

## SPECIAL EDITION

From the APA California President	P 3
Getting Some Space to Breathe	P 7
Staying Authentic While Going Virtual	P 8
Reflections on Post-COVID Urbanity: Questions for Practitioners	P 9
Paved Paradise	P 10
Why Access to Urban Nature Should be an Essential Service	P 11
Short Term Rentals Post COVID-19: Three Things Planners Need to Know	P 12
Legislative Update	P 13
Planning Services Directory	P 16
APA California Leadership	P 17
2020 Conference Save-the-Date	P 18

CAL PLANNER  
IFORNIA

Planning News &amp; Updates from APA California

Safety tips over an empty street. Source: Sacramento Business Journal

ELLIE FIORE | VP-Public Information

## A World Changed

As March 2020 unfolded, our world quickly changed in ways we had never imagined just weeks before. County by county, residents were told to shelter in place, schools and businesses closed, lines formed outside grocery stores, and facemasks became common place—all in the attempt to slow the spread of COVID-19. For those of us privileged enough to keep our jobs and transition relatively smoothly to working from home, our new normal became Zoom, noise-canceling headphones, and adapting our bedrooms, living rooms—and occasionally closets—into workspaces.

As we settled into these new constrained daily routines, our thoughts shifted from the immediate response to the pandemic to what its lasting effects may be, on cities, neighborhoods, workplaces, and communities. As planners, we look at the world through a unique lens. We think long-term. We think about the interrelationships of the built environment, mobility, open spaces, equity, community engagement, and public health. We need to do this, so we can guide communities in confronting challenges, managing change, and understanding how today's decisions can impact the course of our lives.

Here at APA California, we focused our initial response to COVID-19 on collecting and promoting resources for our members who were dealing with these transitions, through our website and our now-weekly eNews. We then asked our members to reflect on the pandemic and its immediate and long-term impacts on our work and our environments.

The articles that follow are a collection of voices considering our shared future. We hope this special edition of CalPlanner will provoke more thinking, and serve as a snapshot of our profession in time—a very, very strange time.

Special thanks to Walker Wells for spearheading and supporting this effort. **EF**

## FEATURE | Aram Kamali

## Envisioning Land Use Planning in a Post-Pandemic City

**The role of a long-range planner is, in essence, to be prescient. We do not dictate how communities grow, but rather facilitate their organic evolution by anticipating how local trends and priorities will unfold in various domains, such as transportation behavior, consumption patterns, and land development.**

In California, General Plans serve as one of the primary vehicles through which we effectuate this process, establishing policy frameworks that envision the future of housing, mobility, and economic activity, among other topics.

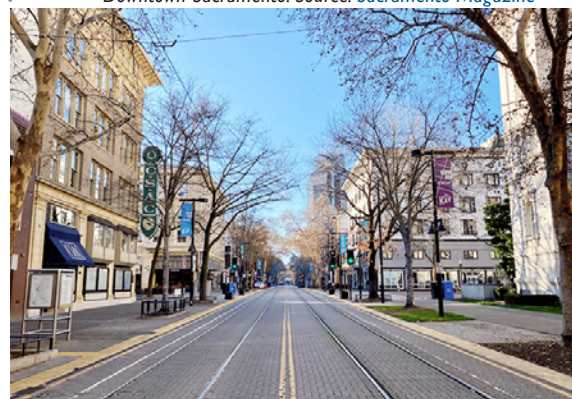
While these tools do often constitute effective means of guiding the future, they are immediately thrown into flux when crises emerge. In the realm of land use, the COVID-19 pandemic has already caused dramatic disruptions that may very well result in a significant reorganization of our built environment. Many retail establishments have either cut operating hours or shuttered completely, dealing what many believe to be a fatal blow to a commercial sector already in steep decline. In other parts of the economy, estimates suggest that at least 20% of the workforce now indefinitely works remotely—a trend that may contribute to a long-term decline in office demand as skepticism surrounding work-from-home is increasingly quelled.<sup>1</sup>

If the aim of our profession, then, is to

plan for tomorrow based on the trends we observe today, how will this crisis influence our approach to land use planning?

To answer this question, we must anticipate both the conditions and priorities that will emerge in a post-pandemic environment. Though COVID-19 may contribute to a decrease in demand for retail and office space, affordable housing demand will undoubtedly remain high. This notion suggests that land market fluctuations may create the physical space necessary to build **P4**

Downtown Sacramento. Source: Sacramento Magazine



## INSIDE...

**P2** Lead with Race**P4** Planning for Essential Workers**P5** How California Slowed Down**P6** Pandemic Call and Response

"We submitted the following article to CalPlanner on May 20. Five days later, George Floyd was murdered by the state. This and many other recent tragic events have created additional trauma, fear, and anger, but particularly in Black, American Indian, and other communities of color. These communities have faced these events repeatedly throughout this nation's history. There is, however, also new momentum to act on policies communities of color have long advocated for.

The planning profession can't passively standby. Not recognizing how this affects you as a planner or only issuing symbolic or general support statements for Black Lives Matter will fail another generation. Planning built into its codes who does and doesn't belong in our communities. The profession must apologize for its past mistakes; listen and partner with their American Indian, Black and other communities of color and colleagues; and identify specific actions to address anti-blackness and overcome the government-sponsor systems that led to Mr. Floyd's murder. The following article provides a framework for doing that. [The San Francisco Planning Commission Resolution to Center Racial and Social Equity in Planning](#) (final version soon) reinforces our commitment to action."



## Lead with Race

**"We shall seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration."**

We must go further: planners shall *lead with race*. In order to achieve positive outcomes for all, specificity matters. The legacy of racism is deep and pervasive. We lead with race while working to dismantle other oppressions.

By leading with race, we recognize that *government-sponsored systems* led to racial inequities. Planning has a major role in these systems, including segregated public housing, "slum" clearance, unwanted land uses siting, highway siting, and exclusionary zoning.

San Francisco isn't immune to these systems and their outcomes. People of color here face disparities across every *social indicator*, including health, income, and housing.

The pandemic illuminates these disparities. In *San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Alameda counties*, the combined COVID-19 death rate per 100,000 for Blacks is 10.7; for Whites it's 3.8.

We're not alone. You can likely name where people thrive in your community and where they don't, and the systems that led to that.

By leading with race, we ask ourselves when facing challenging policy and budget decisions: how does this benefit or burden communities of color? We also expand existing and seek new partnerships with communities of color to answer this question.

We can advance racial equity by applying this question and process to challenges faced during this pandemic like:

- **Land use/economic recovery:** where and which land uses to reopen, such as stores, convention and event centers, and hotels | }
- **Housing:** where to prioritize the protection of tenants, preservation of communities, and/or production and preservation of housing
- **Transportation:** where to prioritize "open streets" and which public transit

lines to change service in relation to communities' access to essential needs

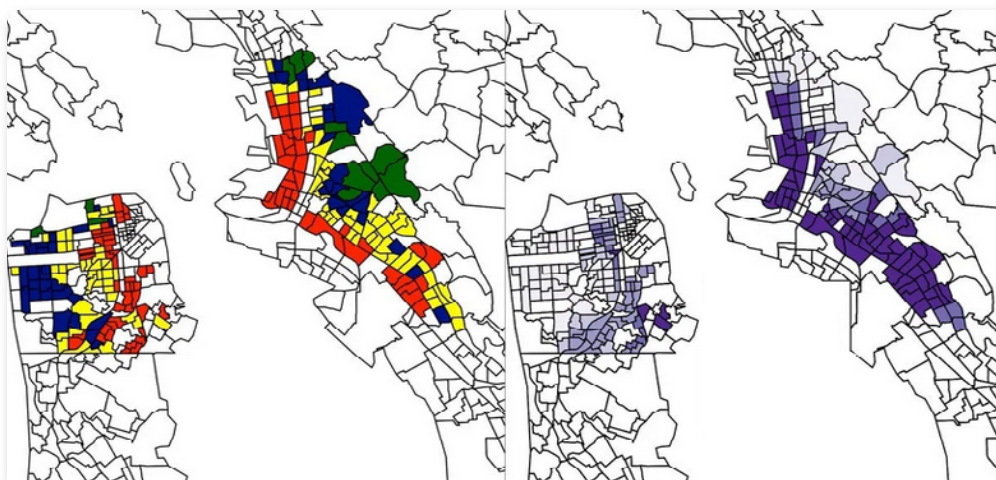
Planners have the background, tools, and power to take on these challenges and advance racial equity. We're inspired by those in *Oakland, Minneapolis, and Seattle* who are doing just that.

The San Francisco Planning Department recognizes its role in these systems and works to advance racial equity through its *Racial & Social Equity Initiative*. The adopted phase I action plan addresses the department's internal processes including hiring and promotions; culture; resource allocation; and consultant procurement. The underway phase II action plan will address the department's external functions such as engagement and legislation.

Planners exacerbate racial inequities if we do little or nothing to address the systems that led to them. Our responsibility is to proactively advance racial equity. We partner with those most in need to plan for communities that work for all. We have an opportunity in this pandemic to change our role in the inequitable systems and the systems themselves. Join us, other planners, and community partners throughout our state and country who are leading with race to advance racial equity.

*Claudia Flores, a mixed-race/Mestiza female, is a principal planner and co-chair of the San Francisco Planning Department's racial and social equity steering committee. She manages the Community Equity Team and the Department's Racial & Social Equity Initiative.*

*Wade Wietgreffe, AICP, a White male, is a principal planner and co-chair of the San Francisco Planning Department's racial and social equity steering committee. He manages environmental review and transportation review and policy.*



The map on the left shows census tracts in the cities of San Francisco and Oakland categorized according to their Home Owner's Loan Corporation rating. The map on the right shows the rate of asthma-related emergency room visits per 10,000 residents for those same census tracts.

Source: UC Berkeley image by Anthony Nardone



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**IMAGES:** Include captions and sources for all photos, renderings, drawings, maps, diagrams, etc. submitted.

**IMAGE FORMAT:** 3 X 5 min at 300 dpi (but no larger than 1MB file size) to be emailed as separate attachment(s). In other words, do not embed images in the WORD document.

**REMARKS:** Article can be written either as a Feature (analysis of the topic), Op-Ed (critique), or First-Person (personal experience with the topic).

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JULIA LAVE JOHNSTON | President

# One Hundred and One Days of Quarantine



It seems like the world changed in a blink of an eye. But maybe it was a refocusing. Are your priorities the same as they were in February? A global pandemic and a

national resurgence of the civil rights movement focusing on institutional racism have forced us to rethink our most basic activities and beliefs.

For the last several years, APA California has prioritized increasing diversity in our leadership and membership and exploring how implicit bias reinforces inequities in the communities we serve and our society at large. We realize that we have a long way to go, but as an organization we are committed to listening, engaging, and working for change.

Please see our website for more information about APA's response to George Floyd's killing and how we are addressing the issue of institutional racism and the role of planning in perpetrating it.

I am proud of how the APA California state and section board members have worked to support our membership during this time. Planners are leaders and problem solvers. APA California has worked to provide our members with the tools they need to support their communities during the pandemic and to understand their role in the emerging equity conversation.

APA California continues to look for innovative ways to support our members both personally and professionally. We are providing timely webinars and virtual networking opportunities for all our members including students, young planners, and planning commissioners. Now more than ever, we need to be sharing best practices, identifying cutting edge tools, and advocating for vital, healthy, and equitable communities.

In this constantly changing environment, we want to continue to provide the information that you need to serve your communities. Join us this September 14 - 16 for our first state virtual conference. We want to make sure that you have the information you need to adapt and lead in our **State of Change. JLJ**

“We realize that we have a long way to go, but as an organization we are committed to listening, engaging, and working for change.”





**CLOSED DUE TO  
CORONAVIRUS**

**FEATURE** | Asher Kohn, AICP Candidate

## Planning for Essential Workers

**Whenever I leave my apartment, as rare as that is, I see signs in windows thanking essential workers—the care, food, and safety labor that keeps my community alive in terrifying times.**

These signs are inspiring reminders of how we are all interconnected. They are, or at least should be, a promise to support these workers when it is our turn as non-essential workers to do our share.

As a planner, I am in part responsible for the safety and happiness of the community that turns to me for my expertise. COVID-19 has made it clear that the community includes not only the traditional categories of “residents and business owners,” but also the workers that provide key labor to support those who planners conventionally see as community stakeholders. If we are to thank essential workers, we are also to include them in the communities we work in as we plan for the future.

This might include new and necessary outreach to find what we can do for super-commuting nurses and senior care workers to stay safe. It could also mean taking more active steps to enact code modifications that require social distancing and Personal Protective Equipment in and around the workplace.

Safety, however vital, may be only part of what our community members are asking from us. In order to reimagine what a vibrant community might look like during and after the pandemic, we can ask workers what could

make our communities good places in which to work. The amenities that workers seek may overlap or may contradict what the “usual suspects” at public meetings request, but if we are to include their visions we can at least take their desires seriously.

One of the deep ironies of a planner’s work is how much of their labor is hidden from the people who enjoy it most. How tempting it can be to go down a street and tell people walking their dogs that those building setbacks didn’t just design themselves, you know. The irony goes even deeper during the state’s shelter-in-place orders, when I am physically removed from the places I seek to improve.

This might lend me to a solidarity of sorts with essential workers, who invisibly support a community and its individuals, keeping them alive in the hopes that we can meet each other as strangers in public again one day soon. My work isn’t as death-defying as theirs, even if it can be just as anonymous. What we can do for them, or at least what I seek to do for them, is to thank these essential workers by giving a platform for their voices as members of the communities they serve.

*Asher Kohn is an AICP Candidate and a planner at M-Group. His work can be found at [www.asherjkohn.com](http://www.asherjkohn.com).*

API

## Envisioning Land Use Planning in a Post-Pandemic City

housing at both the scale and income levels we so desperately need. In metropolitan centers like San Francisco, for example, a decrease in speculative office development could result in more opportunity sites available for multifamily housing, while traditional brick-and-mortar retail spaces could be repurposed as new ground-floor civic facilities.

Though the opportunity to facilitate higher levels of affordable housing development exists in principle, implementing that process may prove difficult in practice. Across the country, municipal revenues are quickly drying up as sales taxes continue to plummet dramatically. A study conducted by the National Association of Counties (NACo) forecasts that the pandemic will result in \$114 billion in lost revenue for counties and require another \$30 billion in response costs through fiscal year 2021.<sup>2</sup> As municipalities scramble to generate revenue, elected officials may find new housing less appealing given that it is often considered a fiscally neutral land use.

If we are not careful, we may soon find ourselves engulfed in a rift that pits the will and welfare of our communities against bureaucratic fiscal considerations. Our communities require affordable housing, and affordable housing requires significant public investment. When we plan for equity in housing, then, articulating high-level policy objectives and zoning changes is simply not enough. We need to overcome the structural constraints imposed by our tax policies so that we may build resilience and finance improvements at the scale our communities need.

This crisis has laid bare the fragility of municipal governance systems, and as practitioners, we must now enter a period of radical self-reflection to strengthen them.

*Aram Kamali is an Intermediate Planner with Raimi + Associates, where he works primarily on General Plans. He specializes in housing and land use issues.*

### References

- <sup>1</sup> Work situation of adults in the United States during the COVID-19 outbreak as of April 2020 (April 2020).
- <sup>2</sup> National Association of Counties, analysis of the Fiscal Impact of COVID-19 on Counties (May 2020).



## FEATURE | Derek Taylor

# How California Slowed Down: Monitoring Daily Vehicle Miles in California Since Shelter in Place

**Since the onset of COVID-19, transportation patterns throughout the world have radically shifted.**

Flights sit empty, once heavily congested corridors now see record lows in traffic, and public transit is used sparingly. Continuing the movement of people and communities will require creative solutions to keep traffic flowing once the shelter in place orders cease.

Accurately monitoring and analyzing how our transportation patterns have already begun to change throughout the pandemic will help guide us towards these creative solutions. With figures from Streetlight Data, a company that processes big data for transportation analysis, we are able to visualize how California has slowed down and reduced vehicle miles traveled (VMT) since the shelter in place orders were put into effect on March 19.

The map below shows the percent change of daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) since the

beginning of March, as compared to an average day in January 2020. The chart shows the percent change per Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which provides unique insights as to how the regions have differed in response to the pandemic:

Some initial take-aways from the graphic:

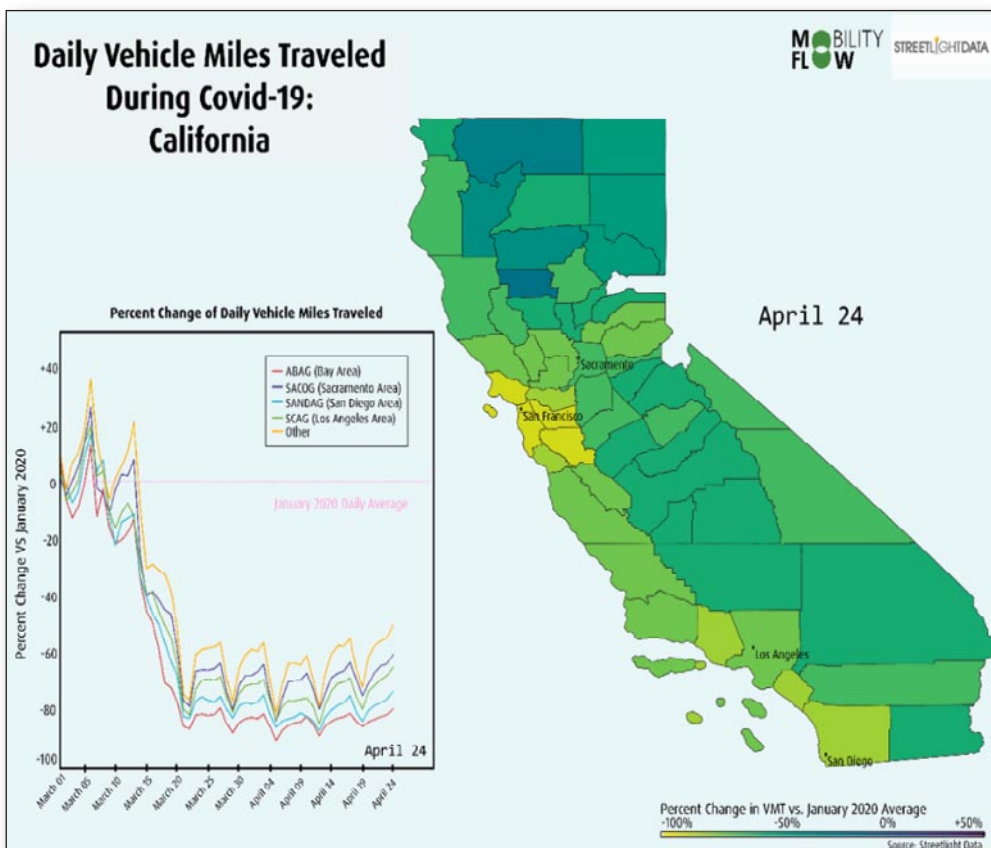
**Bay Area Slows Quickly:** Although Governor Gavin Newsom officially enacted the shelter in place orders on March 19, it is clear that certain regions began acting on their own before that date. The Bay Area was the first to

react to the pandemic and has since had the most dramatic decrease in daily VMT output.

**Rural vs Urban:** The collection of the 4 MPO's noted in the chart (ABAG, SACOG, SANDAG, SCAG) represents the most urbanized regions of California. The line marked Other in the chart represents a combination of the 14 more rural MPOs. It is clear from this illustration that the more rural counties experienced a decrease in the percentage change of daily VMT since the shelter in place orders of March 19.

**Shelter Fatigue:** A common pattern amongst all of the counties shown in this illustration is a slow but steady rise in VMT following the drastic drop on March 19. Although little has changed about the shelter in place orders, counties are struggling to keep their numbers of daily VMT down to the initial levels of March 19. As protests and other movements to reopen California emerge, this pattern towards normal VMT output will continue.

*“...it remains important to monitor how the pandemic has already shifted our transportation behavior and to begin thinking of innovative ways to keep cities moving.”*



The extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic will change the movement of people in the next year and beyond is still unknown. One thing is clear: public transit will most likely not be an option for most in the initial rebuilding phase. Additionally, once the shelter-in-place orders stop, the roads will soon be congested once again. With no transit to turn to, what will remain? Perhaps more people will choose to work from home, others might turn to their bikes or other non-auto modes of transit. Regardless of these answers, it remains important to monitor how the pandemic has already shifted our transportation behavior and to begin thinking of innovative ways to keep cities moving.

Derek Taylor is a GIS and data analyst for the transportation planning firm Mobility Flow. Mobility Flow is the American branch of the Dutch transportation firm Goudappel Coffeng. Derek currently lives in Amsterdam, working on both Dutch and international projects.

For additional information: [m-flow.com](http://m-flow.com)



**FEATURE |** Diana Benitez and Jessica Medina

# Pandemic Call and Response: Planners Protecting and Promoting Health

## Pandemic Call to Action

California was the first state to enact shelter in place orders in response to the coronavirus pandemic, calling for jurisdictions to immediately implement drastic public health policies and practices. Historically, California has other firsts in the public health and planning fields, one important example being the Planning for Healthy Communities Act (SB1000). As planners with a solid understanding of the [social determinants of health](#) and the role of planning in shaping these conditions, we see SB1000 as an important step forward.

Despite California's history of progressive approaches to health, our state has been hit hard by the pandemic. Most troubling is that our [numbers](#) tell a well-known story of health outcome disparities for people of color, particularly for Blacks, Latinos, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, who are experiencing both a disproportionate rate of incidence and rate of mortality.

The COVID experience will affect communities and planning for decades to come and this is why we are collaborating with Planners4Health California on [Planning + Health in the Time of COVID-19](#), a webinar series and call to action.

## Protecting Community Health Today

Conversations with approximately 200 participants show us that local governments, planners, and communities are responding swiftly and with great imagination to promote physical distancing and protect community

health. Compelling approaches and actions identified include:

1. Cities being flexible with zoning policies to support essential businesses by easing noise restrictions and creating curb-side pick-up protocols
2. Planners continuing community outreach and stakeholder engagement by going virtual, through video calls or text messaging, or back to their roots, with phone calls and mailers
3. Cities prioritizing shelter through tenant protections, opening up hotel rooms for unhoused residents, and moving forward with affordable housing development
4. Planners prioritizing streets for active transportation, recreation, and public transit for all by closing them off to vehicles, automated pedestrian crosswalk signals, eliminated fares, and continued on-demand services

5. Cities cautiously reopening parks and beaches to enhance mental and physical health while maintaining social distance guidelines with shortened hours, active uses, and closed parking lots

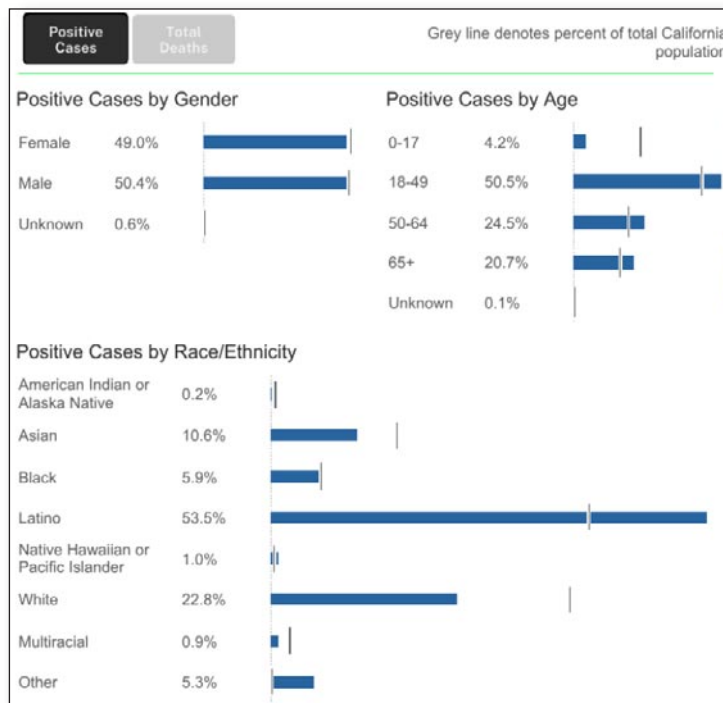
These approaches and actions protect residents from the spread of the virus, yet complicate our analysis of health equity. For example, planners are opening streets for recreation by closing them off to vehicles. The designation of these Slow Streets is done without a full consideration of whether neighborhoods want and need this response. An equity analysis would involve community input and gathering data on existing conditions and sentiments and perhaps find that some communities want to prioritize medical emergency response access, rely on vehicles for access to jobs in essential sectors, or do not feel safe in public spaces due to the over-policing and [violence on Black and Brown bodies](#).

## Promoting Health Equity Beyond the Crisis

COVID-19 has created a crisis mentality that can be paralyzing, but long-range planning is an essential service that must continue to move forward. As planners, we are concurrently responding to the crisis at hand, while keeping an eye on emerging trends and considering the future implications on cities and communities. Our thoughts at this point span across a spectrum of crisis management,



Source: State of California Coronavirus COVID-19 Statewide Update 5/19/20 - Positive Cases.







San Franciscans walk, skate, bike and gather on a street without cars. Source: Atisha Varshney

**FEATURE |** Ritu Raj Sharma, AICP, LEED AP

## Getting Some Space to Breathe

**As shelter-in-place orders rolled out across communities, many found themselves looking for some room to breathe as they started spending their days within the four walls of their homes. Strategies to provide this breathing room are tied to our foundational community building blocks—specifically block patterns, circulation and open space.**

### Block Pattern + Circulation

A gridded development structure with many multiple connection options has enabled cities to create slow streets, which are providing their residents with much needed temporary outdoor spaces, an option not possible in suburban development with cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets. While the slow streets have been a welcome respite for citizens practicing social distancing, these measures are temporary. Furthermore, they were designed to primarily move cars, keeping different transportation modes apart.

However, this collective experience of the pandemic and shelter-in-place orders may

provide a greater understanding of our need for more transformational spaces including streets that can be shared at all times, so that all modes of movement feel more at ease. Paseos and multi-use trails that provide alternative ways to get around should be integrated with the street network. By doing so, we create more breathing room in the spaces designed primarily for movement, such as our sidewalks and walkways.

### Open Space

This experience has also highlighted the importance of access to open spaces, both private and shared, to public and personal health. Jurisdictions should adjust their

requirements for private and common open space, especially for projects at higher densities. One example is to prioritize private open spaces, such as balconies and decks, over shared community open spaces.

As balconies, stoops and porches became the window and the connection to the outside world, there also was a growing realization that they do need to be a minimum size to accommodate usability. Balconies and decks not only provided personal breathing room, but also a space for quarantined folks to physically connect to the surrounding community. As another example, transitional open spaces, such as stoops and porches, also provide a personal refuge as well as promoting interaction with the community.

It is therefore imperative that as we design these spaces, we pay attention to their location to each other and to the public realm. Even within community open spaces we need spaces that can be segmented for use by a variety of users, creating smaller, break away spaces. Equipping those places with anti-microbial materials and ensuring ample sunlight exposure for shared surfaces provides an array of multi-faceted public health solutions. Additionally, elements like benches and street furniture, should be evaluated for flexibility, such as incorporating movable furniture that can be re-arranged according to needs as an alternative to large, stationary benches and picnic tables.

This experience has given society a new perspective on how we live and how the way we plan and design our communities can evolve to enhance our resiliency in the future.

*Ritu Raj Sharma, AICP, LEED AP is Senior Associate/Senior Planner at Dahlin Group Architecture|Planning.*

## ➤P6 Pandemic Call and Response: Planners Protecting and Promoting Health

trauma intervention, social resilience, land use, and application of new methodologies to build on our understanding and implementation of SB 1000:

1. Making space and creating time for community members to process, grieve, and adjust to the crisis, before resuming planning activities and advocating for continued use of flexible engagement tools and practices after the pandemic
2. Learning from grassroots mutual aid efforts models that outreach to neighbors to

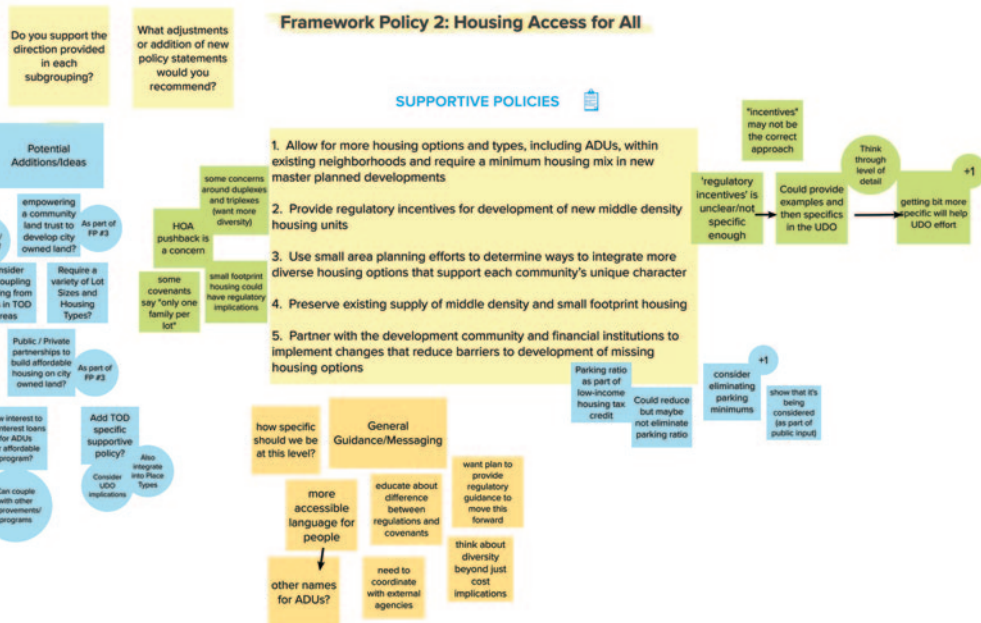
identify physical, social, and economic needs and develop rapid response networks to address those needs

3. Upholding the health-promoting values of our public spaces and goods from sidewalks and streets to parks and beaches to air and water quality and beyond
4. Taking advantage of the health planning tools and resources available to develop comprehensive equitable policies to mitigate future health crises

The call to action will remain after this

pandemic and we will continue to have the opportunity to rewrite the often-told story of health inequities. If we respond with intention, we can build a healthier and more equitable California.

*Diana Benitez and Jessica Medina are Intermediate Planners/Designers at Raimi + Associates, working on general plans, sustainability, and health and SB 1000 implementation. They are both sheltering in place in Los Angeles and engaging others in imagining healthy futures, such as Diana's leadership in Plan4Health California.*



Capturing community input online with Mural: Source MIG

## FEATURE | Walker Wells, AICP, LEED AP, EcoDistricts AP

# Staying Authentic While Going Virtual

**Can authentic stakeholder engagement happen in a high-tech, low-touch format? Will the COVID-19 experience have lasting impacts on how we structure and conduct outreach and stakeholder engagement in the future? What changes about stakeholder engagement and what stays the same?**

On a personal level, the shift to working from home has been a bumpy, somewhat disorienting, at times chaotic, but ultimately manageable process. Professionally, we've found that much of the work of urban planning—data analysis and modeling, map making, report writing, and project management, can be done remotely. The technical work of projects has experienced only minor disruption as we settled into the days of conference calls, Zoom meetings, and getting the VPN server access to cooperate.

The major area of planning work that we quickly realized would be disrupted and not as easy to shift to a remote, virtual, or distanced format is community and stakeholder engagement.

Historically, workshops, community meetings, pop-up workshops, tabling at community events, community surveys,

general plan advisory committee meetings, and planning commission and city council study sessions have all been based on the idea that in-person interaction is valuable, if not essential, to an authentic process. With engagement integral to nearly every project, determining if, and how, to shift to remote or virtual formats is essential to maintaining project-momentum.

What started as an evaluation of technologies and platforms—Zoom, Google Hangouts, MetroQuest, Social Pinpoint, etc.—to determine to what degree they could emulate a community workshop, facilitated roundtable discussion, visual preference mapping exercise, or climate action prioritization process, eventually became a return to fundamentals. Although approach and technology may change, the principles remain the same. An authentic stakeholder engagement process:

- Is inclusive and culturally appropriate
- Offers a diversity of formats and multiple opportunities to engage
- Is convenient and comfortable for the participants
- Provides information in formats that are accessible and easy to understand
- Recognizes the expertise of the community and the value of its voice and experiences
- Ensures that contributions of time, experience, and ideas by the community will influence the outcome of the process or the content of the plan

These are the principles that underlie Arnstein's Ladder of Public Participation, and the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum for Public Participation.

Authenticity is about staying consistent with a core set of beliefs or values in thoughts, communication, and actions. The challenge for engagement then, is how to truly follow these principles while respecting social distancing. In shifting to virtual platforms, we've found that smaller meetings are easier to move online and the tools available on the common platforms, such as screen sharing and the ability to form breakout groups can serve as a reasonable replacement for a focus group or other facilitated small group or roundtable meeting. Interestingly, the chat function is providing an opportunity for less vocal or assertive stakeholders to participate more with the group at-large or to share directly with the meeting facilitator.

Larger meetings, such as a general plan advisory committee, are also able to shift online successfully, but extra attention is required ahead of time to ensure that the participants have the correct software and a reasonable degree of familiarity with using it. This can mean offering pre-meeting training sessions, asking participants to sign in 15-30 minutes ahead of time, and having a team available to provide tech support so that things go smoothly once the meeting has started. Just as in-person meetings require preparation and logistical support, so do the virtual analogs.

Perhaps the greatest challenge is conducting a virtual community open house or workshop. The premise behind this format is that there is value in getting a large group of people that represent different interests into

“...is important to recognize that a shift to virtual engagement also creates a risk of exacerbating existing inequities in access and ability to engage.”



# Reflections on Post-COVID Urbanity: Questions for Practitioners

**As we think about how we will approach planning in these times, we need to peel away the distractions and focus on the fundamentals of how we use our cities. What kind of place do we need to have healthy and fulfilling lives, and what is our role as planners in addressing that?**

## Transit and Mobility

The future of transit is at the top of my list. Dr. Martin Luther King said that access to transit was a civil rights issue, because it connects people to jobs. Devastated agency budgets and concerns about crowding and contagion will make it a challenge to keep existing transit services. Focusing on Dr. King's imperative gives us a direction. Low income workers will need transit choices more than ever.

- Can we help provide lower cost, flexible, quicker-to-implement options like bike lanes, jitneys, and bus rapid transit to connect neighborhoods to jobs?
- If the older hub and spoke transit model no longer serves the layout of our regions and distribution of jobs, how must our planning adjust to support this growth pattern?

Some transit agencies are experimenting with last-mile solutions using the rideshare model, while major employers in some large cities provide their own bus services for employees.

- What would a neighborhood plan that accommodates last-mile rideshare look like?
- What can we learn from these private buses, and are there public/private partnerships that could provide similar services?

## Housing

Even as the pandemic and economic downturn has exacerbated the affordable housing crisis across California, it can also shift our thinking on housing provision and increase creative supply solutions.

- Are there strategically-located office buildings and hotels that could be converted for workforce housing in job centers?
- Will we see residences filling in vacant

ground-floor retail spaces?

- How can planners develop strategies to expedite these or similar processes?

## Office

Major real estate companies are predicting a slow and phased return to working at the office, although with new adaptations including touchless technology, face coverings, cleaning regimens and social distancing standards. Shelter-in-place orders have shown that office workers can adapt and be productive outside the office, but we've lost some human connections that impact workplace culture and learning. In the future there will certainly be a mix of working from home and the office.

- What technology and communications lessons have we learned that we can use to streamline processes when we're permitted to return to workplaces?
- Will demand for office space remain steady as workplaces balance space needs for social distancing with remote working?
- What will happen to the coffee shops and restaurants that serve the daytime population in employment centers?
- What will happen to the street and pedestrian environment if ground-floor vacancies increase?

Clearly, no one can predict how these dynamics will unfold over the coming months and years. What we do know for certain is that the economic and social impacts of COVID combined with looming public sector budget cuts will challenge communities' abilities to preserve the quality of life. Planners will need to continue to provide leadership in their communities and demonstrate creativity and adaptability in dense areas.

*Kate Joncas is the Director of Urban Strategy and Development for MIG. She leads strategic efforts for complex urban projects in downtowns, neighborhoods and urbanizing places.*

## P8

## Staying Authentic While Going Virtual

the same room to share experiences, concerns, and aspirations and ultimately arrive at a direction for moving forward. Recreating this environment online is difficult, as once the number of participants grows past a certain point it's difficult to see everyone, often awkward to make comments, and very hard for participants to get a sense of what others are thinking. Polling tools can be helpful for facilitators to get a read of the room or to identify what issues need focused attention. Creating virtual break out groups enables discussion on specific topics and the more fluid ability to enter and leave break out groups may be beneficial to people that want to contribute to more than one topic. For these functions to run smoothly, a lot of time needs to be allocated to event production, just as is the case for a conventional meeting.

Still, none of these methods is likely to recreate the energy generated by a room full of people excited to share their ideas. Additional outreach to specific community members and organizations will likely be needed to fill the gaps between the in-person and the virtual, to ensure that the process is inclusive, and the full range of voices are heard.

Digital tools help, and in some instances are providing new opportunities for input. But it is important to recognize that a shift to virtual engagement also creates a risk of exacerbating existing inequities in access and ability to engage. Virtual meetings still need to be held at times convenient to community members, materials need to be language appropriate and easy to understand. The technology needs to be intuitive and able to function on multiple devices without the need for extraordinary internet capacity. And when all of the new tools are not able to reach important community members, we should remember to use what may seem like an archaic technology and just pick up the phone and have a conversation.

*Mr. Walker Wells, AICP is a Principal at Raimi+Associates, a mission-driven urban planning and sustainability consultancy. Walker is a certified urban planner, a LEED Accredited Professional and a Green Rater and a lecturer in Green Urbanism at the Claremont Colleges and the UCLA Urban Planning Program.*

# Paved Paradise

**Sitting at my dining room table, I look out on San Francisco's Page Street, one of 12 or so streets the city has temporarily closed to through traffic during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

It has been a joy to watch people gliding along on bikes and walking in the street—but also exercising in open garages, having a glass of wine on the front steps, kicking a soccer ball as a family. I can now run from my front door to Buena Vista Park without ever getting too close to anyone, but I can also feel relaxed and connected in my neighborhood in a way that I haven't felt before. It's the latter experience that I know I'm not alone in savoring and that I think will last.

Flexible use of streets builds on momentum that was already there, with farmers' markets and neighborhood block parties, Sunday streets and Sunday parkways. But streets open to people (de facto or by intention) are now being experienced "at scale." Open streets can be created successfully with very little organization or resources (on my street, I just a sawhorse and a barricade blocking half the street at each intersection). Flexible use may stimulate a mainstreaming of flexible and shared street design, with adaptations for commercial and residential settings.

In the suburbs, we may be poised for some even more transformative opportunities. My colleague Atisha relates her experience in an area with all the ingredients for vibrancy: a high density of housing, a diversity of people, large employers, a shopping district, a park, a regional trail. The parts are all there, but they're separated from one another by walls, disconnected private streets, wide arterials and parking lots.

Sheltering in place, Atisha has discovered, nearby but out of sight, the beautiful and historic landscape of the Agnews Developmental Center (now the core of Oracle's Santa Clara campus.) But what is more interesting than that landscape is the large parking lot she crosses to get there. For months now that parking lot has been empty of cars, and little by little it has been discovered by the neighbors as a place to ride a bike or play soccer. This suggests an

opportunity for lasting change. Even after employees return to the office (and they may do so in smaller numbers), these parking lots have the potential to be creatively, flexibly used, and can become a community resource. This is potential that a well-resourced company with some creative leadership and an energized residential community could join together in making real. In the longer term, these cities (planners, government officials) may see the opportunity for changing development standards to require parking areas be adaptable for community use. This could mean electrical hookups, connective landscape strips, shade trees, seating walls, and public access.

*Peter Winch and Atisha Varshney both work at WRT Planning.*

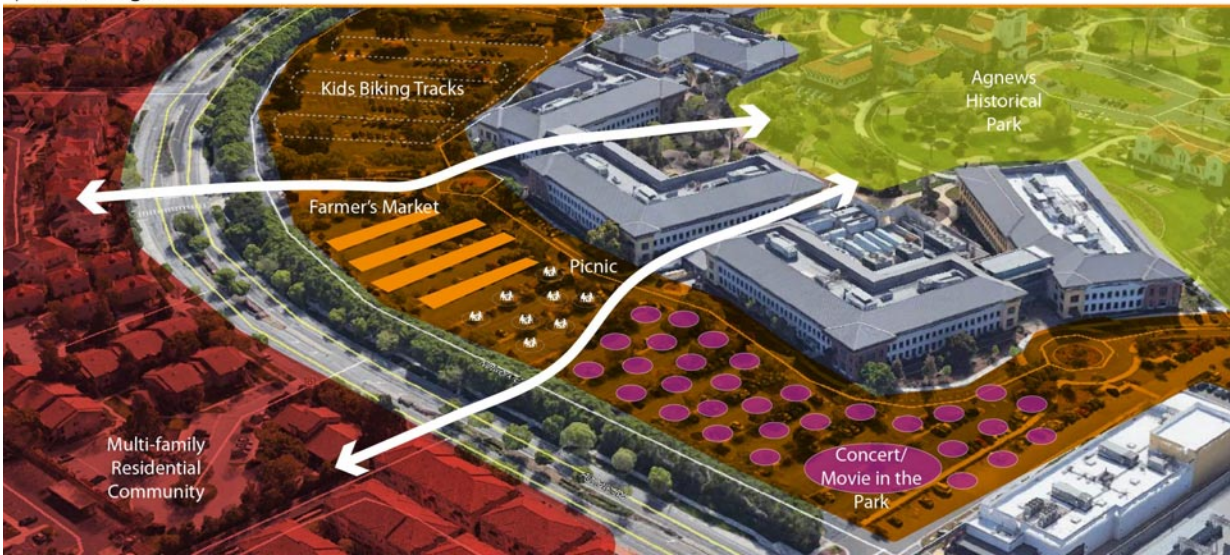
Adaptive strategies for Oracle office parking lot at Agnew Developmental Center, Santa Clara, by allowing community uses while offices stay empty through temporary programming.



▲ Workday

## Parking Lot Adaptation activation and access to open space after COVID-19

▼ Remianing time







Popular open spaces and parks closed across the state. Source: Walker Wells, AICP, LEED AP

**OP-ED** | Walker Wells, AICP, LEED AP, EcoDistricts AP

## Why Access to Urban Nature Should be an Essential Service

**When local, county, and state governments decided to close many parks and open spaces because the demand, combined with no restrictions on access, created crowds that did not maintain a sufficient degree of physical distance, there was a collective sense of shock and sadness. Could it really be true that parks and open spaces were not essential services?**

Online yoga classes, Peloton, and home gyms may meet physical activity needs, but cannot replace the experience of being in an open area with a view of the horizon and sense of psychological relief. Further, for many modern city dwellers, at-home physical activity is not an option. Feeling cooped up under shelter-in-place orders for COVID-19, people are seeking reprieve in parks, trails, beaches, and other open spaces whenever possible. This almost instinctual response validates the fundamental premise of biophilia, that humans as a species have an innate need to be connected to the natural world. It also reveals the need to reevaluate our assumptions about how we access, use, and manage these critical shared resources.

The urban parks movement of the late 1800s and the 1900s focused on providing respite from the horrible environmental pollution of industrial cities and the living and working conditions experienced by workers. People believed breathing fresh air in a place emulating the countryside was good for the temperament and helped maintain social order.

While urban pollution, sanitation, and environmental quality have improved significantly in many, although not all, communities over the past 150 years our core need to access open spaces and nature remains powerful.

As shelter-in-place orders stretch into the summer, concerns about a parallel mental health crisis are growing. By understanding fundamental health benefits of nature, we may craft an effective and equitable response to how these spaces are used and managed. Biophilia research demonstrates that specific patterns and phenomena in natural settings are therapeutic to humans. The publication “14 Patterns of Biophilic Design” prepared by the firm Terrapin Bright Green synthesizes years of research into a concise taxonomy of biophilic elements including visual connection with nature, presence of water, dynamic and diffuse light, connection with natural systems and materials, prospect, refuge, and mystery. Urban parks might only feature a few of these elements, which is likely why many of us seek out natural areas like trails and beaches to get

the full biophilic effect.

The benefits are more prosaic and more powerful than what may be expected. A 2015 study conducted at Stanford University found that a 90-minute walk in nature reduced rumination (repetitive thought focused on negative aspects of the self) and improved emotional regulation. This may not seem as revolutionary as finding that a hike is the quickest pathway to bliss—until one considers that worry and anxiety can be relentless erosive forces on personal wellbeing. Any means to keep negative thought patterns at bay is a step toward producing broader social benefits.

The decision to restrict access to these spaces makes sense, given the science and understanding of how COVID-19 spreads, but it incorrectly places the blame on the spaces themselves, rather than on the users and on how the spaces are managed. If the pull to nature is so strong, and if physical and mental health benefits are so powerful, we should avoid closure and instead develop protocols for limiting crowding while maintaining equitable access and reinforcing safe social norms.

Examples of how this could work are plentiful. One option is to issue access passes with timed entries and a maximum length of stay, similar to what is used for popular cultural events or natural resources, like Half Dome in Yosemite. Another is to create an open parking space lottery, rather than close all parking lots, to increase access for regional visitors while maintaining safe conditions for locals. These measures would encourage more use of open spaces throughout the day and reduce potential crowding.

Of course, management measures must be matched by appropriate behavior by the populace. Physical distancing can be reinforced at the individual level, by adhering to new social norms like wearing a facemask, and at the institutional level through increased staffing onsite. As we evolve new relationships with nature, the threat of future closure needs to be maintained, so we remain aware of the risk of losing these greatly valued resources that provide so many essential services to our health, well-being, and sense of community.

*Mr. Walker Wells, AICP is a Principal at Raimi+Associates, a mission-driven urban planning and sustainability consultancy. Walker is a certified urban planner, a LEED Accredited Professional and a Green Rater and a lecturer in Green Urbanism at the Claremont Colleges and the UCLA Urban Planning Program.*

# Short-Term Rentals Post COVID-19: Three Things Planners Need to Know

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, 25% of Airbnb's workforce was let go. However, the home-sharing industry is more resilient than popular opinion suggests. Short-term rental (STR) listings decreased only three% of online platforms between February and April 2020. Most hosts complied with stay-at-home orders, but they haven't given up hope that they'll be able to rent again soon.

## Three Things You Need to Know

Here are the three things planners need to know about how STRs impact local government and COVID-19's role in the future.

### 1. STRs Impact Long-Term Housing.

Most economists believe there will be a global recession resulting from the current crisis, which means there will be higher demand for affordable long-term housing. Concerns that short-term rentals contribute to the loss of long-term housing have been expressed for years now. Those concerned may better articulate the issue, questioning the fairness of professional hosts who benefitted from government bailouts and pointing to other hosts who, fearful of losing profit during the crisis, were successful in pivoting short-term rentals to the long-term market temporarily.

### 2. STRs Impact Neighborhood Quality of Life.

Because COVID-19 has affected

the economy, future travelers are likely to minimize their individual expenses by fitting more people into each STR unit. When large groups of people rent small residential homes, there is a higher risk of party houses, parking issues, noise complaints, and more.

### 3. Local Government Will Be More Financially Challenged.

Based on previous recessions, local governments are likely to maximize tax revenues. It's important to ensure all hosts pay their fair share, obtain business licenses, and operate in ways that benefit the broader community.

## What You Can Do

STRs can be a great supplementary income for residents and provide cheaper options for visitors. That's how Airbnb started in 2008. Two roommates put an air mattress in their living room and turned their small apartment in San Francisco into a low cost (air)bed and breakfast.

You can easily make the sharing economy

	ADVERTISED STR LISTINGS		PERCENT CHANGE
	02/07/20	04/07/20	
Airbnb	218,106	208,392	-4%
Booking	28,216	27,919	-1%
BedAndBreakfast	87	82	-6%
ChoiceVacationRentals	5,233	4,481	-14%
Flipkey	38,498	35,810	-7%
HelloRelaxation	18	18	0%
HomeAway	118,198	118,407	0%
HomeEscape	815	331	-59%
KidAndCoe	119	123	3%
MisterBAndB	116	99	-15%
OwnerDirect	1,748	2,435	39%
Tripz	518	604	17%
Tuivillas	64	230	259%
Total	411,736	398,931	-3%

These snapshots, taken before and during the COVID-19 crisis, show that advertised STR listings across the most popular online platforms in the U.S. communities Host Compliance serves only fell an average of 3% since February 2020.

work for everyone by implementing smart regulations. For example, to preserve long-term housing, you may implement a permitting process that requires an STR be the owner's place of permanent residency.

To create the right regulations, though, you need an understanding of your community's specific STR market. To ensure those regulations are followed, you'll need to educate hosts and have the evidence to encourage compliance or enforce violations.

Purpose-built STR compliance software can provide the data you need—the addresses of short-term rentals, who owns them, how often they are being rented, and more—to fully understand your community's specific market and issues. That understanding can lead to thoughtful regulations and the ability to educate others on those regulations to encourage compliance.

As COVID-19 restrictions are lifted during the upcoming summer months, cities and counties should expect to face challenges related to STRs. This may be the perfect time to get a modern tech-enabled short-term rental compliance program in place.

Ulrik Binzer is the Founder of Host Compliance, now a part of Granicus. Nearly 400 agencies have trusted Host Compliance to identify STRs across 60+ rental platforms, educate hosts, enforce regulations, recover much-needed revenue, and preserve community character. For additional information: [www.hostcompliance.com](http://www.hostcompliance.com) and <https://granicus.com/blog/short-term-vacation-rentals-after-covid-19-what-will-change/>

E-Bus. Source: Ellie Fiore







ERIC PHILLIPS | VP Policy & Legislation

SANDE GEORGE | Lobbyist

LAUREN DEVALENCIA Y SANCHEZ | Lobbyist

## Legislative Update - June 2020

### Consolidated 2020 Legislative Session

The Legislature returned in person to resume legislative work in early May after their 7-week recess due to efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Members are accompanied by limited staff and are only allowing limited public participation for hearings in the Capitol. Most public participation in hearings has been conducted remotely and/or by providing comments and letters to staff in advance of these hearings. Because of the longer than expected recess, legislative deadlines to pass bills have been delayed, hearings have been consolidated, and a number of bills were dropped for the year. Members in both houses were advised to limit the number of bills they continue to move, prioritizing those that deal directly with the impacts of COVID-19 and other pressing issues that cannot wait until 2021.

Housing, homelessness and wildfire mitigation remain a priority, though the number of proposals have been trimmed down and consolidated. Senate Pro Tem Toni Atkins is leading an effort to advance several of these housing bills that are intended to accelerate the review and approval of development projects. This year's "Housing Package" includes SB 902, SB 1085, SB 1120, and SB 1385 (APA positions below). Unfortunately, due in part to impacts on the budget resulting from COVID-19 disruptions, no significant funding bills to assist with housing production are included in the current Housing Package.

APA California worked with legislative and administrative staff over the shut down through conference calls, providing direct feedback and written comments on proposed legislation as well as COVID-19 impacts on planning processes and services and tolling for statutes of limitations during the peak of state and local shelter-in-place orders. APA California continues to work closely with the Legislature remotely and has been able to

negotiate amendments allowing APA California to remove opposition or move to a support position on a number of major planning-related bills. Below is a list of high priority bills APA California has been lobbying and the position and status of each. Bills in red are no longer active. Position letters on these high priority bills are posted on the APA California website and as always, please visit [www.apacalifornia.com](http://www.apacalifornia.com) to find APA California's hot bill list with up-to-date information on all active legislation APA California is tracking.

### AB 5 Reform

#### AB 1850 (Gonzalez)

Clean up vehicle for AB 5

*Position: Working with the author's office to amend independent contractor requirements related to planners and public agencies to allow planners to continue to contract to provide non-employee planning services*

*Status: Passed to the Senate*

### Infrastructure, Services and Fees

#### AB 1924 (Grayson)

Requires fees proportionate to square footage of unit

*Position: Oppose*

*Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – done for 2020*

#### AB 2722 (McCarty)

Requires 20-year postponement of development fees for "noncompliant" jurisdictions

*Position: Oppose*

*Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – done for 2020*

#### AB 3144 (Grayson)

Requires reimbursement for fee waivers on affordable projects

*Position: Support if Amended*

*Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – done for 2020*

#### AB 3145 (Grayson)

Caps fees greater than 12% of local median home prices or subject to HCD approval

*Position: Oppose*

*Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – done for 2020*

#### 3147 (Gabriel)

Allows developers to continue construction while protesting certain fees

*Position: Review*

*Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – done for 2020*

#### AB 3148 (Chiu)

Reduces fees for affordable units in Density Bonus projects

*Position: Support if Amended*

*Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – done for 2020*

### Density Bonus and Development Incentives

#### AB 2345 (Gonzalez)

Adds other layers of density, incentives, waivers and concessions for moderate-income and other density bonus projects

*Position: Oppose Unless Amended*

*Status: Passed to the Senate*

#### AB 2605 (Chiu)

Clarifies density bonus incentives or concessions for 100% affordable development

*Position: Support*

*Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – changes moved into AB 2345*

#### SB 1085 (Skinner)

Increases density bonus benefits for moderate-income, very-low and student housing projects

*Position: Support if Amended*

*Status: Senate Floor*

### Housing Elements/RHNA Reform/Homelessness

#### AB 725 (Wicks)

Requires at least 25% of RHNA for moderate-income housing and above be allocated to sites with zoning that allows at least two units of housing in larger metropolitan jurisdictions

*Position: Neutral as Amended*

*Status: Senate Rules (Two-Year Bill from 2019)*

#### AB 1860 (Santiago)

Authorizes 50% voter approval for sales tax to fund homeless housing and services

*Position: Support*

*Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – done for 2020*

#### AB 2848 (Santiago)

Sets 10% per year homelessness reduction quotas for local governments

*Position: Oppose*

*Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – done for 2020*

## PI3 Legislative Update

### AB 3040 (Chiu)

Provides incentives to upzone single family sites for 4plexes and allows up to 25% of those developed sites to be counted under RHNA

Position: Support

Status: Passed to the Senate

### AB 3122 (Santiago)

Requires Housing Element inventory of sites to include a comprehensive plan and analysis for sites available for emergency/temporary/supportive housing

Position: Oppose

Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – done for 2020

### AB 3269 (Chiu)

Requires jurisdictions to adopt a plan to meet benchmarks to reduce homelessness by 90% by December 31, 2028

Position: Review Amendments

Status: Passed to the Senate

### AB 3300 (Santiago)

Provides competitive grant funding for homeless housing if appropriation provided in the budget

Position: Review Amendments

Status: Passed to the Senate

### SB 1138 (Wiener)

Adds requirements to sites identified in the Housing Element to accommodate emergency shelters

Position: Support if Amended

Status: Senate Floor

### Streamlining / Project Review

#### AB 1851 (Wicks)

Restricts faith-based organization housing parking requirements

Position: Watch

Status: Assembly Floor

#### AB 2137 (Wicks)

Restricts HAA court orders re other housing approvals

Position: Watch

Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – done for 2020

#### AB 2470 (Kamlager)

Streamlines ministerial review for splitting multi-family units

Position: Oppose

Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – done for 2020

#### AB 2580 (Eggman)

Streamlines approval of conversions of motels and hotels to housing

Position: Support as Amended

Status: Did not reach Assembly Floor – done for 2020

#### AB 3107 (Bloom)

Allows projects with at least 20% affordable housing to be allowed on commercial sites

Position: Support if Amended

Status: Passed to the Senate

### AB 3173 (Bloom)

Requires microunit buildings to be permitted like multifamily units plus minimum standards

Position: Review

Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – done for 2020

### SB 899 (Wiener)

Allows by-right approval for nonprofit hospital and religious institution housing

Position: Watch

Status: Senate Floor

### SB 1120 (Atkins)

Allows duplexes in single family zones and streamlines lot splits

Position: Support

Status: Senate Floor

### SB 1385 (Caballero)

Allows housing in retail and office zones

Position: Support if Amended

Status: Senate Floor

### SB 1410 (Gonzalez)

Provides COVID-19 rental assistance programs

Position: Watch (Previously set up a state appeals board to challenge local housing decisions)

Status: Senate Rules

### Subdivision Map Act

#### AB 2666 (Boerner-Horvath)

Requires approval of applications for small lot developments on areas zoned for multifamily housing that meet specified requirements

Position: Watch

Status: Did not reach Assembly Floor – done for 2020

#### AB 3155 (Rivas)

Extends SB 35 streamlining to all projects with fewer than 10 units and amends the Subdivision Map Act to require a local agency to issue a building permit for a project that has a tentative map provided that the building will not be occupied until the final map is approved

Position: Watch

Status: Did not reach Assembly Floor – done for 2020

#### AB 3234 (Gloria)

APA-sponsor – Provides an opt-in process for streamlining Subdivision Map Act requirements for small lot subdivisions/requires objective standards for map denials in compliance with HAA

Position: Support

Status: Did not reach Assembly Floor – done for 2020

### Wildfire Mitigation and Planning

#### AB 3164 (Friedman)

Requires CalFire to develop a wildland-urban interface wildfire risk model to determine the risk for a community or parcel in specified wildfire hazard zones

Position: Support

Status: Passed to the Senate

### SB 182 (Jackson)

Requires new requirements for development approvals in VHFHSZ and updates to the safety element (Two-Year bill from 2019)

Position: Support

Status: Assembly Floor

### SB 1199 (McGuire)

Creates the Commission on Home Hardening to develop a three-tiered certification system of fire prevention levels for structures in a Wildland-Urban Interface

Position: Support

Status: Senate Floor

### CEQA

#### AB 1907 (Santiago)

Provides CEQA exemption for affordable housing, emergency shelters, supportive housing

Position: Support

Status: Did not reach Assembly Floor – done for 2020

#### AB 2323 (Friedman)

Cleans up current CEQA exemptions for housing development and provides new exemptions for OPR VMT Mapping

Position: Support

Status: Passed to the Senate

#### SB 288 (Wiener)

Provides CEQA statutory exemption for various transportation projects

Position: Support if Amended

Status: Assembly Rules

#### SB 902 (Wiener)

Allows local governments to pass ordinance to zone any parcel up to 10 units of residential density per parcel, at a height specified by the local government, for parcels located in a transit-rich and jobs rich areas or urban infill site, and exempts the ordinance from CEQA

Position: Support as Amended

Status: Senate Floor

#### SB 950 (Jackson)

Makes various changes to CEQA, including an exemption for emergency shelters, supportive housing, and transitional housing projects, changes to translation guidelines of CEQA documents and an optional, alternate process for receiving public comments

Position: Review

Status: Did not reach Senate Floor – done for 2020

#### SB 995 (Atkins)

Extends the Jobs and Economic Improvement Through Environmental Leadership Act of 2011 until 2025, allows smaller housing projects to qualify, requires a lead agency to prepare a master Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for a general plan, plan amendment, plan element, or specified plan for housing projects where the state has provided funding for the preparation of the master EIR

Position: Support if Amended

Status: Senate Floor



## PI4 Legislative Update

### SB 1289 (Chang)

Provides CEQA exemption for infill housing projects

*Position: Watch*

*Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – done for 2020*

### SB 1302 (Morrell)

Prohibits more than one CEQA lawsuit on any housing development

*Position: Review*

*Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – done for 2020*

### Other Planning Related Topics

#### AB 2421 (Quirk)

Streamlines permitting for backup generators for cell towers

*Position: Neutral as Amended*

*Status: Passed to the Senate*

#### AB 2894 (McCarty)

Requires land use element to address and analyze location/capacity of early childhood education facilities

*Position: Oppose*

*Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – done for 2020*

#### SB 1363 (Allen)

Updates SCS GHG and VMT targets and requires local consistency

*Position: Review*

*Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – done for 2020*

### Inclusivity and Equity

#### AB 2344 (Gonzalez)

Requires residents in affordable units in market-rate housing projects be allowed to access common areas and other benefits

*Position: Support*

*Status: Was not moved upon the Legislature's return – done for 2020*

### 2020-2021 Proposed Budget and May Revision

On May 14, Governor Newsom released his May Revision to the 2020-2021 proposed budget that was released in January. Since January, fiscal realities have drastically changed with the onset of COVID-19 and California's economic outlook is much different than where the year began. As a result, the May Revision cut many programs the Governor had requested in his original budget and refocused a substantial portion of available resources to COVID-19 related appropriations. The revisions also attempt to eliminate an estimated \$54 billion deficit.

The Legislature also put forward their own budget proposal that reduced cuts made by the Governor in anticipation of additional federal resources being passed. On June 15 the Legislature passed their own budget proposal as a placeholder budget and will continue negotiations on the details over the coming weeks. Changes will be made to the budget through budget trailer bills.

Below are a few key highlights of interest to

planners that will likely move in budget trailer bills after the Legislature returns from their Summer Recess. Although a number of the items budgeted in the Governor's initial 2020-2021 budget have been taken off the table, housing streamlining, funding for homelessness programs and measures to keep people in their homes, as well as wildfire prevention and mitigation strategies, remained in the May Revised budget.

### HOUSING

- Provides funding to leverage federal funds to implement a comprehensive strategy to increase housing supply and to support preservation, protection, and production of housing that includes significant streamlining, upzoning and producing new housing units, especially on excess and surplus lands, in transit-oriented infill areas and on public land
- Proposes \$750 million in federal funding to continue purchase of hotels and motels through Project Roomkey to be owned and operated by local governments or non-profit providers to address homelessness and provide safe interim housing options during the stay-at-home orders
- Uses federal funds in the amount of \$250 million in mixed-income development funds over the next three years; \$200 million in infill infrastructure grand funds; and \$115 million in other housing program funds
- Provides various public housing agencies with at least \$500 million to maintain normal operations of low-income housing units as well as provide rental assistance and support for homeless individuals and families
- Provides \$450 million to cities from the CARES Act funding for homelessness and public safety
- Maintains the \$500 million in low-income housing state tax credits to continue to expedite housing development through the state by leveraging federal bonding capacity to create more opportunities for tax-exempt building of affordable housing
- Continues ongoing investments including a real estate transaction fee (estimated at \$277 million for 2020-21) for affordable housing, ongoing revenue from cap and trade auction proceeds (estimated at \$452 million for 2020-21) for infill development that also reduces VMT and greenhouse gas emissions
- Forecasts that due to lower demand, residential units authorized by permits would not begin growing until 2022 and would not recover to 2019 levels within the forecast period. Also forecasts that by 2023, total residential permits would be about 28,000 units below the baseline scenario

### WILDFIRES AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

- Maintains \$2 million General Fund forecasts for tracking and predicting critical fire weather systems
- Includes \$1.1 billion in available federal funds through the Community Development Block Grant Programs for critical infrastructure and disaster relief related to the 2017 and 2018 wildfires
- Prioritizes the state's limited resources on emergency preparedness and protection for vulnerable populations related to climate change and environmental pollution
- Allocates \$2.8 million to enhance broadband mapping activities to increase the state's ability to compete for federal broadband funding
- Provides \$30 million for the CPUC to address issues related to utility--caused wildfires

The Legislature has also put forward their own budget proposal that reduces cuts made by the Governor in anticipation of additional federal resources being passed which will need to be reconciled with the Governor's May-Revision in order to meet the June 15 budget deadline. APA California will share more information once the budget is passed.

### Judicial Council Emergency Rules in Light of Covid-19 Stay at Home Orders

In April, the California Judicial Council issued Emergency Rules in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Emergency Rule No. 9 tolled the statutes of limitation for all civil actions until 90 days after the Governor lifts his COVID-19 Emergency Order. APA California and AEP submitted a joint letter to urge the Judicial Council to make modifications to the Rule to accommodate actions with shorter statutes of limitation, such as causes of action under CEQA, to avoid subjecting housing and other projects to ongoing threat of litigation. Similar requests were submitted by the League of Cities, CSAC, RCRC, and the California Building Industry Association. The California Judicial Council has in response approved an amendment to Emergency Rule No. 9, effective as of May 29, 2020, as follows:

- Statutes of limitations that are 180 days or less are tolled from April 6, 2020 until August 3, 2020
- Statutes of limitations that exceed 180 days are tolled from April 6, 2020 until October 1, 2020.
- The Rule includes an Advisory Committee Comment noting the intent of the rule

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