

PLANT SAN DIEGO

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



Bill Anderson, FAICP

APA Conference

The California Chapter of the American Planning Association recently held its annual conference in Carlsbad, hosted by the San Diego Section. The theme was “Coast-Canyon-Crest, Elevating Sustainability.” Almost 1,100 people associated with city & regional planning and related fields in the public and private sectors from throughout California, and some guests from outside the state, attended.

The conference began with an informative keynote talk by Dr. Tony Haymet, Director of the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, regarding the compelling climate change research by scientists worldwide, and at our own San Diego institutions, since the 1950s and the role cities have played in generating greenhouse gas emissions, the imperative role of planning to help reduce these impacts and adapt to a changing global climate, and the economic opportunities in developing new green technologies.

Neal Peirce, a founding editor of the National Journal, a national columnist of the Washington Post Writers Group, and one of the first national writers to recognize the innovations occurring throughout the nation at the local and state levels, gave an inspiring speech on how demographics, ecological awareness, and the sobering experience of the Great Recession are changing attitudes about cities, with California on the leading edge.

The week ended with an in-depth conversation of southern and northern California water agencies, from wholesalers to retailers, talk about the future of water in the state and how regions will have to adapt.

Participants were taken on tours of coastal mixed-use neighborhoods, transit-oriented developments in San Diego, habitat preserves, Downtown San Diego, the border region, and other local sites. They attended sessions regarding urban and sustainable design, the future of retail, new developments in planning and

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Models of Sustainability

By Brian Schoenfisch

The San Diego region has long been recognized as being at the forefront of sustainable development planning and implementation and has consistently demonstrated the ability to achieve broad consensus in integrating land use, transportation, housing, infrastructure, environmental, and economic development. This past August, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) added to the region's stellar reputation by selecting two San Diego communities as Catalyst Projects as part of the Catalyst Projects for California Sustainable Strategies Pilot Program. The two San Diego communities, The Village at Market Creek and Civita (Formerly known as Quarry Falls), are examples of innovative, mixed-use communities which employ smart growth and eco-friendly principals and will serve as transferable models for future growth in the region.



The selection by HCD is an even greater honor considering that only 11 other communities in the entire state received this recognition, with San Diego being the only city with multiple communities on the list. By earning this recognition, the 13 California communities will be in a favorable position to apply for future grant funds. In addition, the Village at Market Creek project was awarded \$1.35 million in state grant funding to build affordable housing.

The Village at Market Creek, a major development underway in the area surrounding Euclid Avenue and Market Street in

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“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.”

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CEQA law, innovations in bicycle transportation systems, community farming, rethinking the general plan, regional planning under SB375, and many other interesting topics. After the conference, the Young Planners group organized volunteers to help maintain one of our coastal lagoons.



What was clear is that there are many great ideas being generated throughout the state, by community-based organizations, non-profits and foundations, private firms and developers, and government agencies, from which we can learn. It was also apparent that the San Diego region can count itself among those places where best practices are being developed. Finally, it was unequivocal that there is still much to be done.

Enjoy your holiday season and look forward to a productive 2011,

Bill

Bill Anderson, FAICP
Director

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Southeastern San Diego, will include 1,000 new affordable homes in a blighted area of the community along with more than 500,000 square feet of office and retail space, all including a wide range of sustainable features. The project is centered around Chollas Creek, which will serve as a focal point to link surrounding neighborhoods, providing multi-modal transportation choices, conservation, public art, education and recreational benefits. Through careful site design, including pedestrian-orientation of buildings and a comprehensive trails system, the community will have direct access to the nearby Euclid Transit Station, thus encouraging walking, bicycling, and public transportation as viable forms of transportation.



Civita is a 230-acre depleted gravel quarry on the north side of Friars Road in the Mission Valley community, planned as a sustainable, walkable community which will include approximately 4,500 homes and nearly 1 million square feet of retail, office, and civic space. The project is one of the largest in the country to receive recognition by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design's Neighborhood Development pilot program (LEED-ND) and recently won a LEED Gold certification from the San Diego chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council. The project will feature a shuttle system, a hybrid car-sharing program and is within close proximity to a trolley station and will serve as a model of providing residents with everything they need to live, work, and play without having to drive.

Both the Village at Market Creek and Civita will serve as examples of how to build sustainable and economically vibrant communities. According to HCD Director Lynn Jacobs "The projects will provide valuable insights to allow the State to implement best practices and strategies as we move forward with our sustainable development goals in California. Walkable communities, improved air quality, reduced emissions, less time spent in a car and a strong economy can all become reality through sustainable development, and I look forward to seeing how these projects develop."

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Urban Greening in City Heights

By Howard Greenstein

The City Heights Urban Greening Plan is one of 14 projects statewide to be awarded a Proposition 84 Urban Greening Planning grant by the Strategic Growth Council (SGC). The SGC is a cabinet level group charged with coordinating state agencies to improve air and water quality, protect natural resources and agricultural lands, promote public health, and assist state and local entities in the planning of sustainable communities and meeting AB32 climate impact goals. The California legislature authorized the SGC to appropriate funds for community greening plans and projects following the 2006 passage of the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act



(Prop 84). The \$250,000 grant is among a first-round applicant pool of forty California cities, counties and non-profit organizations competing for nearly \$4 million in grant funding.

The goal of the City Heights Urban Greening Plan is the creation of a system of green streets that provides enhanced experiences for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users and creates linkages between existing, planned and proposed community facilities, parks, and trails in adjacent canyons. An existing inventory

and deficiencies analysis identifying opportunity areas for green streets will be developed as a component of the plan. Planning of future community facilities will be directed towards the green street system which will provide a comprehensive, integrated framework for future development which considers mobility patterns and opportunities for incorporating green development strategies.

The plan will recommend the inclusion of recreational opportunities within this system, and will incorporate low-impact development strategies designed to reduce storm water pollution. A street tree plan, utilizing a drought-tolerant plant materials palette, would increase the community's tree canopy, reduce the urban heat island effect, enhance the pedestrian environment and foster greater walkability. By providing opportunities for development of local public facilities that are easily accessible by walking and transit via a green street system, implementation of the City Heights Urban Greening Plan will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the consumption of energy and natural resources. The grant will provide the opportunity to develop a comprehensive and environmentally sensitive approach to community revitalization and planning for the provision of future public facilities.

Community Vision Developed at Plan Update Charrettes

By Marlon Pangilinan

During the month of the October through the first week of November, Planning staff along with consultants representing disciplines in urban design, historic resources, and mobility were engaged with members of the public to develop the plan vision for the Uptown, Greater North Park, and Greater Golden Hill communities. A series of 3-day charrettes were held for each community dealing with existing conditions; urban design exercises on various elements of the built form; identifying priorities and preferences on mobility; formulating park, recreation, and open space ideas; and identifying conservation areas.

This series of charrettes last month also saw the introduction of electronic polling technology as a new form of public participation that comes with immediate

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results. Although the use of this technology was not meant to reflect a scientific survey, its use served to gain a sense from those in the room about what their preferences were in relation to such topics as the development of streetcar service in their community, whether they would support acquisition of private property for public parks, or whether they would support reducing parking requirements for development well served by bicycle facilities and transit.



Input from the public on each of these topics taken during the charrettes and from the various cluster and Community Plan Update Advisory Committee meetings, have culminated into the creation of a conceptual plan framework that illustrates the vision for each respective community and identifies specific areas of focus and further refinement through community plan design guidelines, illustrations, and policies that will be developed in cooperation with the community. The conclusion of these charrettes represents a major milestone in the Uptown, Greater North Park, and Greater Golden Hill community plan update processes as City staff and consultants begin the "testing phase" of the ideas that have come forth from the community.

Mills Act

By Jodie Brown

In 1972, the California Legislature enacted the Mills Act, which granted local governments the authority to enter into contracts with owners of qualified properties to preserve their historic characteristics and provided a reduction in property taxes. Since 1995, when the San Diego City Council adopted Council Policy 700-46 allowing the City to enter into the Mills Act contracts with private property owners, the city has signed 1,005 contracts. The reduced property taxes that result from each contract ensures that

the property owner will maintain the historic house in keeping with the US Secretary of the Interior's Standards, allow visibility of the house from the public right-of-way, and improve or rehabilitate the property based on specific conditions outlined in the contract.

In late 2008, the City Council enacted several reforms to improve the accountability of the program for the City and for recipients of the Mills Act property tax reduction. Reforms include a defined monitoring program, which requires inspections of each Mills Act property on a 5-year basis; tailored agreements for each property ensuring that there is a 10-year work plan in place; new fees; a maximum threshold; and a required application with a deadline every year of March 31st.



This year the City received 43 Mills Act applications. The breakdown for the applications includes: 5 from Council District 1, 24 from Council District 2, 10 from Council District 3, and 3 from Council District 7. Property owners participating in this program will realize an average tax savings of \$8,847, with the lowest Mills Act savings being \$1,707 and the highest amount of savings being \$26,436.

If you would like to receive more information on the Mills Act Program, please contact Jodie Brown, AICP, Senior Planner at 619.533.6300 or jdbrown@sandiego.gov.



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Housing Element Update

By Brian Schoenfisch

With 2011 quickly approaching, the City of San Diego will soon be gearing up to start the Fifth Cycle of the General Plan's Housing Element. The Housing Element serves as a policy guide to address the City's current and future housing needs. It is a state required element of the City's General Plan which provides the framework for the City to demonstrate its ability to accommodate the City's share of the regional housing needs, known as the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). The Housing Element outlines the City's housing needs, the barriers or constraints to providing that housing, and action proposed to address these concerns over an eight-year period, from 2013 to 2020.



The State of California Housing Element law, enacted in 1969, mandates that local governments adequately plan to meet the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community. The law acknowledges that, in order for the private market to

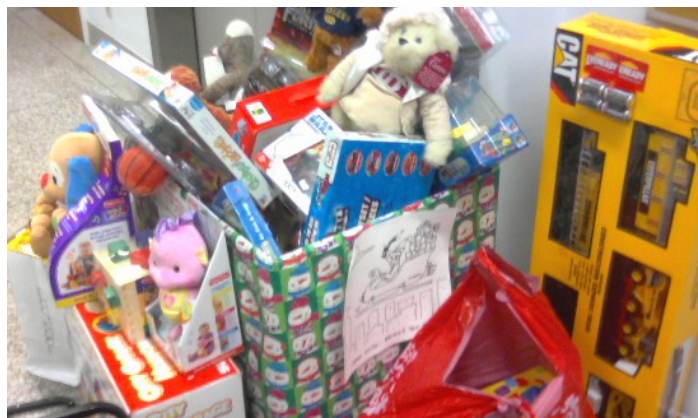
adequately address housing needs and demand, local governments must adopt land use plans and regulatory systems which provide opportunities for, and do not unduly constrain, housing development.

The Housing Element provides an inventory of land adequately zoned or planned to be zoned for housing, certainty in permit processing procedures, and a commitment to assist in housing development through regulatory incentives. In addition to this fundamental framework, with the adoption of California Senate Bill 375 in 2008, for the first time the Housing Element update process is required to include strategies to address climate change and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The City of San Diego is well poised to incorporate these sustainability-related strategies into the Housing Element as the City's General Plan was one of the first in the state to include climate change policies. By integrating housing policy with transportation planning, infrastructure needs and public investment strategies, the City of Villages approach will foster a healthy environment and serve as the foundation for the City's housing strategy.

The City has created a [Housing Element Update](#) web page. The page will serve as a repository of all Housing Element Update-related material, including meeting agendas, handouts, news, and draft documents.

4th Floor Toy Drive

CPCI is holding its 5th annual Holiday Toy Drive. Put a smile on the face of a disadvantaged child by bringing an unwrapped new toy to the bin on the 4th floor of the City Administration Building, 202 C Street, now through December 15th. All toys will go to the Polinsky Children's Center in Kearny Mesa. If you have any questions please contact Brian Schoenfisch at bschoenfisch@sandiego.gov or (619) 533-6457. So go forth and make good things happen this holiday season!



CDBG Funding Available

By Vickie White

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Office of the CPCI is pleased to announce that the CDBG Program FY2012 application period is open. The deadline for submission of an application for FY2012 CDBG funding is December 10, 2010, at 5:00 p.m.

The CDBG Program serves low- and moderate-income persons and neighborhoods, and is open to applications for projects in a number of eligible activity categories including Development/Capital Improvement Projects, Public Services, and Community and Economic Development. CDBG Office staff will review all applications for eligibility under the CDBG Program regulations, and CDBG funding will be awarded to projects by the City Council in Spring 2012. Visit our website for more information about the City of San Diego's [CDBG Program](#) and in San Diego City Council Policy 700-02.



There are four methods by which FY2012 CDBG applications can be obtained:

- Download applications from the City of San Diego's [CDBG website](#).
- Request a Word version of the application form by emailing a request to the CDBG Program at CDBG@sandiego.gov
- Request a hard copy of the application by calling the CDBG Office at (619) 236-6476.
- Request a hard copy of the application in person or via letter: CDBG Program Office, 1200 Third Avenue, Suite 1400, San Diego, CA 92101.

Interested applicants must attend a mandatory workshop on the CDBG Program prior to submitting an application. Attendance at only one workshop is necessary for each application category. The CDBG Office also offers Technical Assistance regarding the application process by appointment to prospective applicants.

Below are the dates and locations for the coming CDBG application workshops and for technical assistance. Space may be limited at the workshops, so the CDBG Office requests that prospective applicants RSVP to attend a specific workshop by email to CDBG@sandiego.gov or by phone at (619) 236-6476.

The CDBG Office looks forward to receiving many applications to provide needed improvements and services to benefit low- and moderate-income San Diegans and to create a suitable and sustainable living environment in the low- and moderate-income neighborhoods of the City of San Diego.

| | | | |
|---------------------------|----------|--|--|
| 11/12/10 through 12/08/10 | By Appt. | CDBG Program Office 1200 Third Avenue, Suite 1400 San Diego, CA 92101 | Technical Assistance Available |
| 11/30/10 | 10:00 am | War Memorial Auditorium 3325 Zoo Drive, San Diego, CA 92101 | Development/Capital Improvement Projects |
| 11/30/10 | 2:00 pm | War Memorial Auditorium 3325 Zoo Drive, San Diego, CA 92101 | Public Services, Community/ Economic Development Projects |
| 12/01/10 | 10:00 am | War Memorial Auditorium 3325 Zoo Drive, San Diego, CA 92101 | Public Services, Community/ Economic Development Projects |
| 12/01/10 | 2:00 pm | War Memorial Auditorium 3325 Zoo Drive, San Diego, CA 92101 | Development/Capital Improvement Projects |



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Tales from the Field

By Craig Hooker and Kristy Forburger

Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Staff goes out in the field when a project is submitted for development permitting and there is a potential for impacts to sensitive habitats and species. Particularly in Otay Mesa, site visits are necessary to assess habitat for burrowing owls as this is one of the last known areas the birds have flourished in the City of San Diego.



Copyright: Brian Lohstroh 2005

Recently, a project was proposed in Otay Mesa that was adjacent to Brown Field and MHPA lands which are suitable foraging habitat for burrowing owls. In addition a berm had been constructed on the site, where during a site visit in July 2009, MSCP Staff observed ground squirrel burrows. Burrows are the essential component of burrowing owl habitat. Therefore a determination was made to implement the MSCP Subarea Plan by requiring a focused protocol burrowing owl survey. As a result, a biological consultant was hired by the applicant to conduct this survey and in May 2010 the survey resulted in the observance of three burrowing owls. Indeed, the owls had inhabited the burrows.

Historical descriptions suggest that burrowing owl populations in San Diego may have been quite extensive. However, due largely to a loss of habitat from development, the burrowing owls numbers have declined. The bird is currently considered a Bird Species of Special Concern by the California Department of Fish and Game.



Copyright: Brian Lohstroh 2005

If impacts to burrowing owls result from project implementation mitigation is required and identified within the biological survey report. Within the MHPA, impacts must be avoided; outside of the MHPA, impacts to the species must be avoided to the maximum extent practicable. Any impacted individuals must be relocated out of the impact area with approval by the wildlife agencies and mitigation for impacts to occupied habitat must be through the conservation of occupied burrowing owl habitat or conservation of lands appropriate for restoration, management and enhancement of burrowing owl nesting and foraging requirements.

At the end of the day, burrowing owls are a species that enrich San Diego's biologic diversity and enhance our quality of life. Through development regulations and vigilance within Otay Mesa, the burrowing owls could avoid the fate of extirpation within the City of San Diego.



Kristy Forburger, MSCP staff, identifying a vacant owl burrow.



2011 Community Planning Group Workshops

As the new year approaches, now is the time for members of community planning groups to mark your calendars for a wide range of upcoming training sessions offered by the CPCI, the Development Services Department, and Neighborhood Code Compliance. Each year, City staff conducts a number of training sessions for community planning group members to discuss items of interest, learn about new subject matter, and help planning groups maximize their effectiveness. For 2011, the following workshops have been developed as a resource for elected members of the City-council-recognized community planning groups:

| Date | Time | Event |
|------------------------------|---------------|---|
| Thursday, January 27, 2011 | 6-8 pm | Neighborhood Code Compliance Training |
| Thursday, February 24, 2011 | 6-8 pm | Development Services Department - What to Know When Reviewing Projects Workshop |
| Thursday, April 28, 2011 | 6-8 pm | Advanced CEQA Training |
| Saturday, May 14, 2011 | 8 am -12 noon | Community Orientation Workshop (COW) |
| Thursday, September 22, 2011 | 6-8 pm | Wireless Communication Facilities Training |
| Wednesday, October 27, 2010 | 6-8 pm | Advanced Historical Resources Training |

All Meetings will be held at 9192 Topaz Way in Kearny Mesa and require RSVP

The **Neighborhood Code Compliance Training** is an opportunity for planning group members to learn how the Neighborhood Code Compliance Department enforces planning and zoning regulations, building codes, substandard housing, illegal grading, encroachments, noise, graffiti, and vacant buildings. This session will also cover special enforcement efforts and community participation programs.

The **“What to Know When Reviewing Projects Workshop”** is a follow-up to the basic development review session given at the annual Community Orientation Workshop (COW). This session will provide members with a higher level of understanding of the City’s review process and additional techniques for providing effective comments to the City for consideration and inclusion with the decision makers’ information on the project.

The **Advanced CEQA Training** will provide a detailed overview of the City’s environmental review process under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and how this affects public and private development projects.

The **Community Orientation Workshop (COW)** is an annual training session which discusses City Council Policy 600-24, “Standard Operating Procedures and Responsibilities of Recognized Community Planning Committees”, and offers an excellent opportunity to hear dialogue about operations of community planning groups. Attendance by all elected planning group members at a COW session satisfies the requirement for members to complete and orientation training session within 12 months of being elected or appointed to a planning group. This four-hour workshop includes breakout sessions with speakers from a variety of City departments.

Wireless Communication Facilities (WCF) Training provides an overview of the regulations, policies and guidelines pertaining to WCF’s and how they apply to planning group reviews. A brief overview of the Telecommunication Act will be presented as well as information on concerns about health issues related to these facilities. The session will also include before and after photos to illustrate how WCF’s can be integrated into your community.

Advanced Historical Resources Training is an informal training session to learn how the City identifies and protects our historical resources. Discussion will include the review process for determining when a historical resource is present and the regulatory framework for designated historical resources. Also included will be a presentation on the use of historic surveys in the community plan update process and historic preservation incentives.

Mark your calendars now, don’t miss out on an exciting opportunity to learn more about the development review and land use planning processes and further the quality of your participation as a community planning group member.

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Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan Implementation

By Tait Galloway

The San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, as the Airport Land Use Commission for San Diego County, adopts Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans (ALUCPs) that reflect the future use of local airports and establish compatibility policies and requirements for the surrounding airport influence area. New development within an airport influence area must comply with the applicable ALUCP on the date of adoption by the Airport Authority. All residential real estate transactions in an airport influence area are required to disclose that the property for sale is located in an airport influence area. The Airport Authority adopted the ALUCPs for MCAS Miramar on October 2008 and Urban Airports on January 2010 which included Montgomery Field, Brown Field, and Gillespie Field.



Courtesy of Chris Cooper

The City is currently processing an implementation plan for above mentioned ALUCPs. The goal is to clarify which policies and regulations apply to property within an airport influence area in the City by amending land use plans and the Land Development Code, as necessary, to implement adopted ALUCP policies. As associated implementing documents are brought forward to the City Council for approval, the Council may consider whether to modify and/or overrule adopted ALUCP policies. Prior to City Council consideration, staff will seek input from various stakeholder groups including a formal recommendation from the Planning Commission.

The Airport Authority is planning to prepare the ALUCPs for the San Diego International Airport in early 2011 and Naval Air Station North Island and Naval Outlying Field Imperial Beach once the Navy releases the updated Air Installation Compatible Use Zone study for both airfields. For additional information on the City's ALUCP implementation process including the proposed implementation plan and land use plan amendment language, please visit the City's [Development Services](#) webpage under News and Updates.

2050 Regional Transportation Plan

By Tait Galloway

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is currently in the process of working with the cities and county to prepare the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP is the region's long-range plan for improving and expanding our roadways and transit system up to year 2050. SANDAG is the first major Metropolitan Planning Organization in the state to prepare an RTP that will comply with provisions of Senate Bill 375, which requires the development of a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). The SCS shows how development patterns, the transportation network, policies and programs can work together to meet greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for cars and light trucks. These targets are set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). The SCS also must be consistent with the Regional Housing Needs Assessment and address protection of sensitive resource areas.



The draft 2050 RTP and its Environmental Impact Report (EIR) are expected to be released in early 2011, with an anticipated adoption by the SANDAG Board of Directors in the summer of 2011. For more information about the 2050 RTP go to the [SANDAG](#) website.

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Plant Profile: Maureen Gardiner



Maureen Gardiner is an Associate Traffic Engineer in the Mobility Planning section of CPCI's Planning Division. Her responsibilities as a mobility planner include managing the city's Pedestrian Master Plan project, reviewing mobility studies to support community plan updates and focused area land-use and mobility studies, and coordinating

with other agencies on regional transportation plans and projects.

Maureen has a degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and is a registered Traffic Engineer in California. She is a past president of the San Diego chapter of the Institute of Transportation Engineers which supports research, education, and development of transportation professionals.

Maureen has been with the City of San Diego for over sixteen years and in addition to planning, she has worked in traffic operations, traffic signal operations, and land development review.

Originally from Boston, Massachusetts, Maureen has lived in San Diego for 17 years and lives in University City with her daughter Erin. She enjoys bodyboarding at our beautiful beaches, practicing yoga, and spending time with family and friends.

Did You Know . . .

Elements of discovery, history, time and place are articulated along the steel railings that span the 400-foot Vermont Street Pedestrian Bridge, including quotations from historical figures such as Pythagoras and Lao Tsu to writers and thinkers such as Audre Lorde and Eleanor Roosevelt and important local figures such as Irving Gill and Dr. Suess.



The Vermont Street Bridge is one of several unique bridges in the Uptown Community and is located at the south end of Vermont Street in the University Heights neighborhood connecting over Washington Street to the Uptown District commercial center.

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THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

City Planning & Community Investment
202 C Street
San Diego, CA 92101

CPCI's Recommended Readings:

"Sustainable Construction; Green Building Design and Delivery"

Charles J. Kibert

John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey, 2008

"Biophilic Cities: Integrating Nature into Urban Design and Planning"

Timothy Beatley

Island Press, 2010

"Street Smart: Street Cars and Cities in the Twenty-First Century"

Gloria Ohland and Shelley Poticha

Reconnecting America, 2009



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

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