

April 28, 2008

Message From the Chair Emeritus—Richard Johnanson

Have you ever considered that traveling within the parameters of a democracy is akin to riding the rails in a passenger train? One rail supports the leadership qualifications and standard of conduct by those who serve us. The opposite rail supports the community standards we have set for ourselves. Whether the rails run in a straight line or must go around a curve, so long as they remain parallel, our system of government functions efficiently. It is only when the distance between the rails is altered for political expediency that our passenger car is endangered. In six weeks we shall be hiring many new crewmembers for our railroad. It is up to us to insist that they keep the tracks parallel. All aboard please.

Land Use Decisions Will Determine Our Future

Often it is the concentration of the bad outcomes stemming from poor planning that finally gets our attention. Having achieved the most concentrated urban poverty in United States (Brookings Institution report), our community knows all too well the domino effect of allowing single interests and to influence development decisions. Continued rapid growth offers the community an opportunity to act differently and to factor long-term implications into decisions made today. On Tuesday, June 10 at 6:00 PM at the Fresno Convention Center, the City of Fresno is hosting a Southeast Growth Area (SEGA) Specific Plan Alternative Growth Scenarios Workshop. The City has engaged Calthorpe Associates to assist. They have looked through the lenses of many issues to come up with the alternative scenarios that will be unveiled at the workshop for discussion. For more information, contact Trai Her at 621-8003 or Trai.Her@fresno.gov.

Experience, Talent and Multiple Perspectives Tapped to Assist in Planning

Kudos to the City of Fresno for bringing in top talent to assist in planning for the future. **Peter Calthorpe** was named one of 25 "innovators on the cutting edge" by Newsweek Magazine for his work redefining the models of urban and suburban growth in America. His long and honored career in urban design, planning, and architecture began in 1976, combining his experience in each discipline to develop new approaches to urban revitalization, suburban growth, and regional planning. Projects he has completed in the past concentrated on new solutions for energy efficiency and passive solar design, a great fit for our community.

Mental Health Cluster Launches as Part of Human Investment Initiative

As one of six developmental pathways (cognitive, language, physical, social, ethical, psychological) human beings travel to self-actualization, within one is the key to motivation—the psychological pathway. Mental health or its absence plays a key role in violence, addiction, relationships and achievement. Mental health occurs along a non-static continuum. While once Fresno had a working system, budget cuts and increased bureaucracy plus the fragmentation of disciplines, funding, and goals has resulted in a chronic shortage of practitioners and lack of supportive housing and acute care facilities. Prevention and early intervention efforts have been hampered by lack of sustainable funding. As a result, emergency rooms, the streets and the jail end up the as a way station for many of those that are severely emotionally disturbed. The Cluster is in an exploration stage and is looking at mental health as a system ranging from acute care to prevention and early intervention.