



CAL Planner

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2009



Single-family home designed with ignition resistant construction following the 2008 Witch Wildfire.

Planning for Wildfires . . . A Regulatory Agency Response

By Jeff Murphy

In October 2007, wildfires raged across San Diego County just as they did four years earlier in 2003, destroying thousands of homes and forcing hundreds of thousands of people to flee. When the fires died, crews found signs of hope inside the charred perimeter – evidence that county actions to improve building codes and policies had better protected people and property. The evidence lay in the wreckage, or in the lack of it.

Consider: The 2007 fires destroyed 13 percent of all the structures trapped inside their boundaries. They only destroyed 2 percent of those structures that had been built to the codes that county officials improved after the 2003 wildfires. Those improvements, many adopted in 2004, made three significant changes:

- Required builders to use more “ignition resistant” materials and standards.
- Increased and better explained vegetation management standards around structures.
- Better explained and improved what we expected during environmental review from discretionary projects in terms of fire protection, including requiring Fire Protection Plans.

Answering the “Why”

Regulatory agencies are often asked the same question after a major disaster: “Why does government allow development in high risk areas?” California residents face a variety of natural threats: floods, earthquakes, and most recently, wildfires. The only way to keep people completely safe would be to stop

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APA California Chapter Evolved Over Six Decades

Second of two articles

By Betty Croly, FAICP, Chapter Historian and Steven A. Preston, FAICP, Anniversary Event Chair

The fledgling organization known as CCAIP — California Chapter of the American Institute of Planners — started modestly in 1948 but grew quickly to meet the needs of its members and communities. The next six decades offered challenges and opportunities unimagined by its founders.

1950s: New frontiers

CCAIP's membership expanded to 450, in three distinct "sections" — Northern, Central, and Southern — that ultimately evolved into the eight regional sections we know today. **Jack Kent**, planning director of San Francisco and a National Planning Pioneer, left to establish a post-graduate program at UC Berkeley in 1948, another 60-year anniversary. That emergent program was the source of Telesis, which APA has lauded as the "first volunteer-based group to bring multiple fields together successfully in a comprehensive approach to environmental development in a regional context."

In 1953, CCAIP issued its first *Planning Commissioner's Handbook*, ancestor of the popular guides that have been published more recently by the League of California Cities.

1960s: Cities in danger

CCAIP's membership topped 600 by 1964. **Lewis Mumford** lectured at UC Berkeley; Berkeley and USC became the first "recognized" planning schools in the state. At the practice level, the chapter's 1960 conference focused on a new trend: the use of "electronic data processing" to support city planning. The national organization took note of California, bringing its national conference to Los Angeles in 1962. Additionally, the San Diego Section was formed.

As the state's growth created new challenges, the chapter formed new responses to deal with them. One

response was its first policy conference, held in Monterey in 1966. By 1967, the chapter started its first legislative program and in the wake of national civil unrest and urban decay, issued policy papers on both the "role of the planner in addressing social concerns" and regionalism.

1970s: Growth, change, and a new identity

CCAIP created the California Planning Foundation in 1970 to provide training and scholarships, but the chapter also saw its share of controversy when the chapter's offices were briefly relocated from Northern California to Los Angeles in 1971-72. To reach members in the coastal regions that were physically separated from much of California's Central Section, a new Central Coast Section was created in 1975.

With the merger of the American Society of Planning Officials (ASPO) and the American Institute of Planners (AIP) in 1978, Cal Chapter became part of an even larger, more diverse organization. Californians quickly made themselves heard, demanding greater roles for women as it helped elect the first APA president, **Dorothy Walker**, from California.

By 1979, the demand for quick legislative responses became so great that the chapter hired its first professional lobbyist. Later that decade, with the advent of professional lobbying, the chapter returned to the capital at Sacramento, where APA California Chapter remains today.

Planning education grew as well: the planning programs at Cal Poly Pomona, Fresno State, UCLA, and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo all were recognized during the decade.



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California Chapter www.calapa.org
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Wildfires*continued from page 1*

building in most of the state, an unlikely scenario with a growing population. Instead, our responsibility as land-use planners is to develop codes and policies that minimize the threat that natural disasters pose to the public.

Increasing Threat

San Diego County has its share of natural-disaster threats. In particular, it has always been prone to wildfires, and large fires have occurred more frequently in recent years. Rainfall is scant. Summers are long and dry. Hot Santa Ana winds whip the region's chaparral, brush, and mountain forests in the expanding Wildland-Urban Interface Area.¹

Even before the devastating 2003 Cedar and Paradise fires, the second-largest wildfire event in state history, county fire and building codes already contained provisions to maximize fire safety. That's because the county had made local amendments to the 2001 State Building Code, which included many fire-related construction requirements.

The improvements seemed to work. The 2003 fires destroyed roughly 2,000 homes in the unincorporated county, about 17 percent of the 15,000 structures in the fires' perimeter. Of the 400 structures built to the 2001 codes, the loss rate was only about 4 percent.

Even so, county leaders believed that codes and policies could be improved further and that better codes could increase the chances that structures could survive future wildfires.

Building Codes

County leaders improved the 2001 State Building Codes by adding new requirements to use more ignition-resistant materials. That meant not just using Class A roofing, but non-combustible material such as stucco for exterior walls and dual-paned windows. It also meant building attic and foundation vents in locations that would deter burning embers from entering structures. For those structures built in the most fire-prone areas, the requirements were ratcheted up even further. Skylights had to be made of tempered glass; rain gutters must be metal instead of plastic; outside doors must be solid-core or non-combustible; eaves had to be made from ignition-resistant materials or heavy timber, and untreated, small dimension, wood patios, decks, and fences could not be attached to houses.

Vegetation Management

Building with ignition-resistant materials is not enough to protect structures by themselves. Builders and homeowners must also control the fuels around structures that can ignite them in the first place. The importance of vegetation management was emphasized in Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission's report.

That was also emphasized in our code improvements. Before 2004, the county's codes required builders and homeowners to keep "weeds" in check in the immediate 30 feet to 100 feet around structures. The county improved those codes in two ways. First, we dropped the "30 feet" and simply made the 100-foot requirement the standard. Then, we clarified the vague "weeds" terminology, explaining that vegetation



Rancho Cielo – a Shelter in Place community following the 2008 Witch Wildfire.

management included not just weeds, but also combustible vegetation, such as shrubs, green waste, and dead and dying trees.

The county also reached out to the public with brochures, meetings, and Internet information to tell people that they could protect themselves and their homes by creating "defensible space." Recommendations included keeping fire-resistant landscaping trimmed and watered in the first 50 feet of homes; keeping natural vegetation in the 50-foot to 100-foot range trimmed and thinned; not planting flammable shrubs and trees beneath eaves and attic vents; and trimming trees that overhang or touch houses.

Environmental Review

Finally, the county also decided to clarify exactly what new developments – discretionary projects that required environmental review – should study and mitigate for when it comes to fire threats and protection. Because there were state fire codes, as well as individual fire codes from many rural fire agencies, the county wanted to make it clear to builders what it expected from them to make projects as safe from fires as possible.

One of the new requirements was that all discretionary projects must submit Fire Protection Plans. At the very minimum, plans needed to show that projects were consistent with the intent of the applicable fire regulations in terms of their site locations, topography, geology, and vegetation. Because each development project has its unique challenges and constraints, plans must be site specific and address issues such as the proximity of emergency responders and how quickly they could arrive; how easy or difficult it was to get to the site; what the available water supplies were; fire sprinkler systems; ignition-resistant construction, defensible space design, and long-term vegetation management.

Failing to comply could result in a potentially significant environmental impact that may jeopardize the approval of the project.

A common problem with projects in remote areas is access. Can residents and emergency responders get in and out safely during emergencies? The state limits how long dead-end roads can be to address that very question, but they provide flexibility.

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Commissioner's CORNER

New year, new goals, new direction

By Kathy Garcia, FASLA



Here we are, 2009! Nearly a decade into the new millennium, and we are suddenly faced with substantial change. Recent elections

have brought a change in direction for the nation as well as many changes at the local level. Assembly bills have changed the way we do CEQA and planning. The economic challenges facing every California sector bring about more change — some of it unwanted and of last resort, but change nonetheless. I'm sure there is personal change facing all of us — there is change ahead for me, but more about that later.

With change comes fear — fear of the unknown and unfamiliar, fear that a different path may result in an untried solution, or fear that we may not be changing for the better. My biggest fear is that this economic slow-down encourages us to throw good planning out the window in favor of economic stimulus. I've heard of proposals to lessen the CEQA requirements on major infrastructure projects in order to jump-start the economy. I don't disagree with the need for fast action, but is compromising our environmental ethics the way to achieve this? I've heard of jurisdictions abandoning their new General Plan update or master plan study due to the budget constraints. While those constraints are very real, the need for the plan is equally as critical. I

understand that some commissions have been favoring land use change because of their economic value, although they go against their strong community policies. Planning should be for the long-range. Our economy should be able to fluctuate within these policies. We will have too hard of a time correcting these mistakes in the future if we caved to the pressure of one year. There is much to fear.

But change also comes with new motivation, a much more positive emotion than fear. Last September,

Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 375 into law, focusing the way we do housing and transportation planning with the goal to reduce fossil fuel consumption and

Let's make a commitment to think long-term in all our decisions and to look at how it can benefit us as well as the next generation.

preserve our resource lands. This change will allow us to incentivize development which reduces vehicle miles traveled and will create a "sustainable community strategy" for every region. Those who comply with the strategy can deservedly streamline their environmental review.

At the federal level, we're looking forward to a much revised EPA that can tackle the issues of smart growth with economic stimulus in manners that are wise to our sensitive resources. Intelligent growth that balances our commitment to limit global warming should be leading the way to bring back a strong economy. Throughout the nation, entrepreneurs are looking to change the way we generate energy, consume fuels, and conserve resources. This type of change can spawn advancements as great as those seen with

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Legislative UPDATE

By Sande George, Stefan/George Associates, APA Legislative Advocate



APA California Legislative Update

November/December 2008

New Legislative Session starting with huge deficit

As you are painfully aware, the 2009-2010 Legislative Session started December 1 with a huge existing budget deficit of \$11.2 billion, and begins the next budget cycle with a minimum projected \$13 billion. This will not bring good news to local agencies already struggling with deficits of their own. There will also be 38 new members learning the ropes at the same time the Legislature attempts again to deal with the deficit, plus a new Senate Pro Tem, Senator Darrell Steinberg, from Sacramento. APA California Chapter will continue to actively participate in the legislative process and will begin new APA California Legislative Review Team meetings in March. If you would like to become a member of the Legislative Review Teams, please email me at sgeorge@stefangeorge.com.

SB 375 cleanup measure announced as well as AB 32 thresholds of significance proposal

Senator Steinberg, after discussions with Governor Schwarzenegger right before the Governor finally signed his SB 375, agreed to discuss several additions to SB 375 next year. On the table are extensions of the CEQA streamlining changes for projects that are consistent with the Sustainable Community Strategy, or SCS. Currently, SB 375 applies those streamlining provisions to residential and mixed use projects. The Governor and many interest groups are now lobbying to extend those provisions to Prop 1B Transportation projects, state highway projects, and infrastructure, retail and commercial development. Also under discussion, is a timetable to eliminate schedule conflicts with the new 8-year housing element and the 4-year Regional Transportation Plans. In addition to a clean-up bill, there will continue to be ongoing discussions with CARB to coordinate AB 32 local land use implementation strategies with SB 375, including a new proposed CARB CEQA thresholds of significance proposal to determine which projects will be subject to AB 32 requirements.

APA California Chapter has a new section on our website homepage designated just for SB 375. We will continue to provide updated implementation information on that site. In addition, APA California is considering publishing an "AB 32 Q & A" for our members as planners begin implementation and run into problems. If you have any questions that are not answered in the background materials on our site, please forward them to me for consideration, at sgeorge@stefangeorge.com.

How to Login for the First Time

APA California Chapter members are now able to login to gain access to Members-Only capabilities. To login for the first time, click on the link "Forgot your Password?" in the lower left area of the web page; type in the email address APA California Chapter has on file for you, and login with the information emailed instantly to your email account.

APA California Chapter "QUICK LEG INFO" Feature Now on Website Homepage

APA California Chapter has a quick legislative information feature — members can now quickly and easily access key information right from the home page, without signing in. Under the new QUICK LEG INFO feature (under the Consultant Directory link), just click on the "Hot Bill List" link. That link connects members to reports on the hot bills, APA California Chapter positions, and the status of each measure.

Please take the time to review this time-saving new feature.

Wildfires

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They allow dead-end roads to be longer if evidence can show that mitigating circumstances make them as safe as a shorter road. For example, a dead-end road could be inter-sected along its path by an emergency-only access road, providing alternate access. However, there are no hard and fast rules to decide the mitigation question, leaving it open to “best professional judgment.” This can be frustrating for planners, developers, and the public. Conditions are unique at different sites. What works for one project doesn’t work for another.

The county has tried to address this by developing wildfire design standards for its “CEQA Guidelines for

Determining Significance.” The guide directs planners and developers how to determine whether a project’s environmental impact is significant and possible options to mitigate it.

The standards help spell out how what kind of mitigation may be needed for road length. One of those possible mitigations is “Shelter in Place.” SIP, while stating that early and safe evacuation is preferred, allows people to shelter in their homes or “safe areas” until the wildfire passes. Projects can only qualify by using the most stringent, continuous defensible space, and fire-building code standards.



Single-family home destroyed during the 2007 Witch Wildfire.



Aerial photo showing vegetation and structure loss following the 2003 Cedar Wildfire.

Developing the Shelter in Place guidelines – minimum road widths, subdivision design and fuel management buffers, construction requirements, proof of continuous funding to manage and enforce defensible space requirements and education campaign – was a controversial process. That controversy was extinguished after it was reported that no homes were lost in any of the five Shelter in Place communities in the 2007 fires.

Conclusions

The fact that the 2007 fires destroyed just 2 percent of the structures built to the improved codes and policies – opposed to the nearly 11 percent of the other structures – makes us believe that the changes made a positive difference.

We cannot rest. Governments will continue to consider development in the wildland-urban interface that is threatened by wildfires. Modern society, meanwhile, has increased the chances of large wildfires. It suppresses the naturally-occurring small fires that used to clean out overgrown fuel loads, and it has introduced highly-flammable ornamental and invasive plants such as the eucalyptus. It will continue to be up to planners to minimize the risks from fires by finding new ways to improve the codes and policies that can make structures safer when fires hit.

1 The Wildland/Urban Interface Area is defined under the 2006 International Wildland-Urban Interface Code as a geographic area where structures and other human development meets or intermingles with wildland or vegetative fuels, thereby, potentially increasing the possibility of vegetation conflagration fires.

Jeff Murphy is the Deputy Director of the Advanced Planning Division for the County of San Diego and responsible for oversight of the County's General Plan Update and Policy/Ordinance Development division; the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), which is a comprehensive, long-term habitat conservation program that streamlines the permitting process for development projects while preserving San Diego's unique, native habitats and wildlife; the Watershed Planning Section, which develops storm water and comprehensive watershed management plans; and the Fire Services Division, which develops local fire codes and regulations, implements the County's dead, dying, diseased tree removal program, and plan check functions relating to fire code compliance.

A list of websites is included on the next page.

We Want to Read Your Article

You and your planning colleagues have much insight and expertise to share. *CalPlanner* is the natural venue to generate discussions about best practices, innovative approaches, and everyday “how to” tactics. Please consider writing an article, submitting bulleted sidebars that make your planning day easier, contributing photos/images for a photo essay, or recruiting another author/photo essayist.

Email your article to Lance Schulte at Meyers-schulte@sbcglobal.net. If you would like to talk with Lance about an article idea, feel free to call him at 760.805.3525. Please tell us if the article has been submitted to other publications, has been printed in another publication, or if it is about to be published.

Articles are around 950 words or fewer. Short, one-paragraph articles heavy with insight are also welcome as well as bullet points for a sidebar. Letters to the editor are also welcome.

We reserve the right to edit for appropriate content, grammar, and space. Once you have submitted the article, it is considered final, and you will not be allowed to submit multiple revisions.

Each article and/or photo(s)/ image(s) must be accompanied with a signed Copyright Agreement that gives the Chapter exclusive rights to the article and photo(s)/image(s). The Copyright Agreement can be downloaded from the APA California Chapter website and faxed to Karen Roberts at 951.769.3917. We look forward to reading your article.

A Rush to Solution ...

A Sidebar on Wildfires

Needless to say, catastrophic wildfires evoke strong emotions. Creating policy with unchecked emotion can lead to catastrophic land-use decisions. After a disaster, it's natural to question policies and change land-use practices. Change can be good, but decisions must be vetted rationally. The worst thing a planner can do is rush policy decisions and learn later that the decisions were ineffective or created unintended, irreparable harm.

Before San Diego County Supervisors adopted any code changes after the 2003 firestorms, county planners assembled and consulted technically-savvy stakeholder groups to help guide policy change. The evidence that code changes saved homes in the 2007 fires reflects the wisdom of that process. Without the stakeholder groups' support, county policy and code changes would not have been as successful.

The guidelines and codes described in the article, all of which relied on stakeholder input, are available on the County of San Diego's website.

- CEQA Significance Guidelines for Wildfire and Fire Protection: <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/docs/Fire-Guidelines.pdf>
- Fire Protection Plan Format and Content Requirements: <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/docs/Fire-Report-Format.pdf>
- County Building & Fire Code: http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/docs/amended_code_01-30-2008.pdf
- Public Outreach Material: <http://www.wildfirezone.org/>

Commissioner's Corner

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transportation, electricity, and the Internet in our last century.

In your own jurisdiction, I am sure that you are aware of opportunities for change. It may be change in your leadership, change on your commission, or major new policy directions that change your region for the better. Let's set our New Year's planners resolutions to address this new energy and embrace change for the better. Let's make a commitment to think long-term in all our decisions and to look at how it can benefit us as well as the next generation.

One more change ... with this article, I say thank you and goodbye. This will be my last Commissioner's Corner, as my term has ended for both the City of San Diego Planning Commission and as your APA California Chapter Planning Commission Representative. For the last four years, you've graciously responded to my articles and in exchange, prompted me to think about commissioners' values, needs, and directions different from my own. You've waived a hearty hello at the APA California Chapter conferences, recognizing me from this picture. A few of you have also written letters in response to my statements, actively disagreeing with my point of view. I'm delighted to have had this exchange, and I thank you for making me a better Planning Commissioner for it. It was a pleasure to serve on the APA California Board, and I would encourage any commissioner who would like to become more involved to do the same. Keep up the good work, commissioners! Don't ever change that.

Kathy Garcia, FASLA can be contacted at 619.696.9303 or kgarcia@SD.wrtdesign.com.



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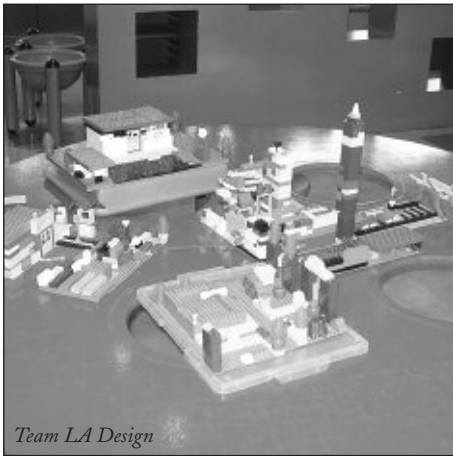


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“Model Cities” Competition at Legoland

By Derek R. Hull, Marketing Director, APA California Chapter

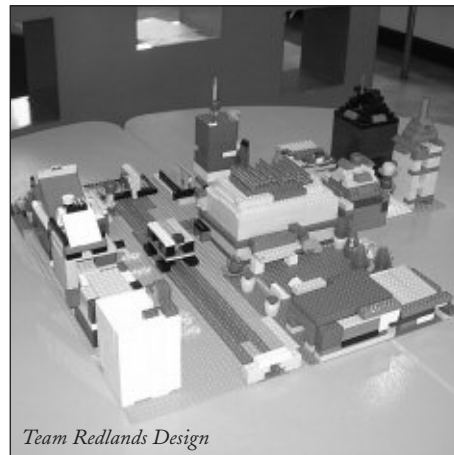


How do you bring together a group of creative, enthusiastic, and diverse students to understand and embrace basic planning concepts without giving long lectures on land use capability, zoning, and environmental impacts? You invite them to Legoland and engage the students in a hands-on exercise to compete for the best “Model Cities” design and development competition.

On October 25, APA California Chapter and its area sections from Los Angeles, Orange County, San Diego County, and the Inland Empire sponsored a planning event in celebration

of National Community Planning Month to teach students basic planning concepts. Southern California Boys and Girls Club members participated in a mock “Model Cities” design competition. Boys and Girls Clubs were selected from Los Angeles, Harbor Region (Garden Grove), Redlands, and SW County (Temecula). Professional planners were on hand to facilitate, teach, and guide students with the basic tenants of good planning. Students were encouraged to discuss critical goals and objectives, think “outside the box,” collaborate on design and function, and justify their model city creations.

Before starting their “Model Cities” design, students recited an Oath of



Commitment to signify the importance of practicing and embracing traditional planning ethics through fair and sound judgment and decision making responsibilities.

Moina Khan, a Riverside County urban regional planner, guided the LA Club by encouraging her group to think of existing land uses with the city.

“I began my session by asking the students open-ended questions on the preferences of neighborhood needs and quality of life concerns. They were thrilled to take part in the exercise and



wasted no time in deciding the elements of their city.”

Other planners and volunteers facilitating groups included **Chantell Griffen**, **Phayvanh Nanthavong-douangsy**, and **Roselee Victoria-White**; **Mustafa Bahar** from the County of Riverside Planning Department; and **John Hildebrand** from the City of Ontario Planning Department. **Hing Wong**, APA California Chapter Vice President of Administration, and **Derek R. Hull**, APA California Chapter Marketing Director, served as the competition’s judges.

Each team was allotted 1.5 hours to generate ideas, build and construct, and prepare an oral presentation to explain the model city design. A summary of each team’s design follows.





The Winners!

Team Temecula (Southwest County representing the San Diego County Section) designed a model city that was comprised of a city-wide monorail system, a hospital and cemetery, rooftop garden parks, an airport and university, office buildings, an industrial park and residential high rise buildings.

Team Redlands (representing the Inland Empire Section) designed a model city that was comprised of a mass transit and train stations, a hospital and downtown mall with solar panels, a cell tower, office buildings, pocket parks, a Boys and Girls Club, a school, and mid-rise residential buildings.

Team LA (representing the Los Angeles Section) designed a model city that was comprised of a Metrolink Train



system, directly connected to LAX; a suburban mall, a hospital in the CBD, a downtown museum, office buildings, a community park equipped with an Olympic-size pool, a Boys and Girls Club and school, a McDonald's, gas station, Starbucks, a cell tower, the Bonaventure Hotel, and single and multi-family residential units. (Notice the sprawl concept. This was planned with the current city layout in mind.)

Team Garden Grove (Harbor Region representing the Orange County Section) designed a model city that was comprised of a power plant far away from the Central Business District, downtown mall with Macy's as the anchor store, a hospital, office building, a downtown



airport, a park to buffer the industrial corridor, a church, additional pocket parks, a school, and residential units.

The categories for judging each design were based on four planning elements: creativity, comprehensiveness, connectivity, and open space/livability.

Each category was weighed individually, on a scale from 1 – 10. The maximum score that a team could achieve was a total score of 40. Each

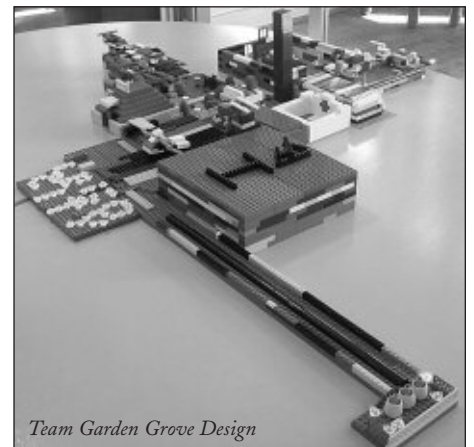


team demonstrated outstanding teamwork, creativity, ingenuity, and, of course, friendly comradery. The competition was very close, but in the end, only one team could take home the grand trophy and be declared the 2008-2009 Southern California Model Cities Boys and Girls Club.

So who took home the coveted grand trophy? **TEAM REDLANDS!**

Congratulations to all Boys and Girls Club members, chaperones, planning volunteers, APA Chapter executive officers and section leaders, and, of course, the wonderful staff at Legoland. **Additional photos are available at the chapter's website: calapa.org.**

Derek Hull is APA California Chapter's marketing director. He can be reached at Drhull@rctlma.org or by phone at 213.388.9755.



Team Garden Grove Design



CPF Issues \$48,000 in Scholarship Awards and Raises Over \$24,000 at 2008 Auction

by Virginia Viado

Despite our current economic climate, 2008 proved to be another year of continued success for the CPF Scholarship Fund as a record-breaking amount in student scholarship awards was issued, and another record-breaking auction was experienced at the APA California Chapter Conference in Hollywood. These achievements would not have been possible without the generous support of APA California Chapter Sections and members, Friends of CPF, and the numerous auction donors and volunteers. CPF distributes all proceeds from its fundraising activities toward scholarships, and we look forward to being able to award another healthy round of scholarships in 2009.

2008 Scholarships

The CPF Scholarship Fund awarded over \$48,000 in scholarships to graduate and undergraduate planning students who will become practicing planners in California. This year's scholarship winners, selected by the faculty in each planning program, were acknowledged at a special awards luncheon during the 2008 APA California Chapter Conference in Hollywood.

CPF Auction

The annual auction event featured **Steve Preston** and **Alex Amoroso** on the stage as Co-Auctioneers, and with the generous donations from conference attendees through auction items, raffle ticket purchases, and gracious cash contributions, over \$24,000 was raised for the CPF Scholarship Fund! A special "Thank You" goes out to the Friends of CPF whose contributions provide support for the scholarship fund. They are listed in the following section. An additional thanks to APA California Chapter sections participating in the annual Section Challenge: Los Angeles, Orange, Inland Empire, Northern, San Diego, and Sacramento.



2008-09 Friends of CPF:

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 Dana C. Privitt

2008-09 Section Challenge winner:

Sacramento Section (largest single package bid of \$1,150)

Looking Forward...Lake Tahoe

As we enter 2009, we look forward to even greater successes in our goal of raising funds for scholarships and providing economical, timely, and relevant professional development workshops for the practicing planning professional. Many thanks to APA California Chapter members for continued support of CPF's efforts. We hope to see you at the next auction in Lake Tahoe on September 14, 2009. For more information, please visit our website: www.californiapanningfoundation.org.



CalPlanner Going Exclusively Digital With May/June 2009 Edition

CalPlanner will transition to an exclusively digital format by the May/June 2009 edition. The March/April 2009 edition of *CalPlanner* will be the last mass printed and mailed edition.

The digital *CalPlanner* can provide far more timely and enhanced communication on planning issues. The decision to go digital with *CalPlanner* was made after multiple discussions and careful consideration of the APA California Board. In those discussions, many APA California Section Directors mentioned their sections' success and positive feedback that they received in making their newsletters digital, along with the few, if any, members requesting a mailed newsletter.

The multiple member benefits of moving *CalPlanner* to a digital environment include:

- More timely articles and information by reducing set-up, printing, and mailing time.
- Additional articles and information without the cost constraints and limited space of a traditional printed newsletter.
- Longer and more in-depth articles on complicated issues.
- Enhanced use of color and graphics in communicating planning issues.
- Incorporation of video, sound, and animation in articles.
- Hotlinks to more information and background on articles.
- Two-way email communication and comment on articles to enhance our professional discussion of issues, ideas, and methods.
- Easier archiving of *CalPlanner* editions and articles for the chapter and for members who would like to digitally archive articles on their computers.
- A simplified process that members can use to more easily forward and share articles and *CalPlanner* information via email.
- Richer communication for *CalPlanner* advertisers and sponsors, and improved avenues for members to communicate with the advertisers and sponsors.

Along with these member benefits, there are obvious environmental and cost savings, such as:

- The reduced greenhouse gas emissions from eliminating a manufactured and printed paper *CalPlanner* and its associated transportation impacts.
- Reduced materials and waste-stream from eliminating a paper *CalPlanner*.
- Reduced paper, printing, formatting, and mailing costs. These costs currently are about \$60,000 per year or \$10,000 per edition of *CalPlanner*.

The environmental benefits of digitally distributing *CalPlanner*, though relatively small, are cumulative contributions that we, as planners, can provide to help our world be more sustainable. The cost savings to our organization will translate into the opportunity to invest in improved communication on planning issues by increasing our communication capabilities on the website, *CalPlanner*, or in our public relations or legislation areas, or to help mitigate other operational cost increases APA California Chapter may experience.

You will be able to access the new digital *CalPlanner* by logging onto the state website or via email. To receive the first digital May/June *CalPlanner* and subsequent editions by email, you will simply need to make sure that you have your email address included in your member information on the National APA website by March 30, 2009 at www.planner.org (or <http://www.calapa.org/> for Chapter Only members). Over 94 percent of members have their email addresses in their membership information. If you currently receive emails from APA (National) or your local section of APA California, then your email is in your membership information. The instructions for registering your membership email address are:

For **National APA Members**: Log onto <https://myapa.planning.org/ecommerce/error/LoginRequired.aspx> and click on the APA Members Only area. You'll need your 6-digit APA ID number (look on your *Planning* magazine label or your dues invoice).

For **Chapter Only Members**: Log onto <http://www.calapa.org/>, click on "My Record" and "Edit Record," update your email address and click "Submit."

If you do not have an email address, a paper copy of *CalPlanner* will be provided at the cost of printing, postage, and processing. To receive a printed and mailed copy of *CalPlanner* simply mail a letter with a \$22 check to:

Ms. Elaine Sledge
 APA California
 c/o Stefan George Associates
 1333 36th Street, Sacramento CA 95816-5401
 Re: Mailed *CalPlanner*

Although the transition to digital newsletters by numerous sections has been extremely well received, we would like to hear from you. If you have any comments or concerns please contact me:

Lance Schulte, APA California VP Public Information
 APA California Chapter
 c/o Stefan George Associates
 1333 36th Street
 Sacramento CA 95816-5401

APA California Member Survey On Communications

As *CalPlanner* moves to a digital format, this is a great opportunity to perform a comprehensive review of *CalPlanner* and our communications. A web-based membership survey has been developed to gather your ideas, suggestions to improve communication via the APA California Chapter website. Your ideas and suggestions will be a great help in highlighting issues and ideas that can help focus and enhance our efforts in the redesign of *CalPlanner* (for the web) and our other forms of communication.

You can access the survey to provide your input at <http://www.calapa.org/en/sur/?6>. Please go to this link and complete the survey by February 1. Consider it one of your New Year's resolutions that can be easily meet.



John S. Rahaim . . . A PROFILE

by Lance Schulte, AICP, Vice President for Public Information

APA California Chapter welcomes John Rahaim, the City and County of San Francisco's new planning director. Rahaim was appointed at the beginning of this year. He came to us from the City of Seattle where he was planning director since 2003, and before that, he was the founding executive director of CityDesign, Seattle's Office of Urban Design. Born and raised in the Midwest, he was the City of Pittsburgh's associate director of city planning before moving to the West Coast. In addition to ongoing development and environmental reviews for physical development, Rahaim is overseeing the creation of a series of comprehensive neighborhood plans, a citywide historic resource survey, and updates to San Francisco's General Plan.

Being new to California, what are some of the planning strengths and planning weaknesses you see based on your experience in Seattle and the Midwest?

There is a broad public awareness of planning in the West that does not occur in the Midwest. This awareness is more acute in San Francisco than in Seattle, and perhaps more so in all of California. The result, of course, is far more public engagement in the planning and development process.

This awareness has also resulted in a more institutionalized planning environment. For example the concept of a General Plan ("Comprehensive Plan" in Washington State) did not even exist in Pennsylvania when I practiced there. My guess is that this partially grows out of the intense interest in the natural environment here and the strong protectionist beliefs about that.

Your training, and background, is based in architecture, one of the key professions from which planning developed. The interplay between planning, architecture, and landscape architecture is so critical to creating vibrant, productive and inspiring urban environments. What important architectural skills do you think all planners should have? What essential planning skills should architects have?

I have a strong interest in this issue and have spoken at several APA conferences about the topic of urban design expertise within planning agencies. Planners should know architectural language and should have sensitivity to design issues. But one cannot expect planners, whose training is often in policy or management, to be design experts. Hence, it is incumbent upon us as planning directors and managers to create systems for design review that can support planners. Many cities, and, in fact, almost all smaller cities and towns, have eliminated this function in their planning agencies with unfortunate consequences. I believe that we must pay strong attention to the public realm, and a successful public realm is

created by the positive interplay of the public environment with the private.

San Francisco is a great urban environment with wonderful public and private places to experience that; like Paris, the city itself is so appreciated that it is a major visitor attraction. What are the key roles planning has in fostering and guiding the creation and growth of such a well-regarded environment?

This is the only American city I know, perhaps outside of Manhattan, where café conversation is often about the city itself. This, of course, is common in Paris or Rome. There is also a very unAmerican sensitivity to the city's history, including but not only, architectural history. The 1906 earthquake is the subject of frequent conversations, as are the extraordinarily colorful actions of the city's many outrageous historical figures.

Planners here have a dual responsibility: to protect that history and the fine-grained scale of the city, and to allow the city to grow with grace in a manner befitting its character, while expressing the desires of a true 21st century, globally connected city. These are enormous challenges here. Meeting these challenges often means mediating disputes between extreme views. Land use politics is often referred to as a "blood sport" in San Francisco, and political careers have, indeed, been made and broken based on land use decisions. Our objective is to present as objectively as possible planning policy while navigating these political waters.

Preparing comprehensive, thoroughly vetted neighborhood plans is one way we are attempting to meet the challenge. Some of these plans have been in process for several years, and when completed by the end of 2008, will have covered over 25 percent of the land area of the city where the vast majority of growth will occur.

CEQA, has a different and more limited focus on in-fill urban environment. Do you think CEQA is the right planning tool for understanding and considering changes from proposed developments in urban environments? Are there other approaches more suitable for the urban environment?

CEQA has important environmental protections that should not be minimized. But it also contains some serious drawbacks for infill development. It seems to be largely intended as a control tool for greenfield development. If so, the procedures required within CEQA, as opposed to the substantive controls, are often counterproductive because these procedures actually discourage development in urban infill locations.

I would advocate for an environmental review system that provides a strong distinction between urban infill locations –

especially in larger cities – than in suburban/rural locations. With our transit infrastructure, the largest cities in California should be encouraged by an environmental process to accommodate new development so as to help address the environmental consequences of sprawl.

Urban environments are very people-focused. In both policy and development planning, how do you effectively create and maintain a community involvement process for planning given the pressing demands on citizens’ time and energy?

Community engagement processes must occur at multiple levels, with multiple media and technologies. We must expand beyond our usual array of neighborhood meetings and public hearings as our primary tools to engage the public. We are exploring online dialogue techniques, as well as other forms of engaging neighborhoods, such as church meetings and other neighborhood-based social gatherings. I am also interested in using small group discussions, such as salons and focus groups to engage those who might not be comfortable in larger settings.

A commitment to community engagement must be fundamental to any planning process or development review. But the specifics of the process should be designed individually for each process. I would also advocate for a more formalized community representation process, whereby the city formally recognizes organizations and representatives. This is enabled by the community democratically determining their representation through an elective process, and allows the city to more efficiently interact with neighborhoods.

Planning is about the thoughtful coordination of public and private sector efforts to more efficiently and justly create a better built environment for people and manage our natural lands. How can planning serve to guide the maintenance and enhancement of our center city neighborhoods in the face of extensive development activity?

We must start with core principles as you note below. Our work must protect those areas of the city that must be protected, but we must also allow for change and for growth. We cannot do this solely through regulations. In fact, zoning is a fairly blunt instrument that cannot in itself create great design or great public spaces. Zoning must lay a foundation for planners to work with communities and developers.

In an urban setting, planners should have the flexibility – with a strong foundation in the code — to shape development that is compatible with the community. In a fine-grained city like San Francisco, the challenge is often related to the scale of development. This is most acute in the neighborhoods seeing new 4- to 7-story development, here, often replacing townhouse patterns of historical growth. To insert new development in such a context in a sensitive manner; planners must be empowered to shape new growth in our neighborhoods that is truly compatible.

Conversely, planners should understand the limits of public benefit. We tend sometimes to lose the forest for the trees and

concentrate on the details rather than on the overall impact, form, or use.

One other point on this, like many cities, San Francisco has adopted, appropriately, a long-standing policy of encouraging new development to be expressive of our time, and not to mimic historical styles. Often, this challenge has not been met well by planners and architects. We have not yet fully understood how to insert contemporary buildings in an urban context in a way that is sensitive to time and place. We must do better, and I am quite interested in a larger dialogue about this between planners and architects.

As planners who advise on the policies and development requirements that provide the envelopes to create urban spaces and architectural form, what are the core principles and objectives planners should achieve in guiding and regulating development? What was the most satisfying planning experience you have had in your career so far?

In Seattle, we started CityDesign, the city’s urban design office. Urban design had not been a focus of planning in Seattle before I arrived. In a few years, we were able to focus more public attention on the public realm, especially on the design of city streets and open spaces. Now, there is a much broader dialogue – and more public attention and resources – on the design of the public environment there. I am very proud of that accomplishment.

What are the three greatest things you like about being in California?

1. The positive energy and forward thinking attitude of the citizenry
2. The sunshine
3. San Francisco

John Rabaim was appointed planning director for the City and County of San Francisco at the beginning of 2008. In that role, he is responsible for overseeing long-range planning, development entitlements, and environmental reviews for all physical development in the city.

Prior to his appointment in San Francisco, Rabaim was planning director for the City of Seattle, a position he held since August of 2003. In 1999, Rabaim was the founding executive director of CityDesign, Seattle’s office of Urban Design and the executive director of the Seattle Design Commission, the city’s primary design advisory panel for public projects and related urban design initiatives.

Prior to his tenure in Seattle, Rabaim was with the City of Pittsburgh Department of City Planning, where he served as associate director in charge of development review and the rewrite of the city’s zoning ordinance.

Rabaim received a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from the University of Michigan, and a Master of Architecture from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, Rabaim’s career path in planning and urban design has been a reaction to that circumstance.

In addition to ongoing development review and environmental reviews for physical development, Rabaim is overseeing a number of planning initiatives well underway with the City of San Francisco. These include a series of comprehensive neighborhood plans, a citywide historic resource survey, and updates to the city’s General Plan.

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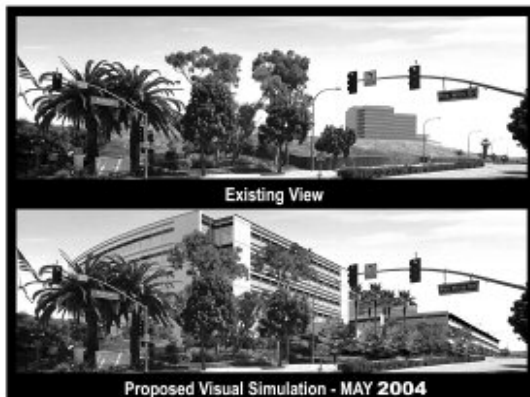
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Sacramento Valley Section Begins a Young Planners Group Program

In the spring of 2008, the Sacramento Valley Section APA California Chapter made it a priority to bring together young planning professionals to address their educational and development needs and build their participation within APA. At the same time, a Young Planners Taskforce was commissioned by APA President Bob Hunter who wanted to investigate the feasibility of a Young Planners Group program as part of the APA. The Young Planners Taskforce effort culminated with the preparation of a report to the APA Board of Directors and a session at the 2008 national conference in Las Vegas to present findings from the report. The Sacramento Valley Section began planning its Young Planners Group with an investigation and review of other professional organizations who focused on career development and materials prepared by the Young Planners Taskforce. These findings led the section to prepare a subcommittee overview, mission statement, and goals. Since then, the section has moved ahead with its Young Planners Group program, after building a contact list of over 100 interested individuals in little over a month and increasing membership of young planning professionals in APA.

In October 2008, the section sponsored the first Young Planners Group networking event. Over 50 young planning professionals and students came to socialize and network; learn, ask questions, exchange information; and voice their support and enthusiasm for the program. The event lasted over two hours, and attendees included a diverse range of planners and planning-related professionals from public agencies and private consulting firms. During the event, attendees expressed their support for a program that focused on the needs of young planning professionals, and many signed up to join APA, the Young Planners Group, and Sacramento Valley Section Young Planners Group subcommittee.

The first subcommittee meeting followed in November, sponsored by the California State Association of Counties (CSAC). Over 30 young planning professionals and students attended to hear about the goals of the Sacramento Valley Section for the Young Planners Group subcommittee and provide input on what they wanted to get out of the Young Planners Group. Key concerns and desires voiced by participants included:

- Keeping up with local, state, national, and international planning related issues, legislation, and best management practices;
- Maintaining a well-rounded base of general planning knowledge;
- Encouraging and implementing new planning trends (e.g., smart growth);
- Understanding CEQA, climate change, and SB 375;

- Earning and maintaining AICP certification;
- Earning other planning-related accreditations (e.g., LEED certification);
- Learning from and being mentored by more experienced professionals;
- Working successfully with more experienced, senior level staff; and
- Making APA membership, programs, and conferences more affordable to young professionals.

At the conclusion of the meeting, participants signed up for various subcommittee groups to begin efforts to conduct educational, mentoring, and professional development programs; obtain sponsorships; give back to the community, recruit new APA and Young Planners Group members, organize networking events, and plan programs and events for the 2009 APA California Chapter Conference in Squaw Valley.

As one of the first sections to implement a Young Planners Group subcommittee, the Sacramento Valley Section is in a unique position to develop its program from the ground up. The section is poised to shape its Young Planners Group into a program that addresses the needs of young planners, provides opportunities to learn more about planning, related fields, and regional land use issues; provide mentors to build strong careers; and expand social and professional networks. The section's Young Planners Group subcommittee looks forward to planning an exciting 2009 program and event schedule that includes: career building, continuing education, mentoring programs; social and networking events; and opportunities to give back to the community through volunteering and community service. Plans include working with the section to increase APA membership, increasing section visibility, and developing future APA leaders.

If you are interested in starting a young planners group in your section, have suggestions for what young planners need, or want to know more about what the Sacramento Valley Section Young Planners Group subcommittee is doing, please let us know. We welcome your participation and interest and hope that you will get involved. Ted Holzem and Jamie Cutlip are the chair and co-chair of the Sacramento Valley Section Young Planners Group subcommittee. Feel free to contact us at sacapaypg@gmail.com or contact our Sacramento Valley Section Director, Julia Lave Johnston at julia.johnston@opr.ca.gov.

This article was prepared by Ted Holzem (Mintier Harnish), Jeannie Lee (Remy, Thomas, Moose, and Manely, LLP), and Juliana Proserpi (Planning Partners).

APA California Chapter History

continued from page 2

1980s: Professional management, new initiatives

Much as the chapter stepped out in front in the 1970s by creating a separate foundation to advance the charitable interests of the planning community, the chapter advanced its interests in policy development when the California Planning Roundtable was created in 1980 to serve as the chapter's "think tank" concerning statewide planning and policy issues. A brief flirtation with magazine publishing even gave the chapter a new shape and form, but the product called *Westplan* only lasted a few issues.

CCAPA transformed its operations in 1984 by establishing professional contract staff to handle both administrative and legislative operations. **Sande George** came to be the face of the organization, representing CCAPA with equal facility in both the legislature and the boardroom.

The last of California's eight sections, Inland Empire, was created in 1981 to meet the rapid growth of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. New initiatives established the chapter's first multi-year communications program; that program led to a greatly enhanced, color newsletter; op-eds in major newspapers; and a host of other programs. The legislative program developed "Legislative Review Teams," and created the Action Agenda for the 1990s to carry its vision to the Legislature.

1990s to today: Adventures in policy...and a birthday!

Building on its record, CCAPA became a respected source of advice and counsel in the legislature. Enhanced marketing, planning commissioner training, and insurance were added; California's conferences developed increasing creativity; and for the first time, a sitting California governor addressed the state conference in 1991 just as a devastating fire scarred the Oakland hills.

The chapter began honoring long-time officers and retired professionals; those receptions evolved into the Planners Emeritus Network. It was the first such venture by any chapter

Firms on the MOVE

Environmental Science Associates (ESA) announced that it was recognized as one of the 2008 Best Environmental Firms to Work For at the ZweigWhite Best Firms to Work For Summit, held in San Francisco in September 2008. The firm was ranked number two nationally among mid-sized environmental firms and seventh overall in the annual competition. Unlike other benchmarking surveys that measure similar companies, the survey gave all employees the opportunity to give input on the company's culture and business practices.

PMC has added an office in San Luis Obispo. The office is California-based PMC's 10th location in the state and the 12th location nationwide.

in the country. Record-breaking national (San Francisco) and state conferences marked the decade. The planning program at UC Irvine won PAB accreditation.

When the chapter's 50th anniversary arrived in 1998, the chapter hosted a celebration on the beach, topped with a huge cake. In an impromptu fundraiser that evening, the chapter raised \$2,600 in pledges which, matched with a contribution from the CCAPA board, created the funding to open the California Chapter APA Archives at California State University, Northridge.

Carrying new branding on its 60th anniversary, California Chapter is today the largest among the nation's 46 chapters, with membership topping 6,500 and an annual budget of more than \$600,000. Under current **President Vince Bertoni, AICP**, its leadership in member communications, legislative action, diversity, planning commissioner training, and member programs has placed the chapter in an enviable position, both among similar organizations in Sacramento and among APA chapters nationally.

The California Planning Foundation continues to generate more than \$20,000 annually through its auctions while APA California Chapter's other related organization, the California Planning Roundtable, has become a respected contributor to the discussion of planning issues in California.

Planners on the MOVE

Leilani Barnett has joined PMC as a senior planner.

Brett Marsengill, ASLA, AICP, LEED-AP has accepted a position with Hargreaves Associates in the San Francisco office.

Adam Petersen has joined Davis-based Land Logistics as an associate planner.

David Salazar, AICP, executive director of facilities, planning and administrative services at San Bernardino Community College District, has accepted the position of associate vice president of physical planning and facilities management at CSU, Long Beach.

ESA

Jack Gorzeman, AICP, ASLA, has joined ESA as senior managing associate in ESA's Community Development Group.

Deanna Hansen has been promoted to vice president.

Michael Manka has joined ESA as senior project manager for ESA's San Francisco Bay Area Region Energy Group, in the Petaluma office.

Jim Parker has joined ESA as Southern California regional marketing manager.

Kate Pixley has been promoted to lead ESA's Bay Area regional marketing and publications groups as senior regional marketing manager.

Teresa Vanderburg has been promoted to lead ESA's Biological Resources and Land Management practice.

Ray Weiss has been promoted to director of the Community Development Group in the Central Valley/Sierra Region, headquartered in Sacramento, California.

Jamie Galos and **Stephanie Parsons** have been promoted to program manager positions in ESA's Central Valley/Sierra Regional office located in Sacramento, California.

Mead & Hunt

Tom Peterson, P.E. is a senior project manager on the Water Resources team.

Rebecca Shumate joins Mead & Hunt as a CAD technician.

CalPlanner Production Schedule

Issue	Articles Submitted	Distributed
March/April 09	January 13	March 3*
May/June 09	March 6	April 17**

*Mailed. Membership will receive magazine within 10 working days after this date, on average. Dates subject to change without notice.

** Online.