

## CITY OF SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE PROCESS



Bobbi Herdes

The City of San Diego embarked on a major overhaul of its vision for the future with the adoption of the comprehensive update of the General Plan in March 2008. Based on the City of Villages land use strategy, the General Plan provides the policy framework for how the city should grow and develop, provide public services, and maintain the qualities that define the city. Furthermore, it serves as the new foundation upon which all land use decisions in the city are to be based.

Given its size and diversity, the city is divided into more than 50 community planning areas, each with its own community plan. RECON was selected and is in the process of preparing program environmental impact reports (EIRs) for two of these community plan updates: Otay Mesa and Barrio Logan.

Though very distinct communities, Otay Mesa and Barrio Logan share several planning considerations and environmental characteristics. Both communities offer good opportunities for village development with mixed residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. Inherent in mixed-use development is the potential for incompatibility between land uses, thus colocation policies are key to RECON's review of the plans.

Another key aspect of both community plans is development of multimodal transportation improvements, including public transportation and pedestrian and bicycle linkages to decrease the dependency on automobiles, thereby improving air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Finally, both plans must address existing deficiencies and needed improvements to public infrastructure, which will be analyzed by RECON and remedied through Public Facilities Financing Plans.

The community plans will clearly identify how applicable General Plan policies are to be implemented through the specification of land uses, the local street and transit network, environmental considerations, public facilities, and urban design guidelines. Future environmental review will also be streamlined through the opportunity to tier off the Program EIR for the community plans. RECON is proud to participate in the City of San Diego's long-range planning process and provide solutions for environmental issues for present and future generations. —

Winter 2009/2010



## CLIENTS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE: AMERICAN ASSETS

American Assets has a clear vision of the future. Unlike some commercial office developers, John Chamberlain, CEO of American Assets, embraces sustainable design concepts. Based in San Diego with commercial properties primarily throughout the West, American Assets is going well beyond the LEED ratings often touted as the standard for the future and is incorporating sustainable design concepts that are unparalleled in California and the nation. By targeting new levels of sustainable performance, American Assets strongly believes that their projects can become a national model of environmentally responsible development.



*The Commons at Mount Burdell*

Two current examples of American Assets' commitment to sustainable development practices in California are The Commons at Mount Burdell project in Novato, and the Sorrento Pointe project in San Diego.

The project is located on the existing Fireman's Fund 65-acre campus in Novato, and American Assets is seeking to redevelop the site with a mixed-use project that will add approximately 750,000 sq. ft. to the existing campus. The project will redesign and reengineer the site with additional office space, a hotel, a sports/health



*Sorrento Pointe*

club, commercial retail space, multi-family residential, child care, a community center, structured parking, landscaped use areas, and site and building amenities. With the goal of achieving a carbon-neutral project, the new buildings will be designed to exceed Title 24 by 80 percent.

The site design incorporates passive solar in the new structures, on-site energy generation (solar thermal, photovoltaics, biomass, wind, and ground-source heat pumps), and an energy retrofit of the existing structures. The project will be independent of city-supplied water through conservation, reuse,

and rainwater catchments, and wastewater will be treated on-site. Truly an innovative project, The Commons at Mount Burdell will set the standard for sustainable development in Marin County and the rest of California.

In San Diego, American Assets is again focusing on designing a carbon-neutral project. Situated just east of Torrey Pines State Park and the San Dieguito Lagoon, the 14-acre Sorrento Pointe project site offers expansive views of the Pacific Ocean and affords opportunities for efficiency and sustainability. The approximately 85,000 sq. ft. commercial office project is being designed to maximize sustainability concepts. The project will incorporate water reduction strategies (e.g., rainwater harvesting), energy conservation through architectural design along with passive heating and cooling systems, and renewable energy systems such as photovoltaics and solar water heating. It is anticipated that these sustainability measures will allow Sorrento Pointe to achieve a LEED Platinum rating.

RECON is proud to collaborate with American Assets on both of these unique projects by providing supporting technical studies and CEQA services. These sustainable building practices incorporate features which endeavor to achieve carbon neutrality, a concept almost unheard of in this country until just a few years ago. RECON embraces these concepts and looks forward to a continued relationship with future American Assets' projects throughout California and the West.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

RECON is working with Waste Management to implement the approved Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan for its El Sobrante Landfill in Riverside County.

In support of this program, RECON is partnering with the landfill in an educational community outreach program. This program has included a variety of different outreach efforts, such as giving biodiversity presentations to local high school ecology and biology classes, making presentations to local grade school classes, engaging local Boy Scout troops in the planting of native trees, planting a native butterfly garden, and preparing packets of native seed collected in the El Sobrante Preserve.



*Scouts Planting Native Plants*

## LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS COLLABORATE AT U OF A



*Women's Plaza of Honor*

The University of Arizona's (U of A) Women's Plaza of Honor, the first of its kind in Arizona and the Southwest, celebrates women who have made significant contributions to Arizona history or have enriched the lives of others.

Lori Jones Woods, RECON Principal and Southwest Region Director, was invited to collaborate with fellow landscape architects Margaret West, Liba Wheat, and Karen Cesare—all of whom, like Lori, are Arizona natives and U of A landscape architecture alumnae—to design the plaza as an inviting, comfortable, and meditative gathering place.

The plaza's unique design of plants, lighting, and water features intermingles with archways, benches, and sculptural elements to represent the stages of women's lives. It has set a high standard for the design of outdoor spaces on the U of A campus and exemplifies how "green infrastructure" can best implement the U of A's Campus Master Plan.

## RECON HONORED AT THE SAN DIEGO AEP AWARDS EVENT

The San Diego Chapter of the Association of Environmental Professionals recently presented RECON with the Outstanding Environmental Resource Document Award for the Final Annual Report for Pardee Homes' Pacific Highlands Ranch Wetland Mitigation Site. This project is located within the low-lying valley floors of both Deer and McGonigle canyons in Carmel Valley, south of State Route 56 and immediately east of the Carmel Valley Road exit. As part of this project, a total of 23.7 acres of wetland and riparian habitat have been created to mitigate for several existing and future projects being undertaken as part of the Pacific Highlands Ranch project.



*Pacific Highlands Ranch Project Restoration Area*

## UPDATES FROM THE LONE STAR STATE

Our Austin office has been keeping busy with several projects, one of which is a wetlands jurisdictional determination in San Marcos, Texas. RECON will produce a technical report describing the limits of the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act so that the City of San Marcos can make street and drainage improvements in a low- and moderate-income neighborhood. Another project will include work orders for as many as 100 environmental assessments (EAs) for the Texas Office of Rural Community Affairs. The EAs will provide environmental review for construction projects identified through the Disaster Recovery Program for damage caused by Hurricanes Dolly and Ike in 2008. RECON is also the prime consultant for the preparation of the Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Program's Habitat Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, which is a plan to protect the federally listed species potentially affected by the management of the Edwards Aquifer and other activities.

RECON has also received the following precertifications from the Texas Department of Transportation for environmental services: Land Planning/Engineering, Policy Planning, Protected Species Determination (Habitat) and Impact Evaluation Assessment, Traffic Noise Analysis, and Biological Surveys.

## NEW TO OUR TEAM



Lori Spar



Rob Hobbs

RECON is pleased to announce that Lori Spar and Robert Hobbs have joined the firm and will be contributing their expertise in environmental planning and habitat restoration. Formerly with the County of San Diego Department of Planning and Land Use, Ms. Spar is a senior environmental analyst and is responsible for environmental planning with a focus on our Private Team's clients.

Mr. Hobbs is a senior restoration ecologist with a focus on our Federal and Restoration Teams' clients. Please join us in welcoming both of these talented individuals to our team of specialists.

## TUCSON OFFICE CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

In October, RECON Environmental marked the occasion of the 20th anniversary of our Tucson office by celebrating with clients and friends.

*"From all of us at RECON, thank you to all of our clients and partners that have helped make this possible! Your support has contributed to our success and we truly appreciate the opportunity to work with you."* -Lori Jones Woods

# RECON

1927 Fifth Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92101  
P 619.308.9333 F 619.308.9334  
[www.recon-us.com](http://www.recon-us.com)

RECON Native Plants, Inc.  
1755 Saturn Boulevard  
San Diego, CA 92154  
P 619.423.2284 F 619.423.0632  
[www.reconnativeplants.com](http://www.reconnativeplants.com)

525 W. Wetmore Road, Suite 111  
Tucson, AZ 85705  
P 520.325.9977 F 520.293.3051

1412 W. 6th 1/2 Street  
Austin, TX 78703  
P 512.913.1200 F 512.474.1184

