

American Planning Association, Alaska Chapter

Alaska Planning Journal

APA Alaska update—Message from the President

Quote of the Quarter

"Whatever failures I have known, whatever errors I have committed, whatever follies I have witnessed in private and public life have been the consequence of action without thought."

- Bernard M. Baruch

John McPherson, AICP

Two years ago, your new board sat down and formulated a strategic plan intended to reinvigorate our chapter. As we start the fourth quarter of this year, we can look back some of our chapter's successes at meeting the vision laid out in the plan.

In March we held our first planning commissioner training in several years. That training was well attended, with more than 40 planning commissioners and planners from across the

state attending. We have had good reviews and several calls for additional training sessions. In fact, if a member wanted to volunteer to provide an additional training session prior to our next scheduled training in March 2007, I am confident it would fill up. Contact me if you are interested helping out.

Another of our initiatives was to keep our newsletter going out regularly. Suzanne Taylor has been doing a wonderful job putting the newsletter together and gently reminding us to get our



APA will hold general membership meeting and training in Juneau, Alaska, in conjunction with the 2006 Alaska Municipal League conference.

articles in on time. A big thank you to Suzanne.

A revamping of our website has been underway for some time. Two of the biggest changes to the website will

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APA Alaska to provide training on affordable housing

Suzanne Taylor, editor

Affordable housing is one of the most pressing issues of our time and a concern in communities all across the nation as well as here in Alaska. It is difficult to create affordable housing that is appealing, marketable, safe, and appropriate to the community.

Panelists at the APA Alaska-sponsored seminar in Juneau will discuss these and other issues related to affordable housing.

This seminar will provide participants with practical tools to deal with this important need in their communities. See page 2 for additional information.

"You will leave this seminar knowing the tools, financing available, and techniques to stimulate the development of public and affordable housing in your Alaskan community."
- Barbara Sheinberg, AICP



The American Planning Association, Alaska Chapter, presents a one-day seminar and chapter conference

Building Sustainable Communities: Meeting the Challenge of Affordable Housing

WHEN: Tuesday, November 14, 2006
8:00 am - 5:30 pm
(followed by an APA Business Meeting from 5:30-7:00 pm)

WHERE: Juneau, Alaska – Hangar Ballroom

Conference Sessions and Panels

- **Key Note Presentation – Building Sustainable Communities**
Denali Commission federal co-chair, George Cannelos, AICP
- **The Culture of Homeownership: The Disconnect Between Expectations and Affordability**
- **Penciling it Out: Financing Development of Affordable Housing**
- **The Role of Municipalities: Land Use Zoning and Regulation**

Who Should Attend - Municipal and Private Planners, Builders, Developers, Lenders, Architects, Elected Leaders, Planning Commissioners, Citizens...

Cost: APA members - Free; Others - \$20 (payable at door).

RSVP to John.McPherson@hdrinc.com To ensure availability and discount, mention AML (Alaska Municipal League) when booking hotel, rental car or airfare. Also check APA website for updates and information <http://www.alaskaplanning.org>

This professional training is sponsored by the American Planning Association, Alaska Chapter.
Questions - call (907) 586-3141 (Juneau)

Planner heads up the Denali Commission

By Caren Mathis,
Southcentral VP

“It was a bolt out of the blue,” said long-time Alaska planning professional George J. Cannelos, AICP, of his appointment a year ago as Federal Co-Chair of the Denali Commission. The Denali Commission is a federal-state partnership created by Congress in 1998 to provide critical utilities, infrastructure, and economic support throughout Alaska. In a recent interview with Southcentral VP Caren Mathis at the Commission’s offices in Downtown Anchorage, George talked about the role of the Denali Commission, his vision, and some of the steps in his planning career in Alaska that led him to the Commission. Prior to his appointment by Senator Ted Stevens in October 2005 to the Denali Commission, George Cannelos was president and chief operating officer of Koonce Pfeiffer Bettis, an Alaska-based architecture, landscape architecture, and interior design firm. Previously, George served as Executive Director of the Municipality of Anchorage Heritage Land Bank, and prior to that, Commander of the Alaska Air National Guard. He has served as senior planner for Alaska-based design and environmental firms, Chief Operating Officer for Chugach Alaska Corporation and land manager and general manager of the Bethel Native Corporation. His

introduction to Alaska after obtaining his graduate degree from University of Pennsylvania in regional planning, was with the Department of Community and Regional Affairs from 1975-1979, working with the new capital site planning commission.

CM: Can you explain to some of our readers what the Denali Commission is?

GC: The Denali Commission is something new in American government. Through inter-agency cooperation and partnerships, the Denali Commission has helped fund projects such as bulk fuel storage tank systems, primary care health clinics, energy saving upgrades, rural power plants, teacher housing, solid waste systems, renewable energy projects, workforce development and training, and transportation improvements. The Commission has invested more than \$700 million in rural Alaska in less than eight years, but there’s a long way to go.

The Denali Commission is still an experiment. Its purpose is to lower the cost of delivering services to rural Alaska. The Commission focuses on government coordination both vertically and horizontally. The business model is based on delivering through partner agencies. The seven member commission is hand picked for its organizational representation to execute the best future for Alaska.

CM: What organizations are represented on the Commission?

GC: The Commission includes the Federal Co-Chair, the Governor, Alaska Federation of Natives, University of Alaska, Alaska Municipal League, Associated General Contractors of Alaska, and AFL-CIO.

CM: What role does planning play in the mission of the Denali Commission?

GC: The role of planning is critical. Infrastructure is an expensive investment, and the size and scale must be appropriate to the community. The community projects that the Denali Commission funds must be verified by a community plan. We have also set up a planning work group that includes the Economic Development Administration and Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. I want the Commissioners to tap into this planning group as we put together a new strategic plan.

CM: What do you see as an important next step at the Denali Commission?

GC: We need to evaluate our programs. I believe all agencies are accountable to the public. We should engage in continuous and genuine feedback. It’s important to listen and learn from our customers. The Denali Commission will be measuring performance



George Cannelos, AICP,
Denali Commission Federal Co-chair

through an objective, third-party program evaluation. We need to know whether we are adding value, if our projects make a difference, and whether the playing field is level for awarding our funding.

CM: How has your planning background helped you at the Denali Commission?

GC: As you recall, I studied with Ian McHarg (landscape architect and ecological planner) at UPenn (University of Pennsylvania) where I earned my Master’s in Regional Planning. Part of what I took away from that experience is that if we understand the regional character, it guides us in design. Good design coupled with market realities provide us with developments and projects that benefit the local community and local economy. My planning background also gave me a true appreciation of the public process.

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APA Alaska update, continued from p 1

be first, a planning commissioner section with an online training course. This training course will provide planning commissioners with an overview of their roles and a framework for their decision-making. The course is based on the Planning Commissioner Handbook written a couple years back by the Chapter and DCED. The second will be an online bibliography of materials that can be checked out for use by members in studying for the AICP exam or in providing trainings with your planning commissioners or elected officials. We have collected a number of

books and purchased a CD set of training materials from APA National. Look for the new web site this fall.

In Southcentral we have been having regular lunch meetings with speakers on a variety of topics. Last month planners attend lunch out in the Mat-Su Valley and toured a number of planning projects. Maryellen Tuttell has taken on the responsibility for organizing the lunches and lining up speakers. The lunches have been routinely attended by 12 to 15 people.

This past month, former Alaska Chapter president

Jon Isaacs and I taught a class at UAA, providing a group of 40 to 50 engineers and architects an introduction to planning.

Finally, our first conference in quite some time will be convened this November in Juneau (look for the article in this newsletter for details). That meeting will be a combination training and conference on affordable housing with a focus on making communities sustainable. In the evening we will be holding a general membership meeting. Barb Sheinberg deserves a lot of credit for pulling that together. Check out the website or

contact Barb for more information.

In the near future, look for chapter nominations for the chapter board to come your way, with our annual election to occur by year's end.

As you can see lots has been going on. As always, if you would like to help out or have an initiative you would like to see happen, please contact me or any of the other board members. Have a great fall and I hope to see you at the conference or the annual meeting in November.



Join us at the APA Alaska Chapter general membership meeting in Juneau.

Canelos interview, continued from p 3

CM: Can you say more about public process?

GC: Public process means getting a representative group of people in the room and helping them to articulate their vision. With effective public process come good decisions.

CM: Among the many and varied planning projects in your career, what's been one of your most memorable?

GC: The new capital site planning commission in 1977. It was planning at its absolute finest. As principal planner to the new capital site planning commission, I

coordinated activities of several consultants preparing plans for the proposed new state capital in Willow. There was a design competition for the best design solution for a proposed new capital. I remember flying into the Willow site via helicopter. We landed on a lake and trekked out on snowshoes. I climbed up a birch tree and took pictures of the site; there was a glorious view of Denali. That project taught me how the pieces of a project fit together—the permitting, the physical planning, the political aspects, the governance.

CM: I see you have an APA National Planning Award. Would you give some background on that?

GC: I was one of the Alaska chapter officers at the time—1996. The award was given through the chapter for the Main Street visioning project in Soldotna, Alaska. The Soldotna Main Street project won the Karen B. Smith award.

CM: I recall the first time I met you was at an annual meeting for the Alaska chapter at the Egan convention center in Anchorage in the early 1980s

as part of the Alaska Municipal League conference.

GC: At that time I think I was doing some work with the North Slope Borough, gathering information on the environmental and social impacts of oil and gas exploration.

This year planners across the state will have an opportunity to meet and talk with George Canelos, AICP, at the Alaska chapter annual meeting at the Alaska Municipal League conference in Juneau November

International polar gathering a big success in Barrow

Earl Finkler, VP Northern Region

BARROW— Over 1000 delegates and visitors from around Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Russia attended a meeting of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) in Barrow July 10-14. During the day, it was a mixture of social and environmental policy discussions for the indigenous peoples of the Polar Regions.

Meanwhile, the nights were endless. Barrow was in the midst of its midnight sun, with no sunset due till August 2. Visitors and residents alike took advantage of that to stay up late, very late, for the Cultural Program. This included dancers, musicians and singers from all over the polar area, including the Greenland Choir, Canadian Throat Singers, Wainwright Eskimo Dancers, and Chukotka (Russia) Naukanski Dancers.

The ICC is an international group started in 1977 by the first mayor of the North Slope Borough in Alaska --the late Eben Hopson, Sr. Back then, the North Slope Borough was just getting started, and attempting to plan and develop basic infrastructure in Barrow and the seven villages.

In the midst of basic borough-building, Mayor Hopson found time to work on the ICC, in the interest of protecting the lands and subsistence resources indigenous people, and also encouraging unity across national borders. I had the privilege to be at that first meeting in Barrow almost 30 years ago, having started to work that year (1977) for Mayor Hopson on economic development planning. Also helping the borough respond to the Haul Road, or Dalton Highway, along the Trans Alaska Oil Pipeline. This was the first road connecting the North Slope with the rest of the state and nation, and the Borough wanted its own plans and road-related zoning to help protect the subsistence culture and resources.

Now, almost three decades later, I felt very grateful to still be here in Barrow for this 2006 ICC meeting, the first time the group met in Barrow since the original get-together. The meeting could have overwhelmed Barrow's limited hotel, restaurant and transportation facilities, but everyone pitched in and many residents took visitors into their homes.

The delegates worked hard on the traditional ICC is-

sues and concerns, which now also include climate change and global warming. The ICC adopted a declaration continuing its commitment in these areas, with more and more concerns being heard about global warming. Also discussed was the increasing need for traditional knowledge, to be much more comprehensive of the climate and climate change in the polar regions.

Back in 1977, communications in Arctic Alaska, and other polar regions, were often very basic. In villages like Anaktuvuk Pass, there was one phone in the general store, and people would line up for the chance to make one short long-distance call. Local folks in Barrow also remembered using basic typewriters, and teletypes, and the big thing ---no e-mail.

The appreciation of e-mail seemed overwhelming among all who attended. "We love our e-mail," a representative from Greenland told me. There were wireless zones and laptops galore. This year's conference was streamed by public radio station KBRW in Barrow and also video streamed around the world.

But old technology or new,



Jacob Adams, president of the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation in Barrow, speaks to a general assembly session of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) in Barrow on July 12 in the Barrow High School Gymnasium.



The Greenland choir, not only great singers, but with such distinct clothing!

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Visit to long-time planning associate and friend in Arizona

Earl Finkler

BARROW --Some say a person should not do any work on vacation, but I say, "If something is interesting or has special meaning, go for it."

This was the case when we spent some time in Tucson, Arizona in June of this year, visiting my oldest daughter Ann and her family. Tucson is really sprawling out, compared to when I worked there as a planner in the mid-1970s.

My daughter lives on the northwest end of the metro area, while an old planning acquaintance named Perry Norton lives on the Far East side. It was a long drive to visit with Perry and his wife Harriet, but well worth it.

Perry is 85 years old, and has had some health problems, but he is still very interested in planning and planners. He remembers working for ACIP way back and a number of other stops on the way.

I first got to know him when I was on the APA Board around the 1980s, and

interested in telecommunications and the possibility of video conferencing some APA meetings to save money and encourage more interaction. Also other ways to help planners through emerging technology.

I remember a demonstration back then at an APA National Conference in Seattle where we had an interactive presentation of a Barrow subdivision plat, and were able to work in changes as part of the Barrow-Seattle discussion.

In later years, I've kept in touch with Perry via e-mail and also his special website "Perry's Cantina" (<http://www.cyburbia.org/forums/forumdisplay.php?f=25>) as part of the Cyburbia site.

Perry contributes spirited discussion and some essays on various planning topics. I join in with posts, and so do a number of planners.

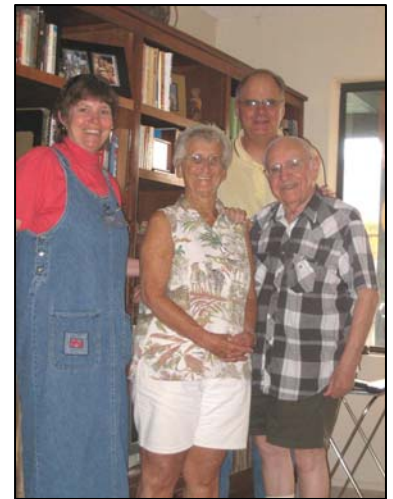
Perry emphasizes precision in planning concepts, and frames his comments with his dry, but always welcome, sense of humor.

One of his posts on sprawl, for example:

"Every newspaper going has a common enemy – SPRAWL. But the definition of sprawl is different, from Metr-0-Big to Burg-0-Small. And this is especially true when considering the Man in the Street, including The Planner. Personal definitions are widely different. Lots Sized X in one place are Sized 10.X elsewhere. Busses are mandatory in one place and not in another. Can we get common definitions or can we take the city one place at a time?"

Our visit in Tucson this year was too short, just a couple of hours one afternoon, but very enjoyable. We sat in their cool and comfortable living room, with all kinds of cactus and native vegetation visible out the windows.

Perry asked me about planning in Alaska and I had some questions about the growth and sprawl of Tucson. He takes a little longer to get around now, but did move a little faster when I asked to



Chris Finkler, Harriet Norton, Earl Finkler and Perry Norton during Finkler's visit to Norton's in Tucson, Arizona in June, 2006. Note: Harriet is the twin sister of the noted actress Ann B. Davis who played the housekeeper "Alice" in the television show "The Brady Bunch."

see his computer and workstation. That is where he composes all those e-mails and timely planning essays and commentary.

I know we will keep in touch across the miles from Barrow to Tucson – thanks to e-mail and the web. But it sure helps a lot to see long-time planning friends in person now and then.

ICC report, continued from p 5

the thing that has always struck me about the ICC is that it demonstrates the incredible unity among polar peoples. The distances are great, and the roads are few, but the indigenous people of the Arctic and sub-Arctic have longstanding roots of

friendship and sharing.

The new Chair of the ICC, Patricia Cochran, Executive Director of the Alaska Native Science Commission, said that the Internet has been helpful, and has its place, but that there are some things that it should

be used for and some it should not. She said there are sometimes questions about intellectual property in communities.

"Besides," she said, "we should not forget face-to-face contact which has always been so important to our culture."

RurAL CAP interns plan for Russian Mission

Erica Mensch

Two Denali Commission interns recently completed a twelve-week community planning internship with partner agency Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP). Each summer the Denali Commission, offers several internships either directly at the Commission or with partner agencies. The Denali Commission / RurAL CAP interns, Erica Mensch and Annette Stepetin, were assigned two projects for the summer: 1) to facilitate the community planning process and write a plan for the village of Russian Mission, and 2) to create a planning handbook that explains the community planning process and encourages rural Alaskan communities to do basic community planning without outside assistance.

The interns were introduced by their supervisor, Mitzi Barker, Director of Rural Housing and Planning at RurAL CAP, to a new planning framework that would be used for the planning process in Russian Mission. The framework suggests eight 'planning dimensions' around which the plan is organized, and encourages using an 'asset-based' rather than 'need-based' approach to planning. The planning dimensions are components that encompass aspects of community life relevant to planning (Culture & Tradition, Economy, Environment, Housing, Land, Public Facilities,

Transportation, and Wellness & Safety).

During the planning process goals, objectives, and activities suggested by the community were organized by planning dimension. Community participants were encouraged to focus on the assets within each planning dimension, to tell the "story" of their community, and to identify the resources in their community that may be used to meet their goals, and outline immediate and long-range actions to be taken to implement the strategies.

The interns made initial contact with Russian Mission through the AmeriCorps*VISTA member in the community, Byron Stephanoff. One of Byron's primary goals as a RurAL CAP Village Council Management VISTA member was to do community planning. Byron, who is employed through the Traditional Council office, explained to the Traditional Council that the interns had offered to facilitate the community planning process.

The interns were welcomed to assist the community. They flew to Russian Mission in mid-June for three days to hold interviews and to have a special meeting with the Traditional Council and residents. Interviewees were asked questions about the assets of the community, their values, and their vision for the future. They were also asked specific questions regarding goals, and methods and means to achieve the

goals within each of the eight planning dimensions.

The interns compiled the ideas, suggestions, and opinions, and presented them at the meeting. Participants discussed community assets and values, and collectively developed a vision statement. They also discussed the results of the interviews, and discussed more ideas for inclusion in the plan.

After the meeting, the interns returned to Anchorage where they organized the opinions and input from the community residents.

Contact with the AmeriCorps*VISTA member and the Traditional Council continued, and the interns sent the draft plan to Russian Mission for review.

The Traditional Council met several times to discuss and edit the draft, as well as to prioritize the goals and objectives. The interns and the Traditional Council communicated over a period of several weeks to revise the plan. In early August, the Traditional Council, City Council, and Russian Mission Native Corporation signed a joint resolution approving a final version of the plan.

The plan may be viewed on the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED) website at www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/commdb/CF_Plans.cfm.

While the Russian Mission Community Plan was being finalized, the interns moved on to the next assignment:



Planning Meeting in Russian Mission

Greenways for Fairbanks

Clayton Dunn

Graduate Student, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Fairbanks, Alaska could greatly benefit from construction and utilization of Greenways. Greenways have the ability to preserve childhood playgrounds for future generations. They can provide a sense of place, which can strengthen the social bonds within a neighborhood or between neighborhoods. The process in which a piece of property intended for a greenway can be acquired can vary greatly. Many different kinds of personalities have been successful in producing a successful greenway. Environmental factors can help in the process of acquiring and creating a greenway. A greenway can create a buffer zone between industrial and residential areas, or limit the effects of urban sprawl. Greenways

can provide a corridor for wildlife to between larger areas of wilderness.

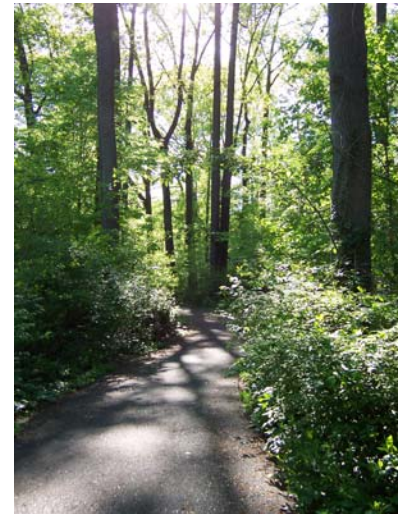
A greenway is a narrow piece of land that has been set a side for all citizens of a community. The topography of the land usually, but not always will, dictate where the greenways go. They might follow along a river, along a ridgeline, along an old railroad right of way, a ravine, a shoreline or a combination of any of these. The trail can take the shape of a paved path, a dirt footpath, a two-lane road or strictly a water corridor or even a combination of designs.

Greenways help to improve the quality of life for all those that chose to utilize them. They can provide a natural sanctuary within an urban jungle. They can provide a place to go to get away from the mundane repetitions of urban life. When traveling in

a greenway you may not even be aware that you are right in the middle of a large urban setting.

The idea of protecting a childhood playground for future generations really made me think. I remember when I was a child growing up in rural Utah. I lived in a small town by the name of Castle Dale. Next to the town flowed a small creek. The creek was within walking and biking distance of my house. I spent many days swimming in the creek and exploring it banks. I caught water snakes, frogs and small minnows. Occasionally I saw deer, skunks, porcupines, owls, hawks, and rabbits among various other creatures. This creek was my childhood playground. If it was light outside I was down at the creek playing. This is something I think every child

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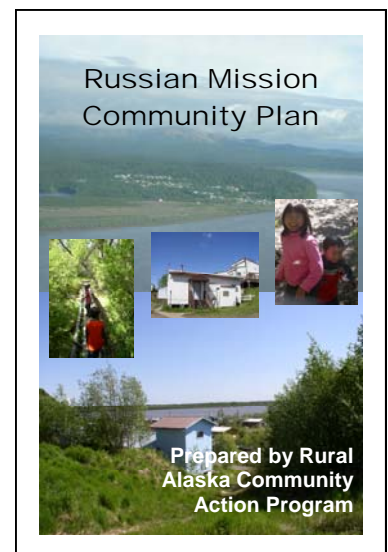
RurAL CAP, continued from p 7

writing the Handbook for Community Planning. Using their experience in community planning and various written materials, the interns wrote a concise handbook. The handbook explains planning including: what planning is and is not, reasons to plan, the 'planning dimensions' framework, and the asset-based planning approach. The handbook also explains six steps in the planning process: Getting Ready to Plan; Telling Your Story; Identifying Assets, Values, and Vision;

Identifying and Prioritizing Goals, Objectives, and Activities; Putting the Plan Together; and Putting the Plan into Action. The handbook is to be distributed throughout Alaska via hardcopy and will also be available on the internet. For more information, please contact Mitzi Barker at 907-279-2511 ext.425 or mbarker@ruralcap.com.

Annette Stepetin is studying Tribal Management at University of Alaska–Fairbanks. She lived in the

Aleutian Islands for many years, and currently resides in Anchorage. Erica Mensch is enrolled in the Masters in Urban and Regional Planning program at Ball State University in Indiana. She intends to use the knowledge and experience gained from her internship to write a thesis regarding 'sustainable native communities'. Her future plans may include joining the Peace Corps, working with Straw Bale construction, and engaging in rural community planning.



Greenways for Fairbanks, continued from p 8

experience. It is my belief that if children had a place like this to explore and play they might stay out of trouble and have an activity other than watching television or playing video games.

Greenways can provide a source of exercise for the younger generation. In order to get kids to use these places of recreation and personal discovery, parents should encourage and participate in outings. Greenways can provide a chance for this to happen by protecting these areas.

Another concept that is intriguing is the idea of connecting different social neighborhoods within a city. New York and Denver provide good examples of this idea. In New York the Brooklyn-Queens Greenway connects the people of Queens with the people of Brooklyn. This trail goes from Coney Island all the way to Long Island Sound. This greenway will let a kid explore and see things he or she probably has never seen before, all from the seat of his or her bicycle. The Platte River Greenway of Denver connects neighborhoods divided by a river the poor on one side and the affluent on the other. The greenway provides a common ground for everyone in the city to meet and recreate regardless of social or economic class. I find this important because it can provide one with a sense of belonging and even acceptance.

I can see how a greenway in Fairbanks could help link the south side of town with more

upscale neighborhoods in the northern part of the city.

A greenway can help provide a sense of place for all the users. When there is a place where people of any social background can go it will help to create a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging helps to increase civic pride. This sense of place in turn increases quality of life.

From my experience people like to view wildlife. People get excited when they see an animal they might have never seen before or see very rarely. A greenway can create a space where wildlife can live and travel between habitats. These corridors can provide for viewing wildlife in its own natural habitat that would otherwise be impossible to see in an urban environment. I get excited when I am out and see a moose, a fox or a snowshoe hare. If you can create a place in the city where you have a chance to view wildlife you have something that is important to many people. By linking the natural habitats with corridors you increase the area for the creatures of the wild to roam. This helps to maintain the biodiversity of ecosystems. This helps to reduce islands of habitat, which may not be big enough to support some species of wildlife.

During the summer months I often fish in the Tanana River along the south side of Fairbanks. In getting there I drive along the dike that was built as part of a flood control project. While driving along

the dike I often see moose, fox, squirrels, hares, and eagles. The dike can be thought of as an accidental greenway. It was constructed due to a large flood. There is a road that runs down the length of the dike. During the summer months many people use the dike to walk their dogs, access the Tanana River, jog and partake in other forms of recreation. During the winter months people use the dike as a snow machining trail and a place to access the Tanana River so that they can cross it and go out into the Tanana Flats. When you get out there and look across the Tanana River it feels like you are many miles away from civilization, then a Boeing 747 flies right over your head and you remember you're right next to an international airport and a fairly large vibrant community.

Historic preservation is another item of importance that a greenway can help maintain. I like the thought of preserving the past. In times of settlement a town was usually founded as far up a stream as a ship could go. There are many places throughout the country where if you can preserve the waterway you can preserve the history along its shores. This can provide a glimpse into the past.

Greenways can act as a means to an exciting and adventurous way of getting exercise. If you're into jogging, running, roller skating, biking, or just walking what could be more exciting than doing it on a



When there is a place where people can go no matter of social background it will help to create of sense of belonging

pathway that runs through a natural wonderland; and being able to do it right in the middle of the city. You have the opportunity to see wildlife, make new friends, see old friends, see a historic site or see something you have never seen before.

I have summarized what to me are the most important concepts of greenways. I have not hit on every point, but only the ones that spur emotion in me. Although I find the process of establishing greenways to be interesting, it is what the greenway means when we are able to utilize them that I find most important. I find the natural world fascinating and wonderful. Greenways help to preserve that natural world and allow us to visit it in close proximity to our homes. By preserving this natural world people of all social backgrounds are able to come together and share whatever the greenway has to offer. It will offer everybody something different. To everyone their green corridor will have a special meaning to them. That special meaning creates a sense of place, a sense of belonging. As I said before everyone like to feel like they belong.

The power of place

Allen Kemplen, AICP

More than two thousand years ago, the Greek physician Hippocrates observed that our well-being is affected by our settings and established this relationship as a cornerstone of Western medicine. The basic principle that links our places and our state of being is simple: a good or bad environment promotes good or bad feelings, which inspire a good or bad mood, which inclines us toward good or bad behavior.

We needn't even be consciously aware of a pleasant or unpleasant environmental stimulus for it to shape our state of being. Scientific research has shown that the mere presence of sunlight increases our willingness to help strangers and tip waiters, and people working in a room slowly permeated by the odor of burnt dust lose their appetites, even though they don't notice the smell.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, the wisdom of the ages concerning the relationship between place and state of being was eclipsed by technological and cultural changes so rapid and vast that social scientists still debate our ability to adjust to them. In one of the least remarked of these transformations, the Industrial Revolution drew the Western world indoors. Turning away from the natural world, huge populations gravitated toward a very different one made up of homes and workplaces that

were warm and illuminated regardless of season or time of day.

Professionals engaged in advancing the common good in urban and rural Alaska are encouraged to keep good design at the forefront of discussions regarding how we grow.

As we move further into the twenty-first century, Alaskans would be wise to remember the power of place. The past ten years have seen significant development in the built environment of our villages and towns. Investments in housing, schools, health clinics and other community facilities have raised the physical standard of living for most Alaskans. However, now that we have a few years of experience living with these new settings, one should be asking about our sense of overall well-being. Rising rates of obesity and diabetes seems to indicate that something is amiss. The significant amount of domestic violence, alcohol abuse and depression are indications that something is not quite right in our settings.

An example of the power of place, and one that greatly impacts all Alaskans, is the relationship between people and natural light. Thousands of years in the outdoors have hardwired this relationship. Alaskans are acutely aware of how light affects our well-being. According to Alaska-specific research, up to fifty percent of residents experience some degree of

behavioral change during the long dark winters. Around twelve percent are affected so severely they fall within the clinical definition of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). This experience is cumulative in that non-exposure to natural light slowly builds up until by January or February, "Cabin Fever" sets in and you witness the impacts to a person's sense of well-being.

Another example of the power of place is the link between color and behavior. Anyone who has ever felt blue, seen red, blacked out, or turned green knows we're prone to make emotional associations with different shades. We respond to colors physiologically – our eyes physically respond differently to different colors, as we do to different light conditions – and those who believe we react psychologically as well claim that "warm" ones, such as reds, yellows, and oranges stimulate us. From this point of view, red is ideal for a slinky evening dress or a fire engine, but wrong for walls at the Department of Motor Vehicles where it could further stir up already vexed citizens waiting for service. On the other hand, "cool" colors such as blue and green are thought to calm the nerves, while the too-cool gray, black and white are so under-stimulating that they can invite depression.

As we become more entrenched within our buildings and further distanced from the natural environment, are we able to re-remember the lessons of Hippocrates? Does the

design of our built environment (buildings, neighborhoods, villages and towns) contribute to a healthy sense of mind? Or are we handicapping ourselves with ill-thought out development? This is an especially relevant question as we quickly transition into the twenty-first century where the cornerstones of economic prosperity are knowledge, innovation and sharp thinking.

Design of our built environment is, and will be, an important component of Alaska's future economic growth. Professionals engaged in advancing the common good in urban and rural Alaska are encouraged to keep good design at the forefront of discussions regarding how we grow. Citizens need to be reminded that a healthy and prosperous community is built on the relationship between our settings, our sense of mind and the power of place.



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Making great communities happen

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Announcements

Kodiak Island Borough

Job Title: *Community Development Director*

Job Summary: Responsible for the administration of the community development department. Applies skills in formulation, implementation and modification of plans for the Borough's physical, social, and economic development. Supervises staff who act as technical advisors. Independently manages the department within established guidelines.

Complete job description and Borough application (required) may be obtained through Kodiak Job Service, 309 Center Ave., Kodiak, Alaska 99615, (907) 486-3105, maureen_butler@labor.state.ak.us. APPLY BY: Until Filled. EOE.

Municipality of Anchorage

Job Title: *Planning Manager*

Job Summary: Responsible for long and short-range transit planning activities,

capital projects planning and programming, and program development. Provide public information and conduct public hearings, and manage and operate information technology. Work closely with other department managers and with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (AMATS). Manage a professional staff of three. See www.muni.org/jol for complete information.

The Municipality is seeking qualified, dedicated and knowledgeable individuals to serve on a variety of Boards and Commission. If you have interest or know someone who would be willing to serve, applications are being accepted.

People can access the MOA website www.muni.org/boards for a list of current openings or contact Michael Johnson in the Mayor's office.

ADOT&PF

Is seeking a Transportation Planner II. This position serves as the Planning

Manager for the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport. The Planning manager manages the Airport's short and long range planning, including comprehensive master plans, facility plans, capital improvement programming, intergovernmental coordination, tenant development review, policy analysis, special projects, and community involvement related to planning. This position closes October 26. See the state website for details. Apply through Workplace Alaska.

Mat-Su Lunch Follow-up

If people are interested in finding out more information on the Hatcher Pass draft SPUD documents they can be directed to: <http://www.matsugov.us/Planning/publicreviewdocs.cfm>