

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

MEETING DATE: 11/27/06

AGENDA ITEM: **Sustainable Community Plan**

ATTACHMENTS

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**AIA Selects Eight Communities for Community Assistance Program to Promote
Long-term Sustainability**

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For immediate release:

Washington, D.C. – February 13, 2006 – The American Institute of Architects (AIA) Center for Communities by Design has selected New Orleans, Syracuse, N.Y., Longview, Wash., Guemes Island, Wash., Lawrence, Kan., Northeast, Mich., Northern, Nev., and Hagerstown, Md. as the eight communities to receive technical assistance under the Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) program in 2006. The collaborative SDAT brings together architects and other professionals assembled from across the country to provide a roadmap for communities seeking to improve their sustainability – as defined by a community’s ability to meet the environmental, economic, and social equity needs of today without reducing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

“More cities are placing a priority on sustainability and community revitalization, and the feedback from planning officials and mayors of communities that have already participated in the SDAT program has been extremely positive,” said David T. Downey, Assoc. AIA, managing director of the AIA Center for Communities by Design. “The forward-looking program is intended to help address challenges that communities face, such as transportation design strategies, air and water quality improvement possibilities, local economic development, brownfields issues, and how to manage growth associated with increasing and shifting populations.”

A team of professionals including architects, planners, hydrologists, economic development specialists, and others will be selected based on their credentials and the specific needs of each community. The SDAT will work in conjunction with local stakeholders to help shape the community’s strategy to increase sustainability. To provide the most objective assessment, team members volunteer their time and expertise and are selected from areas outside the project communities.

Past SDAT participant reaction

Forest City, N.C. Town Planner & Downtown Development Director, Danielle Withrow said, “We are already moving ahead with both smaller recommendations and larger long-term recommendations from the AIA SDAT program that we participated in last summer. The smaller recommendations such as crosswalks in the downtown area have been implemented. The long-term recommendations include creating redevelopment areas that will help to revitalize some of our deteriorating neighborhoods and expand our housing base by offering more opportunities for home ownership in a recreated mill village. An enhanced downtown service district will allow us to better utilize our existing assets, such as our town square, and provide a greater sense of community and safe, walkable neighborhoods.”

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Logan, Utah Director of Community Development, Jay Nielson said, "The AIA SDAT collaboration provided the glue to focus attention on issues that everyone has known about for a long time, but had not previously been able to address. It brought together people with outside objectivity that understood our concerns regarding traffic efficiency and environmental quality control surrounding new building development. We are implementing the key recommendations from the team, including the establishment of a large coalition to closely examine the big picture as it relates to long-term planning for the entire region."

SDAT program elements

The communities were selected after submitting an application to the 2006 SDAT review panel outlining the economic, environmental, and social equity challenges facing their region. The SDAT community assistance program provides the selected communities with six components:

- Preliminary/scoping visit
- Three-day visit from a multidisciplinary team
- A report highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the community with regards to sustainability, along with the opportunities and obstacles to change
- Consultations after the three-day visit (typically by phone or email)
- A conference call six months after delivery of the assessment report to review progress
- One-day follow-up evaluation visit a year after the SDAT report is delivered

To learn more about this program, download the SDAT information packet:
<http://www.aia.org/SiteObjects/files/RFP%20Quark.pdf>

About the AIA Center for Communities by Design

The Center for Communities by Design is the clearinghouse for the American Institute of Architects' many activities—from promoting sustainable design to leading design based technical assistance projects in communities—that influence the quality of life in our nation's communities. The center is a nonpartisan forum that provides information, develops policy, creates partnerships, and assists in advocacy efforts to facilitate discussions of community design and inform choices for neighborhoods, cities, regions, and the nation.

About The American Institute of Architects

For almost 150 years, members of The American Institute of Architects have worked with each other and their communities to create more valuable, healthy, secure, and sustainable buildings and cityscapes. AIA members have access to the right people, knowledge, and tools to create better design, and through such resources and access, they help clients and communities make their visions real. www.aia.org

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