

Columbia Connections



Fall 2011

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Cascadia Collaborative Conference Recap

By Chad Eiken, AICP, Conference Co-Chair

This year's joint conference between Oregon and Washington APA chapters in Portland was a success on many levels. For starters, attendance was the highest in years, with approximately 550 planners, officials, and presenters attending. The overall diversity and quality of the breakout sessions was outstanding, with cutting-edge topics from "Biomimicry and Planning" to "First Foods" to the role of community health in planning. Mobile workshops – all were filled to capacity – included visits to Portland's ubiquitous food cart pods, Beaverton's EcoDistrict, and farms that use innovative models for urban food production. To download copies of the presentations as they are posted, please visit:

www.oregonapa.org/CascadiaCollaborative2

Two highlights of the conference were the two keynote addresses from Robin Morris Collin, law professor at Willamette University, and Mitch Silver, APA President. On Thursday, Robin provided a thought-provoking discussion of sustainability, equity, and the ethical imperatives of planning, and challenged planners to do more to speak out on behalf of those in our communities whose voices are not heard. On Friday, Mitch gave an inspiring, reaffirming, and at times hilarious address about the "Importance of Planning in the 21st Century," and with graphs and charts to support his well-considered conclusions, it was clear to the (perhaps biased) audience that, yes indeed, planners and the work they do does matter.

The success of this conference would not have been possible without financial support from a number of companies and agencies, many of which are located in Southwest Washington. BergerABAM, Bonneville Power Administration, Clark County, Maul Foster & Alongi, and Parametrix all contributed financially to the conference. The 2011 Conference Committee would like to thank each of this year's sponsors! If you are interested in serving on one of next year's conference committees in a leadership or support position, please contact Chad Eiken at (360) 487-7882.

One Planning Nerd's Conference Picks

By Sarah Fox, SW Section Washington APA Treasurer

I look forward to the annual planning conference. This is my opportunity to be the ultimate planning nerd for two days and do it in good company. This year, there were two stand-out sessions for me besides the truly inspiring keynote speakers on both days.

On Thursday, "First Foods" was a surprise, given that the description in the schedule portrayed the session as an explanation of how the tribal serving ritual is incorporated into the structure of tribal organizations, all ecological decisions, and planning. This presentation was about much more, and I urge you to review it on the web when it is available. Eric Quaempts, Director of Natural Resources, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, shared the peer-reviewed research on the Umatilla River that discovered the river was cooler in particular sections that were relatively devoid of shoreline vegetation. In part, the research found that, along with channel complexity, processes in the hyporheic zone are responsible for lowering water temperatures. The hyporheic process involves the exchange of surface water with groundwater—surface water percolates into the ground, becomes groundwater, and then rejoins the surface waters. This exchange lowers the water temperature, which is crucial for fish spawning. **Continued on pg.3**

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Bus Rapid Transit May Be in Vancouver's Future

Katy Belokony, C-TRAN Communications and Public Outreach

Since 1981, C-TRAN has provided Clark County with public transportation, operating local routes within its service area, commuter routes to Portland, limited routes with service to MAX light rail, a reservation-based Connector service, and C-VAN, which provides services to people with disabilities that prevent them from boarding or riding C-TRAN's accessible regular bus service.

Recently, C-TRAN has received substantial publicity resulting from its role in the planning efforts associated with the Columbia River Crossing and the extension of light rail from Portland into downtown Vancouver. Not as well known is C-TRAN's study of introducing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along the Fourth Plain Corridor. BRT would connect east Vancouver to downtown and the Portland public transit system.

Pioneered in South America in the 1970s, BRT is in use around the United States as well as internationally. Cities have chosen BRT because these transit improvements are cost effective, reliable, and flexible enough to operate in many different configurations with buses that can travel on non-BRT routes. In the Pacific Northwest, BRT operates in the Puget Sound region and in Eugene. C-TRAN is examining comparable BRT systems around the US to identify what elements would benefit the Fourth Plain Corridor most cost effectively.

The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) completed the Clark County High Capacity Transit (HCT) System Study in 2009, recommending BRT as the preferred HCT mode within the county based on cost effectiveness, ridership, and potential environmental impacts. Fourth Plain was identified as the priority BRT corridor.

Fourth Plain Boulevard is a heavily used transit corridor, with more than 6,000 boardings per average weekday, one-third of C-TRAN's total system ridership. The Fourth Plain Transit Improvement Project is analyzing BRT and non-BRT options intended to reduce transit travel time and improve trip reliability, add transit capacity to accommodate future growth, and improve transit connections within the region. Transit improvements could support corridor revitalization efforts and create a safer, more secure environment for area businesses and residents. BRT options include transit signal priority, improved stations with off-board fare collection, providing real-time

"next bus" arrival information, and unique, branded vehicles for level boarding.

The project planning effort is funded by a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant. The top two or three options will be evaluated over the next six to eight months, with a final decision on the preferred

Cities have chosen BRT because these transit improvements are cost effective, reliable, and flexible

alternative expected by the C-TRAN Board of Directors in summer 2012. C-TRAN will then seek federal funding to design and build the selected transit project. Local funding for construction as well as operating and maintenance costs will be included in a potential ballot measure being considered for fall 2012. C-TRAN assumes that the project cost will not exceed \$75 million, 80 percent of which would come from FTA.

If you are interested in learning more about the project, please visit the project website at www.c-tran.com/brt or follow us on Facebook.

New networking tool for Southwest planners

Karyn Criswell, President, SW Section APA, Envirolssues

Members of the SW APA Board recently launched a Facebook page, [SW Washington Planners](#). The page provides a new tool for planners and related professionals to exchange information about training and networking opportunities. It can also be used to advertise jobs or solicit ideas on SW Washington planning issues. Expand the network by "liking" and "sharing" the page. Join the conversations by posting your announcements to the wall.

SW Section Awards Cascadia Collaborative Scholarships

By Gary Albrecht, Clark County, SW Section Washington APA President-Elect

The SW Section offered free registration to planning students and SW Section planners now out of work so they could attend Cascadia Collaborative, this year's joint APA conference on October 20–21.

Originally, the section planned to offer two scholarships for each category. No out of work planners submitted, so a scholarship was awarded to a third student applicant.

Three planning student volunteers helped the Washington Chapter APA hold a silent auction to sustain the annual student scholarship. They helped procure and track items, staff the auction, assist with checkout, and related duties. It was a great opportunity for them to meet and network with local planners while helping a great cause. The SW Section is pleased to announce the following winners; all are master's candidates in Urban and Regional Planning at Portland State University.

Matthew Weidner, Specialization Area **Transportation**



Matthew chose transportation because he is interested in how different modes can affect community relationships and influence our perceptions of the physical landscape.

Sarah Isbitz, Specialization Area **Regional Economic Development**



Sarah's principal area of interest is energy sustainability. She has decided to concentrate on regional economic development to better understand how the economic framework helps or impedes the success of programs designed to foster energy sustainability. She wants to learn about strategies that will help preserve the environment, maintain a high standard of public health for local communities, and meet the growing regional demand for power.

Carine Arendes, Specialization Area **Land Use**



Carine's focus is on restoring and preserving ecological functioning in suburban areas. Her intent is to shift the focus from what the burbs are doing wrong to utilizing their existing assets. She is an active volunteer for local environmental restoration projects. The photo was taken at Lewis & Clark College in the Tryon Creek watershed at a recent volunteer work session.

Chad Eiken, AICP, SW APA, receives the President's Award



for Distinguished Service from Jill Sterrett, FAICP, Washington APA President, at the October 2011 joint conference.

Airport & Land Use Planners Forum

Matt Hermen, Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments

At the 2011 Fall Planners Forum held at Longview City Hall, Carter Timmerman, Aviation Planner with WSDOT, presented the recently released Airports and Compatible Land Use Guidebook. Carter detailed the important role airports play in economic development. The manual outlines techniques that can be used to help ensure adjacent land uses coexist with airports. One is delineating the airport influence area—the “area within which the airport's impacts may adversely affect the use of land or the land uses may adversely affect development and use of the airport.” The influence area can be overlaid on future land use maps during comprehensive plan updates. The guidebook is available in electronic format so that local planners can cite the guidance quickly and easily.

Along with the manual, WSDOT Aviation offers technical assistance to communities served by airports and can be reached at [360-651-6312](tel:360-651-6312).

One Planning Nerd's Conference Picks

Continued from pg.1

Friday's stand-out session for me was “Targeting Outreach.” For those of you who organize open houses or need feedback from the public, this session offered tips to maximize your efforts. The presenters from EnviroIssues and the Portland Bureau of Environmental Services brought us research from regional polling and field examples (both successes and failures). They found that people continue to prefer regular mail rather than anything electronic. The presenters also noted that people appreciate the convenience of getting more in-depth information online if they are made aware of the website on the mailer. This research and data should be useful to any size community.

SW APA welcomes articles written by members for publication in the newsletter. If you would like to submit an article, please contact Don Hardy, Communications Chair, at don.hardy@abam.com or 360/823-6115 for specifics.

Thank you for your interest!