

PLANT SAN DIEGO

A quarterly newsletter from City Planning & Community Investment (CPCI) | Spring 2010



Bill Anderson, FAICP

Bicycling!

Not just for recreation.
Not just for kids riding
in the neighborhood.
Not just for the avid
road biker or mountain
biker.

Bicycling to get somewhere – to go to a store, to run errands, to commute to work. No car, no gas, no car insurance, no CO² emissions. Exercise without paying for a gym.

College towns such as Davis and Boulder have had a long tradition of bicycling and supportive and safe networks. However, even large cities, such as Portland, Minneapolis, Boston, and New York City are investing in major bicycle infrastructure for the commuter. Minneapolis has developed two “bike highways” designed specifically for commuting. Boston developed a linear park over its Orange Line that includes a bike route that links the South End neighborhoods to job centers downtown. New York City is experimenting with restricting auto access on certain streets to favor the bicycle commuters.

Certain European cities have a strong tradition of supporting the bicyclist. Paris has public bikes for anyone to use. Amsterdam and Copenhagen are the leaders, with dedicated bike streets, bridges, lanes, and intersection priorities to bicyclists to avoid conflicts with cars and reduce travel times. According to Copenhagen’s Director of Engineering, who visited us last year, almost 40 percent of their daily commute trips are by bicycle.

In these cities, bikes are not just for the avid, they’re for the average person, old and young, rich, poor, and middle income, factory workers and office workers. What do these cities have in common? One, they’re

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Vernal Pool HCP

By Craig Hooker

City Planning & Community Investment has begun the process of creating a new Habitat Conservation Program (HCP) for vernal pool species within the City. On March 16, 2010, the City Council approved acceptance of a \$500,000 grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Vernal pools occur in small depressions underlain by impenetrable clay soils that allow water to accumulate in winter and spring wet seasons. The largest groupings within the City occur in Otay Mesa, Kearny Mesa, Mira Mesa, and Del Mar Mesa. Many sensitive plant and animal species rely on regional vernal pools, including San Diego button celery, San Diego thornmint, San Diego fairy shrimp, and Riverside fairy shrimp, each federally listed as threatened and endangered.

This HCP will analyze the remaining habitat, determine the boundaries of a hard line preserve, include funding mechanisms for long-term maintenance and management and provide the basis for the City to issue incidental take permits.

“We are fortunate that there is the will, the funding opportunities, and the scientific expertise available to make this plan happen. We look forward to better understanding how the planning process can have positive effects on these critically important resources.” - Jeanne Krosch a Senior Planner with the department’s Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP)

The SANDAG Service Bureau will be responsible for scoping the project, facilitating the public workshops, hiring the necessary consultants, providing the vernal pool database and the technical vernal pool, and funding analysis. MSCP staff will collaborate with other City Departments to manage the process and write the necessary EIR. The HCP is anticipated to be completed in March of 2012.



“To engage San Diegans to envision, plan, implement, and maintain a sustainable city through the wise use of land, resources, and aesthetics ensuring a high quality of life for all generations.”

“A livable, prosperous and sustainable San Diego that reflects the City’s planning, design and investment efforts.”

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relatively flat. Two, they’re relatively cold. Three, they’ve invested in bicycle circulation infrastructure.

While San Diego overall has lots of varied topography that can deter many casual bicyclists, we have many mesas, river valleys, and coastal areas that are relatively flat, including areas that have residential development, job centers, and transit. Bicycle circulation systems can work in these communities. Obviously, we have the weather that is conducive to biking, especially when compared to the large cities in the United States and Europe that are most famous for encouraging biking. Finally, we are preparing plans that will enable more investment in the bicycling infrastructure.

Our General Plan puts a strong emphasis on bicycling as a form of transportation. The City and SANDAG have prepared draft Bicycle Master Plans. The Otay Mesa Community Plan update envisions a bicycle circulation network that links workforce housing to jobs on the mesa. The Barrio Logan Community Plan update contributes to the Bayshore Bikeway. The draft San Diego River Master Plan calls for a bike path along the length of the river. The Uptown/ North Park/Golden Hill community plan updates hope to reinforce and perhaps add to the bicycle network and make it safer. Mid-City has contemplated a bike street. The Downtown waterfront plans are designing safe and attractive bike lanes. Almost all community plans in the future will attempt to improve San Diego’s bike circulation network. As these routes serve both commuting and recreation functions, they may be eligible for multiple sources of funding, especially if they help provide alternative options to the car and reduce our City’s greenhouse gas emissions.

Keep on biking!



Bill Anderson, FAICP
Director

Meet the HRB

By Cathy Winterrowd

Have you heard of the Historical Resources Board or HRB? Many of you with an interest in historic preservation are very familiar with this Mayor-appointed Board and their responsibilities. But I would guess that most of you have only a limited understanding of the role this Board plays in the development review process and in implementing our General Plan. Since May is National Historic Preservation Month, we thought this would be an appropriate time to introduce you to the City’s HRB. Made up of 11 volunteers with technical expertise or a strong interest in historic preservation, the HRB meets monthly to review and act on nominations for historical designation, designate historic districts, review and comment on nominations to the California Register of Historical Resources and the National Register of Historic Places, review and make recommendations on historic surveys, review projects that require a site development permit for impacts to designated historical resources, and hear informational presentations on historic preservation topics. These meetings are open to the public and often well attended by our interested community members. Monthly agendas and staff reports are posted on our website at www.sandiego.gov/historic.



The current Board is comprised of a diverse membership representing a variety of preservation related professionals and interested members of the public. The HRB Chair is John Lemmo, a local land use and environmental attorney and adjunct instructor of history at Southwestern College. Abel Silvas is a Native American and descendent of an early California family who is a storyteller, comedian, and educator. Maria Curry is an architect, preservation planner and

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BuildIt San Ysidro

There is great cause to celebrate in San Ysidro these days! The San Ysidro Redevelopment Project Area has seen both the groundbreaking ceremony of one affordable housing project and the grand opening of another for San Diego’s residents.

The spring of 2010 saw the start of construction of the Verbena Affordable Apartments Project and the grand opening of the El Pedregal Family Apartments.

The Verbena Project provides 80 affordable townhome units, a new construction product never seen before in San Diego. The 27 triplex townhome development features two- and three-bedroom units with garages. Verbena is located on Beyer Boulevard, near a trolley station, elementary school and the San Ysidro Health Center.



El Pedregal is a 45 apartment unit complex located on West San Ysidro Boulevard, in the heart of San Ysidro. The project was built for larger families featuring 21 three-bedroom and 24 four-bedroom units. It provides families with a playground, computer lab and laundry facilities.



Both developments provide various amenities, educational programs and social services. Building these 125 affordable units on formerly vacant land achieves two major redevelopment goals: removing blight and providing affordable workforce housing in San Ysidro.

Gold Key Award

On February 25, 2010, CPCI Economic Development Division staff members Beth Murray, Meredith Dibden-Brown and Suzanne Prevost were awarded the prestigious Gold Key award by the San Diego County Hotel-Motel Association and the Tourism Industry. The Gold Key award honors a person or an entity that has made an outstanding contribution on a continuing basis to the betterment of San Diego’s Hospitality Industry. The CPCI staff members were honored for their efforts to develop, establish and manage the Tourism Marketing District which levies assessments from larger lodging establishments to promote tourism in San Diego. Congratulations to Beth, Meredith and Suzanne on their impressive award!

Bicycle Master Plan Update

By Shahriar Ammi

Over the last twenty months, CPCI staff has been managing and leading the effort of updating the City’s 2002 Bicycle Master Plan (BMP). The BMP update aims at forming a denser bicycling network that serves inter (long) and intra (short) bicycling needs, attracting new riders by developing safe and convenient bicycle facilities, pursuing multiple funding mechanisms to implement bicycle facilities, promoting bicycling as an alternative mode of transportation, and working in concert with the Regional bicycle master plan recently adopted by the SANDAG Board. Just to highlight the magnitude of this effort, the BMP update includes recommendations to increase the current 511 miles of bicycle network to 1,044 miles.

Funded through a SANDAG grant, the BMP update is guided by a Project Working Group comprised of representatives from Caltrans, the Centre City Development Corporation, Community Planners Committee, Metropolitan Transit System, San Diego County Bicycle Coalition, San Diego State University, the University of California San Diego and City staff. The Final draft is anticipated to be completed in June of 2010. The [draft BMP](#) is posted on the City’s website. If you would like further information, please contact Shahriar Ammi at (619)236-6576 or SAmmi@sandiego.gov.

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What is the Regional Housing Needs Assessment?

The Regional Housing Needs Assessment, or RHNA, identifies how much housing each city and county should include in their plans. Typically, each council of governments prepares the state-mandated RHNA for each region prior to cities and counties updating their general plan housing elements. Housing elements address how a city or county will meet future housing needs and are required by the state to be updated every eight years and to be in step with regional transportation plans. The state gives each region the estimated amount of homes needed for different income groups. Each region’s council of governments then allocates that housing need among each city and county in the region. In the San Diego region, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) works with each of the 18 cities and the county to conduct the RHNA, which is then implemented through individual housing elements.

For the last RHNA, prepared in 2005, SANDAG determined that the City of San Diego would need to plan for just over 45,700 homes, or 43% of the region’s total which was broken down into the following four state-defined income categories:

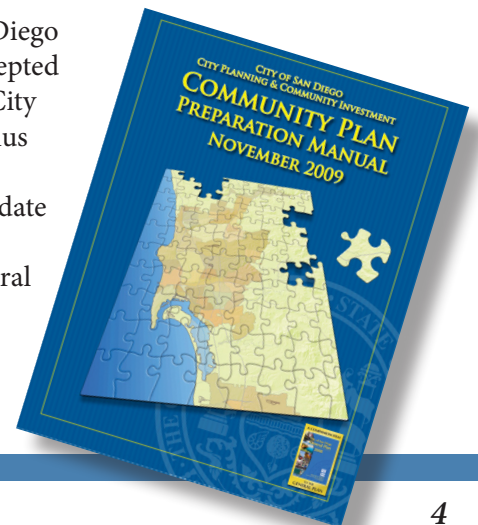
Income Group	Percentage of Area Median Income (AMI)	City of San Diego Share of the Housing Units
Very Low-Income	0-50% of AMI	10,645
Low-Income	51-80% of AMI	8,090
Moderate-Income	81-120% of AMI	8,645
Above Moderate-Income	121%+ of AMI	18,362
TOTAL		45,741

The state does not require that the City of San Diego (or other local jurisdictions) build these housing units, but rather, have enough vacant and/or underdeveloped land that could support the development of housing to meet the estimated need. The City’s Housing Element, last updated in 2006, determined that enough capacity is available to meet the City’s estimated housing needed up to the year 2010.

Later this year, the State will provide SANDAG with the estimated amount of homes that the San Diego region will need to plan for up to the year 2020. SANDAG will then work with the City of San Diego and other local jurisdictions to prepare a method to identify each jurisdiction’s share of the estimated housing need. The method will address Senate Bill 375 which dictates that the RHNA be consistent with the region’s sustainable communities strategy. This strategy will identify how regional greenhouse gas targets would be achieved through feasible development patterns, infrastructure investments, and/or transportation measures or policies. SANDAG expects to approve the draft RHNA in 2011. Once the RHNA has been approved by SANDAG, the City will begin an update to its Housing Element to meet the State’s 2013 deadline.

The Community Plan Preparation Manual Wins Local Award

The Community Plan Preparation Manual (CPPM) received an award from the San Diego Chapter of the American Planning Association. Sara Lyons, staff lead, graciously accepted the award at a ceremony on May 20th. The CPPM is a companion document to the City of San Diego’s General Plan and is a guide for preparing and updating the City’s 40-plus community plans. The CPPM provides the primary users, City staff and consultants, along with community planning groups and the public with a clearly defined plan update process to manage community expectations. The CPPM also helps to streamline and implement the process for incorporating the big picture policy objectives of the General Plan into the City’s community plans. The [Community Plan Preparation Manual](#) is available online.



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Awards Roll In

On April 12, 2010, CPCI Director Bill Anderson (center), along with General Plan Program Manager Nancy Bragado (left), SANDAG’s Coleen Clementson (right center) and former Planning Commissioner Kathy Garcia (right), accepted the 2010 Daniel Burnham Award for a Comprehensive Plan for the City of San Diego’s General Plan at the American Planning Association’s National Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana.



The San Diego General Plan also recently received a “Best of the Decade” Smart Growth Award from the Urban Land Institute San Diego/Tijuana District Council. The awards were to celebrate plans and projects that have furthered smart growth and sustainability in the region. The jury selected the General Plan because it provides a plan for the future that was agreed upon collectively by the communities and elected officials, and will further implementation of smart growth in San Diego.



Meet the HRB, continued from page 1

educator both in San Diego and Baja California. Priscilla Berge is an active member of her community, historical consultant, and historic property owner with graduate training in American Studies and History. Linda Marrone, is a Realtor specializing in architecturally and historically significant homes and also a historic property owner. Salvador Aréchiga is an architectural designer with LEED accreditation and member of the North Park Planning Committee. Gail Garbini owns a historic home and is a licensed landscape architect. Alex Bethke has a Master’s Degree in public history and is a historian for the Navy. Dr. Ann Woods is an art historian and has taught architectural history at SDSU, UCSD, and USD. Ann Jarmusch is a preservation advocate who previously was an architecture and urban design critic and art critic for the San Diego Union-Tribune. Currently, the position reserved for a professional archaeologist is vacant.

Each year in May, the HRB celebrates Historic Preservation Month with an awards ceremony. Nominated by the public, board members and staff, recipients are recognized for excellence in historic preservation as reflected in a wide range of categories. This year’s recipients include homeowners, architects, historians, an Army Captain, the San Diego Architectural Foundation, a large group of people involved in the restoration of the First Avenue Bridge, and two important organizations, the Friends of Villa Montezuma and Save Our Heritage Organization. Please join us at an upcoming HRB meeting, the fourth Thursday of each month, at 1:00pm on the 12th Floor of the City Administration Building.



Did You Know . . .

There are currently 55 community planning areas and 42 recognized community planning groups within the City of San Diego? Planning groups typically meet on a monthly basis and all meetings are open to the public.

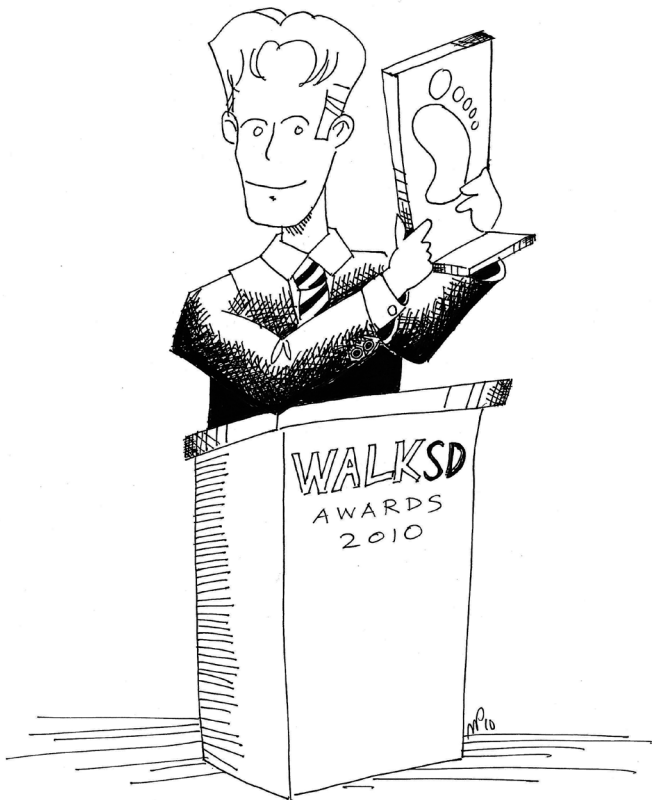
Visit us online if you are interested in being involved with your local [community planning group](#).

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Golden Footprint Award

On April 22, 2010 CPCI Senior Planner Brian Schoenfisch received WalkSanDiego’s 2010 Kaiser Permanente Golden Footprint Award in the “Individual” category. The award recognizes those who have gone the extra mile to restore walking to San Diego’s communities. Among his many accomplishments, Mr. Schoenfisch was recognized for his leadership role on a number of important community-based pedestrian-oriented projects including the Friars Road Pedestrian Tunnel, the 25th Street Walkable Communities (Music Bridge), the Chollas Creek Enhancement Program, the Balboa Avenue Revitalization Action Program, the San Pasqual Vision Plan, the Sherman Heights Revitalization Program, and the Memorial Skatepark project.

These projects serve as examples of Mr. Schoenfisch’s ability to get residents involved in grassroots planning issues and generate momentum for implementation to occur. In a very animated acceptance speech, he focused on the desire to bring together pedestrian, bicycle, and transit advocates from all over San Diego to help develop creative solutions to establish walking and bicycling as safe and attractive options for getting around. For more information on Golden Footprint Awards go to www.walksandiego.org.



Affordable Housing Parking Study

The management and regulation of parking has received a great deal of attention in recent years with the public’s growing awareness of the social and environmental costs to provide land for one’s vehicle at home, work and the places in between. Providing an efficient amount of parking and properly managing both on- and off-street parking is crucial for any community. A lack of convenient parking can be frustrating to drivers and potentially detrimental to businesses; however, an oversupply of parking can have equally detrimental social and environmental affects.

The City is examining the option of efficiency-based parking standards that allow for more flexible and accurate parking requirements at particular locations given factors such as housing affordability restrictions, residential density, geographic location, transit accessibility, urban context, and types of housing.

The purpose of the Affordable Housing Parking Study is to consider options for customizing parking standards for affordable housing developments in order to create a better match between needs and requirements. The provision of affordable housing helps bridge the gap between the high cost of living in San Diego and the high percentage of low wage earners including families, seniors, and people with disabilities. Excessive or inflexible parking requirements potentially increase the development costs of affordable housing, reduce the potential for on-site amenities, and create an inefficient use of land. This study will evaluate and make recommendations for appropriate regulations needed to shape parking requirements for affordable housing programs and associated projects.

As part of this study, the City has formed a 12-member Affordable Housing Parking Study Project Working Group (PWG) to provide input and advisory recommendations. The PWG will meet throughout the project to discuss and guide the progress of the project.

Visit our [Affordable Housing Project Study](#) webpage for more information.

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Plant Profile: VICKIE WHITE



Vickie White is the Stimulus Program Specialist with the City Planning & Community Investment Department (CPCI), in the Economic Development Division’s CDBG Office. Her responsibilities as the Stimulus Program Specialist are to administer the City’s stimulus grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

(HUD), which includes acting as liaison to subgrantees of the stimulus funds, overseeing associated contracts, and ensuring compliance with program requirements and regulations.

Complementing her current work in community development, Vickie was formerly an Assistant Planner with the Planning Division of CPCI. Her experience working as the Community Planner for the Mid-City communities frequently comes in handy in her current position, as the HUD stimulus grants and the CDBG program in general are currently investing grant funds in projects in Mid-City and nearby communities and as community involvement and public hearings important components of the CDBG program. Her work experience prior to coming to the City of San Diego includes public outreach and customer service, mortgage lending and finance, and business.

Vickie is a native of San Diego County. Her interest in community development and land use planning was sparked when she moved back to San Diego after attending the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and studying abroad in Lyon, France. These experiences have made her a committed “urbanite,” which makes her current work for City Planning & Community Investment all the more rewarding.

Second Chance

San Diego Second Chance recently completed a tenant improvement project located at 6145 Imperial Avenue, within the Fourth Council District. The project’s budget was approximately \$1.9M with \$900,000 of the budget provided through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program from funding provided in Fiscal Years 2006 through 2010, with all the Council Offices contributing at some point to the project. Construction began in October 2009 and the Grand Re-Opening of the building occurred on Friday, May 14, 2010.



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THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

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CPCI’s Recommended Readings:

“Planning With Complexity”

By Judith Innes and David Booher, 2010
Publisher - Routledge

“Regenerative Design for Sustainable Development”

By John Tillman Lyle, 1994
Publisher - John Wiley & Sons

“Design with Nature”

By Ian L. McHarg, 1992
Publisher - John Wiley & Sons

Please send ideas and comments to: planning@sandiego.gov