets of planning for the Portland metropolitan area. Portland's glowing successes may be over-exposed, but we cannot deny that city continues to be an impressive living laboratory for sustainable planning and leads the way in pioneering innovative neighborhood and regional planning initiatives.

I also attended the Diversity Summit discussion on the need for the profession to respond to the planning

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

implications of a rapidly changing California populace. Most of us are well-versed on the increasing diversity of California's households as well as the aging baby boom generation. Discussion focused on the need for California planners to take a leadership role in defining and advocating effective strategies for professional and community inclusiveness. It was encouraging to hear from the leadership that APA is placing higher priority on responding to the changing demographic landscape at the national level.

**PEN Inductees:** The Northern Section was well represented as three of the seven 2011 inductees into the Planners Emeritus Network were from our Section. Much deserved congratulations to **Alex Bash, AICP**; **Alex Hinds**; and **Elaine Costello, FAICP**.

**CPF:** The California Planning Foundation once again exceeded its previous year's record of raising approximately \$30,000 at its annual auction to fund student scholarships. See [page 8](#) for this year's awards.

**New Board member:** Northern Section welcomes **Janet Palma, AICP**, who has joined the Board as Planning Commissioner Representative. She has been a regular contributor to *Northern News* with book reviews and through the HSR notes column. ■

4 min 16 sec video shot during 30 hours on a London bus. Thanks to [discoveringeurbanism.blogspot.com](http://discoveringeurbanism.blogspot.com) and to [ReconnectingAmerica.org](http://ReconnectingAmerica.org) for spotting this.

<http://vimeo.com/28341276>

## Call for Nominations, Section Treasurer

The APA California Northern Section Board is soliciting nominations for the elected position of Treasurer.

Interested Northern Section members in good standing (including incumbent Board members) must submit by Friday, October 7, 2011, a complete nomination petition that includes name, address of membership, email, work or daytime phone number, signatures of support from at least five (5) current Northern Section members, and a brief statement of candidacy (not to exceed 500 words) to the APA California Northern Nomination Committee. Please submit complete nomination petitions to the Nomination Committee Chair, Allen Tai, AICP, at [allenhtai@gmail.com](mailto:allenhtai@gmail.com)

Elections will be held in November. The Nomination Committee will publish qualifying candidate statements in the *Northern News* and will include on the election ballot all candidates who meet the minimum qualifications as described in the APA California Northern Bylaws (Section 4.6.5). The Bylaws are online for review at <http://bit.ly/cljlyS> ■

## Who's where



After developing Berkeley's downtown area plan, public realm plan, and zoning, **Matt Taecker, AICP**, has returned to consulting. Taecker was principal planner for the downtown area of Berkeley from 2005–2011, and a principal at Calthorpe Associates, 1990–2001. His firm, Taecker Planning & Design, specializes in urban infill and revitalization. Taecker holds a BA from The University of Chicago (urban policy and economics) and master degrees in architecture and in city planning from UC Berkeley. He has taught urban design at USC, UC Davis, and UC Berkeley. ■

# Norcal roundup

Compiled by Erik Balsley, AICP, associate editor

## Down and dirty in Silicon Valley

<http://bit.ly/oax7Qk>

"It all seems totally incongruous. Here we are in Silicon Valley—a true global icon and the envy of many people around the world (including government leaders, mayors, and economic development planners) who are all trying to have their own mini-version of the Valley, with its intense aggregation of entrepreneurial, innovative people. And yet, this collection of extremely smart people, given to thinking about big, practical challenges and hyper-complex systems, can't even get their act together to establish and maintain state-of-the-art infrastructure? At this point, there clearly isn't much more wear and tear that one can get out of those roads, bridges, and trains before various components will simply collapse. The best answer, most likely, is found in the rock-bottom preference of many either wealthy or smart Americans for outright libertarianism. As long as I fend for myself, why should I worry about matters of collective action, collective rationality? People here seem to enjoy a distinct incongruousness in their lives. The equation of 'my home = my castle = my retreat from society (and my car is the same thing on wheels)' still holds." —Stephan Richter, "A lament for San Francisco," *The Globalist*, August 23, 2011.

## Sonoma vineyards' water use threatens fish

<http://s.tt/137oK>

"A dwindling number of coho struggle to survive in the rivers and streams where they return every year to spawn. Now they must contend with water-hungry vines, and a frost-prevention method that involves spraying plants with 50 gallons of water per acre, per minute. In smaller tributaries, the technique can literally suck stretches of a stream dry. The acreage planted in vines has increased as much as 50 percent in some parts of the county over the last decade [but] the county is still issuing permits for new vineyards without requiring proof of an adequate water supply. Though salmon are the biggest concern, vineyards' water use has effects that ripple through local ecosystems and communities. Dave Jordan [a member of Friends of the Gualala River] said he has seen the tide of vineyards overtake neighboring landscapes. 'Now all of the trees are gone, and it's just grapes from one side of the hill to the other. We want to avoid that same fate here.'" —Jacoba Charles, "Wine vs. salmon: Water wars hit Sonoma County," *The Bay Citizen*, August 25, 2011.

## New SF parks are little dumps

<http://lat.ms/p16WRb>

"Two grandly named 'parkmobiles' were rolled out earlier this summer, the first in a fleet of itinerant oases in one of America's densest cities. The bright-red dumpsters, 16 feet long by nearly 6 feet wide and filled with greenery, have been placed in a busy downtown neighborhood where they throw a little shade, elicit regular double-takes, and fill curbside spots that otherwise would go to cars. In the last two years, San Francisco has seen a proliferation of tiny parks carved out along sidewalks and streets. They have become progressively smaller: from plazas and promenades to parklets and now parkmobiles. The movable fleet, which eventually will number six, was commissioned by the Yerba Buena Community Benefit District. Each costs about \$6,000 and will spend a couple of months in place before being moved to other sites in the South of Market district. In addition, over the last two years, the city has granted permits for around 25 permanent parklets; an estimated 30 more are under consideration." Both park-mobiles and parklets have received mixed reactions from city residents and visitors, though it appears they are here to stay.

—Maria L. La Ganga, "Tiny parks are on a roll in San Francisco," *The Los Angeles Times*, September 2, 2011.

## America's Cup must navigate a sea of public comments <http://huff.to/oXJZ6s>

"America's Cup—the 160-year-old international yachting race, widely considered the most prestigious in the world—is coming to San Francisco in 2013, thanks to an aggressive campaign by Oracle founder and 2010 Cup champion Larry Ellison. While the event is expected to create 8,000 jobs and pump an estimated \$1.4 billion into the Bay Area, many city locals and environmentalists are more than a little wary. Last month, the San Francisco Planning Department released a behemoth 1400-page Environmental Impact Report, and provided a month-long comment period. The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) wrote back with a firm letter of complaints." The Commission's concerns are over the long-term private development of a proposed yacht basin and the blockage of public access to large portions of the waterfront for up to 50 days during the event. According to BCDC Executive Director Will Travis, "the commission is in full support of the event, but insists

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## Norcal roundup (*continued from previous page*)

that environmental and social impacts not be overlooked in its execution. ‘It doesn’t need to be either or,’ he said. ‘The biggest word at the commission is ‘and’: profitable for the city *and* conscientious of impact.’” It has yet to be determined how the Planning Department will respond.

—Robin Wilkey, “America’s Cup navigates backlash from SFBCDC,” *The Huffington Post*, September 1, 2011.

### Humboldt County finalizes its multifamily rezoning plan <http://bit.ly/p7OsJz>

“The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors approved the multifamily rezoning project August 30, with the addition of two properties expected to offset the removal of units in McKinleyville, Humboldt Hill, and Freese Avenue in the greater Eureka area. Forty-eight percent of the project’s units are in McKinleyville, while 43.5 percent are in unincorporated Eureka. The project will now go to the California Department of Housing and Community Development for review. It is unclear if *Housing for All*, the affordable housing advocacy group that settled a lawsuit with the county regarding the issue, will be satisfied with the decision. The settlement, signed off on by the supervisors, set an August 15 deadline for the board to send the plan forward to the state or face a court-mandated building moratorium set to begin on October 3. *Housing for All* attorney Jan Turner said the group plans to file a brief suggesting guidelines for the moratorium. ‘There are questions about what the board actually did today and whether or not they reached their numbers,’ she said after the meeting.” Questions also remain over the extent to which public comments guided the final plan.

—Donna Tam, “Supervisors approve multifamily rezoning plan; Board replaces parcels, increases some units to reach total,” *The Times-Standard*, August 31, 2011.

### Stimulus funds drive Caltrans’ summer activity <http://bit.ly/pzlye7>

“Highways from the Bay Area to Lake Tahoe to the Central Coast are being repaved this summer at a pace not seen in years, even though the state and nation are coming out of a deep recession with major budget problems. The condition of California’s highways is among the worst in the nation, with just 28 percent rated in good condition. Spurred by an infusion of federal stimulus money, state bonds, and millions of dollars in savings from low bids, segments of nearly every local freeway are being resurfaced, plus much of Interstates 5 and 80. Caltrans awarded 276 paving projects this fiscal year, and it says low bids have

resulted in \$163 million in savings. That may not seem like a lot in a state as large as California, but it has enabled Caltrans to spread out the extra cash on dozens of relatively cheap resurfacing projects. While one summer of furious work is helping make up for years of neglect, the long-range outlook is bleak. From 2005 to 2009, the cost of repairing state roads doubled from \$3 billion a year to over \$6 billion. Caltrans budgeted \$1.6 billion this year.”

—Gary Richards, “Caltrans goes on a repaving binge,” *The Mercury News*, September 3, 2011.

### Sonoma County airport plan hits local turbulence <http://bit.ly/q9tw28>

“At the September 1st meeting of the Sonoma County Planning Commission at Windsor High School, neighbors voiced fears about more flights, larger aircraft, noise, traffic and growth with the proposed expansion of Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport. But business owners said the airport project will help Sonoma County’s economy by bringing jobs and visitors. The 20-year plan calls for longer runways, a new passenger terminal, new air traffic control tower, an air cargo facility, fire station, and dozens of other improvements. The projects would cost at least \$84 million, with most of the costs paid by federal grants. But the timing could depend on attracting more airlines to the county-owned airport. Alaska Airlines, the airport’s only scheduled carrier, now operates five flights a day to Los Angeles, Seattle, Portland, and Las Vegas. Airport officials are in talks with Alaska, Frontier, and U.S. Air about more destinations. However, no carrier has made a commitment to add flights. Work could start next year if Sonoma County and federal aviation authorities approve the expansion plan. An environmental report said the project would affect sensitive plants and wildlife, and recommends measures to minimize the impacts.”

—Steve Hart, “Opinions split over county airport plan,” *The Press Democrat*, September 2, 2011.

### Downsized supermarkets carve out niches in SF <http://s.tt/13aHf>

“Since March, Fresh & Easy has opened 11 stores in the Bay Area, with many more in the works. Squeezed by expensive purveyors of organic, local, and artisanal products on the high end and discounters like Costco and Wal-Mart on the low end, as well as a slow economy, traditional supermarket chains are reeling, with store closings and bankruptcies sweeping the sector. The last

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## Norcal roundup (*continued from previous page*)

traditional supermarket chain to open a branch in The City was Safeway, in the South of Market district in 2004. Fresh & Easy's recent opening in Bayview was the neighborhood's first new supermarket in over 20 years. The company's formula is for a small-form, highly automated supermarket, with a split focus on low-cost traditional grocery items and locally sourced, healthy and natural foods. It often moves into areas where other grocery stores have failed or into historically underserved 'food deserts.' Fresh & Easy has a standardized 10,000-square-foot template that allows it to squeeze easily into cramped urban spaces. The smaller size is a key part of its strategy to be more approachable and easier to navigate. 'The day of the gigantic megastore has come and gone,' said Phil Lempert, a supermarket trends analyst. 'These big stores have far more space and selection than anyone can actually use.' —Jesse Hirsch, "The Supermarket Wars," *The Bay Citizen*, September 3, 2011.

### San Jose may limit liquor sales

<http://bit.ly/o7AURW>

"A revision now under way of San Jose's general plan—its blueprint for growth—would restrict new liquor licenses to grocery stores and other 'full service markets,' leaving convenience, drug, and even liquor stores high and dry. San José Planning Director Joe Horwedel and his staff say placing limits on liquor licenses would give grocery stores an incentive to locate in neighborhoods abandoned by grocers or that don't have a good full retailer and would spur economic development. It would not affect existing stores that sell alcohol. John Carr, a spokesman for the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, which licenses alcohol sales in the state, said his department has not heard of such a policy before. While only the state can grant liquor licenses, said planning division manager Jeannie Hamilton, city officials can maintain some control over sales by requiring special permits based on land use and public safety principles. The general plan revision process began in 2007, and particularly in the past year, the planning department and planning commission have tried to deny off-sale alcohol permits to retailers other than grocery stores. But the City Council has often overturned the denials." —Tracy Seipel, "Proposed San Jose policy would restrict kinds of new stores that can sell alcohol," *The Mercury News*, September 6, 2011.

### Density as a job generator

<http://nyti.ms/oFxA4k>

"Economists studying cities routinely find that after controlling for other variables, workers in denser places earn higher wages and are more productive. Some studies suggest that doubling density raises productivity by around 6 percent while others peg the impact at up to 28 percent. The resistance to greater density slows job creation in productive places. Take, for instance, the San Francisco Bay Area, an economic juggernaut, hub of the country's tech industry and home to some of America's highest wages. Despite this, over 500,000 residents of the Bay Area moved elsewhere in the 2000s. Factors like taste and taxes account for some of the migration, but the biggest reason for the shift is housing costs. Real trouble occurs when the idea-generators in cities with a NIMBY approach become so protective that they turn away other idea-generators, undermining the city's economic role. Entrepreneurship rates in Silicon Valley were below the national average during the tech boom because firms couldn't attract enough skilled workers. The world's richest places tend to be dense, with well-educated residents and a free-market-orientation — think of New York and the Bay Area, of Singapore, Hong Kong, and the Netherlands. Rapid urban growth would mean denser neighborhoods, which makes many Americans uncomfortable. Preventing this density, however, denies workers access to the best opportunities, constraining the mechanism that helps support a strong middle class." —Ryan Avent, "One path to better jobs: More density in cities," *The New York Times*, September 3, 2011.

### SF Subway an integral component of city's transit plan

<http://bit.ly/pQEfto>

"San Francisco's Central Subway—our first new subway line in more than 30 years—is under construction and on track for a full funding commitment from the federal government this fall. It will provide fast, convenient service to the most densely populated part of the city, which is plagued with extremely slow, crowded, and unreliable bus service. It also provides a crucial infrastructure investment, forming an integral component

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"More than anything, the governor needs to help elevate the level of confidence in the project. The biggest current enemy of high-speed rail is the perception that it will never happen." —*Fresno Bee* <http://bit.ly/oISABx>

of a citywide rapid transit system. A small band of short-sighted naysayers has emerged with the irrational notion that a subway line would be slower than traffic-choked bus lines and that merely adding more slow buses would solve the problem. However, the Central Subway was a key component of the ‘four corridors plan’ developed by a city-wide citizen’s committee and approved by the voters as part of Proposition B in 1989. The Central Subway will provide rapid north-south service in contrast to the principally east-west rapid transit service on Market Street and will facilitate direct transfer opportunities to Caltrain (and ultimately high-speed rail service) at Fourth and King streets and to BART and Muni Metro at Powell Street Station.” —Stephen L. Taber, “San Francisco’s Central Subway to the future,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, September 1, 2011.

### **Subway becomes a “Big Dig” issue in SF Mayor’s race** <http://bit.ly/nqPAmj>

“For years, San Francisco’s plans to build a 1.7-mile subway from South of Market to Chinatown have glided forward with an air of inevitability, even as the route changed, cost projections soared, ridership estimates shrank, and the dream of eventually extending the line to Fisherman’s Wharf evaporated. The question that just about anyone in power in San Francisco prefers to avoid—is this still a good idea?—is about to become a prominent issue in the mayoral race. City Attorney Dennis Herrera concluded that a recent civil grand jury report is right: The city needs to hit the pause button on a project that could rival Boston’s ‘Big Dig’ as an example of government waste. Another top-tier candidate for mayor, Public Defender Jeff Adachi, has expressed skepticism about the subway plan in the wake of the grand jury report. The election of a mayor who campaigned against the Central Subway would almost certainly give Congress all the reason it needed to halt

federal support. Ed Reiskin, the city’s new transportation chief, suggested it would be a huge mistake to retreat from ‘an investment for the generations’ when San Francisco was on the brink of securing federal funds for the bulk of construction costs.” —John Diaz, “SF plans a subway to ... somewhere,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, September 4, 2011.

### **Water rules may evaporate under new plan**

<http://bit.ly/mOC8U0>

“Gov. Jerry Brown’s determination to shrink the size of government could spell the end for a board overseeing a nationally watched set of proposed agricultural water rules, according to a proposal being circulated by Brown’s office. According to sources familiar with the plan, Brown recently proposed restructuring California’s nine regional water quality boards, including eliminating the Central Coast board. Roger Briggs, executive officer of the Central Coast district, said the proposal echoes an earlier push to cut government floated by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger when he first came into office. The water rules pending before the Central Coast board aim at agricultural runoff and groundwater contamination, particularly from nitrates. They include detailed rules and an agricultural monitoring program for assessing groundwater that comprise the toughest agricultural water rules in the country. Many farmers say the proposal is impossible to comply with and could drive agriculture from the fertile Salinas and Pajaro valleys, but environmental advocates say it is needed to protect everything from drinking water for families to the health of Monterey Bay. But if the Central Coast board is dissolved, those proposals could go up in smoke.” —Jason Hoppin, “Gov. Jerry Brown may restructure water boards, throwing ag rules into doubt,” *San José Mercury News*, August 31, 2011. ■

“The failure of Solyndra should refocus the nation’s efforts on getting general energy policies right; developing rigorous, market-informed finance strategies; and working even harder to rebuild the economy on a firm and environmentally responsible basis. Let’s make that what we learn from the Solyndra collapse.”

—Mark Muro and Jonathan Rothwell <http://huff.to/oyZ44t>

The display of calling cards from firms offering professional services appears in every issue of *Northern News*. Fees paid by the firms for this service help defray the costs of this newsletter.

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## Lorraine Weiss

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## APA California awards

<http://www.calapa.org/en/cms/?70>

Northern Section was well represented at the annual chapter conference with eight projects claiming APA California 2011 Planning Awards. Congratulations to the winners!

### Awards of Excellence

#### • **Comprehensive Planning Award for a Small Jurisdiction**

*Trinidad/Westhaven Integrated Coastal Watershed Management Plan*

City of Trinidad; Streamline Planning Consultants

#### • **Planning Implementation Award for a Large Jurisdiction**

*Contra Costa Centre Transit Village*

Contra Costa County, Department of Conservation and Development; Avalon Bay Communities, Inc.; Bay Area Rapid Transit District; Opticos Design

#### • **Innovation in Green Community Planning Award**

*Martial Cottle Park Master Plan*

County of Santa Clara Parks and Recreation; State of California Parks and Recreation Department; The Planning Center/DC&E

#### • **Best Practices Award**

*San Francisco Better Streets Plan*

San Francisco Planning Department; San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency; San Francisco Department of Public Works; San Francisco Public Utilities Commission; Community Design + Architecture; Nelson/Nygaard

#### • **Hard Won Victory Award**

*Candlestick Point – Hunter's Point Shipyard Phase II Project EIR*

City and County of San Francisco; Atkins; City and County of San Francisco Redevelopment Agency; City Attorney's Office; Mayor's Office of Economic & Community Development; Lennar Urban; Sheppard Mullin

#### • **Academic Award**

*Healthy by Design: A Public Health and Land Use Planning Workbook*

Center for Sustainable Communities; Sonoma State University; Sonoma County Department of Health Services; Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

### Awards of Merit

#### • **Grassroots Initiative Award**

*Oakland International Boulevard Transit Oriented Development Plan*

City of Oakland Community and Economic Development Agency; Reimi + Associates; Nelson/Nygaard; Dowling Associates; Donley Consulting Group; Unity Council; Transform; Oakland Community Organizations; International Boulevard TOD Plan Community Advisory Committee

#### • **Neighborhood Planning Award**

*North San Jose Neighborhood Plan*

City of San Jose, Field Paoli Architects ■

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"Before the iPhone, cyberspace was something you went to your desk to visit. Now cyberspace is something you carry in your pocket." —Paul Saffo,  
<http://nyti.ms/rutxm4>

## What others are saying

Compiled by Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP, editor

**Hot air creates havoc.** "Storms are one of nature's ways of moving heat around, and high temperatures at the ocean surface tend to feed hurricanes and make them stronger. That appears to be a prime factor in explaining the power of Hurricane Irene, since temperatures in the Atlantic are well above their long-term average for this time of year. But are hurricanes getting worse because of human-induced climate change? Scientists are still trying to figure it out. Many of them believe hurricanes will get more intense as the planet warms, and they see large hurricanes like Irene as a harbinger. While the number of the most intense storms has clearly been rising since the 1970s, researchers have come to differing conclusions about whether that increase can be attributed to human activities. One climate-change projection, prepared by the government's Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory in Princeton, N.J., is that the annual number of the most intense storms will double over the course of the 21st century. But what proportion would actually hit land is murky, as climate change could alter steering currents or other traits of the atmosphere that influence hurricane behavior." —Justin Gillis, "Seeing Irene as harbinger of a change in climate," *The New York Times*, August 27, 2011. <http://nyti.ms/otYyKb>

**\$10 per 500-word computer-generated article.** "The company [Narrative Science's] software takes data, like that from sports statistics, company financial reports, and housing starts and sales, and turns it into articles. The quality of the narrative produced was quite good, as if written by a human, if not an accomplished wordsmith. [One company] pays Narrative Science less than \$10 for each article of about 500 words—and the price will very likely decline over time. Even at \$10, the cost is far less than the average cost per article of local online news ventures like AOL's Patch. Narrative Science's ambitions include moving further up the ladder of quality. [Narrative Science's] Birnbaum and Hammond are professors of journalism as well as computer science [at Northwestern University, Evanston]. The company itself is an outgrowth of collaboration between the two schools. 'In five years,' says Mr. Hammond, 'a computer program will win a Pulitzer Prize—and I'll be damned if it's not our technology.'" —Steve Lohr, "Computer-generated articles are gaining traction," *The New York Times*, September 10, 2011. <http://nyti.ms/pEGfly>

**Complete new town, no residents expected.** "A Washington-based technology company has announced plans to build a 20-square-mile model metropolis that will be used to test everything from renewable energy innovations to intelligent traffic systems, next-generation wireless networks, and smart-grid cyber security systems. Although no one will live there, the replica city will be modeled after a typical American town of 35,000 people, complete with highways, houses, and commercial buildings, old and new. The \$200 million project, known

(continued on next page)

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## What others are saying *(continued from previous page)*

as The Center, will be a first of its kind in the U.S., creating a place for scientists at the state's universities, federal labs, and military installations to test their innovations for upgrading cities to 21st century green technology and infrastructure in a real world setting." —Jeri Clausing, "Tech company to build science ghost town in NM," *Associated Press*, September 6, 2011.

<http://onfor.es/mSYn6F>

## ECONOMY

**"A sign of the times."** The administration has yielded to "strapped states and local governments who urged them to *slow or be prepared to stop* federal safety requirements that they replace thousands of road signs with bigger, brighter, more legible signs by 2018, arguing it would be the *wrong way* to make them to spend their limited money. The deadlines for replacing traffic signs to comply with safety standards [were] initiated under the Bush administration. The new proposal calls for eliminating the 2018 deadline for replacing certain street name signs to meet minimum 'retroreflectivity' standards, which make them easier to read at night, and requiring larger lettering. But the Department of Transportation wants to retain a dozen deadlines for sign upgrades that it says are critical to public safety. These include requirements for installing 'One Way' signs at intersections with divided highways or one-way streets, and requiring 'Stop' or 'Yield' signs to be added at all railroad crossings without automatic gates or flashing lights."

—Michael Cooper, "New road signs will now wait," *The New York Times*, August 30, 2011. <http://nyti.ms/qwzGlr>

**California fares worst in jobs tally.** Brookings' Hamilton Project provides a monthly update of "America's 'job gap,' the number of jobs that the U.S. economy needs to create in order to return to pre-recession employment levels while absorbing the 125,000 people who enter the labor force each month.

The August 'job gap' is estimated at 12.4 million jobs, up 180,000 jobs from July. The Hamilton Project last explored *state* job gaps in July 2010. Revisiting these numbers, we find that many of the same states highlighted last year are still struggling to recover today. States like California, Nevada, Colorado, Utah, and Florida suffered significant declines in construction employment during the housing crisis, and those jobs losses still remain." California remains first in 'jobs gap,' needing 1,921,262 jobs to return to its pre-recession employment levels.

—Michael Greenstone and Adam Looney, "Taking the Job Gap to the state level: A closer look at the August employment numbers," *Brookings*, September 2, 2001. <http://bit.ly/r4Wqpk>

**Vanishing mailboxes blamed on Internet.** "Because of steeply declining use, the U.S. Postal Service has removed more than 60 percent of the blue boxes, once as common on the American streetscape as lampposts and ice cream trucks. In 1985, nearly 400,000 blue mailboxes graced American streets. Now only 160,000

*(continued on next page)*



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## What others are saying (*continued from previous page*)

remain, and more are vanishing every day. San Francisco has removed more than 800 in the past few years, dropping the total to 1,700. The chief culprit is the Internet. If a mailbox gets fewer than 25 pieces of mail per day over a six-to-eight-week period, it gets targeted for removal. The Postal Service posts a 30-day warning notice on the box, during which time people can complain to the postmaster, then it's off to the great dead-letter office in the sky."

—Carolyn Jones, "Mailboxes disappearing as usage drops off,"

*San Francisco Chronicle*, September 1, 2011. <http://bit.ly/oBGj1W>

**Cities spur economic growth.** "What makes a city a city and a not-city a not-city is the fact that a city is dense and a not-city isn't. ... The world's richest places tend to be dense, with well-educated residents and a free-market-orientation—New York, the Bay Area, Singapore, Hong Kong, the Netherlands. ... And when it comes to economic growth and the creation of jobs, the denser the city the better. Put two workers with similar skill levels in cities of different densities and the one in the denser place will be more productive, according to two decades' worth of research from economists. The resistance to greater density slows job creation in productive places. Take, for instance, the San Francisco Bay Area, a beautiful place, blessed with outstanding climate, scenery and culture. It's also an economic juggernaut, hub of the country's tech industry and home to some of America's highest wages. Despite this, over 500,000 residents of the Bay Area moved elsewhere in the 2000s." —Ryan Avent, "One path to better jobs: More density in cities," *The New York Times*, September 3, 2011.

<http://nyti.ms/qkTXOD>

**Financial capitals moving to east Asia.** "Look to the Eastern Hemisphere for tomorrow's top urban players in the global economy. More than 20 of the world's top 50 cities ranked by GDP will be located in Asia by the year 2025, up from 8 in 2007. In this new landscape of urban economic power, Shanghai and Beijing will outrank Los Angeles and London, while Mumbai and Doha will surpass Munich and Denver." —Richard Dobbs, Jaana Remes, and Sven Smit, "Urban economic clout moves east," *McKinsey Quarterly*, March 2011.

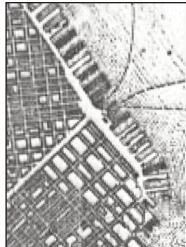
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## ENERGY

**The world of solar.** "Industry officials and analysts say the partisan knife fight obscures a larger point: the very economic forces that helped drive Solyndra out of business—namely competition from Chinese manufacturers—are actually contributing to the expansion of solar power in California. Building solar panels in Fremont with government subsidies proved to be a poor means of creating jobs, but the growth of solar as an electricity source continues to accelerate, and that has job-creation (and environmental) benefits of its own. China's low wages and generous subsidies for the solar industry have helped drive the price of solar cells

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## What others are saying (continued from previous page)

down by 42 percent since January." —Aaron Glantz, "Partisan politicking obscures growth of solar power," *The Bay Citizen*, September 1, 2011.

<http://s.tt/13a5t>

**"2011 a good year for wind energy projects.** In a letter, the Governors Wind Energy Coalition recently urged President Obama to support several industry-specific measures like extending the federal production tax credit. That program is set to expire at the end of 2012, and uncertainty over whether it will be renewed has already affected the industry. The last time the credit lapsed, at the end of 2003, development of new wind projects tapered off significantly. Because tax credits reduce federal revenues, a sensitive topic in this political season, renewal of the production tax credit is far from certain. Working in its favor is the potential for job creation. Although tax credits are the predominant mechanism in the United States for stimulating renewable energy, most other countries rely on a system known as a feed-in tariff that guarantees project developers a set rate per kilowatt hour for the electricity they generate. These tariffs have started to appear at the state level, in California and Vermont. Although the California tariff program became law at the beginning of 2010, state regulators have been slow to put it into effect as debate continues on how to set prices." —Jim Witkin, "Wind industry lobbies for tax-credit extension," *The New York Times*, September 6, 2011. <http://bit.ly/rtxOg0> ■

## Where in the world?



By John J. Kim, AICP (Answer on [page 14](#))



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## SB450 (Redevelopment) sails to governor **Housing California.org** <http://bit.ly/mXPMh1>

"Legislators unable to agree about much else relating to redevelopment this year had no trouble supporting SB 450 (Lowenthal, D-Long Beach), voting 74-0 (Assembly) and 40-0 (Senate) to send it to Governor Brown.

"This measure makes many changes to the rules governing spending of redevelopment agencies' Low and Moderate Income Housing Funds. Among the most significant:

- "Requires at least 75 percent of funds be spent on construction, rehab, or preservation of homes affordable to lower-income households, with at least 25 percent for extremely low-income and 25 percent for very low-income."
- "Establishes a cap on the amount of funds spent on administration."
- "Provides approximately \$500,000 annually to the state Department of Housing and Community Development to conduct audits of agencies' spending."

"Although the Department of Finance officially opposes any changes to redevelopment law while the court case is pending, SB 450 is seen as having the best chance of securing a signature because it doesn't tinker in any way with the elimination/reconstitution scheme of AB 26x/27x." ■

### LETTERS

I absolutely love everything about Northern News! When I first opened your online publication a few months ago, I was hooked; the design did it! Keep up the excellent work.

*Miguel Angel Vazquez, AICP*

The newsletter looks so very professional these days. I am proud to be a contributor.

*Janet Palma, AICP* ■

"The first job for Minneapolis's pedestrian and bicycle coordinator should be to ensure that all traffic lights citywide automatically give a walk signal when the light turns green. Cars don't have to push a button for the light to turn green—walkers and bikers shouldn't have to, either!"—Sam Newberg, [Joe-urban.com](http://Joe-urban.com)

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Answer to "Where in the world?" ([Page 12](#))

Buda Castle, Budapest, 2009.  
Photo by John J. Kim, AICP

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Northern Section congratulates the following students and graduates:

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**Shannon Fiala**, UC Berkeley

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**Nicole Martindale**, Sonoma State University  
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**Antonea Colon**, San José State University  
**Jessica Luk**, UC Berkeley ■

Steve Jobs "changed the vocabulary of media. Songs became files, subscriptions became apps—and media became just one more way to make that thing in your hands appear all the more magical."—David Carr  
<http://nyti.ms/rutxm4>

# More-complete streets: Expanding the vision by integrating green streets

By Sarah Sutton, ASLA, LEED AP, and John Hykes, ASLA



**Figure 1.** A complete street concept adjacent to an inner-city low-income housing project includes raised table crosswalks, bulb-outs to reduce crossing distance and provide room for trees, and decorative murals and vines on trellises within the narrow right of way.  
Concept illustration: The Planning Center | DC&E

Whether in existing or for new development, planning and designing a street means grappling with myriad design requirements from multiple agencies. The goal of creating an inviting streetscape environment that meets the needs of all travel modes is also burdened with the welcome issues of environmental stewardship. Complete Streets must also consider the impacts of streets on public health. Streets cannot be “complete” without environmental health mitigations to address storm water runoff quality, water conservation, green house gas emissions, and energy conservation. In short, Complete Streets must be evaluated within a holistic framework beyond mobility types to address the overlapping goals of current ordinances and environmental concerns including the State Model Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance (MWELO), the Municipal Regional Permit, SB 375, AB32 and Climate Action Plans, and public health and energy conservation.

## Background

California enacted the Complete Streets Act in September 2008. Complete streets are roads designed to accommodate all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, transit riders, and motorists. The legislation requires cities and counties to include complete streets policies in their general plans so that roadways will be designed to safely accommodate all users. The California Department of Transportation followed with Deputy Directive 64-R1: *Complete Streets – Integrating the Transportation System*, which states, “The Department views all transportation improvements as opportunities to improve safety, access, and mobility for all travelers in California and recognizes bicycle, pedestrian, and transit modes as integral elements of the transportation system.”

## Benefits

Designing complete streets is a challenging task because of the need to balance multiple requirements of all users. Complete streets provide the following benefits:

- Promote improved safety by balancing modes of travel on the street with clear delineation, organization, and awareness.
- Encourage healthy lifestyles that promote opportunities for walking and bicycling.
- Provide alternative modes of transportation that can lower transportation costs for families.
- Create a sense of place, providing communities with distinct and integrated streetscapes.

The concept of complete streets is often misconstrued to mean that each street must address the needs of all users and provide a balance of the multiple uses. Rather, all streets within the system as a whole should be considered. Each street does not have to accommodate all modes of travel, but state ordinances require that all street designs mitigate environmental impacts with some element of a green approach. See [Figure 1](#).

(continued on next page)

In many cities, interdepartmental conflicts arise out of streetscape design. Conflicting agendas often result in requirements and standards that preclude the introduction of green street facilities. An economic downturn and overburdened public works staff may contribute to the overall rejection of green street elements, which are correctly recognized as requiring more maintenance and funding. But a complete streets plan can provide a framework to elevate the design beyond the lowest common denominator.

Agencies and consultants have developed a forum for input to guide each project including technical staff of traffic engineers; bicycle, pedestrian and accessibility coordinators; local transit authority; electrical services; stormwater and sewer, and the maintenance division that will be tasked with general upkeep and care of the implemented project. The created Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) resolves conflicts and sets priorities, but once the plans go into design development, underlying rationales can be challenged or overruled by departments with specific agendas.

In December 2010, San Francisco adopted the Better Streets Plan, which includes policies and guidelines for new street improvement projects and streetscape requirements for new development. The complete streets plan is a culmination of years of work directed toward aligning multiple departments (electrical, engineering, stormwater and sewer maintenance, etc.) toward the same goal. The plan provides support in the case of conflicting agendas fighting for representation in the design and maintenance of streets. The TAC, with a guiding framework such as the Better Streets Plan, is better equipped to design streets in a more complete approach—considering all aspects of the complex systems that comprise the streetscape environment.

### Expanding the vision—a holistic approach

A complete streets approach can inform better multi-modal corridor planning and design, but we need to expand the vision. According to a paper prepared by Elizabeth MacDonald of the UC Transportation Center for Caltrans (July 2010), the existing framework of Caltrans methods is incompatible with Deputy Directive 64:R1 because it has no means of addressing environmental impacts caused by transportation facilities. To this end, Caltrans is working towards developing goals to incorporate green street concepts into their Complete Streets directive.<sup>1</sup> The current state and national trend is to integrate the complete and green street approaches. Cities are faced with multiple requirements and challenges that also need to be addressed within the public right of way. When planning a complete streets corridor, the following ordinances and issues need to be considered.

- **Stormwater:** Under the Municipal Regional Permit (MRP) for the San Francisco Bay Region, roadway projects that create 10,000 square feet or more of newly constructed, impervious surface must treat 100 percent of the runoff in plant-based measures. As each street and context varies, so will the solutions. Runoff in gutters can flow through curb cuts into adjacent rain gardens (see [Figure 2](#)), tree well planters supported with Silva Cell structures<sup>2</sup> or structural soil, and vegetated swales.

(continued on next page)



**Figure 2.** Portland Rain Garden. Road runoff flows through curb cuts into curbside planters. Raised curbs and linear planting of sedges, rushes, and trees offer a formal, urban appearance. Photo: Sarah Sutton

## More-complete streets: (*continued from previous page*)



**Figure 3.** Spray irrigation in narrow turf parking strips will always spill over onto adjacent paving, wasting water and reducing life of pavement.

Photo: Sarah Sutton



**Figure 4.** Existing narrow turf parking strip runs along entire length of residential Dublin street.

Photo: Sarah Sutton



**Figure 5.** Proposed redesign alternates permeable paving strips for vehicle access with low-growing, colorful, drought-tolerant plants. Photo simulation: The Planning Center | DC&E

- **Water conservation:** The new Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO January 2011) requires many changes to urban landscapes. The ordinance's primary impact to streetscapes is median and parking strip planting and irrigation. Mowed turf and spray irrigation, the most common and least expensive approach, is prohibited in planting areas eight feet wide or narrower. In narrow planting strips, as shown in [Figure 3](#), over-spray wastes water and reduces the life of adjacent paving. Opportunities for planting strips that allow tree growth and access to parked vehicles will include strategically spaced (preferably pervious) paving, at regular intervals in between tree planters, and infill planted areas with tough and attractive low shrubs and groundcovers. [Figures 4](#) and [5](#) show a before-and-after scenario in a residential setting.

- **Greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction:** Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reductions often produce the greatest reductions in GHG emissions. Creating a safe, inviting, and effective multi-modal corridor that invites people to walk, bike, or take alternative transit is the highest priority for a complete streets approach. While trees sequester carbon when actively growing, the rate of sequestration and subsequent reduction in GHG is considerably lower than other sources. Practices that reduce auto idling (including synchronized traffic signals) are highly encouraged as a GHG reducing measure.

- **Energy conservation:** Transportation corridors can address energy conservation goals with LED lighting, light colored paving, and ample shading. While many cities are embracing LED lighting and are already realizing significant cost savings, others are hesitant to switch. Within five to 10 years, LED is predicted to be the standard. Cities that delay conversion will be left with outdated, energy-guzzling systems. LED lighting will not only save significant energy and costs, but will also provide an even and clear light quality, increasing pedestrian safety and comfort. Large street trees that provide a shaded canopy above asphalt paving can significantly reduce temperatures and filter pollutants.<sup>3</sup> See [Figure 6](#).

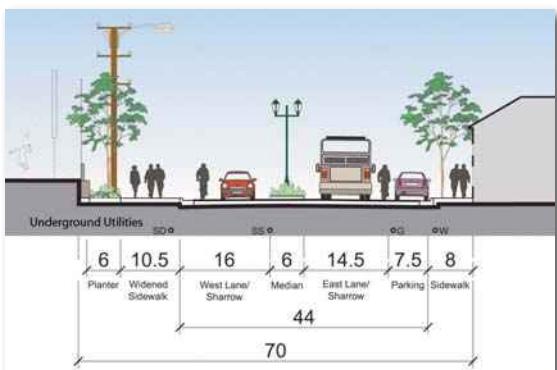
- **Public health:** Safe, attractive, and well-shaded streets will encourage pedestrian and bicycle use, with positive impacts on public health as people exercise more and drive less. Trees also improve the ambient air quality by filtering pollutants and cooling the air. The benefits of a lush urban forest extend beyond the street right-of-way. Research has documented multiple health and psychological benefits, from significant stress reduction and reduced healing time from illness and injuries to greatly reduced symptoms of ADD/ADHD in adults and children.<sup>4</sup> One study at one Portland hospital documented a significant reduction in low birth weights when the expectant mothers lived within 50 meters of an area with 30 percent average tree cover.<sup>5</sup>

(continued on next page)

## More-complete streets: (continued from previous page)



**Figure 6.** Ample tree canopy in a Danville Costco parking lot significantly reduces heat reflected from asphalt paving and cools ambient temperature by more than 15 degrees. Photo: Sarah Sutton



**Figure 7.** Existing and planned overhead and underground utilities limit street tree placement. A five-foot horizontal separation between underground lines and trees is the minimum distance required. Street section: The Planning Center | DC&E



Sarah Sutton, ASLA,  
LEED AP



John Hykes, ASLA

Sarah Sutton, ASLA, LEED AP, Principal, and John Hykes, ASLA, Senior Associate, are landscape architects in the Berkeley office of The Planning Center | DC&E. They work primarily in the public sector on urban streetscapes, public parks, and plazas, with a focus on sustainability and green infrastructure.

- **Urban forest.** Many of the benefits mentioned above result from a healthy urban forest with tall tree canopies shading adjacent pavement. Views of a green streetscape from indoors can also reap multiple benefits. The challenge in an urban setting is creating an environment for a healthy, long-lived tree. Heavy compacted soils and small tree wells in the sidewalk do not provide enough root access to vital oxygen, resulting in heaving pavement and slow decline, or death. James Urban, author of *Up By Roots: Healthy Soils and Trees in the Built Environment*, a manual of urban tree care, recommends a minimum of 1000 cubic feet of uncompacted quality soil per each 30-foot diameter canopy street tree—a considerably larger volume than the typical 4 ft. x 4 ft. tree well. Sidewalks can bridge uncompacted soil using many approaches including Silva cells, structural soil, or reinforced cantilevered walkway sections.<sup>6</sup>

- **Infrastructure:** When dealing with an existing roadway, the spaghetti of utility lines, storm drains, and sanitary sewer lines crisscrossing underground often limits or prevents installation of street trees. Existing streetlights and overhead power lines can dictate tree placement and limit ultimate height. Understanding these constraints at the outset of a planning project will ensure informed problem solving. See **Figure 7**.

- **Cost:** The cost of addressing these issues within a streetscape project often exceeds the available budget. Transportation corridors are eligible for multiple funding sources beyond traditional MTC, Caltrans, and Safe Routes to School. State and Federal grant funding for urban stormwater and urban greening projects, such as the recent Prop 84 series, will continue to support multi-objective projects that address overlapping benefits such as transportation, water quality, and public health.

### Implementing a More-complete streets program

A More-complete street policy, addressing all of the issues and goals in this article, can establish a framework for creating healthy neighborhoods and meeting multiple environmental and social goals. Engaging all agency departments is a good first step; however, a clearly defined and adopted policy will ensure consistency and continuity with all future projects. Safe, healthy, and viable street networks can provide multiple social and environmental benefits and greatly improve everyone's quality of life.

<sup>1</sup> Performance Measures for Complete, Green Streets: A Proposal for Urban Arterials in California. MacDonald, Sanders & Anderson. UC Berkeley, July 2010.

<sup>2</sup> The Silva Cell is a specialized tool to help you meet your project's sustainability goals and improve the ecological function of your site. By making it easy to integrate large tree growth and on-site stormwater management, it enables you to enhance your site designs through the use of green infrastructure. Retrieved Sept. 6, 2011, from <http://www.deeproot.com/products/silva-cell/silva-cell-overview.html>

<sup>3</sup> City of Boulder Water Conservation Office, Calculating the Value of Boulder's Urban Forest, October 2002; Chapter 4: Air Quality, Pollution and Trees. Retrieved Sept. 2, 2011 from <http://bcn.boulder.co.us/basin/boulder/>

<sup>4</sup> Cooper Marcus, Clare and Barnes, Marni, 1999, Healing Gardens: Therapeutic Benefits and Design Recommendations, New York: John Wiley & Sons.

<sup>5</sup> Geoffrey H. Donovan, et. al., Urban Trees and the Risk of Poor Birth Outcomes, *Health & Place* 17 (2011) 390–393.

<sup>6</sup> Urban, James, 2008, *Up By Roots: Healthy Soils and Trees in the Built Environment*, Champagne, IL: International Society of Arboriculture. ■

*The debate and controversy on the merits of high speed rail in California continued this past month with Governor Brown throwing his support to the beleaguered project and appointing two new members to the CHSR Authority. Meanwhile, Kings County appealed to the governor for reconsideration of the rail route through Central Valley farmland (see below). Cost of the project continues to fan general opposition, yet Merced-to-Bakersfield keeps moving toward approval. The comment period for the Draft EIR/S is drawing to a close after being extended to October 13th. As if Peninsula NIMBYs hadn't already stirred up enough anti-rail sentiment, Tri-Valley residents are opposing a BART extension to downtown Livermore, and Pleasanton has gone on record opposing proposed Altamont rail corridor improvements.*

## Brown supports high speed rail

<http://bit.ly/prYosz>

"The governor has said little publicly about the project since it came under fire this year in Sacramento, with cost estimates rising and lawmakers questioning its oversight. The project, to connect San Francisco and Los Angeles, was once expected to cost about \$43 billion, a figure the CHRA is expected to update this fall. Brown said he is 'really getting into' the project and that 'we're working directly with the authority to get their act together.' The rail project is one of two major infrastructure projects on Brown's agenda." —David Siders, "Capitol Alert: Jerry Brown calls for high speed rail to move forward," *Sacramento Bee*, August 17, 2011.

## Clout needed, on its way

<http://bit.ly/oISABx>

"Governor Brown has made two appointments to the rail authority. One is Dan Richard, the governor's deputy legal affairs secretary who previously served on the board of Bay Area Rapid Transit. The other is Michael Rossi, an experienced financier who serves as the governor's senior adviser for jobs and business development. These picks and others give the governor the chance to put his stamp on the authority and the upcoming release of its business plan. That plan will include new cost estimates and a peer-reviewed analysis of ridership projections, a major bone of contention. The governor is taking some chances with high-speed rail, but the risks of letting the project flounder are even higher. Once the recession ends, California will

again grow by millions of people. It will need a new transportation strategy to meet that growth. High-speed rail should be part of the state's transportation offerings."

—Editorial, "Rail needs aggressive political leadership," *Fresno Bee*, August 28, 2011.

## CHSR alignment options

<http://bit.ly/oY4BVQ>

"The basic tradeoff is that Pacheco is somewhat faster for LA-San José and serves San José and San Francisco on one line, while Altamont is much faster for Bay Area-Sacramento, requires less construction overall, and has separate branches to San Francisco and San José. Overall, Altamont is superior because of its advantage for travel from the Bay Area to Sacramento and the Upper Central Valley. Transit activists and environmentalists either preferred Altamont or did not have an opinion. However, San José didn't want to be left on what it perceived as merely a branch, lobbied hard for Pacheco, and as a result Pacheco became the preferred alternative. Unlike the NIMBYs on the Peninsula, the NIMBYs in Pleasanton and Tracy complained about HSR early." —Alon Levy, "California High-Speed Rail alignment questions," *Pedestrian Observations*, August 29, 2011.

## Kings County asks for HSR route change

<http://bit.ly/nYeECs>

"Kings County officials are appealing directly to Governor Brown to intervene and force a reconsideration of the proposed high-speed rail route that would swing through local farmland. The [August 25] letter asks Brown to 'bring the CHSRA and Federal Railroad Administration to the table to coordinate the proposed project's enormous impacts on Kings County as required by the National Environmental Policy Act.' The county's coordination strategy had a promising start with two public meetings with state high-speed rail officials earlier this year. But the approach ran into a brick wall after Jeff Abercrombie, the Authority's program manager for the Central Valley, informed local officials that the Authority didn't think it had to coordinate with the level of detail that county officials wanted. [Assistant county administrative officer Deb] West remained hopeful that Brown might intervene." —Seth Nidever, "County asks governor for high-speed rail relief," *Hanford Sentinel*, August 31, 2011.

(continued on next page)

## More on HSR ridership numbers

<http://bit.ly/n2kocI>

In high-speed rail reporting the media has asserted “that the system’s ridership projections are flawed. In order to address these concerns, the CHSRA put together a peer review panel to examine those projections. They made their final report [as September began] and it concludes that the projections are sound: ‘We are satisfied with the documentation presented in Cambridge Systematics, and conclude that it demonstrates that the model produces results that are reasonable and within expected ranges for the current environmental planning and Business Plan applications of the model. We were very pleased with the content, quality and quantity of the information.’ The reviewers were particularly pleased that the questions they asked of the Authority and Cambridge Systematics in their interim report have been answered to their satisfaction. The peer review panel also noted that CS is undertaking work to update several elements of the ridership projections, which are based on data collected in 2000 and 2005.” —Robert Cruikshank, “Independent peer review says HSR ridership numbers are sound,” *California High Speed Rail Blog*, September 6, 2011.

## Questions of high-speed rail cost responsibility

<http://lat.ms/mTlp3C>

“As California prepares to commit tens of billions of dollars to an ambitious high-speed rail line from San Francisco to Southern California, Congress’ political will to provide the bulk of the funding is disappearing, leaving the possibility that the state could end up stuck with a crushing financial burden. Should federal funds dry up after the scheduled start of construction next year, the state could be left with no more than an unfulfilled dream

and some tracks in the Central Valley. The bullet train hinges on a huge investment of federal dollars when Washington is intent on cutting the nation’s budget. Republicans who control the House of Representatives have already declared new rail construction their ‘lowest priority.’ At the same time, the Obama administration is asking for an \$8 billion increase for rail programs.”

—Ralph Vartabedian, “Bulk of high-speed rail costs could fall to state,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 8, 2011.

## Amtrak versus HSR

<http://bit.ly/rjOByp>

“For several billion dollars, a small fraction of the cost of a new high-speed-rail system, one could upgrade Amtrak to a system that would go 100 mph. The reality is very few people who would take the circuitous, valley-routed high-speed rail for three or more hours to Los Angeles would not take the train if it took but an hour longer going a more direct route either over Altamont Pass or along an improved Coast Starlight route. The current routing of the California high-speed rail fantasy exists as political pork rather than transportation efficiency. Successful high-speed rails around the world depend on feeder lines of mass transport coming from population concentrations to very limited stops, not a new station in every legislator’s district. Most of America’s movers and shakers travel by plane. Rarely do they actually meet, let alone converse with, people in between whose lives are led at ground level. Trains bring people together, something America is sorely in need of given the divisiveness of the past 10 years. Long-term Amtrak funding is the solution to North-South transportation in California.” —Steve Fankuchen, “My Word: Amtrak upgrade is better solution than high-speed rail,” *Oakland Tribune*, September 8, 2011. ■

Fifty-two percent of Americans view the real estate industry negatively. What sectors do they dislike even more? Oil and gas (64 percent) and the federal government (63 percent).

—“10 Most Hated Industries In America: Gallup” <http://huff.to/q3sGCC>

## NORTHERN SECTION CALENDAR

To list an event in the Northern Section calendars (*Northern News*, monthly; *eNews*, every two weeks), go to <http://bit.ly/ed1Ek> to see the required template (at top of page), the current listings, and where to send your formatted item.

### ONGOING

**ONLINE VIDEO. 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://www.planning.org/centennial/symposium/>  
**CM | 4.0 may be earned by viewing all four parts of the symposium video**

**ONLINE VIDEO. Planning for Healthy Places with Health Impact Assessments.** Through examples and activities, this “how-to” guide explains the value of Health Impact Assessments and outlines the steps involved in conducting one. APA and the National Association of County & City Health Officials developed the course. See a video and earn CM credits. **Free**. The video is available through **December 31, 2011**. Visit <http://bit.ly/2ZH32W>  
**CM | 6.0 may be earned by viewing all course materials and taking an exam**

### SEPTEMBER

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**9/22**

**Big store in the urban core**, 12:30–1:30 PM, SPUR, 654 Mission Street, **San Francisco**. Target's arrival in San Francisco is upon us, with new locations underway at the Metreon and at Geary and Masonic. Join Rich Varda, FAIA, Target's senior vice president for store design, as he explains the strategy and challenges of developing stores within the urban core while dealing with the ever-changing economy and demographics of U.S. cities. Examples from across the U.S. and Canada of mixed-use and multi-level projects that include Target stores will be presented. **Free for APA and SPUR members**, \$5 for non-members. For more information contact [gilyard@spur.org](mailto:gilyard@spur.org) **CM | pending**

(continued on next page)

“The failing—that most members of the media make when assessing the cost of a big project—is there’s no discussion of the costs of not building high speed rail. Those costs have been estimated at \$100 billion.”  
—Robert Cruikshank <http://bit.ly/rpcKGh>

## SEPTEMBER

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**9/22****The Dirt on America's Cup: Race's Impact on SF Real Estate.** 5–6:30 PM, Hotel Nikko, 222 Mason Street, **San Francisco**.

The America's Cup sailing competition is already making waves in San Francisco, a year before the qualifying competition and two years before the main event. Close enough to allow large spectator audiences along the shoreline, the race is affecting real estate planning and development around the Bay, with implications for transit use, hosting large special events, and creating lasting economic benefits.

Discussion topics include the current North Waterfront plans, related infrastructure improvements, and post-race real estate long-term scenarios. Co-sponsored by APA and ULI. \$45 for APA and ULI members; \$105 for nonmembers.

RSVP at <http://bit.ly/obI0iD>

For more information, contact Kate White at [kwhite@uli.org](mailto:kwhite@uli.org)

**CM | 1.5 pending**

**9/29****North Bay RAC Mixer**, 5–8 PM, Third Street Aleworks

(upstairs room), 610 Third Street, **Santa Rosa**. Join and meet fellow planners for the first of four local brewery mixers around the North Bay, one in each county. **Free**.

RSVP to [kristinegaspar@w-and-k.com](mailto:kristinegaspar@w-and-k.com)

For information about 3rd Street Aleworks, visit  
<http://thirdstreetaleworks.com>

## OCTOBER

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## OCTOBER

**10/1****AICP Exam Prep Workshops**, 10 AM–4 PM, **San José**

**10/15 State University**, Pacheco Room, 2nd floor, Student Union Building. All sessions are on Saturdays. To register, contact Don Bradley, [dr.donbradley@comcast.net](mailto:dr.donbradley@comcast.net) or (650) 592-0915.

**10/4****Building Asian cities**, 12:30–1:30 PM, World Affairs

Council, 312 Sutter, Suite 200, **San Francisco**. Asian cities are experiencing extraordinary population growth and are working to improve air quality, access to clean water, adequacy of agricultural land, and overall economic strength in order to build livable and sustainable environments. There is much we can learn from their success and failures. John Kriken is an urban design architect with SOM and has been engaged in Asia's development since the mid-1980s. He will share examples and ideas drawn from Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, Dalian, Jiaxing, Foshan, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and Saigon. This forum is sponsored by, and will be held at, the World Affairs Council of Northern California. **Free for APA and SPUR members**, \$5 for nonmembers. For more information contact [ghilyard@spur.org](mailto:ghilyard@spur.org) **CM | pending**

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OCTOBER						
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- 10/11** **Redwood Coast Lecture Series: GIS Innovations for the Field of Planning.** Noon–1 PM. SHN, 812 W. Wabash Street, **Eureka**. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) has revolutionized the world of planning and promises to continue to transform the way planners gather, analyze, and present information. Robert Holmlund of Winzler & Kelly and Bryan Kang, City of Arcata, will present an overview of recent GIS innovations being used in the City of Arcata, Humboldt County, and beyond. **Free**.
- 10/14** **South Bay Strategic Sustainability Workshop.** 8 AM–12:30 PM, HMH, 1570 Oakland Road, **San José**. Light breakfast provided; lunch sponsored by HMH (thank you HMH). The workshop will introduce frameworks for strategic sustainability and use a group exercise to illuminate how to produce benchmarks and action plans to sharpen and accelerate sustainability planning in Santa Clara County and beyond. **Free** for APA members, \$10 for non-members. RSVP to Katja Irvin at [katja.irvin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:katja.irvin@sbcglobal.net) or (408) 569-8214  
**CM | 3.0 pending**
- 10/22** **Ethics in Planning: Real World Scenarios.** 10:30 AM–Noon, Benicia Community Center, 370 East L Street, **Benicia**. This event will fulfill the Ethics requirement for AICP Certification Maintenance. Colette Meunier, AICP, Scott Davidson, AICP, and Tricia Stevens, AICP, will serve as the panel. The session will include a short overview of the AICP Code of Ethics, a facilitated audience discussion of scenarios that highlight common ethical dilemmas faced by planners, key principles and rules of conduct in the Code of Ethics, and Q&A and audience feedback as time permits. \$15. Space is limited; pre-register and pay via PayPal at [www.norcalapa.org](http://www.norcalapa.org) no later than Thursday, October 20. For more information, contact Colette Meunier at (707) 748-4453 or [Colette.Meunier@mindspring.com](mailto:Colette.Meunier@mindspring.com)  
**CM Ethics | 1.5 pending**
- 10/25** **L'Enfant Lecture on City Planning and Design.** 6:30–7:30 PM, Westin St. Francis, 335 Powell St., 32nd Floor (Victor's Palace), **San Francisco**. Dr. Marilyn Taylor, dean of the School of Design at the University of Pennsylvania, will deliver the 2011 L'Enfant Lecture. This annual APA event highlights important issues in planning. Members \$10; student members free. Taylor became dean of The School of Design at the University of Pennsylvania in October 2008 after practicing as an architect and urban designer at Skidmore Owings & Merrill. She is a graduate of Radcliffe College and received her M. Arch. from the University of California, Berkeley. Login and register online by October 20 at <http://bit.ly/ntK6Jf> **CM | 1.0**

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## OCTOBER

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**10/27**

**Ethics in Planning: Real World Scenarios.** 7–8:30 PM, Redwood Shores Branch Library Community Room, 399 Marine Parkway, **Redwood City**. This event will fulfill the Ethics requirement for AICP Certification Maintenance. Colette Meunier, AICP, Andrea Ouse, AICP, and James Castañeda, AICP, will serve as the panel. The session will include a short overview of the AICP Code of Ethics, a facilitated audience discussion of scenarios that highlight common ethical dilemmas faced by planners, key principles and rules of conduct in the Code of Ethics, and Q&A and audience feedback as time permits. \$15. Space is limited; pre-register and pay via PayPal at [www.norcalapa.org](http://www.norcalapa.org) no later than Tuesday, October 25. For more information, contact James Castañeda at (415) 601-9473 or [james.castaneda@me.com](mailto:james.castaneda@me.com)

**CM Ethics | 1.5 pending**

## NOVEMBER

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## NOVEMBER

**11/3**

**Getting commuters out of cars.** 12:30–1:30 PM, SPUR, 654 Mission Street, **San Francisco**. With nearly seven in 10 commuters still driving alone to work in the Bay Area, getting more jobs near transit and more commuters out of their cars remain important goals. A recent SPUR paper explores what it would take to get half of commuters to work without driving alone. The paper identifies actions at the local, regional, and state levels. With Egon Terplan from SPUR, Jed Kolko from the Public Policy Institute of California, and Mark Shorett from Arup. **Free for APA and SPUR members**, \$5 for non-members. For more information contact [ghilyard@spur.org](mailto:ghilyard@spur.org)

**CM | pending**

**11/5**

**Symposium: The State of Planning: Navigating New Roles and Careers.** 11 AM–6 PM, **San José State University**, location TBD. The event will feature speakers, networking opportunities, and a job expo. Light lunch and refreshments provided. The symposium will help students, young planners, professionals, and others interested in the planning field understand the current state of the profession and employment trends in light of current economic crises. Sponsorship opportunities and expo participation are available. Cost: \$5 students, \$8 APA members, \$10 general. For more information or to discuss sponsorship and expo opportunities, please contact Johnasies McGraw at [Johnasies.eastlake@gmail.com](mailto:Johnasies.eastlake@gmail.com).

Event updates available at [www.theupc.org](http://www.theupc.org)

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## NOVEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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### 11/8 What are Communities of Excellence [CX<sup>3</sup>]?

Noon–1 PM. Winzler & Kelly, 718 3rd Street, **Eureka**.

CX<sup>3</sup> is an important tool that harnesses the power of neighborhood-level data to promote healthier communities. The data collected measure food quality, availability, and affordability in low-income communities. Kelley Kyle, Public Health Division, Humboldt County Health and Human Services, will share results of data gathered in neighborhoods in West Eureka, Fortuna, and Arcata during the summer of 2011. **Free**.

### 11/12 AICP Exam Prep Workshop

10 AM–4 PM, **San José State University**, Pacheco Room, 2nd floor, Student Union Building. To register, contact Don Bradley, [dr.donbradley@comcast.net](mailto:dr.donbradley@comcast.net) or (650) 592-0915.

## DECEMBER

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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

## DECEMBER

- 12/9 Note new date.** **Northern Section Holiday Party.** 7–10 PM, Blu Restaurant, 747 Market Street, 4th floor, **San Francisco**. BART Powell Street station. \$30; \$15 for planning students and unemployed planners. RSVP by Monday, December 5, at [www.norcalapa.org](http://www.norcalapa.org) ■

"We invest half as much in our infrastructure as we did 50 years ago with more than one-and-a-half the number of people. That's unacceptable for a country that has always dreamed big and built big, from the transcontinental railroads to the interstate highway system."—President Barack Obama,  
<http://bit.ly/nbwY13>

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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 4,000.

*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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