



Planning — December 2010

## Media

### Comp planning models

The California Planning Roundtable believes that the long-range comprehensive plan is the most effective tool for dealing with the significant new challenges that face cities and counties in the state — and the country. To show planners how comp planning can be done right, the group has created a website, [www.ReinventingTheGeneralPlan.org](http://www.ReinventingTheGeneralPlan.org), and posted some exemplary models. Users are invited to submit other examples. The site also includes a blog where planners can air their views about the general plan and its future.

**Reinventing the General Plan**  
A Project of the California Planning Roundtable  
With support from the American Planning Association, California Chapter

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California communities are facing crises on many fronts, including climate change, financially strapped governments, congestion, unaffordable housing, and job loss. The General Plan is the single best tool to help communities tackle these issues in the comprehensive, "big picture" way that generates sustainable positive change. Too often, however, the General Plan is enormously costly, complex and ineffective.

Still, many communities are doing great things with their General Plans, demonstrating that the General Plan can provide a vibrant, proactive vision to guide communities as they assess and respond to challenges and opportunities.

Our goal is to Reinvent the General Plan, revitalizing it as an essential tool to help California communities tackle the tough issues of the twenty-first century. This is an ambitious task, and it begins by identifying what is already working for some communities. The communities included on this "Incubator" have gone beyond the basic requirements of General Plans to attain new visions, strategies, and ways of communicating. Together, these Great Models build our understanding of how powerful a transformed General Plan can be.

Ultimately, we envision inventing a General Plan process that is less burdensome and more beneficial for communities, that meets the myriad challenges and changing legal environment for planning in California, and that achieves its most fundamental mission of describing and implementing communities' visions for their future.

### IBM gets into the act

CityOne, IBM's new (and free) planning game, is intended to help users deal with complex urban problems — and of course to sell products. Mike Welch, APA's leadership director, played the game and has this to say about it: "It's a Flash game that runs in the browser. It asks you to make decisions about specific problems such as an energy blackout (the first one that came up). Players have three solutions to choose from and get points according to how effective their choices are. I thought it was an interesting way to stimulate thinking as well as to engage potential customers." See [www-01.ibm.com/software/solutions/soa/innov8/cityone](http://www-01.ibm.com/software/solutions/soa/innov8/cityone).

## Reality TV

*The Shape of Things to Come*, the Atlanta Regional Council's quarterly television series, has announced that its next installment, on May 2, will examine the development of alternative energy in the 10-county region (and the state). The series airs on local government cable channels and can also be seen on ARC's website, [www.atlantaregional.com](http://www.atlantaregional.com).

## We've got data

More than 4,000 projects are included in the new TOD Database compiled by the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, a partnership of Reconnecting America, the Center for Neighborhood Technology, and Strategic Economics. The searchable site includes geographic and demographic data, along with maps and reports for transit regions. Go to [toddata.cnt.org](http://toddata.cnt.org). Another new website addresses the effects of climate change on natural resources. It's the Climate Adaption Knowledge Exchange (CAKE), and it includes case studies, a virtual library, community contacts, and guidance for finding more information. It's at [www.CAKEX.org](http://www.CAKEX.org).

## South of the border

Planning is hotter than salsa in Latin America since the Obama administration launched the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas ([ecplanning.org](http://ecplanning.org)). APA is administering the 30-month initiative, a U.S.-Brazilian partnership that is aimed at building urban planning capacity and promoting the profession in Latin countries, says APA program manager John Rhinehart, AICP. At a meeting last month in Brazil, ECPA announced a competition for sustainable urban housing. See [www.changemakers.com/sustainableurbanhousing](http://www.changemakers.com/sustainableurbanhousing).

## Two primers

In the third edition of *Access for Everyone: A Guide to the Accessibility of Buildings and Sites with References to 2010 ADAAG*, Arvid Osterberg, an architecture professor at Iowa State University, offers recommendations for inclusive design. For purchase information, go to [www.fpm.iastate.edu/accessforeveryone](http://www.fpm.iastate.edu/accessforeveryone). And if you need something to convince your neighbors to put away their chainsaws: *Sustaining American Urban Trees and Forests*, published by the Forests on the Edge Program of the USDA Forest Service, enumerates the benefits of saving trees, from reducing energy use to protecting wildlife habitat. Lead author David Nowak is a researcher for the Northern Research Station in St. Paul. Order a copy at [www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/35572](http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/35572).

## For do-it-yourselfers

The Home Depot Foundation has climbed on the bandwagon with its new Sustainable Cities Institute. Last month, the institute selected its first two entries in its Pilot Cities Program: Charleston, South Carolina, and Fayetteville, Arkansas. Each was awarded \$500,000 to develop its own sustainability program. They will share their results at [www.sustainablecitiesinstitute.org](http://www.sustainablecitiesinstitute.org).

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