



NORTHERN NEWS



American Planning Association
California Chapter
Northern

Making Great Communities Happen

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

JUNE 2012

Birds of a feather flock together: The Jailbirds of Elmwood Prison

By Bill Goggin

You can hear the sound as you approach the courtyard of the Elmwood Correctional Facility, although it's not exactly clear what's causing all the commotion. It starts as a low, background chattering and builds to a near cacophony close to the mess hall. Otherwise everything appears to be in order: The inmates go about their daily routine in white- and black-striped jumpsuits while guards keep an eye out for anything out of the ordinary.

It's just another day at Elmwood, but what is causing the noise? Then it hits you: the many large birds in the trees above are calling out. These are the Jailbirds of Elmwood Prison.

Elmwood is a low-security Santa Clara County prison in Milpitas, west of Interstate 880 and north of Great American Parkway. To solve an ongoing maintenance and health problem, the prison staff proposed to pave a path between security fences so guards could patrol this area without suffering turned ankles and knees on the uneven and potholed surface. Because the project could potentially impact sensitive biological resources, the County engaged a private consultant to help them comply with California and federal environmental laws in place to protect sensitive animals and their habitats — in this case, an established egret and heron rookery.

An earlier biological survey conducted in 2010 observed an active rookery (a colonial breeding bird site) with 40 to 50 platform stick nests in the prison's main courtyard. The rookery is within a cluster of densely foliated trees, and contains 50-60 nests from three bird species: great egret, snowy egret, and black-crowned night heron. The ground surface beneath the trees had accumulated white-



*Egret Rookery. View from outside the Elmwood Correctional Facility.
Photo: Bill Goggin*

wash, feathers, and eggshell fragments — evidence of long-term site use by the rookery's birds.

Unique in an urban area, the Elmwood rookery is believed to be the only egret and heron rookery in the southern San Francisco Bay within an entirely fenced and man-made setting — and maybe the only one of its kind in northern California. Such breeding sites are especially important in urbanized environments, where opportunities for colonial nesting species are limited, and development and land conversion often degrades or removes available habitat. These sites are significant because they often support a sizeable segment of the local population, and because their proximity to foraging areas can reduce travel distances and predator-prey (i.e., mortality) interactions.

Because the path construction would occur during the most sensitive period of the egrets' life cycle, the increased noise, dust and fumes generated by the project had the potential to negatively affect the birds' nesting activities, possibly leading to fines and negative press for the County. Therefore, to protect this important resource, the County retained EMC Planning Group to monitor the rookery when heavy equipment would be scheduled to operate within 500 feet.

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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2012 Planning Award Winners APA California – Northern

A complete list of winners and eight photos. [PAGE 9](#)

"In France, the pie chart became known as le camembert, because of the way a wheel of cheese is typically divided." —From *Hilary Greenbaum and Dana Rubinstein, "Who made that pie chart?"* The New York Times Magazine, April 20, 2012. <http://nyti.ms/ISMHv5>

Director's note

By *Hanson Hom, AICP*



APA Northern Section Planning Awards

One of my highlights as Section Director is presiding over the Northern Section Awards Celebration. Over 120 planners gathered at the Parc 55 Wyndham Hotel in San Francisco on May 11 for the annual Awards Celebration. The event kicked off by recognizing the 2012 FAICP inductees from the Northern Section: **Linda C. Dalton, PhD, FAICP, Ellen Greenberg, FAICP, and Barry J. Miller, FAICP.** We then recognized the next generation of planners by honoring the past year's California Planning Foundation student scholarship winners. The 15 young planners that were recognized provide confidence that the future of planning is in very capable hands.

The centerpiece of the evening was announcing the 2012 APA Northern Section Planning Awards. Thirteen exceptional plans and projects from the Northern Section were honored with Planning Excellence Awards and Awards of Merit in various categories. (See attached list and photos beginning on [page 9](#).) The winning plans and projects are an impressive representation of the quality and diversity of planning initiatives in the Northern Section. All qualify to move on for consideration of an APA California Chapter award. Over the years, the Northern Section has been successful in having a large number of projects recognized with Chapter awards. We wish the 2012 winners continued success as they proceed to the next round of competition.

For the sixth year, **Andrea Ouse, AICP,** and **Eileen Whitty, AICP,** Awards Program Co-Directors, did a phenomenal job of organizing the awards program and festive dinner. Assisting in the effort were, **Juan Borrelli, AICP, Ronny Kraft, AICP, Darcy Kremin, AICP, and Hing Wong, AICP.** Thanks also to the many board directors who supported the program and were present for the dinner, and to **Kevin J. Keller, AICP,** APA California Chapter President, who made a special trip from southern California to attend. And special thanks to the distinguished Awards Jury for committing many hours to reviewing the proposals and deliberating on the awards. This year's jurors were **Kathryn Studwell,**

AICP, Charles S. Bryant, AICP, Yatman Kwan, AICP, Paul Waddell, Victoriya Wise, AICP, and Daniel Zack, AICP.

The evening closed with presenting a much-deserved Recognition of Excellence Award to **Hing Wong, AICP,** for his over 10 years of dedicated service to the Northern Section.

ALERT: Membership Director Position Available

We are seeking one or two motivated planners to serve on the Board to oversee membership and communications for the Northern Section. Please consider applying if you have particular interest or experience in marketing or communications. Graphic design and social media knowledge are desired but not required. As the Membership Director, the appointee(s) will work with the Board to develop a membership recruitment and retention program and implement strategies for effective communication to members. Please contact Hanson Hom, AICP, at hansonapa@gmail.com if you are interested in this position or have questions.

New Website Launched!

Please visit norcalapa.org to see Northern Section's totally redesigned and reorganized website. It was a major goal of the Board for 2012, and it launched early in May. The new website represents the collective efforts of the entire Northern Section Board led by **Ronny Kraft, AICP,** Section Webmaster. With the technical assistance of our web designer **Devin Dombrowski,** the site was upgraded with a WordPress content management system. This will allow for more content and timely posting of information and announcements. We are very proud of the new website, but this is only the beginning, as it will gradually evolve and expand to respond to your needs. We are exploring strategies for attracting more traffic to the site and for effectively highlighting and advertising Northern Section firms. We encourage you to help by sending your suggestions and comments to our webmaster at kraft.ronny@gmail.com. ■

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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Birds of a feather flock together: The Jailbirds of Elmwood Prison *(continued from page 1)*

Interestingly, none of the bird species living at the Elmwood rookery are specifically listed as threatened or endangered by state or federal acts. However, the California Department of Fish and Game considers colonial breeding sites unique, sensitive resources. State regulations afford the rookery protection during the breeding season.

Egrets and herons are also protected under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Once nests have been constructed and eggs are present, the rookery site becomes a protected resource area and cannot be disturbed. The species generally reproduce from early April through July. Juvenile rearing extends into mid-September.

Behavioral monitoring at Elmwood required a qualified biologist stationed inside the facility's perimeter fence, within 275 feet and with a direct line of sight to the rookery when construction occurred or heavy equipment operated within 500 feet of the rookery. Using hand held binoculars and a spotting scope, the monitoring biologist searched for signs of colony stress or agitation during construction. Behavioral interactions, counts of individuals and juveniles, and the amount of time the group spent doing various activities were observed and recorded.

Construction began April 27, 2012. The lead monitoring biologist conducted worker environmental awareness training concerning the rookery and its importance. No disturbance was noted and the rookeries' behavior was essentially unchanged by project activities. Approximately 38 adult and 23 juvenile egrets and herons were observed throughout the construction period.

Bill Goggin is a senior biologist at EMC Planning Group. You can reach him at goggin@emcplanning.com.



Great Egret nest with chicks at the Morro Bay Heron Rookery, May 2009. Photo via Wikimedia Commons © Michael "Mike" L. Baird, mike@mikebaird.com, flickr.bairdphotos.com



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Planning & Design



Eileen Whitty, AICP, and Andrea Ouse, AICP, have been co-directors of Northern Section's APA Awards process and program for six years. More photos, and a list of this year's winners, can be found on [page 9](#).

Volunteering

Enabling communities abroad to meet basic needs with local material and labor

By Erik Balsley, AICP, associate editor

Engineers Without Borders (EWB) USA is a nonprofit organization established in 2002 to support community-driven development programs worldwide. It does so by collaborating with local partners to design and implement sustainable engineering projects, while creating transformative experiences and responsible leaders. I recently spoke with **Jennifer Lehane** to find out more about her local chapter in San Francisco and the El Salvador project in which she is involved. Here is an edited summary of our conversation.

How was EWB-USA founded?

EWB-USA started about 12 years ago, when a professor of civil engineering at the University of Colorado at Boulder was asked to visit a village in San Pablo, Belize, to install a water distribution system. The village did not have running water, so with the help from eight of his students, they installed a water distribution system powered by a local waterfall. From this initial project, EWB-USA has grown to over 12,000 members, with 350 projects in over 45 developing countries.

When did the EWB-San Francisco Professional (EWB-SFP) chapter form?

In 2004, a group of university graduates living in the Bay Area decided to form an EWB professional chapter. They were members of various EWB student chapters and wanted to continue working on projects after their graduations. EWB-SFP was the first professional chapter formed in the United States.

EWB-SFP is geared mostly towards professionals. This is somewhat unusual for the organization as a whole, as most chapters typically focus on university students. The closest EWB student chapter is at UC Berkeley. EWB-SFP is probably the largest and most organized EWB chapter in the United States, in part due to the strong culture of volunteering in San Francisco Bay Area. It is working on six projects throughout the developing world.

How did you find EWB-SFP?

While living and working as a civil engineer in Santa Cruz, I took some engineering review classes in San Jose. One day, I mentioned to my fellow students that I was hoping to use my skills to help people in the developing world. A fellow student referred me to EWB-SFP. The following month I attended the chapter meeting in San Francisco and was so impressed with the organization I immediately joined. That was four years ago!

Do planners fit into the organization?

The organization is open to all skill sets. Initially, I started fundraising and event planning for the chapter. Then, I was elected the chapter's Public Relations Chair. The latter involved presenting and organizing numerous public meetings for interested audiences including UC

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Volunteering *(continued from previous page)*

Berkeley and San Francisco State University engineering students, CalTrans, the American Society of Engineers (ASCE), and other large engineering companies. About 3 years ago, I got involved with the El Salvador project. My role on this project includes education, planning, and project coordination. Typically, planners have a broad skill set, and within the EWB-SFP chapter, there is something for everyone. I have had various roles.

How does an EWB project start?

Communities request assistance from EWB-USA. After an initial evaluation of the community's needs and commitment, their request is made available to EWB chapters across the US. One of the core requirements of any EWB project is that the selected chapter makes a five-year commitment to the community. The EWB chapter visits the site to collect community input and assess needs. Based on the assessment, individual projects are then implemented. We then follow-up with the community to benchmark each project and evaluate its overall effectiveness.

EWB enables communities to meet their basic needs by building simple sustainable engineering projects that utilize in-country materials and local labor. This gives community members the ability to fix any potential problems with locally available materials. However, each project must be built to US standards. We can't just travel to a county and build whatever we want. A Technical Advisory Committee at EWB-USA reviews each project design.

A new aspect of any EWB project is education. We generally focus on infrastructure, but we want to educate children on the different types of projects we are working on in their community. If we can educate the kids on the projects, the adults may become more involved.



Jennifer Lehane with schoolchildren, San Juan de Dios

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Volunteering *(continued from previous page)*

Tell me about your project in El Salvador.

We have been working with the community of San Juan de Dios for the past four years. During our first visit there, we held a meeting to enable community members to meet the EWB project team and vote on potential projects. At the meeting, it was decided to first construct latrines. Some village members had no latrines; other latrines were in poor condition. Improperly functioning latrines could affect the water distribution system and pose major health and sanitation concerns for the community.

Based on the needs of the village, we decided to install 10 latrines. With this project, we showed the village that we listened to what they said and demonstrated our commitment to the community. The show of commitment was important, as other nonprofits in the area had previously made commitments but weren't around when problems occurred. Since the initial project four years ago, we have installed an electric water pump, conducted science education with children in San Juan De Dios, and are currently conducting a site assessment for another water distribution system.

Please describe the electric pump project.

From working closely with the community, we knew that their existing diesel water pump continuously broke down, leaving the village without a consistent supply of running water. Installing an electric water pump would be of great benefit, but a much larger effort compared to the latrines. Approximately 20 stakeholders were involved in the project including residents, landowners, the mayor, and the water company. In addition, the engineering and planning of this project were more complex.



Newly installed electric water pump

What are some of the issues involved with such projects?

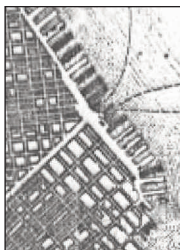
Sometimes when we travel to the community, we find things that are not as they are supposed to be, or the local laborers did not follow our project designs. One day we were not on-site to supervise installation of the power poles to the electric pump. The initial design minimized the visual impact of the overhead lines on a lake by locating them around its edges. When we arrived, we discovered the poles had been placed at such an angle that the lines crossed the lake. This misplacement not only did not follow plans but also created an eyesore.

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Volunteering *(continued from previous page)*

To decrease the likelihood of this occurring again, we had an engineer from San Francisco onsite for three months. He supervised the construction and ensured the project designs were followed.

What educational elements did you teach?

Currently, school children in San Juan de Dios are not taught science. So, among other things, we described the water cycle, outlined the community's water supply system, tested various water supplies in the village, and taught the kids the concept of recycling. It was pretty cool to see the children's reaction to the various water samples containing the e-coli and coliform.

Outside the visits, how often are you in touch with the community?

The community is involved throughout the project, from the initial planning of the project to the final evaluation. The El Salvador project team meets in San Francisco once or twice a month and there is constant communication with the community via email and Skype.

How many times have you been to San Juan de Dios?

So far, I have traveled there twice. I plan to continue being involved with this project for the foreseeable future.

Is your work making a difference there?

We have been involved with the community for four years. We have developed good relationships with the residents, interested stakeholders, and community leaders such as the mayor. Before we started, relationships had been strained among the parties and project management was poor. Perhaps the most important elements we have helped the community with are communication and coordination. We brought the community together to implement various projects. Landowners who previously would not permit electric poles to be installed on their land are now a part of the team. In such a small community, nobody wants to be singled out as the person preventing the village from meeting its basic needs.

Is knowing the language a deal breaker for participating in a project?

I know a little Spanish, but most of the project team have a good grasp of the language.

What types of skills does EWB seek for its good works?

You can approach the project manager to find how you can use your skills on an EWB project. Important to remember when becoming involved is that EWB is an all-volunteer organization. No one is going to tell you what to do. If you're willing to put yourself out there and share your skills, you will find an EWB project in need of your help! Jennifer Lehane is a Planning Associate at Michael Baker Jr., Inc. where she works on emergency management and public outreach projects. She received her Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from San Jose State University in May 2012 and has been involved with EWB-SFP for the past four years. ■

APA California – Northern Section 2012 Planning Award Winners



The following were recognized by Northern Section on May 11th:

Academic Award

LBNL Second Campus Economic Impact Analysis

Karen Chapple, PhD, and Cecilia Estolano, JD, UC Berkeley, and UC Berkeley Department of City and Regional Planning, Sustainable Economic Development Studio



Michelle Thong, Karen Chapple, PhD, Michael Katz, and Section Director Hanson Hom, AICP

Neighborhood Planning Award

El Camino Real/Chestnut Avenue Area Plan

City of South San Francisco; Dyett & Bhatia, Urban and Regional Planners; and Field Paoli Architects

Best Practices – Award of Merit

East Bay Regional Park District Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Resource Management Plan

Judith Malamut, AICP, LSA Associates, Inc.; Brian Wiese and Kenneth Blonski, East Bay Regional Park District; Carol Rice, Wildland Resource Management, Inc.; Bruce Abelli-Amen, Baseline Environmental Consulting



Brian Wiese, Judith Malamut, AICP, and Section Director Hanson Hom, AICP

Best Practices Award

SJSU/VTA Collaborative Research on TOD Residential Parking

Eduardo C. Serafin, PE, AICP, and Justin M. Meek, AICP, San Jose State University; Chris Augenstein, AICP, Robert Swierk, AICP, and Ying Smith, AICP, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority



Award winners Justin Meek, AICP, and Eduardo Serafin, PE, AICP, with Sarah Diaz-Bastin

Focused Issue Planning – Award of Merit

Adapting to Rising Tides: Transportation Vulnerability and Risk Assessment Pilot Project

Ashley Nguyen, Metropolitan Transportation Commission; San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission; AECOM Technical Services, Inc.; and California Department of Transportation



Claire Bonham-Carter, Sarah Heard, Yanna Badet, Ryan Park (all of AECOM) and Section Director Hanson Hom, AICP

Focused Issue Planning Award

The City of San Pablo Health Element

City of San Pablo City Council; Tina Gallegos, City of San Pablo; Dyett & Bhatia, Urban and Regional Planners; Contra Costa Health Services

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Grassroots Initiative – Award of Merit

Developing the Seedbed for Arcata’s Emerging Entrepreneurs

Greenway Partners, Inc., and Planwest Partners, Inc.

Grassroots Initiative Award

Central Market Economic Strategy

City and County of San Francisco; AECOM; Ethan Sprague of SunRun Inc.; Deborah Frieden & Associates

Innovation in Green Community Planning – Award of Merit

Concord Reuse Project

City of Concord, Local Reuse Authority; Perkins+Will; Coalition for a Sustainable Concord

Innovation in Green Community Planning Award

Treasure Island and Yerba Buena Island Design for Development

Kamala Subbarayan, Perkins+Will; Treasure Island Community Development (TICD); Skidmore, Owings & Merrill; CMG Landscape Architecture



Jordan O'Brien, Kamala Subbarayan and Karen Alschuler, FAICP, Π of Perkins+Will, Section Director Hanson Hom, AICP Π

Comprehensive Planning, Small Jurisdiction Award

City of Redwood City General Plan

City of Redwood City; Lisa Brownfield, Hogle-Ireland, Inc.; Dena Belzer, Strategic Economics; Sohrab Rashid, Fehr and Peers



Blake Lyon, Tom Passanisi, Jill Dever Ekas, AICP, Hanson Hom, AICP

Comprehensive Planning, Large Jurisdiction – Award of Merit

The City of Fremont General Plan Update

City of Fremont Community Development Department and Barry Miller, FAICP



Scott Ruhland, Jeff Schwob, AICP, Dan Schoenholz, Barry Miller, FAICP, Section Director Hanson Hom, AICP Π

Comprehensive Planning, Large Jurisdiction Award

The Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan

Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan Update Team; City of San Jose, Department of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement; Planning and Policy Team, Department of Transportation; Economic Strategy Team, Office of Economic Development; Policy and Planning Team, Department of Housing; San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission; David J. Powers & Associates

Recognition of Excellence

Hing Wong, AICP



Section Director-elect Jeff Baker, Section Director Hanson Hom, AICP, and former Section Directors Hing Wong, AICP, Darcy Kremin, AICP, and Juan Borrelli, AICP

WHAT'S INSIDE

UC Davis opens doors to West Village, aims to be largest Zero Net Energy facility in U.S.

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Where in the world?

Not your typical photo. [PAGE 13](#)

Roundabouts — smart transportation infrastructure

By Matthew Sundt, vice president of Golden State Planning and Environmental Consulting, Inc.

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Plan-it sustainably

By Katja Irvin, AICP, Sustainability Co-Director. Author Ernest Callenbach (1920–2012) leaves on his computer an **Epistle to the Ecotopians**.

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HSR notes

Compiled by Janet Palma, AICP. This month's high-speed rail news is all about money and whether California's legislators will vote for it.

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Norcal roundup

This month's planning news from around the San Francisco and Monterey Bay areas, compiled by Erik Balsley, AICP, associate editor.

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What others are saying

The "other" planning news from around the country and around the world, compiled by Naphthali H. Knox, FAICP, editor. [PAGE 21](#)

Northern Section calendar

Courses and events, June through July.

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Board member directory and newsletter information

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UC Davis opens doors to West Village, aims to be largest Zero Net Energy facility in U.S.

Republished from HUD USER, Sustainable Communities Resource Center eNews, February 2012

<http://www.huduser.org/portal/sustainability/newsletter.html>



Viridian apartments at UC Davis West Village

The Village Square is the hub of community life at West Village. Residents and visitors celebrated the opening of this new campus community on Saturday, Oct. 15, 2011. (Photo by Karin Higgins/UC Davis)

In August 2011, the University of California at Davis (UC Davis) welcomed the first residents of UC Davis West Village, a multi-use development that aspires to be the largest zero net energy community in the country. Zero Net Energy (ZNE) means that the community expects to generate the same amount of energy that it consumes. Occupying 130 acres of the UC Davis campus, West Village encompasses 42,500 square feet of commercial space, including a recreational and leasing center, in addition to providing housing for the 800 students who will inhabit the West Village apartments. When completed, the development will include energy research centers and the Sacramento City College campus, the first community college to be located on a University of California campus.

A comprehensive strategy for sustainable community

Environmental responsiveness is a central design principle of West Village. If built according to 2008 California Green Building Standards Code, a development similar to West Village would likely consume close to 23 million kilowatt-hours of energy per year. Aggressive conservation measures are expected to reduce the energy consumption at West Village by more than half, to 10 million kilowatt-hours per year (see [following table](#)).

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UC Davis opens doors to West Village, aims to be largest Zero Net Energy facility in U.S. *(continued from previous page)*

Community-Wide Energy Consumption Estimates

Category	Base Case 2008 T24		Proposed Package		Reduction
	kWh/yr	kWh/sq ft/yr	kWh/yr	kWh/sq ft/yr	
Single Family	9,863,100	16.2	3,484,500	5.7	65%
Multifamily (Ramble/Townhouse)	9,781,500	13.8	4,067,900	5.6	58%
Commercial / Mixed Use	1,967,100	12.4	1,090,500	6.9	45%
Leasing / Rec. Building	347,000	26	225,500	16.9	35%
Community College	1,036,400	18.5	785,400	14	24%
Common Area Lighting	299,500	n/a	149,800	n/a	50%
Totals	23,294,600		9,803,600		58%

Note: Estimates based on local building codes and energy saving projections.
Source: Table 2, eec.ucdavis.edu/publications/2010aceewestvillage.pdf

This reduction is made possible by various design features and applied technologies. Apartments feature oversized windows to take advantage of cross-breezes and natural lighting, sunshades to block sunlight on hot days, and water- and energy-saving appliances. Residents can use web-based controls to monitor and adjust their energy consumption. In addition, energy-saving technologies such as solar-reflective roofing, radiant barrier roof sheathing, increased wall insulation, and high-efficiency lighting fixtures, air conditioning systems, and appliances have been integrated into the design. “One of the unique things about this development,” says Sid England, assistant vice chancellor for environmental stewardship, “is building at community scale rather than building-by-building.” That kind of integrated planning enables the use of strategies such as locating photovoltaic cells on shade structures (in this case, parking lots) in addition to building walls. Throughout the development, drought-friendly landscaping, water-saving appliances, and paints with low levels of volatile organic compounds are used.

Although West Village has gained attention for the scale of its ZNE ambitions, the multiuse complex emphasizes sustainability in other ways. Despite its intensive planning and advanced technology, West Village offers student apartments with rents similar to those of traditional on-campus housing: \$837 per month for an individual sharing a three-bedroom apartment compared with \$900 per month for dormitory housing. In addition, the development features bike trails and bus hubs to promote low-impact living. West Village will also house the University’s first incubator for sustainable innovation, uHub, which will facilitate public-private partnerships in energy research.

(continued on next page)



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UC Davis opens doors to West Village, aims to be largest Zero Net Energy facility in U.S. *(continued from previous page)*

Public-private partnerships at work

Public-private partnerships were key to both the planning and financing of West Village. Research institutions based at the university helped create West Village's ZNE strategy, while corporations such as Davis Energy and Chevron Energy Solutions conducted feasibility studies. SunPower, another corporate partner, designed and created the photovoltaic system that will generate power for the development's housing and retail space.

West Village Community Partnership, LLC (WVCP), a joint venture between the sustainable development firms Carmel Partners of San Francisco and Urban Villages of Denver, financed the \$280 million needed for the first phase of construction. (The second, final phase of development is not yet planned.) Although UC Davis owns the land at West Village, WVCP holds a 65-year ground lease. WVCP officials estimate returns on the project by single-digit profit margins. UC Davis invested approximately \$17 million in the project for utilities and road construction. The project also garnered \$7.5 million in state and federal grants for sustainable growth.

Although it's still too early to tell whether this ambitious project will achieve its ZNE targets, this collaboration of public and private entities to design and finance a ZNE community should provide a model for future large-scale sustainable development projects. ■

Where in the world?



Answer on [page 22](#).

Roundabouts — smart transportation infrastructure

By Matthew Sundt

Evidence is that roundabouts are safer than traditional intersections because their design precludes most high-risk situations — they are designed to preclude head-on and broadside collisions, and vehicles are not required to stop. Studies by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety show roundabouts provide a 90 percent reduction in fatal and incapacitating crashes, 76 percent reduction in injury crashes, 30–40 percent reduction in pedestrian crashes, and a 10 percent reduction in bicycle crashes. In other words, roundabouts perform more favorably than conventional intersections in terms of safety, capacity, reduced overall delay, and aesthetics. Roundabouts' specific design and traffic control features include yield control for entering traffic, channeled approaches, and appropriate curvature to ensure that travel speeds are reduced on the circulatory roadway — i.e., they are self-regulating as to driver speed and access to the intersection. Roundabouts are proven to be safer, cheaper to maintain, and environmentally friendly.

Vehicle emissions

Consider another important benefit — reduced vehicle emissions. A 2007 roundabouts study¹ showed they significantly decrease delay time, fuel consumption, and hydrocarbon emissions — by 26 percent according to this study — when compared to signalized intersections. In California, the total annual tonnage of CO₂ emissions is anticipated to reach 600 million metric tons of CO₂ equivalents by 2020.

In response to this pending filth, California took the lead in protecting the environment, health, and safety with Assembly Bill 32, The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. AB 32 is intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in California whereby emissions in 2020 would be the same as 1990, and by 2050 will be further reduced to 80 percent of 1990. Senate Bill 375 passed in 2008 empowers regional planning coordination pursuant to AB 32.

In the Monterey Bay area, AMBAG responded with the *Monterey Bay Blueprint for a Sustainable Growth and Smart Infrastructure*. The Blueprint focuses on transportation and



Campus Drive at Mowatt Lane and Valley Drive, University of Maryland, College Park. Photo: Andrew Bossi, March 12, 2008.

land use planning as a way to reduce our dependence on the automobile and reduce emissions. Transportation accounts for 38 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions in California. Reducing transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions can be accomplished by building smart transportation infrastructure.

Who has them

California (population 37.2 million) is reported to have 198 roundabouts at last count. By comparison, there are over 150 roundabouts in Utah (pop. 2.7 million). Wisconsin has built 100 since

2004 and plans to build some 50 more in the next couple of years. Maryland is closing in on 200 and Kansas has nearly 100. The number of modern roundabouts in the US is around 2,300 as of December 2009.² The United Kingdom has more than 25,000 roundabouts; France has more than 30,000. Carmel, Indiana, where the Third International Conference on Roundabouts convened in May 2011, has 65 roundabouts, and 35 more are in the works by 2014!

Although California lags behind other states, there are modern roundabouts in Davis, Truckee, Arcata, Santa Barbara, Calabasas, Long Beach, Woodland, Santa Cruz, and Modesto. Goleta, Watsonville, Salinas, and Monterey each have one in the planning or construction stage. In San Juan Bautista (San Benito County), in response to a Caltrans proposal to expand Hwy 156 through the San Juan Valley incorporating standard signalized intersections, a group of citizens has funded concept plans for roundabouts at the intersections of Hwy 156/The Alameda and Hwy 156/Union Road.

Roundabouts first

Roundabouts can be constructed, but only if there is a shift in the way we think about infrastructure. Some level of concern for health and safety is a prerequisite, and acknowledging that current infrastructure is severely defective is also necessary. For roundabout infrastructure to take off, policies must be put into place that require roundabouts be considered when a project includes reconstructing intersections or building new ones. In this scenario, project engineers will analyze each intersection to determine if a roundabout is a feasible alternative based on site constraints, including right of way, environmental factors, and

(continued on next page)

Plan to attend APA state conference, Oct. 21–24

The APA California 2012 Conference-at-a-Glance is now available at <http://bit.ly/JhwKNC>. Online registration is open at <http://bit.ly/J5ESjb>. The early member rate of \$450 includes all meals. Reserve your room at the Rancho Las Palmas, Rancho Mirage, <http://bit.ly/Jqwqd7>. Space is limited at the group rate of \$175.

“The V-Pole will be more energy-efficient and cost-effective than the current generation of utility structures found on city streets, and will reduce visual clutter along the streetscape.”

—Vancity Buzz, <http://bit.ly/Mi86i9>



V-Pole rendering (Martin Tessler/Mathew Bulford)

Roundabouts — smart transportation infrastructure *(continued from previous page)*

other design constraints. The advantages and disadvantages of constructing a roundabout must be documented for each intersection. When the analysis shows that a roundabout is a feasible alternative, it must be considered the *preferred alternative*.

All jurisdictions should incorporate this “roundabouts first” policy into their planning documents and construction standards. To enhance conformance with AB32 and SB375, Air Pollution Control Districts and regional agencies such as AMBAG and ABAG should be responsible for reviewing all environmental documents to assure that roundabouts are adequately discussed as the superior and preferred alternative vis-à-vis greenhouse gas emissions.

Bottom line

We are paying dearly with our blood and treasure for a defective transportation system, so why have we not embraced and constructed roundabouts? The evidence clearly shows their efficiency and health and safety benefits. Push your community, decision makers, and staff to think about this!

Matthew Sundt is a consulting city planner and environmental consultant living in Monterey and is vice president of Golden State Planning and Environmental Consulting, Inc. You can reach him at sundt@goldenstateplanning.com.

Web site links for additional information (May 16, 2012)

<http://www.alaskaroundabouts.com/California.htm>

<http://www.roundaboutsusa.com/>

<http://www.iihs.org/research/qanda/roundabouts.html>

¹ Maxine Hesch. “Quantitatively determining the emissions reduction benefits of the replacement of a signalized intersection by a roundabout.” March 2007

² <http://www.roundaboutsusa.com/history.html> visited May 13, 2012 ■

Plan-it sustainably

Epistle to the Ecotopians (Ernest Callenbach¹)

By Katja Irvin, AICP, Sustainability Co-Director

Ernest Callenbach's "epistle" really spoke to me, offering both realistic assessment and real hope that "humans and all other beings [can] live in harmony and mutual support." Some excerpts:

"Learn to live with contradictions. These are dark times, these are bright times. We are implacably making the planet less habitable. ... We are turning more land into deserts and parking lots. We are wiping out innumerable species that are not only wondrous and beautiful, but might be useful to us. We are multiplying to the point where our needs and our wastes outweigh the capacities of the biosphere to produce and absorb them. And yet, despite the bloody headlines and the rocketing military budgets, we are also, unbelievably, killing fewer of each other proportionately than in earlier centuries. We have mobilized enormous global intelligence and mutual curiosity, through the Internet and outside it. ...

"... [W]e see, under the crumbling surface of the conventional world, promising developments: new ways of organizing economic activity (cooperatives, worker-owned companies, nonprofits, trusts), new ways of using low-impact technology to capture solar energy, to sequester carbon dioxide, new ways of building compact, congenial cities that are low (or even self-sufficient) in energy use, low in waste production, high in recycling of almost everything. A vision of sustainability that sometimes shockingly resembles Ecotopia is tremulously coming into existence at the hands of people who never heard of the book."

There must be more of you out there to whom Callenbach's epistle speaks. Let's take advantage now of opportunities to pave the road to consuming less, buying local, and promoting strategic sustainability planning. See <http://bit.ly/JkMBXO>.

We need to change our measures of success

The "limits of GDP are becoming increasingly obvious. The most telling example is pollution, whether greenhouse gases or the

dead zones in the ocean due to nitrogen runoff, or any other unintended consequence of economic activity." The good part is "there is a growing chorus that aims to replace, or at least pair it, with an index that is equally rigorous and more comprehensive. That new yardstick of success goes by the unlikely name of Gross National Happiness (GNH)." ²

A quick update

ABAG and MTC released the *Preferred Land Use and Transportation Investment Strategy for Plan Bay Area* to the Commission and ABAG Executive Board for review and approval at their joint meeting on May 17. (More information at <http://bit.ly/KRcN0d>.) The transportation investment strategy, integrated with the preferred land use strategy, fully achieves the statutory GHG emission reduction and housing targets! In June, the agencies will select alternatives to the preferred scenario to be evaluated in the EIR, and in December, they will release the Draft *Plan Bay Area* and EIR.

Sustainability committee

Need resources? Curious? Check out and explore our new website at <http://norcalapa.org/programs/sustainability/>. Kudos to Sustainability Co-Director Scott Edmondson for a job well done!

¹Callenbach, Ernest. *Epistle to the Ecotopians*. Author of the classic environmental novel *Ecotopia* (1975), Ernest Callenbach died April 16, 2012. He was 83. The *Epistle* was found on his computer after his death and was published online by TomDispatch.com. <http://www.tomdispatch.com/archive/175538/>

²Greenberg, Jon. "Happiness: A Serious Matter for Cities." Citiwire.net April 19 2012. <http://bit.ly/KRczWQ> ■

Getting the numbers right and getting the money still pose major hurdles for high-speed rail. The Legislative Analyst's Office continues to advise lawmakers to reject Governor Brown's request for \$5.9 billion in state and federal bond funds. (See "Funding remains HSR problem," below.) CHSRA Chairman Dan Richard disputed the LAO's findings, saying the use of carbon-offset dollars for the project is a solid concept.

Late in April, SPUR came out with four reasons it remains a strong supporter of high-speed rail for California. First, the most recent business plan "lowers the cost of the high-speed rail system by \$30 billion to \$68.4 billion by adopting a 'blended' approach." Second, "While starting construction in the Central Valley, it includes early investments in the Bay Area and Los Angeles." Third, "It proposes that the initial operating segment will connect from the Central Valley to Southern California." And fourth, "It makes high-speed trains part of an integrated statewide transportation system in California." (See Egon Terplan, "Big wins, big questions as high-speed rail moves ahead," SPUR, Ideas and action for a better city, April 25, 2012.

<http://bit.ly/L4GZYu>

Below is a roundup of other HSR news from around the state.

Funding remains HSR problem

<http://bit.ly/HRgxuJ>

"After the state's fiscal analyst criticized California high-speed rail for facing 'highly speculative' financial prospects, California High-Speed Rail Authority Chairman Dan Richard defended the \$68 billion program ... suggesting major transportation projects often lack funding certainty. The LAO assailed contentions ... the high-speed rail project could rely on billions of dollars from a new charge on businesses for greenhouse gas emissions [saying] the state would face significant legal risks if it were to use such funds for high-speed rail." —Kevin Yamamura, "California high-speed rail chief: Projects often lack sure funding," *The Sacramento Bee: Capitol Alert*, April 18, 2012.

LAO: Limit funds to planning

<http://reut.rs/MeggIc>

"While the Legislative Analyst's Office urged putting the brakes on the high-speed rail project, it recommended lawmakers provide some minimal funding for it to continue some planning efforts, specifically around environmental and initial engineering review, that are underway to keep options for it open. Mary Nichols, chairman of California's Air Resources Board, said building a high-speed rail network would help the state meet its aggressive goals for reducing greenhouse [gas] emissions." —Jim Christie, "Halt California funds for high-speed rail: budget watchdog," *Reuters*, April 17, 2012.

Calculating the cost

<http://bit.ly/lfoFKP>

"The paper [Berkeley Institute for Transportation Studies, Chester and Horvath, 2009] suggested high-speed trains were not so green, with possibly negative cost/benefit. The paper went viral, even though there were huge blunders in the study. One error was the unrealistic seat occupancy numbers (as low as 10 percent). But even worse was a units-conversion error, as discovered by Clem Tillier: 'Berkeley's numbers are undone by a simple unit conversion error committed by a CHSRA consultant [who] botched the conversion from kilowatt-hours to British Thermal Units, feeding Berkeley a figure of 170 kWh/VKT instead of 46 kWh/VKT.' With the release of the 2012 Business Plan, the CHSRA corrected their energy consumption figure." —"Carbon footprint of a high-speed train," *Drunk Engineer, Wordpress.com*, April 26, 2012.

Comparing costs

<http://bit.ly/lhPJoE>

"By hitting the reset button, Gov. Jerry Brown bought some time for the embattled California high-speed rail plan. But none of [the business plan] changes addressed what a panel of outside financial experts has styled 'the

(continued on next page)

elephant in the room' for California proposed high-speed rail system — its extraordinarily low projected operating costs. Regarding the outside experts' critique, [rail board member Mike] Rossi said, 'We have met with the authors of the report in an attempt to correct their flawed assumptions and conclusions.' —Lance Williams, "Bullet train's low operating costs are 'elephant in room,' experts say," *Bakersfield Californian*, April 30, 2012.

Valley EIR approved

<http://bit.ly/JwqYGv>

"The California High-Speed Rail Authority approved two resolutions [May 3] certifying the environmental impact report for its proposed Merced-Fresno section, and formally approving the project. The approval clears the way for the authority to begin negotiations with property owners to buy right of way, to discuss compensation for losses to businesses, farms, and residents affected by the route, and to award construction contracts for work in the section. The action also sets the location for stations in downtown Merced and downtown Fresno." —Tim Sheehan, "High-speed rail board approves Merced-Fresno environmental impact report," *The Fresno Bee*, May 3, 2012.

Joint agreement between Caltrain and CHSR

<http://bit.ly/L2bMix>

"Caltrain has received a unanimous thumbs-up by the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board to electrify the Peninsula commuter-rail system. The memorandum of understanding between the California High-Speed Rail Authority and seven Bay Area public agencies would use local, regional, and federal funding to secure hundreds

of millions of dollars in high-speed rail funds for the project. Riders could see an electrified Caltrain system as soon as 2019, Caltrain announced." —Sue Dremann, "Electrification of Caltrain approved by board," *Palo Alto Online*, May 3, 2012.

LaHood backs HSR with time limit

<http://bit.ly/IY7sp4>

"Although high speed rail opponents in Sacramento have been trying to delay the legislature's approval of spending Prop 1A bond funds to begin construction of the high speed rail project, the Obama Administration made it clear that delay would jeopardize federal funding. 'U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood warned the California Legislature [May 10] that the Obama administration will not wait until fall for a vote on high-speed rail, urging its approval in a budget vote [in June].' The Obama Administration — in the middle of a close re-election campaign — is counting on California to move the high-speed rail project forward and show that it isn't a wasteful, flawed concept. One would assume that Democrats in Sacramento would help the President out." —Robert Cruickshank, "Obama administration tells California: Approve HSR money as part of regular budget," *California High Speed Rail Blog*, May 10, 2012.

Janet Palma, MS, AICP, works in Environmental Health Services for the San Francisco Department of Public Health and is Principal at J. Palma & Associates. She serves on the San Leandro Board of Zoning Adjustments and as Planning Commissioner Representative for APA California-Northern's board of directors. **Disclosure:** The author has been working on visual resources for the Bakersfield-to-Palmdale section of the proposed high-speed rail line as a sub-contractor to URS Corporation. ■



Three-minute video shows world's roads, flight paths, and shipping routes.

<http://bit.ly/IAIszn>

Norcal roundup

Planning news from around the San Francisco and Monterey Bay areas

Compiled by Erik Balsley, AICP, associate editor

On a plateau overlooking undulating grounds

<http://bit.ly/JVnAUd>

"Since work began at the East Garrison at the former Fort Ord last fall, there are now hundreds of housing pads and residential streets nearing completion, utilities, sidewalks and street lights are in place, and the first 'vertical construction' is now in sight. The master development group, Union Community partners took over the 1,400-unit, 244-acre project from East Garrison Partners after it fell into foreclosure in 2009. Jim Fletcher, a UCP vice-president, pointed out that the proposal is 'pretty unique in a couple of ways; it's a fully entitled project with water in Monterey County, and unlike most projects approved before the economic meltdown, it is beginning construction with its original concept intact.' The initial wave of building includes 441 homes, neighborhood parks and open space, a community park, and the beginnings of a town center. Fletcher said there's no way to know for sure but indications are it will take 10–15 years for 'build-out' to occur." —Jim Johnson, "Fort Ord's East Garrison roaring back to life," *The Monterey County Herald*, May 14, 2012.

Benefits district celebrates success

<http://bit.ly/KiMxcW>

"Last week the Koreatown Northgate Community Benefit District, otherwise known as KONO, came together to celebrate the creation of new banners, street trees, and fanciful artwork on area utility boxes. KONO property owners contribute funds to ensure the district is safe, clean, and promoted. About 60 percent of the funds is used for district cleaning and security services, including sidewalk sweeping, trash removal, graffiti abatement, while another 20 percent goes to marketing and identity enhancement. The Telegraph Avenue corridor group began their planning process in July 2007. Now, nearly five years later, their goal of making the area more attractive for visitors is making a visible difference. There are now 281 registered businesses in the benefit district." —Annalee Allen, "A new neighborhood designation in Oakland: KONO," *The Oakland Tribune*, *MercuryNews.com*, May 13, 2012.

Governance center hits roadblock

<http://bit.ly/KXDAFj>

"The California Senate has ordered the Bay Area's transportation planning agency to stop spending bridge toll money on renovations to the San Francisco building where it hopes to open a new regional governance center. The legislation, passed overwhelmingly on a 30-2 vote, orders the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to cease renovation work on the building at 390 Main St. in San Francisco until state Auditor Elaine Howle releases her audit of the purchase. It's unclear whether Senate Bill 1545 will make it onto Gov. Jerry

Brown's desk before the state auditor completes her work in June, which would render the legislation moot. The first agency scheduled to move into 390 Main St. is the Bay Conservation and Development District [sic], whose current lease expires in March 2013."

—Lisa Vorderbrueggen, "Senate votes to stop spending on MTC regional headquarters project," *Contra Costa Times*, *MercuryNews.com*, May 11, 2012.

San Francisco water deal generates controversy

<http://bit.ly/KoYVKM>

"The Modesto Irrigation District and San Francisco released a draft contract in early May that envisions the city buying 2,240 acre-feet per year, about 1.2 percent of MID's average farm deliveries. San Francisco would pay \$700 per acre-foot to start, with annual increases of up to 3 percent. MID officials said that another 25,000 acre-feet would be sold only if an exhaustive study shows that it would not leave customers short. San Francisco officials have said the MID water, even at \$700 per acre-foot, is more practical than the alternatives for meeting future demand. In closed session, the Modesto City Council has discussed an agenda item with legal staff over the initiation of a lawsuit against an undisclosed party. City Attorney Susana Alcala Wood later said there was nothing to report from the closed session." —John Holland, "Harsh words, lawsuit threats greet MID plan to sell water to SF," *The Modesto Bee*, May 8, 2012.

Date muddles redevelopment wind-down

<http://bit.ly/J7aYxO>

"Last November, San Jose gave the Oakland A's an option to buy downtown land for a new ballpark. But the deal wasn't intended simply to boost the stadium plan; it also aimed to protect the land from the state, which was seeking to nab the assets of city redevelopment agencies in order to plug its budget holes. Other cities around the Bay Area made similar maneuvers to keep threatened projects alive, and they all may find those redevelopment-related deals in the state's cross hairs as officials argue over the effective date of the law passed last year that ultimately killed the agencies. Two recent letters from State Controller John Chiang have ignited a firestorm by trying to clarify the state's position. The state contends that any asset transferred last year from the redevelopment agencies to other government entities after Jan. 1, 2011, through June 28, 2011, must be returned. And any contracts that redevelopment agencies signed with outside parties after June 28, also aren't viable."

—Tracy Seipel, "California controller seeks return of redevelopment agency property, assets," *San Jose Mercury News*, May 7, 2012.

(continued on next page)

Cruises! Foiled again

<http://bit.ly/MeDEp9>

"Everything seems lined up for a surge in cruise business in San Francisco: a beautiful bay, a world-class tourist city, and now a new, state-of-the-art cruise ship terminal at Pier 27. Except the idea to make San Francisco a destination for cruises is foiled by the Passenger Vessel Service Act passed in 1886, which requires all foreign-owned ships from transporting passengers from one American port, say Los Angeles, to another, like San Francisco, to stop in a foreign port. Unfortunately the debate over lifting the act has gone on for years, with hearings and no changes by the House of Representatives in 1994 and 2001. Despite this, local travel officials hope the new terminal will encourage ships to remain longer than overnight." —C.W. Nevius, "Law hampers dreams of boosting bay's cruise ships," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, May 3, 2012.

Cameras boost local economy

<http://bit.ly/L2EdSq>

"A nine-day production of a new Will Smith film is expected to pump millions of dollars into the local economy of Humboldt County. This isn't the first time Humboldt County attracted a major movie — 'Return of the Jedi,' 'Outbreak,' and 'The Majestic' showcase the region, too. 'For every dollar a production company spends in an area on actual filming, called direct filming, they'll spend three dollars indirectly, money circulating in the county for a larger impact,' said Humboldt County Film Commissioner Cassandra Hesseltine. She says California is competing with other states to keep the movie business in the state." However, an "extension of a five-year package of tax credits" proposed by the California Film Commission could better help the state compete. —Cheryl Getuiza, "Keeping the California film economy rolling," *California Forward*, May 3, 2012.

Foreclosures reshape black community

<http://bit.ly/IUG9cr>

"Over the last 40 years, the black population in San Francisco dropped from over 13 percent to 6 percent, the biggest percentage decline in any American city. Around a quarter of the city's remaining black population lives in Bayview, which has the highest foreclosure rate in San Francisco. To many local residents, the emigration of black people from Bayview follows a direct line of descent from the displacement of black people from the Fillmore neighborhood. A good portion of the displaced black population from the redevelopment of the area headed to Bayview, an industrial hub with an established black community that had grown throughout the postwar years.

By the turn of the millennium, the black population in the neighborhood had stabilized at around 50 percent. Then came the housing boom and bust. Hundreds of homes, including many that had been paid off and later refinanced, fell into foreclosure. The free market now threatens to do to Bayview what city leaders and developers did to the Fillmore." —Albert Samaha, "The dispossessed: Bayview homeowners fight foreclosures," *SF Weekly*, May 2, 2012.

PRT for Google?

<http://bit.ly/L55a99>

"Google's campus isn't exactly in the center of Mountain View but in North Bayshore, an '80s-era office park two miles north of downtown Mountain View. Google is currently doing its first-ever campus master plan in anticipation of an increase in employment. Likewise, Mountain View is about to create a plan for the North Bayshore district that deals with the gnarly issue of how to accommodate Google's growth. To combat expected congestion, some local folks are looking at a Jetson-style idea: personal rapid transit, or PRT. However, while PRT is sexy, the other options are deceptively boring and low-tech: to charge for parking or build housing and office space in North Bayshore. In suburban Silicon Valley, the Googles, LinkedIns and other tech companies may yet learn that the key to competitiveness in the future is to take advantage of a remarkably efficient and resilient invention that is many centuries old: the city." —William Fulton, "Silicon Valley considers Personal Rapid Transit system," *Governing*, May 2012.

New vineyard rules criticised

<http://bit.ly/JCHZim>

"New rules making it tougher to rip up forested hillsides to plant vineyards won qualified approval from the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors in April. The vote was the culmination of four months' work by county staff to craft rules aimed at strengthening erosion control measures ahead of immediate proposals for hillside vineyard projects totalling 341 acres. They would prohibit tree removal on the steepest of slopes, keep vineyards 50 to 100 feet away from unstable hillsides, and require three years of follow-up to ensure the regulations are effective. In addition, vineyards must be set back 50 feet below a grade of 50 percent or more, and 100 feet above such a grade. Environmental groups think it doesn't go far enough, and agriculture and growers groups believe the process was rushed, said Supervisor Efren Carrillo." —Kevin McCallum, "Sonoma County adopts hillside vineyard restrictions," *Press Democrat*, April 25, 2012.

What others are saying

Compiled by Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP, Editor

Nearly a billion sold

<http://bit.ly/K6Iz78>

“According to a Booz & Company/Buddy Media survey released last October of more than 100 large companies (<http://bit.ly/KOWFtb>), only a third have a senior executive charged with overseeing social media. And just over a third (38 percent) reported social media as a CEO-level agenda item. There are nearly a billion people on Facebook — just about everyone, that is, except CEOs. ... The problem is that using social media challenges basic assumptions of what it means to be ‘professional.’ ... Your organization, reputation, logo, and staff are living, breathing entities that need to be out in the world to be effective.” —Allison Fine, “What does ‘Professional’ look like today?” *Harvard Business Review*, May 9, 2012.

Tiburon to Texarkana exodus is exaggerated

<http://bloom.bg/IUmawc>

“Economic theory typically embraces choice, whether in supermarkets or in cities. Americans can opt to live in dense cities or sprawling suburbs. As long as people pay the social costs of their actions, and are not subsidized by policies that artificially favor one living style over another, then it is splendid that we have plenty of options, some with sunshine and inexpensive mass-produced housing and others with high wages and costly apartments. The tides of history may occasionally make one form of living appear temporarily triumphant — as suburbia did, thanks to cheap cars and abundant highways, in the 1960s and 1970s — but soon enough other forces reassert themselves. After 1980, globalization and new technologies increased the value of ideas and innovation, which in turn led to a rebirth of those older, denser cities that were heavy with human capital.” —Edward Glaeser, “You hate taxes, but you’re not moving to Nashville,” *Bloomberg*, May 8, 2012.

New transmission lines needed to carry power

<http://bit.ly/LB5T13>

“When the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) approved PG&E’s contract with the Mojave Solar Project, consumer advocates raised questions about the deal. The

contract does not include the cost to expand and upgrade transmission lines that will carry power from the desert to Northern California. The CPUC has approved contracts for 51 solar energy-generating projects [that along with] other renewable projects still in development will require more than \$12 billion in transmission line expansions and upgrades over the next decade. But some environmentalists argue that ... California is ignoring a less expensive and more environmentally-friendly alternative: putting solar projects on rooftops and landfills closer to urban centers, where energy can flow directly into local grids. PG&E projects its rates will rise 45 percent over the next decade, while its renewable energy investments will only lead to a 2 percent decrease in greenhouse gas emissions. Bill Powers, a San Diego-based mechanical engineer, contends that a more localized approach to distributing power could reduce emissions by up to 60 percent.” —Ryan Jacobs, “Remote solar plants come with added costs,” *The Bay Citizen*, May 7, 2012.

Job numbers in context

<http://nyti.ms/JpZTUG>

“The share of working-age Americans either working or actively looking for a job is at its lowest level since 1981. The share of men in the labor force fell in April to 70 percent — the lowest figure since the Labor Department began collecting these data in 1948 — partly because baby boomers are hitting retirement age. With the average duration of unemployment now at 39.1 weeks, more and more workers roll off those benefits, stopping their job searches and dropping out. Government spending has fallen for six straight quarters. [In April] governments eliminated 15,000 jobs. Averaging the total job growth, the economy has been adding about 200,000 jobs a month this year. That pace is not fast enough to recover the losses from the Great Recession and its aftermath in the foreseeable future.” —Catherine Rampell, “April jobs report shows growth slowing, with 115,000 new positions,” *The New York Times*, May 4, 2012.

(continued on next page)

Five cities are biggest GHG emitters: Tianjin, Toronto, Shanghai, Beijing, Los Angeles

<http://bit.ly/IOmqxR>

“Several major Chinese cities have some of the world’s highest per capita carbon footprints according to a World Bank report, *Sustainable Low-Carbon City Development in China*. (PDF <http://bit.ly/Jh5BdY>) Greenhouse gas emissions (in tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per capita) in Tianjin, Shanghai, and Beijing far exceed those of [other major] cities. Industry and power generation are major contributors in Chinese cities, largely because coal dominates the nation’s energy use. Globally, most urban emissions come from transport, buildings, and waste, but these three sectors only account for about 20 percent of China’s urban emissions. Cities account for more than 70 percent of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions worldwide, and this is expected to rise to 76 percent by 2030, said the report. ‘Local governments are relying on land transfers and land development to raise revenue for building infrastructure and urban development, but such an approach is unsustainable.’ ” —Lan Lan, “Chinese cities ‘near top’ of world carbon emissions list,” *China Daily*, May 4, 2012.

Let’s deal with climate change

<http://nyti.ms/K2BOa6>

“To the editor: Let’s say you had a fire in your house. It is your most important possession, and you feel that it is irreplaceable. You want to find out what caused the fire, so you hire 100 expert fire investigators to investigate and report to you. Ninety-seven of them tell you virtually the same thing: the fire was caused by faulty wiring, and if you

don’t invest in upgrading the wiring you will almost certainly have another fire — and the next one could destroy your house. Three of the experts tell you that you don’t have to do anything, and you shouldn’t worry about it at all. What would you do? —Bob Shamis, New York, May 2, 2012.” A version of this letter appeared in print on May 5, 2012, on page A22 of the New York edition with the headline: *The Climate, the Clouds and the Dissenters*. The referenced article is “Clouds’ effect on climate change is last bastion for dissenters,” by Justin Gillis, *The New York Times*, May 1, 2012.

<http://nyti.ms/Kbx93Y>

SB 375 aligns with reality

<http://bit.ly/IS7Qnb>

“Perhaps the most remarkable finding [from *The New California Dream* by Arthur C. Nelson, <http://bit.ly/IRr9yD>] focuses on transit-served neighborhoods. A growing portion of the US population, 47 percent, would like to live in neighborhoods served by public transit. Only about 10 percent do now. In California, the number who would like to live near transit is much higher — 71 percent. Another finding [of Nelson’s report] focuses on the supply of conventional-lot single-family housing. For California, that is anything larger than an eighth of an acre (5,445 square feet). Even if no new suburban-style single-family housing is built, there will still be an oversupply of more than two million of these units in California in 2035. According to the report, ‘These long-term market trends represent a directional alignment between the real estate preferences expressed by consumers and the greenhouse gas reduction objectives expressed by the state of California in the form of Senate Bill (SB) 375.’ ” —Robert Steuteville, “A golden opportunity,” *Better! Cities & Towns Online*, May 1, 2012. ■

Answer to “Where in the world?” (Page 13)

Venice, in the Piazzeta San Marco, looking south. San Teodoro Column on the left. Photo: Justin Meek, AICP, 2012.

<http://g.co/maps/55dcf>

“Transit-served areas take up only 120 square miles (76,605 acres), or 0.07 percent of California. Most of the demand for new housing could be met by developers voluntarily building in this tiny portion of the state, leaving most of the rest of the suburban and rural character intact — if communities will let this happen.” — Robert Steuteville,

<http://bit.ly/IS7Qnb>

NORTHERN SECTION CALENDAR

To list an event in the Northern Section calendars (*Northern News*, monthly; *eNews*, every two weeks), go to <http://bit.ly/ed1Ekc> 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://bit.ly/ILq1gx>

CM | 4.0 may be earned by viewing all four parts of the symposium 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. The course was developed by the APA and the National Association of County & City Health Officials. See a video and earn CM credits. **Free.** The video is available through **December 31, 2012.** Visit <http://bit.ly/HKRZJe>

CM | 6.0 may be earned by viewing all course materials and taking an exam

MAY						
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MAY

5/24

Walking Tour of Mission District Parklets. 5:30–7 PM. Bring your walking shoes and join us for a walking tour of the Mission District’s newest open spaces. The tour will start promptly at 5:30 at Four Barrel Coffee, 375 Valencia Street, **SAN FRANCISCO**, and will be led by John Bela of Rebar Group and Paul Chasan of the San Francisco Planning Department. It will showcase parklets built in this part of the City and give a broader overview of the parklet creation process. A happy hour will follow at one of the local bars. **Free** for APA members; however, space is limited. Contact Tania Sheyner, Professional Development Director, at tsheyner@esassoc.com for more information and/or to RSVP. **CM | 1.5 pending**

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JUNE						
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JUNE

6/7 **Health Impact Assessments: An Innovative Approach for Planning Healthy Communities.** 6:30–8:30 PM, URS, 1333 Broadway, Ste 800, **OAKLAND**. Learn about a new tool in the planner’s toolbox to assess policies, programs, and projects for their potential effects on a community’s health and the distribution of those effects. **Free**. For more information, contact Darcy Kremin, AICP, at darcy.kremin@urs.com or (510) 874-3110. **CM | pending**

6/11–6/13 **UC Berkeley ITS Tech Transfer: Access Management.** 1–4 PM. This **ONLINE** UC Berkeley Technology Transfer Program course covers access management strategies and techniques to locate, design, and manage safe, efficient means to move traffic to and from adjoining land uses, improve traffic flow and travel times with less delay, and protect the public investment in the road system to help reduce agency capital costs. **\$295**. Register at <http://bit.ly/HKRdFp>. **CM | 7.5 pending**

6/12 **Brown Bag Lunch Series: Tsunami on the North Coast.** Noon–1 PM, GHD’s conference room, 718 Third Street, **EUREKA**. It has been just over a year since a tsunami roared out from Japan and sent a noticeable wave into Humboldt Bay and the Crescent City Harbor. What can Humboldt County be prepared for? How might sea level rise affect a tsunami generated by a local earthquake? These and other questions about this potential threat to our future will be addressed by Lori Dengler, Professor of Geology at Humboldt State University. **Free**.

6/20 **Planning and Designing for Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety.** All-day workshop sponsored by the Healthy Transportation Network, co-sponsored by APA California – Northern and the City of Fortuna. The workshop will describe and provide examples of complete streets, proven pedestrian safety programs, designing bicycle routes in rural and urban areas, and how to share the road effectively. Examples near the lecture area will be explored. The workshop will be held at River Lodge in **FORTUNA**. The address and driving instructions are provided with your pre-registration. Online registration will be available soon. A discount for APA members will be available. **CM | 6.5 pending**

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JULY						
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JULY

7/10 Brown Bag Lunch Series – Implementing Pedestrian Safety Programs. Noon–1 PM. GHD’s conference room at 718 Third Street, **EUREKA**. Pedestrian Safety is one aspect of Complete Streets that enhances our communities. Humboldt County has received a grant of funds for a pilot project that will target select intersections with crosswalks but where safety is still an issue. The program will be described by Maria Bauman and Michelle Postman from the County’s Public Health Branch. The program models safety measures installed in Seattle, Salt Lake City, Kirkland, and several small towns across the country. As a hint, fluorescent yellow and orange play a prominent role as do whimsy and children’s enthusiasm about “protecting” their parents when crossing the street. Curious? Want a set-up in your town? Then attend this most improbable good idea. **Free.**

7/23–7/25 UC Berkeley ITS Tech Transfer: Roundabouts. 1:30–4 PM. This **ONLINE** UC Berkeley Technology Transfer Program course covers the principles and working concepts of modern *roundabout* design and operation. This course will address capacity analysis, crash rate experience, right of way impacts, geometric design principles, sight distance criteria, traffic operations, system considerations, and pedestrian and bicycle treatments. **\$295.** Register at <http://bit.ly/HpF9QE>. **CM | 7.5 pending** ■

“At least 675 shipping containers are lost at sea each year. ... Tokyo University agricultural researchers found that *nurdles* — plastic resin pellets used as raw industrial materials, which spill into the ocean by the ton every year — absorb toxins including pesticides and endocrine-disrupting PCBs. Those toxins can pass into the creatures that eat the plastic.” —*Pacific Standard Magazine*, <http://bit.ly/JH10XE>

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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) 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 2012 schedule can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/wSH355>.

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