

# PLANT SAN DIEGO

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



Bill Anderson, FAICP

## Happy New Decade!

We're beginning 2010 with a quarterly e-letter to better inform the many people and organizations involved in improving San Diego's communities. While the e-letters do not replace our direct personal interaction, we hope the e-letter will allow us to communicate what's new at CPCI.

**The Planning Division** maintains the General Plan, manages community plan updates and focused mobility plans and master plans and reviews major projects that require discretionary decision-making by the Planning Commission and City Council. In addition, the Planning Division supports the City's 42 community planning groups.

**The Urban Form Division** includes urban design, park and open space planning, historic resources, and the Multiple-Species Conservation Program (MSCP).

**The Economic Development Division** oversees the City's HUD related programs, such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), the Consolidated Plan, and other programs; and certain special districts, such as the Business Improvement Districts, parking districts, Tourism Marketing District, and selected assessment districts; as well as the Façade Improvement Program and the Small Business Assistance programs.

**The Redevelopment Division** manages redevelopment activities in 11 of the City's 19 redevelopment project areas. The other project areas are managed by the Centre City Development Corporation and the Southeastern Economic Development Corporation.

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## General Plan Wins National Award!

By Brian Schoenfisch

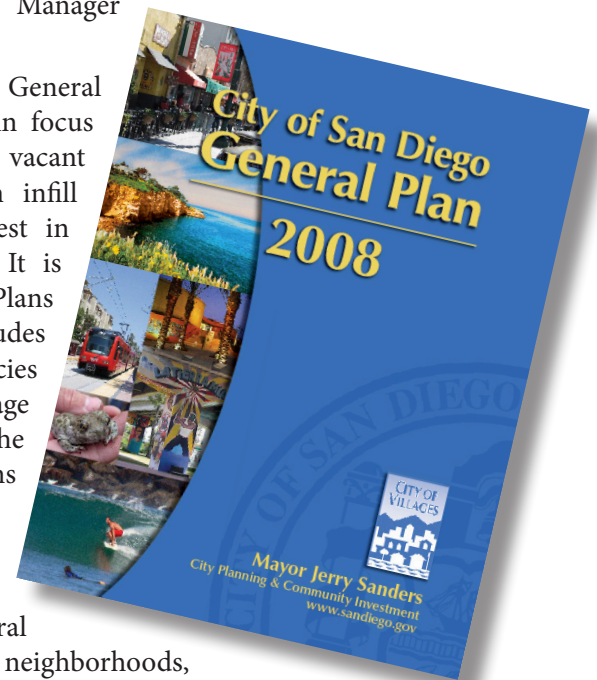
The City of San Diego's General Plan, unanimously adopted by the City Council on March 10, 2008, was recognized as the winner of the 2010 Daniel Burnham Award for the best comprehensive plan in the nation by the American Planning Association (APA). Honoring innovative planning and planners across the nation, the APA's national awards program, the profession's highest honor, is a tradition established more than 50 years ago to recognize outstanding plans, planning programs and initiatives. "We are honored to be recognized with this award, which is a great tribute to our in-house staff team, and to the dedicated stakeholders who worked with us through plan adoption. It is exciting to now have the opportunity to see the plan put into practice through the community plan updates and other implementation measures underway," stated General Plan Program Manager Nancy Bragado.

The City of San Diego's General Plan represents a shift in focus from how to develop vacant land to how to design infill development and reinvest in existing communities. It is one of the first General Plans in California which includes climate change policies stemming from the passage of Assembly Bill 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006.

The Plan draws upon the character and strengths of San Diego's natural environment, distinctive neighborhoods, and activity centers that together form the City as a whole. It includes a strong sustainability focus through policies addressing transit/land use coordination; climate change; healthy, walkable communities; and resource conservation and management. It's an award to the hundreds of people, organizations, and planning groups who participated during the process.

To view the City's General Plan and related documents please visit the General Plan homepage at:

<http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/genplan/index.shtml>



*"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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Staff within these divisions work with several citizen groups, such as the Community Planning Groups, the Business Improvement Districts and Parking District Boards, Redevelopment’s Project Area Committees, the Tourism Marketing District Board, the Small Business Advisory Committee, the Historic Resources Board, the Parks and Recreation Board, and the City Planning Commission.

In addition to the four divisions, the Facilities Financing Section manages the Facilities Benefit Assessment, Development Impact Fee and other funding programs for the City.

In 2010, we will continue working on 12 community plan updates, 1 major community plan amendment, three major resource park master plans, a citywide habitat conservation plan, redevelopment and affordable housing activities, CDBG reforms, public facility financing strategies, review and coordination with other agencies, new historic districts, and community economic development activities.

As stated on the front page, we have started the year on a good note – the American Planning Association announced that San Diego’s General Plan will receive the prestigious national Daniel Burnham Award for excellence in comprehensive planning – congratulations to the hundreds of citizens, volunteers, boards, elected officials and staff who provided input and worked on the City of Villages Plan over several years.

We hope you find the e-letter informative and welcome suggestions on how to make it better with each new issue.

Thank you,



Bill Anderson, FAICP  
Director

# CEP Greens Up Barrio Logan

*By Michelle Muñoz*

On Saturday, January 9, 2010, as part of the Green Street Community Enhancement Program, the Redevelopment Agency of the City of San Diego in partnership with the Urban Corps of San Diego County, and Council District 8 hosted a community and home enhancement clean-up event in Barrio Logan. With the help of approximately 200 volunteers, 80 trees were planted, 6 dumpsters full of debris and trash were removed, weeds were pulled, graffiti was eradicated, and two homes received facelifts. The event contributed to the ongoing revitalization efforts in Barrio Logan. Funds in the amount of \$75,000 were approved by the Agency for the Community Enhancement Program. Of the \$75,000, \$50,000 will be used for the renovation of 14 Barrio Logan homes occupied by low- and moderate-income households who earn less than 120% of the area median income (i.e. a family of four earning \$89,900 or less) and \$25,000 will be used for community clean-up efforts. Planning efforts are underway for the next community event, which is scheduled to take place in late Spring 2010. For more information regarding the Agency’s Community Enhancement Program, please contact Michelle Muñoz at (619) 236-6492.



## Did You Know . . .

381 new, affordable housing units were completed in FY 2009 with Redevelopment Agency financial assistance?

- Studio 15** ..... 274 affordable units (275 total)
- Boulevard Apartments**..... 23 affordable units (24 total)
- La Entrada** ..... 84 affordable units (85 total)

# City Receives over \$19 million in Stimulus Funding

By Vickie White

As you have likely heard in the news, throughout 2008 and 2009 the Federal government provided substantial financial resources to states, counties, and cities to moderate the current recession through the Stimulus Package. This Stimulus that we talk about is actually two laws enacted by Congress, the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 (HERA) and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), which made funds available through the various departments of the Federal government to address the foreclosure crisis and the recession’s effects and to spur job creation.



CPCI’s Economic Development Division, CDBG Office, is responsible for administering three Stimulus grants that were awarded to the City by the Department of Housing and Urban Development which total more than \$19 million. The City received approximately \$9.4 million in Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds to provide a mechanism for first time homebuyers to purchase foreclosed and abandoned homes in the areas hit hardest by the housing slump and to provide decent and affordable housing opportunities for low-income (less than 50% of Area Median Income) households.

Additionally, the City received nearly \$6.2 million in Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) funds to help City residents on the verge of becoming homeless to stay in their homes or find more affordable homes and to help homeless citizens find supportive housing; and \$4.03 million in Community Development Block Grant

– Recovery (CDBG-R) program funds that will create jobs and make improvements in the City’s low- and moderate-income neighborhoods through one street improvement project, one public facility improvement project, and four affordable housing rehabilitation projects.

CPCI has partnered with the San Diego Housing Commission to carry out a significant portion of its Stimulus-funded programs and projects, and with the Engineering & Capital Projects Department to realize the two CDBG-R-funded public improvement projects. Work has commenced on all three grant-funded programs, and you can stay informed of the progress of the ARRA grants through the numerous maps, graphs, and other resources available online at the Recovery Act website, [www.recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov).

If you would like more information regarding the HPRP or NSP programs please contact Vickie White, Stimulus Program Specialist in the CDBG Office, at (619) 236-6607.

# Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

By Nancy Bragado

The State of California has taken aggressive actions to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change, and to help minimize and adapt to climate change impacts. The state’s Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, also known as Assembly Bill (AB) 32, requires California to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. Since the passage of AB 32, the state has continued to develop more detailed strategies, actions, and regulations to address climate change, including adoption of Senate Bill (SB) 375 in 2008. SB 375 was designed to help achieve the goals of AB 32 by reducing the emissions from cars and light trucks through better coordinated transportation, housing and climate change planning.

SB 375 requires the establishment of regional targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions and the preparation of Sustainable Communities Strategies that demonstrate how the regional targets will be met. The Sustainable Communities Strategy is to be developed as a part of each region’s update to their Regional Transportation Plan. In the San Diego region, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is responsible for preparing this strategy. SANDAG, in turn, will rely on local government land use planning and coordination with regional transportation planning in order to produce a successful Sustainable Communities Strategy.

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# Otay Valley Regional Park Trail wins Award

By Robin Shifflet

At the December 2009 San Diego Chapter of American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) biannual design awards program, an Urban Design Merit Award was received for the planning and implementation of the Otay Valley Regional Park Trails.

The planned 8,869 acre Otay Valley Regional Park (OVRP) is located in the southern boundary of the City of San Diego, in the Otay Mesa-Nestor community planning area. It extends 13 miles through the river valley from just west of I-5, along the river, to the Lower and Upper Otay Lakes, through the City of San Diego, San Diego County and the City of Chula Vista.

One of the goals of the OVRP Concept Plan is to create a trail system the entire length of the park. Through the efforts of the multi-jurisdictional staff, the design consultants Wallace Roberts & Todd and the OVRP Citizens Advisory Committee, five miles of trail and two parking/staging areas have been constructed. At the end of this year a total of nine miles of trails and six parking/staging areas will be completed.

The 2009 jury stated that the OVRP Trails Project deserved the Urban Design Merit Award due to the thoughtful planning of a trail system in a river valley surrounded by an urban environment. One jury member stated ‘it is wonderful to finally see this type of urban planning along a river that resulted in a natural and sustainable project for the community.’ Another jury member stated that it was a hidden jewel in the city, where community members and the native habitat can co-exist. For links to the OVRP and a trail map visit the homepage at: <http://www.ovrp.org>.



# The Euclid Tower Rises Again

By Karina Danek

The Euclid Tower, originally known as the Silver Tower Building, was built in 1932 by David H. Ryan in the Art/Deco/Assyrian Revival style and modeled after New York’s Empire State Building. It was constructed with a unique, two-story octagonal base topped by a striking ornamental tower. The structure was originally built as a drive-in soda fountain and marked the terminus of the street car line along University and Euclid Avenues.



In 1995, a public art project replaced the Euclid Tower’s white façade with bright colors and geometric designs reflecting City Heights’ ethnic diversity. Unfortunately, the tower section was torn down in 1999 for safety reasons.

A strongly-supported restoration effort began in 2005 assisted by architect Richard Bundy providing expertise to the City of San Diego’s Redevelopment Agency on how to best restore the tower. The restoration was of particular importance to the community, which believed it would positively affect the neighborhood character around Euclid Avenue.

In May 2007, the Redevelopment Agency approved funding for the tower restoration, with funds coming from tax increment generated by the City Heights Redevelopment Project Area.

In March 2009, the Euclid Tower restoration was completed and is based on the design by architect Richard Bundy. Today, the tower is a great amenity to the community and a striking landmark in City Heights, providing the positive change originally envisioned by the community.

For more information on the Euclid Tower please contact Melissa Garcia, Project Manager, at: [magarcia@sandiego.gov](mailto:magarcia@sandiego.gov).

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# Plant Profile: CRAIG HOOKER



Craig is an Associate Planner with City Planning and Community Investment, in the Urban Form Division’s Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). His responsibilities as a planner and Landscape Architect include habitat conservation planning, grant preparation and management, and project review.

Craig is a registered Landscape Architect and has extensive experience in every scale of landscape architecture from residential design and construction to watershed planning. Strengths include design, landscape ecology, and management and communications skills. Craig has



taught design and lecture courses to share his knowledge and experience with students as an adjunct faculty in New School of Architecture and Cuyamaca College.

Craig received his M.L.A. degree from Cal. Poly Pomona where he received the Faculty and Messy Holberg Awards. Craig contributes professionally as a Landscape Architect and Planner by volunteering for non-profit organizations. Since 2004, he has volunteered by participating in habitat education and restoration events, resulting in significant benefits to the cross-border environment and local canyons. This year he received the 2009 “Local Hero” award from Bank of America for his work with the Wetland Avengers/ Campeones de los Canones program, which is part of the Ocean Discovery Institute.

<http://oceandiscoveryinstitute.org/>

## Onion For IHO

*By Marlon Pangilinan*

Hollywood annually bestows the Golden Raspberry Award to its worst films. The architectural world has their own version of recognizing a “Razzie” in the Onion Award given out annually at the Orchids and Onions Awards ceremony put on by the San Diego Architectural Foundation. This year the City of San Diego received an Interim Onion Award for the Interim Height Ordinance (IHO) – a regulatory measure that restricts building heights to 50 and 65 feet in selected corridors of the Mission Hills and Hillcrest neighborhoods of the Uptown Community, while the community plan update process is underway. So what does one do when life hands you an Onion? You simply show up and graciously accept, and less graciously defend, as the director of CPCI did.

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**THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO**  
 City Planning & Community Investment  
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 San Diego, CA 92101

## CPCI’s Recommended Classics:

“The Death and Life of Great American Cities”  
 By Jane Jacobs, 1961, Publisher – Random House.

“City: Rediscovering the Center”  
 By William H Whyte, 1988, Publisher – Doubleday.

*Please send ideas and comments to:  
[planning@sandiego.gov](mailto:planning@sandiego.gov)*