

Conference Abstracts



Sparkling Headwaters (Water Resources)

Don't Get Swamped by Hydrology, Water Quality, and Drainage

Sunday, April 23, 2023

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm | Room: Castle Peak

Moderator: Cheryl DeGano, Environmental Services Practice, Albert A. Webb Associates

Panelist: Teri Gibbs, Land Development Engineering, Albert A. Webb Associates, Practice Leader

Panelist: Autumn DeWoody, Sr. Env. Analyst- Water Resources Planning, Albert A. Webb Associates

Abstract:

The CEQA topics associated with hydrology, water quality, and drainage can be daunting. There is specialized vocabulary (hydraulics, velocity, water surface elevation, depth, duration, sheet flow); seemingly endless acronyms (NPDES, WQMP, SWPPP, SGMA, WDRs, BMPs, MS4, HCOCs); loads of regulations; and a variety of reports, maps, and plans to be considered that may inundate an environmental professional. Fear not! Our panel will be comprised of a Civil Engineer, Water Resources Planner, and seasoned CEQA practitioner. Using the Appendix G checklist questions as our framework, this Moderator-led session will include a basic hydrology primer, provide tips on how to get the information you need from a project engineer, what to do if there isn't a project engineer, identify data sources, and include tips on how to approach and survive these topics. Come with your questions as we take a deep breath and dive in.

Avalanche Warning (Regulatory/CEQA)

AEP Air Quality and Climate Change Workshop

Sunday, April 23, 2023

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm | Room: Grand Sierra D | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Mike Hendrix, Principal, Michael Hendrix Consulting

Panelist: Rich Walter, Vice President, Environmental Planning, ICF

Panelist: Jennifer Reed, Air Quality Services Manager, Dudek

Panelist: Nicole Vermilion, Principal, PlaceWorks

Panelist: Brian Schuster, Senior Managing Associate, ESA

Panelist: Tammy Seale, Principal, Climate Action & Resiliency Services, PlaceWorks

Panelist: Haseeb Qureshi, Principal, Urban Crossroads

Abstract:

The AEP Climate Change Committee will provide an Air Quality and Climate Change Workshop with the latest requirements and methods of analyzing air quality and climate change impacts within CEQA and NEPA. The workshop will provide guidance in the following topics:

- CalEEMod 2022: With a geospatial interface, connections to EnviroScreen, and CalAdapt, the new CalEEMod is completely different and has the capacity to depict environmental justice issues, and climate risks as well as calculate emissions. Learn how to navigate within the new version of the model and accurately depict projects.
- CEQ Phase 2 Guidance: Updated guidelines on the analysis of climate change and GHG emissions in NEPA.
- The 2022 Scoping Plan an overview of Appendix D: Guidance for Local Jurisdictions and Project level impacts.
- The Southern California Gas Company (SCG) Sustainability Plan and how SCG plans to be carbon neutral.

AB1279 (and other recent legislation): Is Zero the Law? Find out about the latest Statewide targets and how they impact CEQA thresholds and CAP Reduction Targets. In addition to the panelists listed additional speakers will include Michael Keinath, Ramboll Associates Poonam Boparai, Ascent Environmental Preeti Verma, Southern California Gas Company CARB staff member

Sparkling Headwaters (Water Resources)

Environmental Professional? Me?

Sunday, April 23, 2023

3:15 pm – 4:45 pm | Room: Castle Peak

Moderator: Emma Haines, Associate I, PlaceWorks

Panelist: Addie Farrell, Principal, PlaceWorks

Panelist: Jacqueline Protsman Rohr, Associate II, PlaceWorks

Panelist: Sydnie Margallo, Environmental and Sustainability Planner / Deputy, Harris & Associates

Panelist: Megna Murali, Student/Sapphos Environmental, Student/Environmental Consultant

Panelist: Ryan Callahan, Environmental Analyst, Kimley-Horn and Associates

Abstract:

Transitioning from being a student into a career can be a big leap and knowing what to expect in your first year can help you find the job you want, ask the right questions in an interview, and prepare you to be a successful employee. This session is focused on introducing students and young professionals into what a career as an environmental planner can look like. This session brings together a diverse group of panelists with varying experience levels from 18 years to entry level and various degree paths from bachelors, masters, and law school. The goals for this session are to show students and young professionals what your first few years as an environmental planner may look like, to take a deep dive into topics and projects that may be typical of an entry level hire, and show what different education paths can lead to in a future career. Panelists will share their tips, tricks for landing an entry level position, experiences entering the workforce, and insight into what to be prepared for and how to be successful in your first year. This session will encourage an open forum type atmosphere for students and young professionals to meet and discuss tips and tricks about early career experiences as an Environmental Planner.

Mountains of Change (Emerging Topics)

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Environmental Profession

Sunday, April 23, 2023

3:15 pm – 4:45 pm | Room: Emigrant Peak

Moderator: Marie Campbell, President, Sapphos Environmental

Panelist: La Mikia Castillo, Principal, Castillo Consulting Partners

Panelist: Claudia Garcia, Principal Planner, City of Berkeley

Panelist: Bill Halligan, Senior Director/Senior Environmental Counsel, Harris & Associates

Panelist: Vanessa Toscano, Environmental Planning Group Manager, HELIX Environmental Planning

Abstract:

This presentation will summarize the decisions made by the California Association of Environmental Professionals (AEP) leadership to engage in a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative, following the increasing awareness of the too-common imperilment of people based on their religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, of physical or mental capacity. In the United States, a country that arguably has the greatest constitutional commitment to equality, the violent events that regularly made the headlines in 2020 compelled AEP President at that time to share the following narrative in a letter to the Membership: ‘The events of the last few weeks have starkly further exposed and rightly shined a spotlight on the inequality, injustice, and systemic racism in our society.’ Marie Campbell will provide opening remarks about the relevance and importance of the initiative, the purpose of embracing DEI within the environmental professions, and the ultimate goal of having environmental professionals serve as agents for constructive change. Bill Halligan will summarize the determination, by AEP leadership, to commit to supporting and facilitating DEI as a foundational requirement of the environmental profession. La Mikia Castillo will describe the survey undertaken in 2022, the survey results, and the inherent bias training in which the AEP leadership has engaged. Claudia Garcia will share the continuing DEI work, authorized by the AEP Board, for 2023 including a strategic planning effort. The panel will close with a round-table discussion facilitated by Vanessa Toscano. The DEI committee invites, welcomes, and values the experience and input of each member of the community of environmental professionals.

Avalanche Warning (Regulatory/CEQA)

AEP Climate Change White Paper: AB1279 - Is Zero the Law?

Sunday, April 23, 2023

3:15 pm – 4:45 pm | Room: Grand Sierra D | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Mike Hendrix, Michael Hendrix Consulting

Panelist: Brian Schuster, Senior Managing Associate, ESA

Panelist: Tammy Seale, Principal, Climate Action & Resiliency Services, PlaceWorks

Panelist: Poonam Boparai, Principal, Ascent Environmental

Panelist: Rich Walter, Vice President, Environmental Planning, ICF

Abstract:

AB 1279 sets into law the net carbon neutrality by 2045 goal of California. This new law requires an 85 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990 levels of emissions and includes enhancing natural sequestration, and mechanical carbon removal from the atmosphere and permeant sequestration within geologic deposits and/or building materials in order for the state to reach zero net emissions by 2045 or before. How

does this effect project level analysis in CEQA? Is zero the new threshold? How does this effect climate action plans? The AEP Climate Change Committee will be providing guidance on how to deal with the new law and how to proceed with CEQA analysis of projects and climate action plans in this forthcoming White Paper. Find out the answers and ask the Committee your burning questions by attending this session.

Into the Weeds (Case Studies/Best Practices)

Helping Agencies Decarbonize: Multi-Sectoral and Transportation Case Studies

Sunday, April 23, 2023

3:15 pm – 4:45 pm | Room: Monument Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Matt Goynes, Principal, Fehr & Peers

Panelist: Olivia Ervin, Principal Environmental Planner, M-Group

Panelist: Darryl Yip, Senior Transportation Planner, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA)

Panelist: Rebeca Appel, Sustainability & Environmental Justice, Group Program Manager, County of San Diego

Panelist: Elise Ruiz, Sustainability & Environmental Justice, Group Program Manager, County of San Diego

Abstract:

Many jurisdictions have set ambitious targets to reach net zero or climate neutrality and now face the hard part of figuring out how to achieve these ambitious targets. Prioritizing actions requires clear insights on the effectiveness of actions related to GHG emissions, costs, timelines, and co-benefits. Given how the transportation sector generates over half of the state's greenhouse gas emissions, and considering the California Air Resources Board 2022 Scoping Plan that calls for the state to reduce vehicle miles traveled by 30 percent by 2045, cities and counties must act aggressively and partner with transportation agencies to implement these actions. This panel will include representatives from a county, city, and transportation agency and explore their multi-sectoral and transportation-focused decarbonization frameworks to provide diverse perspectives on how agencies are approaching this challenge. This panel will include presentations, a moderated discussion, and a Q&A to engage with the audience to explore the analytical approaches, implementation frameworks, and inspirations that the panelists are using to pursue their ambitious goals.

Enchanted Forest (Adaptation/Resiliency)

Resilient Recreation in a Changing Climate

Monday, April 24, 2023

9:00 am – 10:30 am | Room: Grand Sierra C | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Jacqueline Protsman Rohr, Associate II, PlaceWorks

Panelist: Kaeleigh Reynolds, Climate & Energy Planning Technician, Sierra Business Council

Panelist: Mikey Goralnik, Senior Community Design and Development Planner, Mariposa County, Planning Department

Panelist: John Wentworth, Board President, Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation

Panelist: Kristin York, Vice President, Sierra Business Council

Abstract:

Communities across the Sierra Nevada region depend on recreation and tourism to maintain thriving economies. This economic sector relies on the beauty and benefits of natural ecosystems that draw visitors from around the world. The diverse landscapes of the region provide recreation opportunities in both winter and summer

for hiking, skiing, and site seeing, just to name a few. However, climate change is altering temperature and precipitation patterns, intensifying wildfires, loss of snowpack, drought, and extreme storms that all affect regional ecosystems. This has led to a reduction in year-round recreation opportunities due to hazardous conditions, early snowmelt, and poor air quality that deter visitors from traveling to the region. Although climate change is harming the recreation and tourism economy in the Sierra, agencies and organizations are teaming up across the State to increase resilience of the Sierra Nevada ecosystems and adapt the recreation and tourism economies to the changing conditions. Our session will provide insight from regional organizations and adaptation experts on their efforts to evaluate the impacts of climate change on the ecosystems, recreation facilities, and the overall economies throughout the Sierra Nevada region. This session will present an overview from three regional efforts to evaluate how climate change is affecting recreation and tourism, identify vulnerabilities to this economic sector, and develop adaptation strategies and projects to increase the resilience of recreation and tourism. The intent of this session is to empower participants to apply the findings and strategies in their own communities.

Sparkling Headwaters (Water Resources)

Going it Alone: Monterey Bay Communities Plan for a Secure Water Future

Monday, April 24, 2023

9:00 am – 10:30 am | Room: Castle Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Ann Sansevero, Principal/Senior Project Manager, Dudek

Panelist: Sarah Easley Perez, Principal Planner, City of Santa Cruz Water Department

Panelist: Donna Meyers, General Manager, Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

Abstract:

This session provides an insider's view of how water agencies in the Monterey Bay Region are pursuing regional, collaborative solutions to long-standing water supply challenges created by periodic drought conditions, climate change, and shrinking groundwater supplies. The City of Santa Cruz has pursued supplemental water supplies for several decades to address system vulnerability to multi-year droughts. Through a robust public engagement process, the City's Water Supply Advisory Committee developed a strategy that includes conservation, groundwater recharge, and supply augmentation. The strategy is being implemented in part by the recently certified Santa Cruz Water Rights Project EIR. The water rights modifications will provide greater water system flexibility, including better utilizing existing diversions, sharing water with regional partners, and allowing for underground storage, while enhancing stream flows for fisheries, per an Anadromous Salmonid Habitat Conservation Plan. The EIR also evaluated infrastructure improvements including aquifer storage and recovery facilities, interties for local water transfers, and surface water diversion improvements. Numerous water agencies in Monterey County have been working for decades to address overdraft and seawater intrusion in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin through various supply projects, including recycled water and desalination. With the passage of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) was formed, comprised of a Joint Powers Authority of the County of Monterey, Water Resources Agency of the County of Monterey, the four cities in the County, Castroville Community Services District, and Monterey One Water. In preparing the various subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plans, the GSA examined reliability of recharge in a drier climate, demand management, as well as innovative new supplies including brackish water desalting. This panel will provide lessons learned and takeaways to help public agencies and their consultants navigate the complex water planning process and build water security solutions.

Mountains of Change (Emerging Topics)

Environmental and Planning Diversity Internship Program - A Collaborative Effort to Diversify Our Industry

Monday, April 24, 2023

9:00 am – 10:30 am | Room: Emigrant Peak

Moderator: Gary Jakobs, President/CEO, Ascent Environmental

Panelist: Barbra Calantas, Vice President/Southern California Bio Director, Environmental Science Associates (ESA)

Panelist: Zachary Miller, Senior Transportation and Environmental Planner, Ascent Environmental

Panelist: Jessica Fernandez De La O, Intern, University of San Diego

Abstract:

The environmental and planning fields have long lacked the diversity reflective of the communities in which we work. However, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in our workspaces has become an important core value embraced by many organizations in the planning and environmental industry, including AEP. In an effort to effect change within the industry, five leading California environmental and planning firms (Ascent, Dudek, ESA, PlaceWorks, and Rincon) founded the Environmental and Planning Diversity Internship Program. This program is a collaborative effort designed to create opportunities for college students and early career candidates from underrepresented communities to engage with professionals in the private and public sectors and gain valuable industry work experience. We recently completed our inaugural year, providing internships for 11 individuals. Our panel will present the concept and detail the implementation of the Environmental and Planning Diversity Internship Program, concentrating on its importance, the framework, lessons learned, and tools/training needed to implement such a program. The panel will conclude with a robust question and answer session which will include representatives from all participating firms. We hope to provide an example and template of a program focused on diversifying the industry that will inspire other firms and organizations to start similar programs.

Avalanche Warning (Regulatory/CEQA)

Don't start an avalanche! Navigating safe mitigation measures

Monday, April 24, 2023

9:00 am – 10:30 am | Room: Grand Sierra D | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Darcy Kremin, ESA

Panelist: Florentina Craciun, Senior Environmental Planner, San Francisco Planning

Panelist: Shana Inspektor, Associate, Stradling Yocca Carlson & Rauth

Panelist: John Bellas, Los Angeles Area CEQA Technical Director, Michael Baker International

Abstract:

You identified an impact and are worried about what mitigation measures should look like? Do you want to better understand the role of applicants, current planners, and attorneys in the CEQA mitigation process? Then put on your skis and let's slide down the mitigation mountain. This session is geared towards CEQA practitioners that work on tailoring project specific mitigation measures. We are here to help you write feasible, tangible, and trackable mitigation measures. We will review the 'DOs' and 'DON'Ts' of deferred mitigation and how to capture the essence of mitigation measures. Sometimes we do not know when or even how those measures will be implemented in the future, therefore we need to tailor mitigation measure that allow for flexibility. In this session,

we will describe the good, the bad and horrendous mitigation measures we encountered. We will take those measures, word for word, and point out common and not-so-common mistakes, and how to fix them before we ever publish a CEQA document. This session is both for well and under seasoned CEQA professionals.

Into the Weeds (Case Studies/Best Practices)

Keep Planning Weed Free: How to Avoid Compensatory Mitigation Pitfalls

Monday, April 24, 2023

9:00 am – 10:30 am | Room: Monument Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Amanda Dwyer, Sales and Business Development Manager, Westervelt Ecological Services

Panelist: Angela Lagneau, Senior Environmental Planner, Westervelt Ecological Services

Panelist: Dawn Edwards, Senior Environmental Project Manager, HDR

Panelist: Analisa Martinez, CA Dept of Water Resources

Abstract:

Effective environmental planning requires the early identification of mitigation solutions in order to ensure successful project implementation. When analyzing impacts to biological resources such as species habitat or wetlands, a common mitigation measure utilized by planners is to purchase compensatory mitigation credits from an unidentified mitigation bank. Often, when projects move to the construction phase they face challenges in identifying viable solutions to their mitigation requirements. This can result in project delays and costly and often un-satisfactory environmental outcomes. The changing landscape of regulatory criteria, mineral and water rights, and climate change make selecting viable properties for long-term conservation more complicated than ever. With the reduction in available undeveloped lands and changing land uses, it has become imperative to move quickly when suitable properties become available. How then to fold the planning process into strategic land purchases and mitigation solutions? This panel will share lessons learned about identifying and securing mitigation for project implementation.

Enchanted Forest (Adaptation/Resiliency)

Landscape-Level Wildfire Fuel Treatment - How We're Reaching the Million-Acre Goal

Monday, April 24, 2023

10:45 am – 12:15 pm | Room: Grand Sierra C | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Heather Blair, Principal, Ascent Environmental

Panelist: Matt Dias, President and CEO, Calforests

Panelist: Jerry Keir, Chief Executive Officer, Great Basin Institute

Panelist: Adam Lewandowski, Senior Associate, Ascent Environmental

Abstract:

The State of California and USDA Forest Service have committed to treat at least a million acres annually by 2025 to reduce wildfire fuels and improve wildfire resiliency. Reaching this goal will require federal, state, local, NGO, and private partnerships committed to advancing landscape-scale resilience projects with effectively streamlined CEQA, NEPA, and Forest Practice Act compliance. Based on 2020-2023 progress, this panel will share strategies and updated best practices for streamlining environmental review and increasing the pace and scale of wildfire

fuels treatments across state, federal, local, and private lands in California. It will include case studies from practitioners working with the timber industry, state and local agencies, and USFS landscape-level programs. Streamlining strategies covered as case studies will include use of the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP Program EIR) under CEQA, the Tahoe Program Timberland EIR (PTEIR) under Forest Practice Rules, and the various NEPA approaches being to analyze treatment of hundreds of thousands of acres throughout the state.

Sparkling Headwaters (Water Resources)

Water Management and Fire: Investing in our Watersheds as Green Infrastructure

Monday, April 24, 2023

10:45 am – 12:15 pm | Room: Castle Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Jen Kidson, Water Resources Planner, Woodard & Curran

Panelist: Angel Hertslet, Forest Project Director for the California Chapter, The Nature Conservancy

Panelist: Phil Saksa, Co-Founder & Chief Scientist, Blue Forest

Panelist: Kim Clyma, Project Manager 2/Senior Environmental Planner, Woodard & Curran

Panelist: Dave Hunt, District Engineer, Olympic Valley Public Service District

Abstract:

We all know wildfires can have catastrophic effects on us all. But how do those effects impact our water supply, systems, and infrastructure? What are water managers doing about it? And how do we pay for it? Come join our panel of leading industry experts as we discuss the key challenges, using science to guide water management actions, and the strategies and mechanisms for addressing post-wildfire water resource issues and efforts to proactively managing headwater forests in this era of megafires. We will explore the current science and trends, case studies, regional collaboratives, and funding opportunities.

Mountains of Change (Emerging Topics)

Evacuation Warning! Determining Impacts within CEQA

Monday, April 24, 2023

10:45 am – 12:15 pm | Room: Emigrant Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5 & MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Lisa Maier, Urban Forestry/Fire Protection Analyst, Dudek

Panelist: Michael Huff, Urban Forestry/Fire Protection Practice Director, Dudek

Panelist: Darin Neufeld, Environmental Planning + Compliance, Harris and Associates, Director

Panelist: Andee Leisy, Senior Partner, RMM Environmental Law, LLP

Panelist: Phoung Nguyen, Senior Transportation Engineer, CR Associates

Panelist: Dana Link-Herrera, Urban Forestry and Wildfire Planner, Dudek

Abstract:

Recent litigation surrounding project wildfire evacuation capabilities and impacts requires elevated analysis within CEQA documents; yet thresholds to determine impacts related to evacuation have yet to clearly be defined. So, what should developers and municipalities do? In this session, panelists will discuss existing tools and established criteria that can help determine when a project may have a significant impact and what mitigations may be available, and additional evacuation options that could provide contingencies for when evacuation is not possible.

This discussion will include insights gleaned from land use attorneys, evacuation planners, traffic engineers, fire departments, CEQA practitioners, and fire protection planners. Panelist will use case-studies to answer questions such as: What should be included in an evacuation plan? How do you determine evacuation time? How do you determine how long is too long to evacuate? How do you determine impacts on existing communities? What is shelter in place? How do OPR's guidance documents help?

Avalanche Warning (Regulatory/CEQA)

Implementing CEQA Streamlining for Transit, Bike & Pedestrian Projects

Monday, April 24, 2023

10:45 am – 12:15 pm | Room: Grand Sierra D | Credits: AICP 1.5 & MCLE 1.5

Moderator: Andrea Contreras, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

Panelist: Debra Dwyer, San Francisco Planning Department

Panelist: Lauren Bihl, Environmental Planner, San Francisco Planning Department

Abstract:

Senate Bill 288 (California Environmental Quality Act: exemptions: transportation-related projects), sponsored by Senator Wiener and effective January 2021, provides a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) statutory exemption to accelerate common-sense, sustainable transit and active transportation projects that make limited public dollars go further, fight climate change, and result in a safer, healthier, and more equitable future for all Californians. San Francisco has been using this statutory exemption to expedite implementation of public projects since January 2021. In this session, public agency planners will discuss procedures developed and implemented to best rely on this statutory exemption and provide examples of clean transportation projects for which they streamlined CEQA review using the new statutory exemption. They will also discuss how their experiences informed SB 922 (California Environmental Quality Act: exemptions: transportation-related projects), which extends and expands SB288 through 2030.

Into the Weeds (Case Studies/Best Practices)

Solutions Transforming Suburban and Urban Electric Transmission Powerlines: Case Study of San Francisco Bay Area Project

Monday, April 24, 2023

10:45 am – 12:15 pm | Room: Monument Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Brandon Liddell, Senior Land Planner, Pacific Gas and Electric Company

Panelist: Lynne Hosley, Principal Project Manager-Regulatory Specialist, Jacobs

Panelist: Colleen Taylor, Principal Project Manager-Environmental Scientist, Jacobs

Abstract:

Utility companies face challenges when siting new overhead electric transmission powerlines (lines), defined as lines that carry more than 50 kilovolts (kV) of current, in suburban and urban environments. These challenges include limited right-of-way options and environmental considerations such as compatibility with adjacent land uses and potential impacts relating to aesthetics, biological resources, historical resources, protected wetlands, and construction in heavily-populated areas. With newer technology, underground lines can be identified as the

preferred solution to right-of-way constraints and the environmentally- preferred solution in CEQA documents. However, underground lines present a distinct set of challenges and opportunities compared to overhead lines. This session will focus on Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) underground and hybrid (overhead/underground) lines located in the San Francisco Bay Area. Using examples from key PG&E projects, the engineering, construction, and environmental challenges and opportunities will be presented through the project phases of siting, engineering, analyzing, and constructing lines. Three example PG&E projects demonstrate a range of challenges and solutions: 1) the hybrid overhead/underground Jefferson- Martin 230 kV Project located along the San Francisco Peninsula, 2) the underground Egbert Switching Station Project with its 230 kV transmission line extensions located in Brisbane, Daly City and San Francisco, and 3) the hybrid underground/submarine Embarcadero-Potrero 230 kV Project located in San Francisco and San Francisco Bay. For these electric transmission projects, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) is the lead agency under CEQA- preempting local jurisdictions- under its General Order (GO) 131-D. GO 131-D requires the applicant utility to develop a Proponent’s Environmental Assessment in accordance with detailed guidelines and undergo a robust environmental review and decision process before project approval, all of which will be discussed during the presentation.

Enchanted Forest (Adaptation/Resiliency)

Let’s Fight Fire with Fire

Monday, April 24, 2023

1:45 pm – 3:15 pm | Room: Grand Sierra C | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Kim Clyma, Project Manager 2/Senior Environmental Planner, Woodard & Curran

Panelist: Angel Hertslet, Forest Project Director for the California Chapter, The Nature Conservancy

Panelist: Erin Ernst, Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative Coordinator, California Tahoe Conservancy

Panelist: Melinda Booth, Director of Development – College of Forestry & Conservation & Wildlife Biology Program, University of Montana Foundation

Panelist: Rachel Hutchinson, Eastside Watershed Program Manager, USFS- Tahoe National Forest

Abstract:

Curious about the science behind megafires? Curious about what is being done to build resilience to wildfire and climate change in our watersheds? Ever wonder how we can scale up forest restoration to meet the moment? Join us for a discussion of the current science and how ecological forest restoration is being implemented within forest collaboratives and regional initiatives to manage our forests into a more resilient condition. During this panel we’ll hear from scientists, project implementers, and collaborators who are working to restore our forests into resilient landscapes with ecological thinning and prescribed fire. We’ll look at case studies and pilot projects that are innovating how we increase the pace and scale of large landscape forest restoration to meet State targets. Themes will include collaborating at different scales, utilizing new data, frameworks and decision-support tools, and broadening the tent to include new project collaborators ready to engage in ecological forest management.

Sparkling Headwaters (Water Resources)

Water Supply Planning and Impact Evaluation: Dry Year Edition

Monday, April 24, 2023

1:45 pm – 3:15 pm | Room: Castle Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Heidi Mekkelson, Managing Director, ICF

Panelist: Heidi Mekkelson, Managing Director, ICF

Panelist: Elizabeth Drayer, Vice President, West Yost

Panelist: Adena Friedman, Principal Planner, City of South San Francisco

Panelist: Megan Jennings, Partner, Coblenz Patch Duffy & Bass LLP

Abstract:

The year is 2010. The Giants are in the World Series. Brangelina is going strong. Wendy Water Consultant is preparing a UWMP for the City of Waterville. Both surface and groundwater supplies are plentiful and reliable, and the UWMP finds that there will be adequate supplies to meet demand in normal, single dry, and multiple dry years over the next 25 years. Peter Planner prepares his staff report, and the UWMP is adopted without a hitch. Wendy prepares a WSA for a development project in the city. Cindy CEQA Consultant reviews the WSA and easily determines that the project's impact would be less than significant. Fast forward to 2023. California is in the midst of a record-breaking drought. The SWRCB intends to implement the Bay-Delta Plan Amendment, but it remains mired in litigation. Brangelina is no more. Wendy is preparing the City's 2020 UWMP, and this time it's much more complicated. The UWMP finds that significant supply shortfalls (up to 40 percent) will exist during single and multiple dry years. Peter struggles to explain the findings to a concerned community and city council. Cindy reviews a WSA based on the UWMP and isn't sure what to think. Is there a significant project impact? If so, how can it be mitigated? This panel will address current-day challenges facing agencies and consultants engaging in water resource planning and impact evaluation, focusing on UWMPs, WSAs, and water supply analyses under CEQA. The panel will provide an overview of the state's major water delivery systems and key regulations related to water resource planning. Challenges including ongoing drought conditions and the Bay-Delta Plan Amendment will be discussed. The panel will conclude with a discussion of what these challenges mean when it comes to evaluating a project's impacts to water supply under CEQA.

Mountains of Change (Emerging Topics)

Reduce emission or Advance Equity: Can you have it all in Transportation Planning?

Monday, April 24, 2023

1:45 pm – 3:15 pm | Room: Emigrant Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Adrita Islam, Senior Transportation Planner, Fehr & Peers

Panelist: Kyle Shipley, Transportation Modeling and Analysis Team Manager, Sacramento Area Council of Governments

Panelist: Chris Grgich, Associate Engineer/Planner, Fehr & Peers

Panelist: Adrita Islam, Senior Transportation Planner, Fehr & Peers

Abstract:

Metropolitan Transportation Plans/Sustainable Communities Strategies (MTP/SCS) are designed by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to manage transportation, land use, and air-quality in a region. While the state of

California continues to expand legislation and regulations to curb greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by switching to vehicle miles of travel (VMT) as the transportation impact metric, the recent SB-150 report by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) finds that both VMT/capita and GHG/capita are increasing. Hence, MPOs in California are expected to do more to change this pattern while also being expected to address equity in any new solutions. This panel will discuss the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) 2024 Blueprint strategy, which centers on the triple bottom line framework that will use equity, economy, and environment. SACOG places the advancement of racial equity in land use and transportation planning as one of their top priorities for the new MTP/Blueprint update. The panel will cover the following key topics.

- How do different land use scenarios influence transportation outcomes?
- What transportation and land use strategies will reduce VMT/GHG while also addressing racial equity needs?
- Under what conditions are VMT growth in historically disadvantaged communities desired to offset long-standing economic and transportation inequities?
- How advanced models like the Sacramento Activity-Based Travel Simulation Model (SACSIM) can answer questions related to the travel behavior of individuals and analyze equity concerns?
- How to measure (and track) VMT meaningfully by evaluating what groups are exposed to the most VMT and what groups generate the most VMT.

This panel will share how Metro, the Portland Region Metropolitan Planning Organization updated its Transportation System Management and Operations (TSMO) Strategy to include equity as a component in improving transportation system operations and equity outcomes.

Avalanche Warning (Regulatory/CEQA)

Cultural Resource Consultations Under a Public Agency Lens

Monday, April 24, 2023

1:45 pm – 3:15 pm | Room: Grand Sierra D | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Tammy Taylor, Senior Environmental Planner, County of Marin/CDA

Panelist: Chelsea Hall, Environmental Planning Aide, County of Marin/CDA

Panelist: Robin Fies, CDA Technician and Archaeologist Advisor, County of Marin/CDA

Abstract:

Relationships between government entities and Native peoples in California are notoriously fraught. This tension grew over time from deep historical roots; as an example, the first Governor of California proclaimed that white colonists and Native Californian populations would never coexist peacefully so long as the latter inhabited the lands of California. This pronouncement paved the way for decades of genocide and forced removal of Native populations from their ancestral lands at the hands of white colonists. Many present-day Native Californians understandably view government from a skeptical, distrusting, or sometimes hostile lens given this tragic history of genocide, colonization, and theft of land and resources. However, in more recent years, the State has enacted several laws to facilitate repairing relationships between government entities and Native peoples to encourage greater equity and collaboration. Specifically, these laws require public agencies to consult with local tribes and to facilitate thorough consideration of tribal cultural resources prior to development of projects or implementation of policy changes. This discussion will provide an overview of these state laws from a regulatory perspective- in-

cluding AB 52, SB 35, SB 18- as well as the federal counterpart: Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Although these regulations provide general guidance for tribal consultation, implementing agencies often encounter challenges that further complicate their cultural resources work and documentation for environmental reviews. This session will examine several case studies to shed light on lessons learned from public agency-tribal consultations conducted in Marin County, discuss best practices when engaging with Native groups (particularly from a local government perspective), and invite open discussion among attendees about their own experiences with and/or take-aways from conducting tribal consultations.

Into the Weeds (Case Studies/Best Practices)

Behind the Scenes of Health Risk Assessments (For Those Who Never Intend to Perform an HRA)

Monday, April 24, 2023

1:45 pm – 3:15 pm | Room: Monument Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5 & MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Jennifer Reed, Air Quality Services Manager, Dudek

Panelist: Michael Keinath, Principal, Ramboll

Panelist: Adam Poll, Air Resource Specialist, Dudek

Panelist: Danielle Morone, Partner, Gatzke Dillon & Ballance LLP

Panelist: Paul Philley, Program Supervisor, CEQA & Land Use, Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District

Abstract:

Have you ever reviewed a health risk assessment (HRA) and wondered, ‘how did they do this?’ and ‘what does this even mean?’ You are not alone. HRAs are technical and one of the most complex analyses you will see under the CEQA umbrella. If you want to learn more to help improve your review, management, and understanding of HRAs, but not go down too far down the technical rabbit hole, this session is your opportunity to do so. We will discuss the purpose of HRAs, review guidance on when to prepare construction and operational HRAs, provide an overview of toxic air contaminants focusing on diesel particulate matter and the difference from criteria air pollutants, demonstrate the assessment process, present two case studies, and discuss what the results mean and why the analysis is meaningful. We will give a behind the scenes look into the two key models: AERMOD, a dispersion model developed by the EPA, and Hotspots Analysis and Reporting Program (HARP2), a California-specific software suite that calculates risk among other things. Air districts also perform HRAs for permitting; as such, we will briefly discuss the differences and what to keep in mind as CEQA analyses typically occur prior to permitting. Lastly, the panel will take questions in hopes to demystify HRAs for all participants!

Enchanted Forest (Adaptation/Resiliency)

Tribal Transportation Climate Adaptation

Monday, April 24, 2023

3:45 pm – 5:15 pm | Room: Grand Sierra C | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Juliana Richards, Kimley-Horn

Abstract:

Tribal communities have existing transportation challenges and are particularly vulnerable to climate exposures like wildfire, heat, storms and flooding, and drought. The following case study is part of a larger effort to share project learnings and resources for the benefit of other Tribal Nations. Early planning stages for the case study focused on creating a tribal steering committee to engage community members and stakeholder inputs on vulnerabilities and adaptation strategies through surveys, workshops, onsite visits, and information requests. Early engagement with Tribal members identified high-priority Tribal assets that are often missed in the typical desktop/field data inventory exercises. Efforts have been compiled into a toolkit to be used for other Tribal Nations working to protect their assets against climate change. The Tribal Transportation Climate Adaptation Project is a joint project of the Pala Band of Mission Indians and the Jamul Indian Village of California (JIVoC). Located in rural and remote areas of San Diego County, California this project efforts worked to understand how exposures would affect Pala and Jamul's transportation assets and systems and to determine how to address the most significant current and projected impacts to their health and safety, economy, natural resources, and culture. Deliverables consisted of transportation-focused climate change vulnerability assessments and adaptation plans for Pala and JIVoC, including advanced plans for two selected strategies per Tribe. Moving forward, the Tribes are armored with shovel ready projects, and tools to prioritize mitigation strategies that will protect their vulnerable transportation assets.

Sparkling Headwaters (Water Resources)

How a partnership came together to tackle a complex regulatory maze to fight the largest aquatic infestation in Lake Tahoe

Monday, April 24, 2023

3:45 pm – 5:15 pm | Room: Castle Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Caelan McGee, Principal, Zephyr Collaboration

Panelist: Kim Chevallier, Environmental Improvement Program Manager, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

Panelist: Jesse Patterson, Chief Strategy Officer, The League to Save Lake Tahoe

Panelist: Peter Wolcott, Water Quality Committee Chair, Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association

Abstract:

Lake Tahoe is a spectacularly clear high alpine lake and is appropriately designated as an 'Outstanding National Resource Water' by the Environmental Protection Agency. There are only two lakes in California that enjoy this designation: Lake Tahoe and Mono Lake. With this designation comes special environmental protections against degradation to maintain its water quality and clarity. However, Lake Tahoe also suffers from an infestation of two non-native invasive weeds, Eurasian water milfoil and curlyleaf pondweed, that were introduced more than 40 years ago. The largest infestation is located within the Tahoe Keys, a south shore neighborhood that is connected to Lake Tahoe through a series of shallow channels and waterways. Each year the infestation has gotten worse, and the homeowners have tirelessly battled the weeds in an attempt to keep the infestation at bay and protect

Lake Tahoe from the spread. Because of the lake's special protections, aquatic herbicides have never been on the table as tool. In 2018, with the weed infestation at a tipping point, a group of stakeholders came together to try to solve one of Lake Tahoe's most pressing environmental challenges. Together they crafted a project that would test ALL aquatic weed control methods in designated areas alongside each other to see what combination might work. The proposed methods included aquatic herbicide, UV-light, divers, aeration, and bottom barriers. Including aquatic herbicide in the project, even testing it at small scales, would require extensive environmental review, regulatory exemptions, board approvals, political and public support, and strong collaboration. Find out how this stakeholder group went 'into the weeds' to design a test of invasive weeds control methods and get an update on this signature project in this session.

Mountains of Change (Emerging Topics)

Safety First - Evacuation and Wildfire Analysis

Monday, April 24, 2023

3:45 pm – 5:15 pm | Room: Emigrant Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5 & MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Mark Teague, Managing Principal, PlaceWorks

Panelist: Eli Krispi, Senior Associate, PlaceWorks

Panelist: Ron Milam, Principal, Fehr & Peers

Panelist: Nicole Rinke, Attorney, California Attorney General's Office

Abstract:

With increasingly hot weather, more frequent drought, and other changes to climate conditions, new developments near the wildland urban interface and in other fire-prone areas need to evaluate evacuation routes. Evacuation routes are essential for safety in these areas. The evaluation of evacuation routes is an essential part of the General Plan Safety Element, and an increasingly important component of the environmental analysis. This session will cover new guidance on the analysis drafted by the Attorney General's Office and demonstrate how GIS analysis and policies in recent Safety Elements can make the environmental review more efficient and explain how to apply advanced travel forecasting models to better predict evacuation travel times.

CEQA Law and Ethics

CEQA Law and Ethics: Legal Pitfalls when developing the Administrative Record

Monday, April 24, 2023

3:45 pm – 5:15 pm | Room: Grand Sierra D | Credits: AICP Law 1.0 & AICP Ethics 1.0

Panelists: TBD

Abstract:

CEQA practitioners must understand the ins and outs of the Administrative Record. Which documents are privileged and should be excluded? Must all project documents be retained? Will your emails be reviewed by a court? This session will ensure that environmental professionals have a current understanding of case law, regulations and statutes that impact communications between project applicants, lead agencies and consultants, and ultimately the CEQA Administrative Record. This session will also ensure that environmental professionals understand how a planner's Code of Ethics applies during the planning process.

Into the Weeds (Case Studies/Best Practices)

Re-discovering a Forgotten Graveyard in San Francisco: A Case Study in What To Do When Your Project is Within a Historic Cemetery

Monday, April 24, 2023

3:45 pm – 5:15 pm | Room: Monument Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Devyani Jain, Deputy Director of Environmental Planning, San Francisco Planning Department

Panelist: Jonathan Mates-Muchin, Environmental Compliance Manager, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Panelist: Matthew Russell, Program Manager, Archaeology, Environmental Science Associates

Panelist: Allison Vanderslice, CEQA Cultural Resources Team Manager, San Francisco Planning Department

Abstract:

This panel will discuss a complex case study involving archaeological resources and historic-era human remains. San Francisco's Lincoln Park is known for its views of the Golden Gate Bridge, the Legion of Honor museum, and its golf course. However, few people are aware that the park was a burial ground known as City Cemetery from 1868-1909. The remains of 19 people buried in the cemetery were recently discovered during the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) Baker Beach Green Street Project, a utilities project in the park. This session will explore the challenges of determining whether proposed projects could impact archaeological resources and human remains during CEQA environmental review. SF Planning Department and Environmental Science Associates (ESA) archaeologists will share about identifying resources within historical cemeteries and cutting-edge scientific methods for analyzing human remains. SFPUC staff will share their environmental construction management best practices to keep projects moving forward after the discovery of archaeological resources. The panel will also delve into the public interpretation efforts that resulted from the discovery, as well as the recent effort to remember this forgotten place through designation of City Cemetery as a city landmark in coordination with community groups, the SF Board of Supervisors and SF Recreation and Parks Department. Whether you're a Planner or specialize in cultural resources management, getting 'into the weeds' through the lessons learned from this case study will inform your work on cultural resources techniques and procedures. Panelists include experts from the SFPUC, the SF Planning, and ESA.

Enchanted Forest (Adaptation/Resiliency)

Getting The Most Out of Hazard Mitigation Planning

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

8:45 am – 10:15 am | Room: Grand Sierra C | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Gina Sawaya, Environmental Planner, WSP Environment & Infrastructure, Inc.

Panelist: Nick Meisinger, Project Manager, WSP Environment & Infrastructure, Inc.

Panelist: Jeff Brislawn, Hazard Mitigation Lead/Sr. Associate, WSP Environment & Infrastructure, Inc.

Panelist: Juliana Prosperi, Associate Environmental Scientist/Planner, WSP Environment & Infrastructure, Inc.

Panelist: Victoria LaMar-Haas, Chief, Mitigation Planning Division, California Office of Emergency Management (CalOES)

Abstract:

'Every dollar invested on disaster prevention saves six dollars in cost related to response and recovery,' according to the National Institute of Building Sciences. Community exposure to hazards is ever-growing as more people live in hazardous areas, like high-fires zones, and more hazards pop up every year, such as pandemics and cyber

threats. Response and recovery costs are skyrocketing, yet many hazardous events are predictable and repetitive. Planners and local governments have learned that, and mitigation measures are cost-effective, environmentally sound, and can be funded by government grants. In order to access grant funding, local governments need to have updated hazard mitigation plans that help guide future development, reduce losses, and build community resiliency. Every level of government regularly prepares hazard mitigation plans addressing risks ranging from wildfire, drought, and earthquakes to terrorism and agricultural pests. Planning can include identifying risks, understanding existing capabilities, and developing strong mitigation techniques. This panel of professional hazard mitigation planners at public and private organizations will discuss how planning for hazard mitigation can involve general plans, CEQA, and NEPA. They will discuss their experiences working with local jurisdictions up to federal agencies like FEMA. The panel will cover what to do when Hazard Mitigation Plans trigger CEQA and what you can do to navigate CEQA within the plan. Panelists will also discuss how hazard mitigation planning can be integrated into Safety Elements under AB 2140 and the benefits that affords. Environmental professionals will learn how planners analyze environmental impacts of activities like reducing flammable vegetation and preparing for floods, and lessons learned from recent hazard mitigation plans. Other topics will include coordination with local jurisdictions, public outreach, dealing with state and federal regulations, developing strong mitigation plans, and accessing grant funding.

Sparkling Headwaters (Water Resources)

Modernizing Reservoir Operation - Oroville and New Bullards Bar Water Control Manuals

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

8:45 am – 10:15 am | Room: Castle Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Leslie Tice, National Director of Environmental Services, CEP, HDR, Inc.

Panelist: Nathan Pingel, Water Supply Management Business Class Leader & Pr, HDR

Panelist: Joe Forbis, Water Management Integration Lead, USACE Sacramento District

Abstract:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Sacramento District (SPK) is examining new ways to operate Oroville and New Bullards Bar dams by leveraging the best-available forecast technology as part of updates to the dams' water control manuals (WCMs). This presentation will provide an update on potential forecast-informed reservoir operation (FIRO) alternatives that will be considered, environmental compliance strategies, and multi-agency collaboration. SPK developed the WCMs that prescribe flood operation rules for the dams 50 years ago. USACE's policy is to review and update WCMs to ensure that the best use is made of water resources. Due to advancement in forecast skill over the past 50 years, probabilistic inflow forecasts can now be explicitly incorporated into reservoir operation rules. For example, if the forecast shows a large event approaching, reservoir releases can be made gradually in advance of peak inflow to more reliably and optimally attenuate peak outflow downstream, yielding greater flood control benefits. Conversely, in the spring, if no storms are forecast, runoff can be safely stored, yielding additional water supply reliability benefits. SPK will develop flood operation alternatives that incorporate resiliency to changing conditions while balancing multi-purpose project benefits. SPK is coordinating with the dam owners, the California Department of Water Resources and Yuba Water Agency, as well as the FIRO Program. The WCM updates will allow SPK to work collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure the projects continue to meet the current and future needs of the communities they serve. Because this approach to modernizing water control manuals is intended to roll out at USACE Districts across the country starting in the next few years, this presentation provides the audience the opportunity to peak behind the curtain of how this integrated approach to planning advances a complex analysis.

Mountains of Change (Emerging Topics)

Renewable Energy Best Practices: Lessons Learned from the Development of Renewable Energy and Battery Storage Projects

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

8:45 am – 10:15 am | Room: Emigrant Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Adam Poll, Senior Air Quality Specialist, Dudek

Panelist: David Hochart, Renewable Energy Practice Director, Dudek

Panelist: Collin Ramsey, Senior Development Manager, Western US, Strata Clean Energy

Panelist: Christopher Guillen, Attorney, rownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP

Panelist: Brock Ortega, Senior Biologist, Dudek

Abstract:

The development of renewable energy and battery storage projects in California takes a team of seasoned professionals to navigate the intricacies of the state's complicated regulatory environment. Why do 'clean energy' projects touted as the future of our power grid garner such friction? While they are considered 'green' projects, there are still challenges and potential environmental obstacles to be properly evaluated and, if needed, mitigated. Furthermore, the sheer size of the projects and their potential benefits leave them ripe for opposition groups. This panel takes an in-depth look at best practices for permitting and constructing these projects from an air quality, biological, legal, and programmatic approach using actual case studies.

Avalanche Warning (Regulatory/CEQA)

Equitable Outreach for Meaningful Engagement

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

8:45 am – 10:15 am | Room: Grand Sierra D | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Helen Blackmore, Acting Chief, Environmental Maintenance, Caltrans

Panelist: Sherie George, Senior Planner, San Francisco Planning Department

Panelist: Kathryn Rose, Acting Chief, Cultural Studies Office, Caltrans

Panelist: Carie Montero, Associate VP, Director of Environmental Planning, HNTB

Abstract:

Environmental laws and regulations require consultation and stakeholder outreach for project delivery compliance. The Federal Justice40 Initiative and other state and local requirements highlight the importance of equitable engagement and the need to include the views of historically underrepresented, unrepresented, and marginalized groups more fully in the outreach process. Consultation responsibilities often reside with state and local agencies and their consultants. Accelerated project schedules require new methods, tools, and techniques to facilitate inclusive and meaningful engagement in this changing consultation landscape. Equitable outreach can begin before the environmental process and extend beyond construction of a project. The pandemic resulted in new techniques and created opportunities to experiment and refine engagement strategies. Despite this, challenges remain and the interaction with potential stakeholders both virtually and in person can continue to be improved. This panel will discuss tools and methods for enhancing public engagement in compliance with NEPA and CEQA, by offering specific best practices from the transportation industry. Examples will draw from projects from the Bay Area and beyond and include a variety of community perspectives. The session will share strategies on how

to leverage the virtual environment and provide innovative ideas on inclusive engagement. The panel will discuss communication protocols and documents, and how public engagement can be reimaged during the planning and environmental process to help ensure often overlooked stakeholders can participate in projects in a collaborative and meaningful manner.

Into the Weeds (Case Studies/Best Practices)

CEQA Alternative(s) Rock

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

8:45 am – 10:15 am | Room: Monument Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5 & MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Kristi Black, Senior Environmental Planner, ICF

Panelist: Leo Mena, Senior Environmental Planner, Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Panelist: Laura Harris, Senior Counsel, Remy Moose Manley, LLP

Abstract:

What is the environmentally superior alternative? And why can't my proposed project be the environmentally superior alternative? After all, the lead agency chose it because it is 'environmentally superior,' or the applicant designed the project to be environmentally friendly knowing there would be mitigation anyway. How do I make sure that I've identified a reasonable range of alternatives? What even is a reasonable range of alternatives? What if I can't find any alternatives at all? And how can I still show the environmental benefits of the proposed project when CEQA is so focused on adverse impacts? The alternatives analysis can place practitioners in the middle of conflicting goals. For example:

- An alternative to a residential project is to reduce the number of units, which reduces environmental impacts but also does not square with prevailing policy that sees higher density as more environmentally friendly.
- The EIR identifies only significant short-term construction impacts, leading you to a set of alternatives that reduces construction impacts but sacrifices some of the long-term policy or environmental benefits of a larger project.
- An alternative substantially reduces a significant impact of the proposed project and is deemed the 'environmentally superior alternative,' but is overall more impactful than the proposed project. The alternatives section of an EIR can get very challenging very quickly. As CEQA practitioners, we confront and must answer these questions at some point or another. This panel will present considerations for practitioners as they work through the alternatives analysis.

This panel will:

- Review some of the key issues that arise with alternatives analyses and identify the potential risks to be aware of when conducting the alternatives analysis.
- Present approaches for addressing the key issues.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to learn from each other based on their own experiences.

Enchanted Forest (Adaptation/Resiliency)

Consensus Building for Climate Action Plans

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

10:30 am – 12:00 n | Room: Grand Sierra C | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Hannah Kornfeld, Climate Action Planning Manager, Ascent

Panelist: Quincy Yaley, Community Development Department Director, Tuolumne County

Panelist: Christopher Jordan, Strategic Planning and Innovation, City of Elk Grove, Director

Panelist: Abby Young, Climate Protection Manager, Bay Area Air Quality Management District

Abstract:

How do you build community consensus when facing a challenge as complicated and intersectional as climate change? Join this session to play a persona and work in teams to devise a climate action plan that meets many objectives. The City of CAPtopia is preparing a climate action plan and needs your help with developing the suite of policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve resiliency, achieve equity objectives, create local jobs, and provide additional community benefits. Attendees will be given a persona and will work in groups to achieve the City's objectives while staying within the financial budget. This will be an engaging session to learn about how various considerations are weighed in the local planning process. No technical background is needed; this is intended to give everyone a taste of CAPs who doesn't typically work in this space. Local government and agency staff will be facilitating the small group discussions, reflecting on their own experiences with building consensus for CAPs. We will also dive into a case study from Tuolumne County, which recently completed its first climate action plan with a challenging consensus building component. Panelists will share tips, tricks, and lessons learned along the way and provide recommendations for how to build consensus among the climate strategies we need to implement now!

Sparkling Headwaters (Water Resources)

Offshore Wind Energy and Humboldt Bay's Abundant Natural Resources

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

10:30 am – 12:00 n | Room: Castle Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Krystle Heaney, Senior Planner, Planwest Partners, Inc.

Panelist: Vanessa Blodgett, Principal Planner & Partner, Planwest Partners, Inc.

Panelist: Bob Brown, Principal Planner, SHN

Abstract:

One of California's most pristine estuarine environments, Humboldt Bay is the second-largest natural bay in the state and a major stopover on the Pacific Flyway. Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District was created in 1973 to address the special needs of this area and oversees planned development of harbors/ ports, and protection of natural resources. Attendees will learn of the exciting projects in progress including development of major port improvements to support offshore wind energy, mariculture pre-permitting, and bay conservation programs. Panelists will discuss rehabilitation and development of the District's Redwood Multipurpose Marine Terminal to meet the upcoming needs of the offshore wind industry. This advanced carbon-neutral terminal will support offshore wind energy component fabrication, assembly, and transport in addition to upland aquaculture, and broadband data facilities for the trans-pacific fiber optic line. Development will require ample agency

coordination and a robust CEQA/ NEPA process that is in initial stages. Panelists will provide insight into this challenging process and provide strategies for effective agency and public engagement. The District is also working on permit streamlining opportunities for mariculture operations. Oyster cultivation, a type of mariculture, only takes place in a handful of areas along the California coast and in most locations is limited by environmental constraints. However, in Humboldt Bay, it's a \$6 million a year industry supporting over \$1.4 million in payroll. Recent mariculture projects have also included growing various species of hagfish, sea lettuce and kelp. During this portion of the session, panelists will discuss the unique opportunities available in Humboldt Bay and how the District is working on pre-permitting both subtidal and intertidal mariculture areas to streamline approvals and make it easier for small-scale cultivators to start up operations. Lastly, panelists will discuss various conservation programs.

Mountains of Change (Emerging Topics)

The Future is Now: Working Together to Integrate Autonomous Vehicles

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

10:30 am – 12:00 n | Room: Emigrant Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Jenny Delumo, Senior Planner and Transportation Review Team Lead, San Francisco Planning Department

Panelist: Tam Tran, Planner and Transportation Policy Lead, San Francisco Planning Department

Panelist: Lana Wong, Mobility Management Strategy Lead, California Air Resources Board

Panelist: Kei Zushi, Senior Environmental Planner, San Francisco Planning Department

Panelist: Joshua Huneycutt, Transportation Policy Supervisor, California Public Utilities Commission

Panelist: Chris Ganson, Principal, NextMove

Abstract:

California (and the rest of the world) is in a climate crisis. Vehicle emissions are the greatest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in California, accounting for approximately 41 percent of the state's total. One of the primary ways to reduce vehicle emissions is through incentivizing low-carbon trips, including mode shift and the use of zero emission vehicles. The deployment of autonomous vehicles (AVs) is currently underway as ride hailing companies, such as Cruise, Waymo, and Nuro, have recently launched AV passenger services in San Francisco, with the intention to expand services to other cities. Ride hailing services (a.k.a. 'transportation network companies,' or TNCs) can generate substantial vehicle miles travelled, as discussed in the San Francisco County Transportation Authority's white paper entitled 'TNCs Today.' Given how new this technology is and how recently the state has begun to regulate the AV industry, there is limited data available to inform our understanding of its potential environmental impacts. While agencies seek ways to ensure that AVs are integrated safely and in a manner that does not substantially induce new vehicle miles travelled, consistent with state and local climate action goals, they should also integrate this emerging technology such that they can maximize benefits, such as improved access and convenience for people, and minimize negative consequences, such as interference with transit operations. This session will focus on the current state of AV policy and regulations, how jurisdictions can conduct environmental impact analysis for projects involving AVs, and how these might change in the future.

Avalanche Warning (Regulatory/CEQA)

CEQANet 3.0

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

10:30 am – 12:00 n | Room: Grand Sierra D | Credits: AICP 1.5 & MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Scott Morgan, Chief Deputy Director, Governor's Office of Planning and Research

Panelist: Olivia Naves, Assistant Planner, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse

Panelist: Mikayla Vaba, CEQA Technician, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse

Panelist: Daunte Arriaga, CEQA Technician, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse

Panelist: Alexandra Owens, CEQA Technician, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse

Panelist: Christine Asiata Rodriguez, Manager, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse

Panelist: Jamie Burke, CEQA Touchpoint Program Manager, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse

Abstract:

The Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) is in the preliminary stage of gathering requirements, soliciting feedback, and reviewing current processes to facilitate the development of a new online CEQA submission system. OPR proposes to modernize and streamline its business processes and enhance the user experience to improve its ability to interact with customers and stakeholders throughout the State-level review of environmental documents and notices pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Please attend the session to provide feedback about the current CEQA Submit and CEQANet system and what you would like to see in a new system.

Into the Weeds (Case Studies/Best Practices)

Mitigating Transportation Impacts: Using the New CAPCOA Handbook to Quantify VMT Reductions

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

10:30 am – 12:00 n | Room: Monument Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Teresa Whinery, Associate, Fehr & Peers

Panelist: Jeff Ang-Olson, Vice President, Transportation, ICF

Panelist: Paul Phillely, Program Supervisor, CEQA & Land Use, Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District

Abstract:

Transportation impacts and their mitigation comprise an essential part of CEQA analysis. How people travel affects the transportation system, with the potential to impact greenhouse gas emissions, air quality, and noise. The need to accurately assess and mitigate transportation impacts remains critical in CEQA analysis. Driven by changes in legislation and industry practices, the statewide shift to using vehicle miles traveled (VMT) has radically altered the way we assess transportation impacts. It also means the methodology we use to mitigate transportation impacts must change. Mitigation requires investment in programs and infrastructure designed to reduce VMT. The new CAPCOA Handbook provides accurate, reliable, and standardized emission reduction quantification methods for mitigating transportation impacts. The panel will provide an overview of the handbook and the transportation measures it includes. They will demonstrate how to identify appropriate mitigation measures, use available

calculators and tools, customize analysis for a specific project, and calculate VMT reduction potential. The panel will discuss how to address common pitfalls in calculating VMT and emissions reductions, how to use local and statewide tools to streamline the quantification process, and how cities are integrating VMT reduction strategies into other policies and plans.

Enchanted Forest (Adaptation/Resiliency)

Centering Environmental Justice in CEQA

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

1:45 pm – 3:15 pm | Room: Grand Sierra C | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Alesia Hsiao, Senior Environmental Planner, Bay Area Air Quality Management District

Panelist: Alesia Hsiao, Senior Environmental Planner, Bay Area Air Quality Management District

Panelist: Miriam Torres, Senior Advanced Project Advisor, Bay Area Air Quality Management District

Panelist: Suma Peesapati, Environmental Justice Officer, Bay Area Air Quality Management District

Abstract:

Environmental injustices are often rooted in the exclusion of communities in land use decisions. There is a moral imperative to address long-standing inequities in the siting, design, and development of land use projects. We are developing recommendations for centering environmental justice (EJ) in CEQA to respond to the community's right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement, and evaluation. This session makes the case for centering EJ in CEQA processes and analyses and provides a framework to improve EJ practices in CEQA review for all projects. We believe that discussions like these are essential in collaborating with community and further advancing EJ in planning outcomes.

Sparkling Headwaters (Water Resources)

Revamping Water Infrastructure in the Wild

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

1:45 pm – 3:15 pm | Room: Castle Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Debbie Craven-Green, Permitting Supervisor, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Panelist: Sue Chau, Senior Environmental Project Manager, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Panelist: Mae Frantz, Senior Environmental Program Manager, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Panelist: Kelly Bayer, Northern California Environmental Planning Manager, AECOM

Panelist: Michael J. Kuehn, Ph.D., Senior Biologist, AECOM

Abstract:

Water systems in California are aging, and many of them far exceed our individual ages. The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's (SFPUC's) water system is nearly 100 years old and needs loving care. As an agency committed to the protection of the environment, we prefer to rehabilitate infrastructure where we can. For the Mountain Tunnel Improvements Project, SFPUC opted to rehabilitate deficiencies in the underground tunnel to increase drinking water reliability and improve future tunnel maintenance. Challenges are inherent in a project located in remote areas of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, but from the start, a project goal was to plan and design a project that avoids or minimizes impacts. In this session, we will walk you through the weedy trail of environmental

challenges and guide you to the cleared path that led to project success. Along the way, we will navigate our way through the complex terrain of golden eagle nests in planned blast zones and many other hydrologic-, sensitive species and natural community-, and recreation-related issues. We will highlight creative solutions that were identified to avoid/minimize impacts from the diverse project activities. Additionally, portions of the project area are on the U.S. Forest Service lands and required a Special Use Permit for which NEPA and NHPA compliance was required. We will show you the shorter and easier path we blazed by leveraging existing documentation and developing specialized analyses (in support of the Environmental Assessment) to reach the summit. Join us as we discuss our journey to see the forest for the trees on our path to project implementation.

Mountains of Change (Emerging Topics)

The New World of VMT Mitigation: Programmatic Approaches from around the State

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

1:45 pm – 3:15 pm | Room: Emigrant Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5 & MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Julie Morgan, Principal, Fehr & Peers

Panelist: Chelsea Richer, Senior Associate, Fehr & Peers

Panelist: Matt Kelly, Senior Transportation Planner, Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA)

Panelist: Cheryl Croshere, Executive Director, 50 Corridor TMA and Sacramento TMA

Abstract:

On September 27, 2013, Governor Brown signed SB 743 into law and started a process to fundamentally change CEQA transportation impact analysis by eliminating level of service (LOS) or delay as a basis for determining significant impacts. Instead, transportation impacts are now calculated based on changes to vehicle miles of travel or VMT. Practitioners and lead agency staff are now finding that fully mitigating significant VMT impacts can be challenging. Traditionally, reducing VMT from land use projects was accomplished by applying transportation demand management (TDM) strategies at the project site level, such as modifying the project's density or design, or implementing trip reduction programs that change the travel behavior of the project's tenants and visitors. However, there are limits on the effects of project-specific TDM measures. For example, most TDM strategies are effective in higher-density urban settings, and become less effective in lower density suburban and rural areas where there are few viable travel choices besides the personal automobile. This session examines how a large-scale, program-based approach to VMT mitigation could be more effective than project-specific strategies and how these programmatic approaches fit within the larger CEQA and land use planning context. Our panelists represent agencies around the state who are blazing new trails in setting up VMT mitigation programs, including VMT impact fees, mitigation exchanges, and mitigation banks. Come learn about what steps are required to set up and operate a mitigation program, how to include equity co-benefits in program design and implementation, how to navigate interjurisdictional differences, and what are some outstanding legal and technical questions that deserve expanded research. To maximize engagement and target the discussion to the audience's needs, each panelist will give a 5-minute overview of important considerations, followed by a facilitated Q&A to allow the audience to guide the discussion.

Cutting Through the Weeds of AB 52: Current Trends in Consultation and Cooperative Mitigation Strategies

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

1:45 pm – 3:15 pm | Room: Grand Sierra D | Credits: AICP 1.5 & MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Adam Giancinto, Archaeologist IV, Dudek

Panelist: Anecita Agustinez, Tribal Liaison, California Department of Water Resources

Panelist: Darrel Cruz, Director, THPO/CRO, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California

Panelist: Michele Prestowitz, Director of Restoration, Truckee River Watershed Council

Panelist: Shawn Shamlou, Cultural Practice Director, Dudek

Abstract:

It has been seven years since Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) established new relationships between public agencies and Native American tribes. It introduced requirements for reoccurring consultation and defined a new class of resources and impacts under CEQA. It can be challenging to cut through the weeds of confusion and successfully implement AB 52, especially when considering different goals of lead agencies, Native American tribes, cultural resources experts, and CEQA practitioners. This panel will discuss recent case studies and lessons learned, as well as offer recommendations from different viewpoints, with candid dialogue between the different participants. We will discuss how AB 52 and the coordination between lead agencies, tribes, and CEQA practitioners has continued to develop from each participant's perspective. How is this process being implemented? What kinds of weeds are practitioners experiencing in current approaches to AB 52? Are there best practices that have emerged? Drawing on factual case studies primarily in Northern California, a central theme of this panel will be to discuss how AB 52 can be implemented with an emphasis on cooperation, integration of multiple viewpoints, and mutually beneficial management strategies.

Into the Weeds (Case Studies/Best Practices)

Leaving No Trace and Enhancing Habitat: Methods, Challenges, and Lessons Learned from Multi-Year Restoration Projects

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

1:45 pm – 3:15 pm | Room: Monument Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Karen Frye Manager, Environmental Management Group, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission,

Panelist: Mia Ingolia, Senior Biologist, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Panelist: Andrea Irons, Biologist, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Panelist: Matthew Weinand, Environmental Compliance Manager, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Panelist: Kimberly Stern Lidell, Environmental Construction Compliance Manager, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Panelist: Suk-Ann Yee, Senior Biologist, Coast Ridge Ecology

Abstract:

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) is nearing the completion of a \$4.8 billion-dollar, multi-year capital Water System Improvement Program (WSIP) to upgrade the regional and local water systems that serve water to 2.7 million people in San Francisco and through 26 water agencies in Alameda, Santa Clara, and San

Mateo counties. The WSIP involved the construction of dozens of projects in sensitive biological habitats across SFPUC watersheds and rights-of-way stretching from the Sierra Nevada Mountains to San Francisco. Now, after several years of on-site habitat restoration activities and monitoring, the former trace of these major construction projects and buried utilities is negligible. Meanwhile, habitat enhancements where off-site mitigation restoration has occurred such as plantings, strategically located exclusion fencing, and diverting cattle are clearly visible and special status species have been seen in some locations for the first time. Through the discussion of actual restoration sites, this session will dig into habitat restoration and enhancement techniques, challenges, and lessons learned spanning the gamut of restoration program design, monitoring, and reporting methods; working with regulatory resources agencies to develop intentional, flexible, and achievable restoration plans; invasive species management; soil and plant pathogen introductions that led to the SFPUC constructing its own state-of-the-art nursery facility; nitty gritty tips such as irrigation system design; and even insights for budgeting. For planners preparing biological resources sections of environmental review documents or permit applications this session may help you write restoration-related mitigation measures that are defensible, yet flexible and achievable.

Enchanted Forest (Adaptation/Resiliency)

Statewide and Streamlined! Using the CalVTP Program EIR to Expedite Wildfire Resilience

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

3:45 pm – 5:15 pm | Room: Grand Sierra C | Credits: AICP 1.5 & MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Heather Blair, Principal, Ascent

Panelist: Sabrina Teller, Managing Partner, Remy Moose Manley, LLP

Panelist: Lara Rachowicz, Senior Ecologist/Project Manager, Ascent Environmental

Panelist: Givonne Law, Fuels Reduction Coordinator, Fire Department, East Bay Regional Park District

Abstract:

California is experiencing a wildfire crisis. California's Forest Carbon Plan and Shared Stewardship Agreement call for federal and state agencies to treat 1 million acres annually by 2025. How can CEQA compliance for landscape-scale wildfire and forest resilience projects be accelerated? Program EIRs are a highly effective tool in streamlining CEQA review of qualifying projects while maintaining environmental protection. The Program EIR for the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) has been identified in California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan (January 2021) and California's Strategic Plan for Expanding the Use of Beneficial Fire (March 2022) as critical to improving regulatory efficiency and reducing regulatory barriers, respectively. The statewide Program EIR allows for CEQA streamlining through associated documentation, including 'within the scope' findings. The streamlined approach documents a project's environmental effects and which resource protection measures would be incorporated to avoid and reduce effects. The Program EIR is designed for use by any public agency providing or receiving state funding or with land ownership or management responsibilities in the treatable landscape that seeks to implement vegetation treatments consistent with the CalVTP; there are many such state and local agencies, including universities, special districts, park districts, resource conservation districts, fire safe councils, and more. The speakers will provide information on maximizing the usefulness of a Program EIR and the 'nuts and bolts' of adequately documenting 'within the scope findings' pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(C). The panel will provide information on the CalVTP and will get 'into the weeds' on preparing a Project-specific Analysis (PSA), the within the scope finding process developed for the CalVTP Program EIR. The East Bay Hills Vegetation Treatment Project PSA will be highlighted as a real-world example of a project implemented using the CalVTP Program EIR.

Sparkling Headwaters (Water Resources)

PFAS: How to Navigate this 21st Century Challenge

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

3:45 pm – 5:15 pm | Room: Castle Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Liza Debies, Project Manager, FirstCarbon Solutions

Panelist: Michael Stephenson, Principal Scientist and Western Region Manager, Cameron-Cole

Panelist: Brian Myller, President of Professional Services, ADEC Innovations

Panelist: Rob Fagerness, Senior Engineer, FirstCarbon Solutions

Abstract:

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are pernicious chemicals found virtually everywhere: in our air, our water, our soil, and even our bodies. While the full extent of PFAS in our drinking water supply is not clear and there is still a lot we don't know about these chemicals, the EPA has proposed designating certain PFAS chemicals as hazardous substances. Seemingly overnight, many jurisdictions find themselves with PFAS levels above recommended standards, creating a challenging compliance environment that strains local finances and, in some cases, reduces access to already constrained groundwater supplies. In this workshop, we will provide a brief overview of PFAS, discuss the new standards surrounding them including potential CERCLA liability, identify potential remediation strategies, and identify funding sources to support local communities grappling with PFAS. With the latest EPA proposed ruling, regulators will soon begin requiring greater PFAS testing frequency in drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and soil and groundwater media at regulated cleanup investigation sites. It's critical to understand this rapidly evolving landscape, and this workshop will empower you to make informed decisions.

Mountains of Change (Emerging Topics)

An Integrated Environmental Approach: Turning Risk into Opportunity

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

3:45 pm – 5:15 pm | Room: Emigrant Peak | Credits: AICP 1.5 & MCLE 1.0

Moderator: Leslie Tice, National Director of Environmental Services, HDR, Inc.

Panelist: Sarah Perez, Principal, City of Santa Cruz Water Department

Panelist: Jessica Martinez-McKinney, Associate Planner, City of Santa Cruz Water Department

Panelist: Lewis Kay, Project Manager, City of Santa Cruz Water Department

Abstract:

At the 2019 AEP Conference, we presented on the topic of Advancing Program Management through More Integrated Environmental Considerations. That engagement was lively and demonstrated that the concept of integrated planning is as something our practice believes in, but how it is applied and how it is accepted varies across the industry. The City of Santa Cruz Water Department's Capital Improvement Program continues to explore and adapt its approach to integrated environmental planning and proposes to bring the conversation back to the AEP community. During this session, our panel of Water Department environmental and engineering professionals and HDR's environmental lead will present an update on this program, examining a diverse crosscut of projects to focus on how an approach of early and consistent environmental engagement turned potential risks and issues into opportunities. Specifically, we will highlight the following projects: - Laguna Creek Diversion Retrofit Project: \$3M retrofit of a surface water intake with a novel installation (Coanda screen) to improve operability of

the facility and habitat conditions in a cold-water coastal stream supporting steelhead and coho in downstream reaches.- Newell Creek Pipeline Replacement Project: \$39M replacement of an 8.75-mile raw water pipeline between the Loch Lomond Reservoir to the Graham Hill Water Treatment Plant.- Graham Hill Water Treatment Plant Facility Improvements Project: \$151M upgrade of the City's only surface water treatment plant to address aged infrastructure and meet current expectations for reliability and resiliency in the face of many new 21st century challenges. This panel will share challenges, tools, and lessons learned applicable to any project. We will share values including how to pursue early and consistent environmental engagement on projects of all sizes and specific strategies to advance project planning. Finally, we will engage with our fellow practitioners to incorporate their own experiences.

Avalanche Warning (Regulatory/CEQA)

Rail Trail Segments 8/9 Draft EIR

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

3:45 pm – 5:15 pm | Room: Grand Sierra D | Credits: AICP 1.5

Moderator: Kate Elliott, Director, Environmental Planning + Compliance, Harris & Associates

Panelist: Nathan Nguyen, Assistant Public Works Director/Project Manager, City of Santa Cruz

Panelist: Grace Blakeslee, Senior Transportation Planner, Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

Panelist: Nicole West, Sr Environmental Planner, Rincon Consultants

Abstract:

The City of Santa Cruz prepared an EIR with a unique approach for dealing with a project subject to local controversy, unknown political outcome (ballot referendum to change relevant General Plan policy), several agency stakeholders, and an aggressive EIR schedule. The Project is the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 8 and 9, which is part of the larger Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network. The Project extends through the City and unincorporated Santa Cruz County in a rail corridor owned by the Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission, and which is receiving federal funding through Caltrans. The City, their stakeholders, and the EIR consultant team developed an approach to prepare a robust EIR that covered two potential outcomes. This includes analyzing the City's Proposed Project: Trail next to Rail line (Ultimate Trail Configuration), as well as an Optional First Phase: Trail on the Rail line (Interim Trail) for Segment 9, which is part of the Project and therefore analyzed at an equal level of detail. The Interim Trail includes three parts: 1) railbanking the rail corridor, removing the rail, and constructing the Interim Trail on the rail line; 2) removing the Interim Trail and rebuilding the rail ~25 years later; and 3) constructing the Ultimate Trail Configuration alongside the rail. This approach provides for full evaluation of both scenarios, certification of the EIR by the February 2023 deadline, and enables the decision makers to approve both scenarios and decide later which to implement based on politics and funding. Additionally, there are significant and unavoidable impacts to aesthetics, biological resources, and cultural resources due to substantial tree removal and effects to a historic rail line eligible for state and federal listing which made for a challenging alternatives analysis. We look forward to sharing and discussing this interesting project, challenging EIR, and lessons learned.