

# NORTHERN NEWS



American Planning Association  
California Chapter  
Northern  
*Making Great Communities Happen*

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



November 2012

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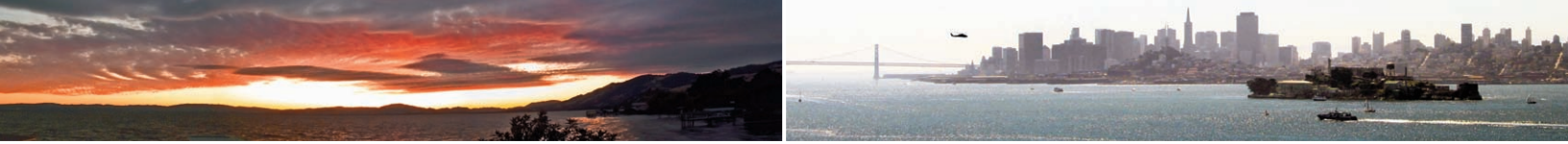
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Southbound Caltrain pulls in to San Carlos station  
Photo: Naphtali Knox, FAICP





# NORTHERN NEWS



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*Making Great Communities Happen*

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**NOVEMBER 2012**

## Lessons learned from LEED to lean



By Peter Pirnejad

**I**t is time that I — having spent a considerable amount of my professional career promoting healthy buildings and neighborhoods — apply some of the lessons I have learned to promoting healthier people.

As a mid-career professional planner, I was drawn to the idea of healthier, more sustainable buildings and to promoting green buildings, neighborhoods, and ordinances. I spent a considerable portion of the last decade speaking at various conferences on this noble cause, and I continue to advocate for sustainable development.

It was coincidence that my career was entering its midlife as I was. I decided to challenge mortality by signing up for my first ironman. After a year of training and preparation, I traveled to Guerneville to try my hand at one of the hardest single day endurance events. Three years and four 'ironman's later, I hung up my wetsuit, bike, and running shoes.

In the post-endorphin haze, I started thinking about how planning and health come together. For someone to find time in their busy working, commuting, and family life to exercise would require, I thought, a complete lifestyle change. For many, making exercise and diet one of the main focal points of their lives in order to avoid being counted with the other 65 percent of Americans who are overweight<sup>1</sup> might seem a losing battle. With research that links physical activity and health outcomes, the Surgeon General's 1996 report on physical activity and health made clear that the stakes are life or death.<sup>2</sup> The good news is that people don't need to train for an ironman; they only need 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity most days of the week.

If the opportunities are there, it is not hard to find, in the course of a typical day, 30 minutes for moderately intense physical activity. Unfortunately, and to no one's surprise, cities, communities, and buildings have been trending toward encouraging convenience rather than promoting mobility. We see an epidemic of auto-oriented streets instead of bicycle and pedestrian focus corridors;

expansive landscaped setbacks and medians instead of trails and linear parks; and elevator-centric buildings that design stairs for emergency exits rather than extensions of the walker's experience. As planners we have the ability to change this trend.

The sustainability agenda has dominated a significant portion of the planning and building bandwidth since the late 1990s. The agenda went from progressive to mainstream in 2010 when the ICC published the optional Green Building Code. By 2011 — as the ordinance became mandatory — California cities no longer had the option to ignore sustainability. And by 2014, the measures begin to affect existing buildings.

How did this happen in such short order? By weaving the appropriate adjustments slowly into everyday life and vocabulary, we were able to absorb the change merely by realigning our priorities rather than drastically changing direction.

It was determined early on that there is no need to create a whole new element of a general plan in order to consider sustainability; rather, the subject was infused into every policy of the general plan. The result was an internally consistent and holistic approach to sustainability rather than an afterthought. In much the same way, wellness needs to be another lens through which we review general plan policies to consider their health impacts. Humboldt County's General Plan does just that by applying an assessment tool normally used in Public Health circles — the Health Impact Assessment — to study the health implications of their long range planning policy document.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Katherine M. Flegal, PhD; Margaret D. Carroll, MS; Cynthia L. Ogden, PhD; Clifford L. Johnson, MSPH. *Prevalence and Trends in Obesity Among US Adults, 1999–2000*. JAMA. 2002;288(14): 1723–1727.

<http://bit.ly/PyeNve>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 1996. <http://1.usa.gov/UYHJOK>

<sup>3</sup> Humboldt County General Plan Update Health Impact Assessment, March 2008, 46 pp. <http://bit.ly/SWLAcO>

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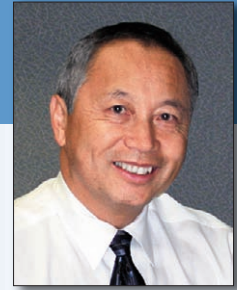
have moved to the Northern Section website, [norcalapa.org](http://norcalapa.org). ■

There are currently 17 desalination proposals in the state [and] the California Coastal Commission reviews each project case-by-case. However, only one small plant along Monterey Bay is pumping out any drinking water: The \$14 million facility in Sand City, a town of about 340 people.

—Alicia Chang, *San Francisco Chronicle*. <http://bit.ly/SZjthe>

## Director's note

By Hanson Hom, AICP



### Plan to attend APA Northern Holiday Party on November 30

The end of 2012 is right around the corner, and the opportunity to catch up with colleagues is coming up. Don't miss an always-enjoyable Northern Section tradition as we gather for a festive get together to celebrate and/or console. This year's event will be held on Friday, November 30, 7:00 p.m., at eclectic **Mua Oakland Bar and Restaurant**, 2442a Webster St. in downtown Oakland, a short walk from the 19th Street Oakland BART station. We will have a special room with mezzanine seating reserved exclusively for our use. See [page 16](#) for more information and to register for the event. *A discount is available for pre-registration before November 26.* Additionally, we will hold our annual California Planning Foundation (CPF) auction that evening. If you can donate an item (no donation is too small!), it would be greatly appreciated, and we will acknowledge your donation at the event. **All proceeds go toward student scholarships.** Please contact Hing Wong, CPF Liaison at (510) 464-7966 or [hingw@abag.ca.gov](mailto:hingw@abag.ca.gov).

### Upcoming AICP | CM Events at <http://bit.ly/LtpX2Y>

For those who want to earn some end of the year AICP | CM credits, the Northern Section is sponsoring a number of events in the next several weeks. Check the above link for details. Workshops are being offered on interpreting U.S. Census information, and several events will discuss parking policy reform — an important land use topic that seems to be a bane for many planners. One event to highlight is the Nov. 9th Northern

Section workshop on *Smart Parking for Smart Growth: Reforming Parking Policies for TOD.*

The workshop is co-sponsored by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission with the goal of facilitating a dialogue on adjusting parking standards for transit-rich areas, with a discussion of effective state legislation and local ordinances. For more details, please see [page 14](#) and my Director's note in the *Northern News* October issue, <http://bit.ly/WEPZXq>

### Northern Section to host Chapter Conference in 2015

I hope many of you were able to attend this year's California Chapter conference at Rancho Mirage — a very enlightening conference with many networking events. As you might guess, planning a conference requires a tremendous amount of planning and attention to numerous details. *"It takes a village"* aptly applies, and it is not too early for Northern Section to start planning the 2015 Chapter conference. The Northern Section last hosted the conference in San Jose in 2007, which was a stunning event and a great success. (Seems like just yesterday.) We need your energy and ideas to make the 2015 conference equally successful or even better. If you would like to participate in the collective planning of the conference, please email me — noting any particular interest — at [hansonapa@gmail.com](mailto:hansonapa@gmail.com), as the Board will be developing an interest list of volunteers. Details will be forthcoming as the conference planning picks up steam next year. ■

"Researchers at Stanford University are developing smart-phone applications that give commuters incentives to leave their cars at home, or at least to avoid driving them during rush hour. Stanford has served as a proving ground for the technology because of a pre-existing agreement with local government that limits the campus to less than 3,500 vehicles during peak commuting times." —Jeff McMahon, *Forbes*. <http://onforb.es/QHmBLY>

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## Lessons learned from LEED to lean (*continued from page 1*)

The same logic holds true for reviewing policies that affect community planning projects. For example, we can promote wellness by replacing older rules that foster traditional Euclidean Zoning practices with mixed-use models that promote pedestrian modality as a form of connectivity. Studies show that walking trips to commercial areas are more frequent in neighborhoods with nearby stores and grid-like street networks.<sup>4</sup> The evidence is becoming increasingly clearer that urban form plays a role in the amount of physical activity in which we engage, and the link between reduced physical activity and chronic disease and conditions is largely undisputable<sup>5</sup>.

Reviewing building plans to ensure that new and renovated buildings promote healthy living can also be a means to removing barriers to promoting mobility and wellness. We can do simple things such as requiring bicycle parking for employees and patrons; making stairs enjoyable, and giving them precedence over elevators or escalators; and siting outdoor spaces that promote modality and exploration over sitting in meetings or at computers. In 2010, the American Institute of Architects partnered with the city of New York to create “Active Design Guidelines” that promote healthy living in buildings, along streets, and in urban spaces.<sup>6</sup>

To promote healthy policies and remove the obstacles that keep us from implementing wellbeing in our planning practice, we can start by partnering with experts who specialize in working with cities to target harmful — and promote helpful — policies. Organizations such as ChangeLab Solutions, Health Impact Partners, and Generations Community Wellness are but a few that specialize in doing just that. We also can look to large granting organizations such as the Pew Family Trusts, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the California Endowment. They have allocated millions of dollars for competitive grants to study the effects of this epidemic and institute creative solutions.

The problem is evident, the solutions are available, the experts are waiting, and the funding is plentiful. The only thing left to do is start.

Peter Pirnejad is development services director for the City of Palo Alto. You can reach him at [Peter.pirnejad@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:Peter.pirnejad@cityofpaloalto.org)

<sup>4</sup> Handy, SL, *Understanding the link between urban form and nonwork travel behavior*, *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, April 1996: vol. 15 no. 3:183-198.  
<http://bit.ly/SWLDoX>

<sup>5</sup> Ewing, Reid, Tom Schmid, Richard Killingsworth, Amy Zlot, and Stephen Raudenbush, “Relationship Between Urban Sprawl and Physical Activity, Obesity, and Morbidity,” *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 2003, Sept/Oct, Vol. 18, No. 1: 47-57.  
<http://bit.ly/RMOxiF>

<sup>6</sup> New York City Dept. of Design and Construction, <http://on.nyc.gov/SWLIZR> ■

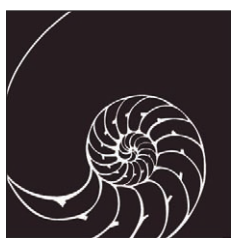
“Too many people see compromise as a bad thing, an abandonment of principle. In reality, a willingness to compromise is a sign of great conviction: the conviction that the organization comes first. As easy as that sounds, it is remarkably hard to adopt.” —John Baldoni, *HBR Blog Network*. <http://bit.ly/TkuAOs>





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## Norcal roundup

By Erik Balsley, AICP, associate editor

### Palo Alto parking exemptions eliminated

<http://bit.ly/RCIxuA>

"A Palo Alto law that relaxed parking regulations for developers with downtown projects began its transition from the city's zoning code to its history books after the City Council passed an 'urgency ordinance' temporarily halting it. The ordinance imposes a moratorium on the parking exemption granted to developers looking to build dense developments downtown and in the California Avenue business district. The city added these exemptions to its zoning code in the mid-1980s as a way to encourage downtown development after building regulations were tightened. Since then, conditions have changed dramatically: Downtown vacancies are almost nonexistent; developers are filing applications at a brisk pace; and downtown residents are reporting a severe shortage of parking on neighborhood streets near the city's commercial core. After years of lobbying from residents, staff proposed a residential-permit-parking program. The council rejected this pilot program and directed staff to seek more comprehensive solutions to downtown's parking woes, including a full analysis that considers zoning changes and the need for new facilities." —Gennady Sheyner, "Palo Alto beefs up rules for downtown parking," *Palo Alto Weekly*, Oct. 16, 2012.

### SF waterfront continues to rebound

<http://bit.ly/PBco7F>

"After months of speculation, details are emerging about the arena that the Golden State Warriors want to build on San Francisco's Embarcadero. The team is proposing a 17,500-seat glass-covered arena on the southeast edge of Piers 30-32, with retail buildings along the Embarcadero and 8 acres of terraced plazas in between. The design and finance plans also include such water-specific uses as kayak docks and a fireboat landing, part of the effort to win state approval for the project. The ballclub would be given a 66-year lease for the pier, the longest allowed for port property. The team in return would build and pay for the arena and other buildings as well as the open spaces. It would be the team's responsibility to strengthen the dilapidated piers, an endeavor that city officials say would cost an estimated \$120 million. The proposed deal calls for the city to reimburse the team up to that amount for infrastructure upgrades. If successful, the proposal would transform a slice of the city's waterfront that for decades has defied efforts to develop it." —John Côté and John Wildermuth, "Warriors SF arena framework taking shape," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, October 16, 2012. Here's what the Warriors' arena might look like. —*The Bay Citizen*, Oct. 16, 2012. <http://bit.ly/TOSrBT>

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

### Full EIR ordered for Monterey County desalination project <http://bit.ly/PyXhLZ>

"A new environmental impact report will be required for California American Water's proposed Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project. Cal Am officials initially sought to limit environmental review to a supplemental EIR to the Coastal Water Project EIR that studied the now-defunct regional desalination project. But the Public Utilities Commission decided a more detailed EIR was more appropriate and pointed to changes involving key components of the project, including the seawater intake system and the desalination plant, as justification. PUC administrative law judge Gary Weatherford set the review schedule back nearly a year past Cal Am's proposed schedule. It is now 'possible, but very unlikely' the project will be developed before the current 2016 deadline. The project is designed to provide a replacement source of water for the Peninsula, which is facing a state-ordered cutback in pumping from the Carmel River that takes full effect at midnight on Dec. 31, 2016." —Jim Johnson, "New environmental report ordered for latest water supply project," *The Monterey County Herald*, Oct. 14, 2012.

### Biomass-derived energy faces challenges <http://bit.ly/WfToNB>

"A draft study for the Redwood Coast Energy Authority said North Coast biomass energy production could potentially double by 2030. Only Los Angeles County produces more biomass — in its case, garbage — according to a study from University of California, Davis. On the North Coast, biomass plants traditionally burn scraps and residue from sawmills in order to generate power. Unlike sawmill residue, Humboldt County's substantial forest biomass, created at logging sites or ecological forest thinnings, is not easily accessible, [and] expansion can be difficult considering the challenges. The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board recently expressed concerns about the management of wood ash, a byproduct of biomass energy plants. Farmers use the ash as soil amendment, mixing it with earth in hopes of improving various properties. Humboldt Waste Management Authority interim Executive Director Patrick Owen said that if the board determines there are too many toxins in the ash waste, power plants might be forced to send the ash to landfills instead, which would dramatically drive up costs. —Grant Scott-Goforth, "Biomass faces uncertain future on North Coast; industry struggles with logistics as use of ash in agricultural soil questioned," *The Times-Standard*, Oct. 14, 2012.

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

### Fremont's support to start-ups bears fruit

<http://bit.ly/SO8EjY>

"City officials for years have been promoting Fremont as an active, thriving part of Silicon Valley and it appears that entrepreneurs are taking notice. A recent study ranked Fremont as the nation's top city, per capita, for having the most tech startup businesses. The city's rate of startups, in fact, is twice as high as that of San Jose, which placed second in the report completed by SizeUp.com, a San Francisco-based website that provides business data for small and mid-sized companies. 'We're really excited to be recognized in this way,' said Christina Briggs, Fremont's economic development manager. 'It validated our strategy in attracting emerging technology companies.' In 2009, Fremont began offering five-year tax exemptions to new or existing cleantech companies. Last year, the city slightly changed its policy to also include biotech companies and began giving two-year exemptions to existing businesses, while still providing a five-year exemption to new cleantech and biotech startups, Briggs said. Besides Fremont and San Jose, two other California cities made the top 10: Anaheim was ranked seventh and Santa Ana finished 10th." —Chris De Benedetti, "Fremont ranked top U.S. city for tech startups," *The Argus*, Oct. 10, 2012.

### Traffic a non-event during busy SF event weekend

<http://bit.ly/ORAjzv>

Over the weekend of October 6–7, San Francisco played host to the Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival, America's Cup races, Fleet Week, the Columbus Day Parade, and a playoff game for the Giants making residents fear the inevitable gridlock. However, as "a *Mercury News* headline read, 'traffic woes [went] mostly unrealized' throughout the Bay Area. No doubt, transit riders were packed: BART saw 319,484 riders on Saturday, blowing its previous weekend ridership record of 278,586 out of the water. SFMTA officials estimated Muni took on an extra 100,000 to 135,000 extra riders each day, according to the *Chronicle*. The surge of bicycle traffic 'Wiggling' it to the Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival also broke the single-day ridership record for the SFMTA's bicycle counter on Fell Street, which counted 4,000 bikes on Saturday. Around the Embarcadero, the SFMTA tested out some of the strategies in the People Plan, which is aimed at facilitating car-free travel to the America's Cup yacht races." —Aaron Bialick, "This Weekend's Traffic Frenzy: A Success for Sustainable Transportation?" *Streetsblog San Francisco*, Oct. 9, 2012.

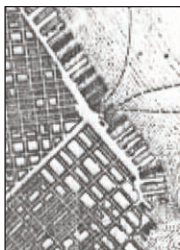
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## Norcal roundup *(continued from previous page)*

### New North Bay train may have quiet crossings

<http://bit.ly/V3z8PZ>

"The Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) district is overhauling train crossings as it rebuilds the track between Guerneville Road in Santa Rosa and downtown San Rafael for commute trains. Service is scheduled to begin in late 2015 or early 2016. As part of the work, SMART is spending \$12 million for such additional 'quiet zone' measures as special crossing gates and traffic islands that are intended to keep motorists from being able to drive onto the tracks. If additional work is still needed to meet the requirements, SMART is also committing another \$50,000 to an individual crossing, with the city or county picking up anything more, said Farhad Mansourian, SMART general manager. Only the cities and counties, however, have the authority to apply to the state Public Utilities Commission and the Federal Railroad Administration for quiet zone status. City and county officials say quiet zones will eventually be a policy decision by city councils and supervisors, but it is already being discussed at the staff level." —Bob Norberg, "SMART looks to put train crossings on mute," *The Press Democrat*, Oct. 8, 2012.

### Santa Cruz has successful 'Open Streets' event

<http://bit.ly/PyUAK6>

"Hundreds of bikers, joggers, dog walkers, stroller pushers, skaters, and more became free to roam the width of scenic West Cliff Drive [in Santa Cruz] on Sunday [October 7] as a new nonprofit orchestrated a six-hour closure of the street to cars. The space, typically king to the car, was crowded with people-powered modes of transport and lined with educational booths promoting kindred causes such as biking and pedestrian safety on Mission Street, as well as schools, animal welfare groups, alternative energy providers, the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History, the Sierra Club and more. Santa Cruz Open Streets founder Saskia Lucas, a UC Santa Cruz alum, started working on the event about a year ago, coordinating with the city and gathering support from various businesses and organizations. Lucas said she would organize the events as often as the community wanted. She started advising West Cliff Drive residents about the closure three months ago, and Santa Cruz Neighbors and many others helped." —Cathy Kelly, "West Cliff closed to cars in 'Open Streets' event," *The Santa Cruz Sentinel*, Oct. 7, 2012.

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## Norcal roundup (continued from previous page)

### Treasure Island cleanup questioned

<http://bit.ly/SAWxqz>

“Recent U.S. Navy explanations for widespread readings of radioactivity on the former Treasure Island Naval Station don’t adequately explore the possibility that the base might have been dusted with radioactive ash, soaked with radioactive sewage, and contaminated by radioactive garbage, California health regulators said on October 5. The response addressed an Aug. 6 draft report by the Navy, which was aimed at assuaging concerns about the base’s history of radioactive material. The Navy’s report is part of the process of turning the military land over to the city of San Francisco, which has approved construction of 8,000 homes there. The August draft included the Navy’s acknowledgment that the base’s radiation history was more widespread than previously reported. But the Navy also sought to assure state and city officials that a radioactive cleanup was well in hand, and that the base should be ready for preliminary development some time in 2013. However, the California Department of Public Health suggested today in its response to that draft that the military agency might have significant work to do to earn a clean bill of health.” —Matt Smith, “Navy’s Treasure Island radiation report found wanting,” *The Bay Citizen*, Oct. 5, 2012.

### Climate change affects crop insurance rates

<http://bit.ly/SUyQDz>

“Alterations in the California climate have prompted the insurance industry to start assessing the potential damage and its financial exposure. The nation’s crop insurance system, a hybrid of private insurers backed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Risk Management Agency, has been paying out steadily increasing amounts for weather-related damages across the country, according to the Congressional Research Service — from \$2.1 billion in 2000 to a record-breaking \$12.1 billion last year. Although it’s difficult to distinguish how many extreme events would have occurred without the atmospheric concentration of CO<sub>2</sub>, the Risk Management Agency now has identified climate change as one of the major risk factors for U.S. agriculture. Jeff Yasui, director of the California office of the Risk Management Agency, said one sign of the growing stress in wine country is that over the past four years, the number of wine grape growers who increased their insurance coverage from the base-level policy — which covers half of all losses — to more substantial, and more expensive, protection increased from 28 percent of all policies to 40 percent this year.” —Mark Schapiro, *Center for Investigative Reporting*, “Higher temperatures bring new struggles in Calif. wine country,” *The Bay Citizen*, Sept. 28, 2012.

(continued on next page)





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

### BART institutes automatic braking

<http://bit.ly/Os2On7>

"The San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system has long had accelerometers — devices that detect strong ground movement — positioned along the tracks. They ring an alarm bell in the Central Control Facility when the local shaking exceeds a specific threshold. Supervisors use these to make the decision whether to radio train operators and tell them to initiate emergency braking to a full stop. Thanks to assistance from the Berkeley Seismological Laboratory, the BART system can now automatically brake trains when earthquakes threaten to rattle the Bay Area, allowing perhaps tens of seconds to a minute for trains to slow down before the ground starts to shake. Instituted last month, the earthquake early warning system was created with the help of UC Berkeley seismologists who hooked BART into data flowing from the more than 200 stations throughout Northern California on the California Integrated Seismic Network. The new system gives warning as soon as shaking is felt at remote sensors—which can be sooner than the time it takes for the strong shaking to radiate from the epicenter to the accelerometers, as electronic signals travel much faster than seismic waves." —Robert Sanders, "BART teams with UC Berkeley to adopt earthquake early warning system," *UC Berkeley News Center*, Sept. 27, 2012. ■

By the end of this century, "... a highly urbanized global population will add nearly 6 billion people to cities that only hold about 3.6 billion today. That's growth of almost 280 percent in less than a century. Such a percentage isn't unprecedented — between 1900 and today, the world's urban population grew by more than 1600 percent — but the raw numbers will be. To accommodate those people, cities will have to remake themselves like never before."

—Tim De Chant, senior digital editor, *NOVA at WGBH*. <http://bit.ly/QhZbfs>

# Rail-Volution comes to LA

By Jeff Carpenter, AICP

The national Rail-Volution conference came to LA on Saturday, October 13 at the Lowe's Renaissance Hotel in Hollywood with a theme of "A Region in Transition" which many of us felt to be particularly apt. Reportedly starting out in 1995 as essentially a local advocacy organization for what became Portland's MAX light rail system, Rail-Volution has now become a fully-grown national conference on the challenges of building our cities and suburbs around a new generation of sustainable transportation infrastructure — as well as the still-daunting challenge of building that infrastructure itself.

Good conferences always present frustrating conflicts of wanting to be in two events at any one time, and Rail-Volution 2012 raised the frustration to new heights, with myriad conflicts of interest for most any planner for much of the four-plus days. While the excellent Sunday "New Starts" session helped local transportation professionals map out the arcana of MAP-21, the new, two-year federal transportation act, there was hardly anything else on the program that would not be of interest to at least a fair number of concerned planners. My own particular favorites were the number of sessions on value capture, the economics of walkability, and strategies for partnerships, collaboration, and engagement — but the conference ran the gamut of mode, finance, public health, and design topics.

An early plenary session on Monday morning was most talked about for the comments from LA County Supervisor — and new Metro Board Chair — Michael Antonovich. Representing, among other areas, LA County's high desert, Supervisor Antonovich stressed that LA County was "not LA City" and expressed some serious skepticism about the virtues of transit. He posited that any rail transit as might be developed

should be relegated to the center of freeways, leading some of the locals in the audience to wonder if he had ever had the experience of standing on the platform of the "freeway-convenient" Sierra Madre Gold Line station in his own district.

Deserving more note was Mayor Villaraigosa's announcement (more details to come in the months ahead) of a Transportation Corridor Cabinet coordinated by the Mayor's Office to elevate and better harness the synergy that LA's transit investments can engender in evolving land use into more sustainable, walkable neighborhoods and districts. LA Deputy Mayor (and interim Housing Department General Manager) Mercedes Marquez led the conference's noon wrap up session on Wednesday with a fact-filled presentation on the regional corridor served by the East Los Angeles Gold Line. She highlighted not only the considerable benefits and opportunities being heralded by that line, but the great challenges the city faces in insuring continued urban housing affordability as we build these new rail lines.

One person could only attend a tiny fraction of the sessions — and I have only mentioned a few. I went on none of the considerable number of Mobile Workshops the local host committee worked hard to put together — and those were getting a lot of buzz from the out-of-towners and which hopefully others can report on.

*Jeff Carpenter, AICP, has recently become an independent consultant in transportation and land use after a career of 40 years with the Community Redevelopment Agency in Los Angeles and the Southern California Rapid Transit District. He is a founding member of the California Planning Roundtable and a former (AIP) Section President. You can reach him at [jeffry.carpenter@gmail.com](mailto:jeffry.carpenter@gmail.com)*

A version of this article will be appearing in *Los Angeles News*, the newsletter of the Los Angeles Section, California Chapter, American Planning Association. ■

The sound of rain by Christopher Jacrot (20 images), by Stefan Bacigal. "Amazing and creative urban photography with rain scenario by Christopher Jacrot from France." Via Flipboard. <http://bit.ly/UBZwA6>



## Who's where



**Peter Pirnejad** is now development services director for the City of Palo Alto. He previously was assistant economic and community development director, Daly City (four years) and planning manager, City of Lodi, for

three years before that. Pirnejad holds a Master's in Policy, Planning, and Development Studies from USC and a BA in Environmental Studies and Geography from UCSB. He has written for *Northern News* (*Lodi leads with LEED-ND*, Dec 2007–Jan 2008) and has been active in the League of California Cities. As the head of the city's Development Center, Pirnejad expects to hire three project managers and a permit manager to improve customer satisfaction and reduce waiting times.



**Heather Adamson, AICP**, is now principal planner at the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG). She previously worked at the San Diego Association of Governments

(SANDAG) for 14 years, most recently as the project manager for California's first Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy developed under SB 375. Adamson has a Master of Public Administration from San Diego State University–California State University and a BA in Urban Studies and Planning from UC San Diego. ■

## Vote for Northern Section Administrative Director

It is that time of year to vote for a Director position on the APA California Chapter Northern Section Board. The Administrative Director will serve a two-year term beginning January 1, 2013, and ending December 31, 2014. This position is a key leadership role on a very active board. All APA Northern Section members will receive a ballot by e-mail during November. Please take a moment to show your support for the Board by casting your vote. Running for the Administrative Director position is Justin Meek, AICP. Below is his candidate statement.

### Candidate statement, Justin Meek, AICP

I have been honored to serve on the APA California–Northern Section Board for the past few years and humbly resubmit this statement of candidacy for the Administrative Director position. In making this decision, I wish to continue to support the Board and contribute substantially to the ongoing development of the planning profession.

In the past few years, I have actively involved myself in a number of APA events. In addition to being responsible for all records of the Section and working with Board members to publicize section professional development activities, I have helped organize or participated in a number of events, such as a walking tour of Santa Cruz's riverfront and a workshop on using census data. If elected to the Board, I look forward to continuing to be active and will work diligently as the Administrative Director. I am excited at the opportunity to serve the planning profession and be a part of APA California–Northern Section's efforts to promote and inspire APA members.

**Experience.** Justin Meek, AICP, is a senior planner with 10 years of planning and CEQA experience for public and private sector clients. He presently works for the City of Marina and provides consulting services for the City of Pacific Grove. Previously, he managed the preparation of numerous environmental documents throughout California and authored geology and soils, recreation, visual resources, transportation and traffic, land use and planning, public services, and utilities and service systems sections for a variety of environmental documents. He also teaches at San Jose State University (SJSU) in the Urban and Regional Planning Department (URBP). Mr. Meek has a Bachelor of Science in Earth Sciences and Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies from the University of California at Santa Cruz and a Master of Urban Planning from SJSU, where he was the recipient of the AICP Outstanding Graduating Student Award. He has been active in the American Planning Association since 2008, and is currently the Administrative Director for the APA California–Northern Section. He also serves on the SJSU URBP Alumni Committee. ■

## Governor vetoes redevelopment surrogates

By Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP

Below are Governor Brown's veto messages on redevelopment and related bills.

"I am returning **Senate Bill 1156** without my signature. This bill would allow local governments to establish a Sustainable Communities Investment Authority to finance activities within a specified area. ...

"I prefer to take a constructive look at implementing this type of program once the winding down of redevelopment is complete and General Fund savings are achieved. At that time, we will be in a much better position to consider new investment authority. I am committed to working with the Legislature and interested parties on the important task of revitalizing our communities."

"I am returning **Assembly Bill 345** without my signature. This bill makes changes to the Community Redevelopment Law regarding redevelopment agencies' use of the Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund. The intent of this bill is to govern use of the 20 percent set aside for low and moderate income housing established in SB 1156. Given my veto of SB 1156, this bill is premature."

"Sincerely, Edmund G. Brown, Jr."

In addition, the governor vetoed three bills modifying rules for the establishment of Infrastructure Financing Districts (IFDs) by local governments — **AB 2144**, **SB 214**, and **AB 2551** — saying the new measures "would likely cause cities to focus their efforts on using the new tools ... instead of winding down redevelopment. This would prevent the state from achieving the General Fund savings assumed in this year's budget." ■

## 2012 Legislative Year in Review for Land Use Planners

By Alexandra Barnhill, Legislative Director, APA California–Northern

September 30th marked the end of another busy California legislative session. While it is not possible to summarize all the actions taken on bills that are relevant to land use planners, some of the most significant developments are described below.

**Redevelopment-related bills vetoed as "premature."** The loss of redevelopment as a tool for economic development has deeply impacted local governments. Numerous bills were drafted this session to create a replacement tool for redevelopment; however, none of them secured the Governor's approval. (See sidebar for Governor's veto messages. —Ed.)

- **SB 214 (Wolk), AB 2144 (Perez), and AB 2551 (Hueso)** would have modified the cumbersome rules for the establishment of Infrastructure Financing Districts (IFDs) by local governments.
- **AB 345 (Torres)** would have made changes to the Community Redevelopment Law regarding redevelopment agencies' use of the Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund.
- **SB 1156 (Steinberg)** would have allowed local governments to establish a Sustainable Communities Investment Authority to finance activities within a specified area.

Though these bills were not signed into law, the Governor indicated via his veto messages that he is committed to working on revitalization efforts in upcoming sessions. For now, Brown wants local agencies to focus their efforts on the winding down of redevelopment.

Although the Governor does not yet broadly support the use of IFDs for redevelopment, one exception was made. Brown signed **AB 2259 (Ammiano)**, which creates an IFD for San Francisco's upcoming America's Cup yacht race. This, along with the veto messages, signals that IFDs or other redevelopment replacement tools may be approved in the future.

**Parking Reform measure fails. AB 904 (Skinner)** would have imposed a single statewide parking standard for both nonresidential and residential infill and close-to-transit projects across California. Facing strong opposition, the author dropped the bill. Similar proposals also failed to gain support in prior sessions. APA California conceptually supports reduced or "smart" parking requirements near transit-rich areas and has agreed to work with the bill's sponsors to develop a new parking proposal for 2013. Northern California APA will be hosting a forum representing all stakeholders' views on this topic on November 9, 2012. More information on the workshop is available on the following page.

(continued on next page)



## WORKSHOP: Smart Parking for Smart Growth: Reforming parking policies for TOD

The California state legislature recently proposed “smart” parking policies for transit-rich areas (AB904, Skinner). Join this workshop and discussion with local planners and policy makers to share your views. Workshop comments and recommendations will be forwarded to state legislators and to APA California’s policy and legislation committee.

**When:** Friday, Nov. 9, 2012, 2–4:30 PM

**Where:** MetroCenter Auditorium,  
101 Eighth Street, Oakland

**Directions:**

[www.mtc.ca.gov/about\\_mtc/directions.htm](http://www.mtc.ca.gov/about_mtc/directions.htm)

**Cost:**

\$5 APA members, \$10 Non-APA,  
Free for planning students  
Light refreshments, space limited  
*CM I 2.0 pending*

**Register and pay:**

<http://www.eventbrite.com/event/4280810018>

**PANELISTS:**

**David Snow, AICP**, APA California  
vice-president of policy & legislation

**Eric Figueroa**, League of California Cities,  
public affairs manager

**Justin Meek, AICP**, adjunct faculty, San José  
State University, Urban and Regional Planning

**Mott Smith**, Civic Enterprise Associates, principal

**Tom Pace**, City of Sacramento, principal planner

**Valerie Knepper**, MTC, transportation planner

**MODERATOR:**

**Prof. Elizabeth Deakin**, DCRP, UC Berkeley

**Questions?** Contact Hanson Hom at (408) 730-7450  
or [hansonapa@gmail.com](mailto:hansonapa@gmail.com), or Emy Mendoza at  
(510) 326-1919 or [mendoza.emy@gmail.com](mailto:mendoza.emy@gmail.com) ■

## 2012 Legislative Year in Review for Land Use Planners (continued from previous page)

**Wildfire Prevention Planning bill approved.** After many unsuccessful attempts, Senator Kehoe finally secured adoption of a bill that requires local governments to plan for wildfire hazards. **Senate Bill 1241** amends the Planning and Zoning Law, requiring cities and counties to review and update their safety element. The Office of Planning and Research will draft guidelines for how plans should identify and address fire danger. Then, local agencies must amend their safety element by 2014 to include detailed surveys and maps identifying areas of high fire severity zones and addressing the risk of fire in State Responsibility areas.

**Housing Element Law clarified.** Last year, SB 244 (Wolk) amended the Planning and Zoning law to require cities to update their land use element to plan for disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the city’s sphere of influence. It was unclear under the law whether local governments were required to undertake new studies or analysis to satisfy this obligation. **SB 1090** (Committee on Governance and Finance), the Local Government Omnibus bill, contains a provision that clarifies that the responsibilities of each city to update their General Plan is based upon *available* information, such as the data and analysis provided by a LAFCo.

**Solar Energy Permit bills signed.** Under current law, local agencies must administratively approve applications to install solar energy systems and only charge a building permit fee that reflects the estimated reasonable cost of providing the service. The Governor signed into law two new bills relating to solar residential building permit fees:

- **AB 1801 (Campos)** clarifies that a local agency’s solar residential building permit fees are an issue of statewide concern and must be based on the costs to issue the permit, not the value of the solar system or other factors.
- **SB 1222 (Leno)** places a cap on building permit fees on what local agencies can charge applicants to install solar residential systems unless the agency can justify their “reasonable costs” with detailed findings. This bill was controversial because it may establish a precedence of legislation placing arbitrary caps on permit fees for specific types of projects.

Together with the Office of Planning and Research’s *California Solar Permitting Guidebook* and the County Planning Directors’ *California Solar Planning Guide*, these legislative developments provide a base of information for local agencies to appropriately permit residential solar systems.

(continued on next page)

## LETTERS

Editor:

How you manage to pull this off each month is amazing to me. Nice job!

**Michael Bills, San Jose**

Editor:

Thank you for the new year wishes. APA Northern California is the only organization to which I belong or with which I do business that has acknowledged Yom Kippur.

**Laura Saunders, AICP** ■

## CORRECTIONS – October issue

On page 7, the firm where Mott Smith is employed as principal was incorrectly identified as Civic Enterprises Associates. The correct name of the firm is Civic Enterprise [singular] Associates, [www.civicenterprise.com/](http://www.civicenterprise.com/)

On page 20, incorrect information appeared about author Alice Daly, AICP. She should have been identified as “planner for Santa Cruz County,” not as redevelopment project manager/planner. <http://bit.ly/R3rAq0> ■

## 2012 Legislative Year in Review for Land Use Planners (continued from previous page)

**Cottage Food Operations bill approved.** Under the gut-and-amend bill **AB 1616 (Gatto)**, cities and counties must permit cottage food operations in residential dwellings by right. Alternatively, the agency may grant such operations a non-discretionary or use permit, so long as the operation complies with certain limited restrictions such as concentration, parking, and noise. The bill also effectively shifts the enforcement obligation of cottage food operations from local health departments to local planning departments. APA California has a number of concerns about the bill and is seeking clarification regarding this bill’s implications for local regulation of the point of sale of cottage food products, application of home occupation standards, and permit fees.

**CEQA only modestly reformed.** In late August, **SB 317 (Rubio)** was introduced as a gut-and-amend bill that would have made significant changes to the enforcement of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). While the bill was ultimately killed, this effort highlighted the deep divide between labor and other groups seeking CEQA reform and environmental groups who are opposed to the weakening of CEQA.

Several modest changes to CEQA were able to survive the legislative process. Most notably, a handful of new exemptions were approved, such as **AB 1665 (Galgiani)** for railroad crossings, **AB 1486 (Lara)** for roadway improvements, and **AB 2245 (Smyth)** for bicycle lanes.

Unless otherwise provided for in the law, the statutes enacted by this new legislation take effect January 1, 2013.



Alexandra M. Barnhill is a Partner in the Oakland office of Burke, Williams and Sorensen, LLP. You can reach her at [abarnhill@bwslaw.com](mailto:abarnhill@bwslaw.com) ■

“‘Coming from my inexhaustible supply of dangling modifiers, you will find this post a helpful exercise in how to spot this type of error.’ That lead sentence, of course, contains a dangling modifier, a phrase providing additional information about a sentence’s subject that does not associate directly with the subject.” Mark Nichol tells how to spot and fix the problem: “3 Sentences with Dangling Modifiers,” *DailyWritingTips*, <http://bit.ly/OpJSi8>

# Enjoy a great night on the uptown

**What:**

APA California–Northern's  
2012 Holiday Party

**When:**

Friday, November 30, starting at 7 PM

**Where:**

**MUA OAKLAND Bar & Restaurant**  
2442a Webster Street, in uptown Oakland

**Getting there:**

Free on-street parking.  
Seven blocks from 19th Street BART

**Cost:**

\$30 for APA members,  
\$35 for nonmembers,  
\$15 for students and unemployed planners  
\$5 extra at the door.

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**More info about the event:**

Contact **Florentina Craciun** at (510) 874-3127  
or [florentina.craciun@urs.com](mailto:florentina.craciun@urs.com)

**More info about CPF:**

Contact CPF Liaison Hing Wong, AICP,  
at (510) 464-7966 or [hingw@abag.ca.gov](mailto:hingw@abag.ca.gov)

*See you there!*

## Where in the world?



Photos by Barry Miller, FAICP (Answer on [page 21](#))

Mixed use gets a break. In September, "FHA loosened a restriction that forbade government-backed loans from supporting condominium projects that contained more than 25 percent commercial space. New rules will allow credit to flow to projects with up to 35 percent commercial space — or 50 percent in certain cases where the developer applies for an exemption." —Angie Schmitt, *DC Streetsblog*.  
<http://bit.ly/RMQCtV>



# Plan-it sustainably

## Innovation in the Northern Section: San Francisco takes the leading edge

By Scott T. Edmondson, AICP, co-director, Sustainability Committee

After many years of SF Environment's path-breaking accomplishments, the San Francisco Planning Department is also accelerating sustainability with the completion of recent plans, formation of a multi-agency sustainability program (<http://bit.ly/Q0dgnl>) and exploration of promising frameworks. Recent plans with significant sustainability components include Bayview Hunters Point–Candlestick Point, Treasure Island, Transbay, and Merced Park. A year ago, SF Planning convened a multi-agency team to advance citywide sustainability by coordinating the work of the SF PUC (water, wastewater and power), SF Environment, Capital Planning, Public Works, and the Successor to Redevelopment Agency. To deepen their sustainability planning capacity, they participated in the Portland Sustainability Institute's EcoDistrict training this past May.

To create a common basis for collaboration and program development, the team engages in ongoing dialogue with monthly program development meetings and presentations. Key presentation topics have included transformative energy and water infrastructure, infrastructure ownership models, new business models for smarter cities, optimizing district-scale energy and water systems, and integrated water resource management. This cross-silo group's evolving EcoDistrict approach encompasses the district scale, neighborhood scale, and industrially zoned land. Their emerging focus is coordinating private development and public infrastructure improvements through new modes of finance and stakeholder governance to create the next generation of sustainable urban infrastructure and planning capacity.

Other SF Planning initiatives include applying an EcoDistrict approach to the Central Corridor Plan Area and a pilot neighborhood, exploring the Living Building Challenge and the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development, and participating as a partner city in the International Biophilic Cities Research project.

**Are you advancing innovative sustainability planning in your city?** Feature your initiative in this column. Post a longer description and links to resources on the Committee's Blog. Email a summary to Scott at [SustCommAPA@gmail.com](mailto:SustCommAPA@gmail.com). What is and is not working? Join the conversation; add value; move the Section's sustainability needle!

### Links:

- **Are Canadian cities at the sustainability tipping point** after 12 years of innovative integrative community strategic sustainability planning? <http://bit.ly/Roy9DN>
- **Mountain View pursues an EcoDistrict approach** to the North Bayshore Precise Plan. <http://bit.ly/SW1YLb>
- **ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability** and partners launched **STAR Communities**, a community rating system for sustainable communities. <http://bit.ly/PcfTy5>
- US EPA's **Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities** is accepting applications through Oct 26, 2012, and has a host of resources. <http://1.usa.gov/WNx8cC>

### Sustainability Committee Update

- Subscribe to the email list for periodic updates. <http://bit.ly/MVdpQh>
- Visit, subscribe (RSS), comment, or contribute to the new Plan-It Sustainably Journal/Blog. <http://bit.ly/PMaVkl>
- Collaborate. Share your work and questions. <http://bit.ly/0h7sxp>
- Visit our website. <http://bit.ly/NqSUkg>

For a longer discussion of SF innovation (and even more links) see this post on the *Plan-It Sustainably Journal-Blog* <http://bit.ly/PMHofn> ■

According to the plastics industry, "paper and plastic bags are important parts of daily life beyond the checkout line. The bag has been demonized, and the reusable bag unfairly celebrated. Such bags often themselves contain plastic and can even be unhealthy: 'They can harbor hazardous bacteria.'" —Matt Richtel, <http://nyti.ms/QLv3cm>

# What others are saying

## Feel free to smile at this

<http://bit.ly/X9A1Uq>

"If you smile at your boss and she smiles back, beware. It could be a sign that she does not think too highly of you, according to a study. People who feel powerful are more likely to mimic the smiles of those they perceive as low status, according to research presented at the annual Society for Neuroscience conference in New Orleans, Oct. 15th. They are less likely, however, to return the smiles of people they consider of higher status than themselves. And when people are not feeling particularly powerful, they return everyone's smiles almost equally. Evan Carr, UCSD, led the study. Power, he said, refers to someone's internal feeling of being able to take control of others, whereas status is a more externally defined quality. 'It's more to do with perceived reverence or some type of social hierarchy,' said Carr."

—Alok Jha, "Status affects how readily people return smiles, research reveals," *The Guardian*, Oct. 14, 2012.

[Ed. note: I worked for someone for three years who always smiled when talking to me, on any subject. It was only during my third year that a colleague informed me the boss had suffered facial injuries in a car crash, and the permanent smile resulted from reconstructive surgery.]

## Ideological divide between cities and suburbs

<http://bit.ly/UPAfNq>

"The Republican party seems to have abandoned urban cores to the Democrats, preferring to stake out rural, semirural, suburban, and exurban territories. ... There is an underlying logic to a political split in physical territory. Cities can only exist through the continual presence of a great deal of infrastructure that is visible. Mass transportation, cops on the beat, utilities, and everything that lets people live in such close quarters is necessary and in your face. It is clear why government is necessary, and that we live in a society of contrasts. In the suburbs, much is invisible. The only large-scale infrastructure you see are the highways that get you to where you live. The suburbs would not have existed to the extent that they do without the massive amounts of money we put into everything from electrification to highways, but the bulk of that investment is now merely a fact on the ground. The suburbs ... are a dream of living with nature with all of the modern conveniences ... while hiding divisions, fissures, and reality." —Aaron Betsky, "Smoke, Mirrors, and Oz," *Architect* (AIA), Oct. 9, 2012.

## Plant many trees

<http://to.pbs.org/PXuY4q>

The PBS NewsHour has "been looking at how the urban heat island effect and climate change turn up the thermostat on U.S. cities, and how places like Chicago are trying to cool off with greener infrastructure. Hari Sreenivasan caught up with [Peter] Calthorpe at the Aspen Environment Forum. He said the best thing cities can do to keep cool is plant trees. 'It's that simple,' Calthorpe said. 'Yeah, you can do white roofs and green roofs ... but believe me, it's that street canopy that makes all the difference.'" Watch the PBS interview in a three minute video embedded in the article by Rebecca Jacobson, "Key to a Cool City? It's in the Trees," *PBS NewsHour*, Oct. 9, 2012.

## Job not going swimmingly?

<http://bit.ly/OlrRqE>

"Dozens of cities across the globe are trying to re-create the so-called High Line Effect. This fall, the mayor of London and the city's Landscape Museum hosted a conference and competition aimed at helping the metropolis develop its own High Line-inspired project. [Y/N] Studio proposes creating a new commuter network that would turn the 8.6-mile-long Regent's Canal into a swimming lane, allowing Londoners to swim to work. In the winter, the designers imagine ice-skating. Much like +Pool (<http://bit.ly/R1aNnd>), the LidoLine would contain canal water filtered through a multilayer membrane, removing bacteria and toxins. The canal was built nearly two centuries ago and, like the Erie Canal, was designed to transport industrial goods to factories around the blossoming city." —Kelsey Campbell-Dollaghan, "Will London be the first city with commuter swim lanes?" *Fast Company Design*, Oct. 8, 2012.

## Latest twist in bullet train saga

<http://bit.ly/SBnzfm>

"Pending a high-speed rail legal challenge, the Madera and Merced County farm bureaus have asked a judge to freeze construction on a segment of the project. While a legal battle plays out over the proposed route between Merced and Fresno, the judge in the case has agreed to consider

*(continued on next page)*

temporarily halting any development. The High-Speed Rail Authority declined to comment on the litigation, which challenges the California Environmental Quality Act review of the project's chosen route. Sacramento Superior Court Judge Timothy Frawley will hear arguments for and against the Preliminary injunction Nov. 16. The judge recently combined into one case three challenges to the rail authority's environmental planning document. The CEQA challenge of the Merced-to-Fresno route is scheduled to start in April. [Meanwhile,] the city [of Merced] is waiting on \$600,000 in state and federal funding to begin the design phase of the high-speed rail station. The money is expected to be approved before the end of the year." —Joshua Emerson Smith, "Opponents request building freeze on high-speed rail," *Merced Sun-Star*, Oct. 4, 2012.

### **Housing market improvement will continue**

<http://bit.ly/QGmTog>

California's housing market will continue to recover in 2013, as home sales are forecast to increase for the third consecutive year. The statewide median home price is forecast to increase a moderate 5.7 percent to \$335,000 in 2013. "Housing affordability has never been stronger — with record-low interest rates and favorable home prices," said C.A.R. Vice President and Chief Economist Leslie Appleton-Young. "The actions of underwater homeowners will play an important role in housing inventory next year, with rising home prices inducing some to stay put and others to list and move forward." (C.A.R., Oct. 2, 2012.)

### **Water rates high in Bay Area, Sacramento**

<http://usat.ly/NWCZKp>

"A study of residential water rates over the past 12 years finds that crumbling infrastructure is forcing repairs from coast to coast, with costs more than doubling in 1 of 4 localities. In three municipalities — Atlanta, San Francisco, and Wilmington, Del. — water costs tripled or more. Monthly costs topped \$50 for consumers in Atlanta, Seattle, and San Diego who used 1,000 cubic feet of water, a typical residential consumption level in many areas. Officials in [those] municipalities and elsewhere say actual consumption is often lower. But conservation efforts counter-intuitively may raise water rates in some localities. [While] water costs of any given area [vary greatly because of] differences in population, geography, geology, bonding debt for infrastruc-

ture work, and other variables, what most water agencies across the nation share is increasing costs that make higher bills all but inevitable." An interactive map shows percentage increases for major US cities since 2000–2001. —Kevin McCoy, "Water costs gush higher," *USA TODAY*, Sept. 29, 2012.

### **BYOB (bag, preferably reusable)**

<http://nyti.ms/QLv3cm>

"In more than two dozen California cities, grocery stores, pharmacies, and sometimes other retailers are no longer allowed to use plastic shopping bags and must charge customers for paper ones ... [a charge] aimed at nudging people to carry reusable bags when they shop. The concept is sweeping across the most populous state two years after the District of Columbia adopted a 5-cent charge for paper and plastic. Tim Goncharoff, a Santa Cruz County official, said the rules were intended to make people think about the wastefulness of single-use products. 'It's a little tickle to the conscience.' The plastics industry is arguing that ... the rules are particularly onerous and impractical in places ... where tourists are unlikely to have packed a reusable bag. San Francisco [now has] one of the nation's most far-reaching bag ordinances, banning plastic bags at all retailers — and eventually requiring they charge 10 cents for paper and compostable carryout bags. In Santa Monica, where a 10-cent charge for paper and a ban on plastic bags went into effect last year, the reusable bag culture has exploded, said Josephine Miller, an environmental program analyst with the city. People want to be seen with the coolest, hippest reusable bag, she said, adding, 'Businesses are putting logos on reusable bags.' " —Matt Richtel, "Paper or plastic? Some communities say neither," *The New York Times*, Sept. 28, 2012.

### **Tackling climate change at new heights**

<http://bit.ly/TNViF8>

"Scientists at the University of Strathclyde in Scotland have suggested an out-of-this-world solution [to combating climate change]. The researchers suggest an asteroid could gravitationally anchor a dust cloud in space to block sunlight and cool the Earth. The idea would be to place an asteroid at Lagrange point L1, a site where the gravitational pull of the

*(continued on next page)*



sun and the Earth cancel out — about four times the distance from the Earth to the moon. They would outfit a near-Earth asteroid with a ‘mass driver,’ a device consisting of electromagnets that would serve both as a rocket to push the asteroid to the L1 point and hurl asteroid-derived matter — sun-shielding dust — away from the giant rock. The largest near-Earth asteroid, 1036 Ganymede, could maintain a dust cloud large enough to block out 6.58 percent of the solar radiation that would normally reach Earth, more than enough to combat any current global warming trends.”

—Charles Choi, “Asteroid dust could fight climate change on Earth,” *LiveScience*, Sept. 28, 2012.

### Homes and services before freeways

<http://nyti.ms/RYGAPb>

More and more Americans, educated 20-somethings and empty nesters among them, want to live downtown. Plenty of downtowns are coming back; many are thriving. Even so, we remain a nation in thrall to suburbs, highways, cars. The large new Louisville Waterfront Park designed by Hargreaves Associates of San Francisco, built partly under the interstates, has become a recent source of civic pride. Getting there requires crossing several busy roadways, and the park is practically inaccessible without a car. But it’s popular. Louisville has good bones, good architects, and some good ideas. For three decades the city has wrestled with the interstate and bridge problem. But removing the highways, or downscaling them, might turn downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods, including the riverfront, into more attractive places. And where highways have come down in other cities, property values have gone up. What brings life to a city are attractions, services, homes, and walkable streets. We see traffic problems today and ask how to ease them. But it’s better to start by thinking about what kind of streets and neighborhoods a city wants, what kind of waterfront it should have, and how mass transit could change things. First things first.” —Michael Kimmelman, “Does Louisville need more highways?” *The New York Times*, Sept. 26, 2012.

### Bring consumers into the electricity marketplace

<http://bit.ly/Q9LHlm>

“Americans shop viciously for bargains, but when it comes to electricity, we simply write checks for the bills we receive.

A new study from two UC Davis economists suggests that if we had the right information, we could become enlightened shoppers, saving money buying cheap low-pollution hydro or wind power in the middle of the night while turning off the expensive stuff made with fossil fuels in the late afternoon. In a study of a few hundred homes in Connecticut, the Davis researchers found that when they gave consumers Home Area Network digital devices with real-time information about electrical prices and electricity use, and then raised the price of their electricity during hot days, consumers cut back on their usage by 8 to 21 percent. Homes that were only given information on the price of the power, and no information about their own usage, only cut back during peak times by 1 to 7 percent.” —Lisa Margonelli, “Could the Smart Grid finally do some good for consumers?” in *Pacific Standard*, Sept. 26, 2012. Download the study: Katrina Jessoe and David Rapson, “Knowledge is (less) power: Experimental evidence from residential energy use,” August 2012, 43 pp. <http://bit.ly/SZ1330>

### The climate on Fox News

<http://bit.ly/Q6RKam>

“Is the climate changing and are humans responsible? There’s virtually no debate in the scientific world that the answer to both questions is yes, but public opinion is confused and conflicted. [One] explanation: simple misinformation [including] through mainstream news organizations. The Union of Concerned Scientists has just released a study entitled ‘Is News Corp. failing science?’ It looks at climate change coverage in two influential arms of Rupert Murdoch’s media empire: the Fox News Channel and the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*. ‘Over a recent six-month period, 93 percent of Fox News Channel’s representations of climate change were misleading (37 out of 40 instances),’ the report states. ‘Similarly, over the past year, 81 percent of the representations of climate science in the WSJ’s opinion section were misleading (39 out of 48 instances).’ The Fox News Channel [is the] bigger concern. It’s really troubling when there’s no counter-balancing voice presenting actual facts.” —Tom Jacobs, “Fox News misleads viewers on climate change,” *Pacific Standard*, Sept. 25, 2012. Download the study by Aaron Huertas and Dena Adler, Union of Concerned Scientists, Sept. 2012: <http://bit.ly/PNHAft> ■

# Bright future for APA California

In a recent email to the members of APA California, President **Kevin J. Keller, AICP**, assured that the Chapter “will continue to grow and provide the services that members expect and will need in the next decade.”

“APA California and its members have withstood one of the worst recessions in the nation’s history,” Keller wrote. “From 2008 to 2009, APA lost 15 percent of its membership, and revenues from dues and other sources experienced a corresponding decrease:

- Total income to the Chapter dropped 59 percent from 2008 to 2012.
- California Chapter revenue from National APA dues dropped \$101,000 in that same period.
- National APA instituted a new \$40,000 annual fee to the California Chapter for member services that National provides.
- Chapter ad revenue dropped \$86,000 from 2008 to 2012.
- Chapter Reserve Account investments dropped 36 percent.”

“In response, the Board reduced Chapter operating expenses from 2008 to 2012 by 39 percent,” and, said Keller, “for the first time in Chapter history, used deficit budgets and 40 percent of Reserve Account funds to maintain member core services. The eight APA California Sections waived their share of annual revenue from California Chapter dues in 2010 to assist the Chapter’s effort to reduce expenses, and agreed to a reduction of their dues revenue for a minimum of three years beginning in 2011.”

Despite the cutbacks, “All existing core services have been retained,” wrote Keller. “Members are still able to enjoy all chapter programs and services at no additional cost or at reduced rates. As a result, APA California has remained stable with a strong membership. We now have 5154 members, up from a 2009 low of 4580.”

To ensure continued growth, “the Board decided to increase Chapter dues — the first time in seven years. The increase will be a flat \$20 per year for full APA members beginning in January 2013. Student dues will not be impacted.”

To read the full letter, go to <http://bit.ly/R6f8Wc> ■

From APA Interact, Oct. 10,

## APA Northern California

Most APA chapters have sections. The APA Northern California Section has a great **website** and an active **Young Planners Group**. The many events and activities on tap this month include a **Planners of Color Social Mixer** in Berkeley on October 18 and an **AICP Exam Preparation Workshop** at San Jose State University on October 27.

Answer to “Where in the world?” (Page 16)

Night and day in downtown Calgary, Alberta.

Calgary Tower (627 ft., 1968) can be seen in the night photo.

The Bow (58 floors, 774 ft., 2011) can be seen in both photos.

Photos by Barry Miller, FAICP

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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/JOV1Kn>. 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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