

# **The Makabusi Archives**

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**December 2nd, 2001**

## **SUNDAYS READINGS — 12/2/01**

### **RACING**

California Counties are facing changes that for example would end 60 years of horse racing at the Pomona fairgrounds. Kern County made this decision about their fairgrounds many years ago – but went further – no more horse racing at all. It is a pity because we are the “belly button of California” and like our soccer facilities, we can be attractive to all Californians because of our central geographic location.

Few if any new horse racing facilities have been proposed recently in the United States. Maybe investors have greater interests in motorcar racetracks. At least they are bringing in more sports fans than horse racing. However like all new things the inexorable pressure of TV networks placing a better eye on reality, than sitting in stands as spectators, — this trend will not last.

It is a pity that a TV camera has not been strapped to the head of a jockey for a better look at the track and horses hooves!

### **CITY OF TAFT**

A most well written article of “Glitz, Cash and a Dream Lead to Trouble in Taft “ was covered by the LA Times. The Bakersfield Californian has done small shrift on sharing this problem in our County.

### **VENTURA COUNTY AND CITIES COULD LOSE \$75M**

State lawmakers seeking tax shift to avoid a deficit could trigger cuts in local programs makes one wonder what programs will be nixed in Kern County and the City of Bakersfield.

### **LOOPHOLE LETS LANDOWNERS BUILD ON NATIVE GROUNDS.**

The California Historical Resources Information System Holds records used to help determine whether Native American remains and artifacts should be removed or preserved during construction. State law gives cities and counties discretion on whether to check permits for small builders against those archeological records. To comply with state law large developers often pay archeologists and Native Americans to survey their land, reinter remain and take representative samples of artifacts before construction begins.

Kern County and the City of Bakersfield require an archeological check for a grading project like the proposed Multi-use Stadium. One hope the City Manager Tandy has budgeted for this contingency.

A compounding factor is that state archeological maps are shared only with scientists and developers on a need-to-know basis.

**BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.**

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**December 3rd, 2001**

## **MAGLEV TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT**

When transportation discussions venture into such things as Maglev technology alternatives, all the high powered consultants tell us is that we, “don’t have the full breadth of expertise to make total sense of the minutia...” Then they begin the mantra, “proven technology” or “proprietary technology” and say something about, “...isn’t the point of Maglev technology...speed...?”

The last excuse is one of whether there is any example of advance Maglev technologies in “proven revenue service”. Unfortunately unknown to these experts there are two representative Maglev technologies presently doing quite well in revenue service. The risk takers in this technology can be found in California at Disneyland and Six Flags Magic Mountain. (See my earlier article)

It is my challenge to these politburo folk to take a ride and discover the speed of our currently running revenue receiving Maglev technology. Why I will even join them and pay for the ride!

It is my hope that the CHRSA Board Members at least take this small risk to feel the power of Maglev future, rather than suggest how wonderful it was on high speed rail services in Europe. It is these decision makers who should lead us into transportation futures for California.

One fervently hopes that we Californians can vote for something better than old rail technology somewhat souped up! . Maglev has smooth transitions and can easily reach the CHSRA goals of reaching distant stations in our state to supplement our need for short time frames between the Bay Area and the Los Angeles Basin.

One hopes that we Californians can avoid crossing our fingers, or putting together prayerful hands for our people taking on this challenge for us all. All we need is rather the thumbs up signal choice of Maglev technology for our traveling future.

**BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.**

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**December 4th, 2001**

## **BAKERSFIELD REDEVELOPMENT THEME**

The rumors are rife about our current Bakersfield downtown redevelopment “Entertainment Theme” center. The connections between the proposed Multi-use Stadium and the adjacent proposed development seems to be dependent on financing for both private and public development functions.

Bakersfield might be comparable to Albuquerque that also has a reputation for suburban sprawl. However Albuquerque is finally beginning to see revitalization in its downtown. The city center got its first 14-screen state of the art movie theatre and is successfully drawing people from outlying areas. New restaurants are opening, a new transportation center is being developed, even an exhibition center and mixed-use is contemplated.

This sounds similar to Bakersfield’s expectations except for Albuquerque’s hundreds of new downtown dwellings, which have been planned. To spend a day or an evening without having to get into a car to go to each

destination is paramount. This means that structured parking should be considered as an essential ingredient of destination for citizens within the pedestrian bounds of the project area.

A most important feature is not just the commercial amenities but also another magnet that needs attention. It means that in addition to making the proposed “Entertainment Center” it also needs the creation of an attractive central place for our metro citizens to congregate. This means a more adequate public space area than the micro public space left over in front of the “Centennial Gardens”.

Is it not a gift that Bakersfield has a canal that affords an extraordinary opportunity to create a creek as a water feature to traverse between three city blocks? It is these edges that create high values to adjacent real estate development. Surely with a little more imagination together with a few small incentives and adjustments this area could become what Bakersfolks have longed for many years to develop?

This area is a diamond in the rough and deserves a great urban design to demonstrate it’s worth to the community.

**BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.**

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**December 5th, 2001**

## **PLANS FOR HORSES HAVE HITCHES**

Some time ago in one of my articles a question was raised about horse racetracks and County Fairs. For many years past horses and fairs have worked together on events throughout the year. Now without horse racing tracks, County Fairs are waning as agricultural exhibitions.

One should rather change the context of County Fairs and cluster them alongside a new motorcar racetrack! Why current mechanical farming technology now replaces recreational horse sled pull events with tractor pulls for example. Many other old horse technologies have been replaced with machines. Horses and mules functioned well for the military in the past carrying soldiers and pulling guns into firing positions. It was highly amusing seeing camouflaged American soldiers riding through difficult terrain in Afghanistan.

So what can be done to keep the horse as a viable aspect of our economy? With the Kern County Fairgrounds contemplating the elimination of stables and arena for year round events it is an indication that change is looming as to how we approach a parting of ways in this future of County Fairs. It is no different from the Equestrian Center at the Orange County Fairgrounds. The decision to downsize are forcing consideration of horse functions elsewhere.

A possible solution might be to suggest a “mixed use” development. In short it would place stables and horse event needs alongside one another. A development with such amenities has been suggested in part in San Juan Meadows, near San Juan Capistrano. The facility would accommodate 3,000 horses, a veterinary hospital, a clubhouse, restaurants, an Equestrian event center that could hold up to 1,000 guests and even some private training stables.

This above development proposal is however short of one essential element. The rural needs of ranchettes and estates together with rental housing for stable hands. The mix would be to add a variety of housing to accommodate the wide range of people suffering from the disease of horse genes in their blood! This would

include accommodations for the breeders with larger property needs to small backyard horse owners. Ideally this sort of facility would be placed inside a buffer of land that would not only supply alfalfa and feed for horses but also handle horse byproducts – manure.

A joint private/public project such as this alongside the Kern River would revive the entire multi million dollar recreational industry. The needs are a equestrian school, a quality new racetrack, dressage arenas, Olympic three day event course, carriage course, an event arena for rodeos and horse breed conformation shows, show jumping and unique events such as the Calgary Stampede and the Las Vegas or Dallas/Fort Worth rodeo and team penning, annual national championships.

In addition such a Kern Equestrian Facility location could attach itself to the start or finish of a long distance 20—50 mile horse races along the Kern River. From such a location the trail to the Kern Canyon mouth and beyond could connect with the John Muir Trail. The right ideas however belong to appropriate timing and a cluster of the right “horse people” who have such a long-term vision to maintain this agricultural heritage.

This is the hitch in the plan for horses. Who will stand up and commit to this action?

**BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.**

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## **December 7th, 2001**

### **MORE ZIMBABWE WHISPERS**

Zimbabwe’s high court reversed itself and ruled siezures of white–owned farms are legal. The reversal of last years decision came after President Mugabe replaced many of the justices and expanded the court.

Zimbabwe’s high court ordered the government to relax a rule requiring registering voters to produce extensive documentation. The opposition argued the law was meant to further Mugabe’s re-election bid.

**BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.**

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## **December 9th, 2001**

### **SUNDAY READINGS 12/9/01**

#### **HORSES AGAIN**

Having lived for over a quarter of a century with Pure Spanish Horses I was pleased to notice that a “Third Party” of discipline was needed to care for the Yosemite Valley National Park. Like the Spanish Cria Caballar who is still protecting the purity of the Spanish Horse against breeder’s organizations in Spain and for that matter all over the world, the U.S. Cavalry were called upon to manage the newly created park in Yosemite Valley between 1890 and 1914.

This US Cavalry literally rode to the rescue “That most holy mansion of the mountains,” as John Muir called it,

“was protected in law but not in fact.” “Homesteading farmers, cattlemen, miners, land promoters and timber speculators claimed nearly 60,000 acres within the designated national park.”

The U.S. Cavalry according to Meyerson surveyed and mapped the fantastic topography, counted the already endangered population of bear, deer, grouse and quail; worked to prevent the locals and the tourists from doing damage to the parklands and championed the right of a tiny remnant of Native American to remain in their tribal homeland.”

The Spanish Horse in The United States of America has been under assault by breeders, showmen and riders for the time my wife and I have been involved over 25 years. There needs to be a clear understanding amongst all Spanish Horse owners that a “Third Party” much like the U.S. Cavalry is paramount to ensure that the essence of the breed is kept intact for the next hundred years.

**AIRPORT DESIGN TOOK A BIG HIT SEPT 11.**

While airport projects are on hold while “officials rethink the balance between efficiency and security” The Federal Government have taken over the national airports. Their solution is short term and lacks any sensitivity to long-term futures.

After closing down military airbases all over the country the Feds are now manning security stations being wedged into the walls of yesterday’s terminals. Adib Kanafani of UC Berkeley critiqued the economics of this airport design, as “The terminal will be more expensive so the debt burden will be higher, the lease payments will be higher, the operating costs for airlines will be higher, the air fares will go up.”

Here is but another exquisite example of how the narrow short term is being addressed by Feds for airports. The same might be said about the methods for freeway, railway and/or any other ground transportation mobility technology programming for our civil urban future. This scanning hiccup and mending of the passenger boarding process that should be fixed is only an incremental patchwork.

Consider the following airport plight; vehicle trips, limousine trips, shuttle bus trips, rental car receipts, parking revenues, taxicab trips, cars parked, actual passenger trips, scheduled passenger seats, mail, air freight, assessed land value, scheduled flights and passengers processed, plus another 13 measures well described in the LA Times. They are all negative from the norm by large margins.

One might look at rubber tire and supportive roadways much the same way in dealing with traffic congestion. The Census 2000 Supplemental Survey in Kern County showed that some 75 percent of Kern County workers drove to work alone in a car, truck or van. This was slightly higher than statewide. Cleaner air and resultant congestion relief is being sought with a new freeway system and arterial roads. The Census survey found it took people an average of 21.8 minutes to get to work. The Kern Regional Transit and Golden Empire Transit are still utilizing 1950’s bus designs and are passively suggesting that these statistics are not correct!

Until one can step out of this status quo “officials” box of no risk taking for any new transportation technology ventures to get people around, we will be traveling much like the mouse running on a spinning Ferris wheel for the foreseeable future.

**BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.**

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**December 11th, 2001**

## **A CALL FOR NEW DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

After years of working on a public vision driven by City Council Members who instructed City Manager Tandy to move ahead adjacent to the Convention Center, Mayor Hall has sensibly called for a pause in an attempt to discover a new way to move this project forward.

Look at the result of this effort – No Loans, No Certificates of Participation, No Multi-Use Stadium, No Baseball Franchise Sale, No Land Purchases. Ouch!

The triad of people who made the decisions behind these negotiations are – Group ONE — Olmscheid, Sivers and Moctezuma Esparza. — Group TWO — City Manager Tandy, Redevelopment Agency and City Council. — Group THREE — Bakerfolks, Land Owners, Downtown Business Association, Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce, 2020 Vision, and a DDA Business Assessment Group amongst others.

The movers and shakers involved with this program all had a good measure of perseverance and patience to get this far. They relied on the program offered by an Economic Consultant. They relied on an unsolicited proposal from a single urban developer. This was later subdivided by Councilman Carson when the housing element was given to another developer. They relied on only the “Entertainment Forecast” for a narrow program with little change and only one update in three years. They did not expect the impacts of the September 11th external terrorist event.

The opportunity for improvements to any future redevelopment process should give more thought to the following considerations.

Consider the entire redevelopment area as one whole area set into a development framework plan for the future of all downtown, that is Old Town Kern, the South East Area as well as present downtown, not forgetting to include the County Metropolitan Park.

Consider setting up a priority of development programs which targets specific areas and sectors of the overall development framework plan with ideas such as has been revealed by citizens in the Downtown Charrette and 2020 Vision Project. Check the market and fiscal feasibility of each program.

Consider establishing future transportation corridor investments needed for an expanding downtown and metropolitan area. This would include both the major east-west cross San Joaquin Valley Freeway 58, the local Centennial Freeway the California State High Speed “Rail Station” location, together with local road arterials. Neither should one forget the integration of city, county and regional bus or light rail transit.

Consider setting up an investment pattern for infrastructure improvements metro-wide. Then illuminate a small step by step strategy for the public development framework programs. Only then allow the implementation of RFQ’s and RFP’s for private competitive development.

Consider better public participation with the landowners impacted by these programs. Provide a variety of opportunities for those involved in the expected development consequences. Understand the differences between the wants and needs of the public at large for these developments. Never take the path of least resistance by excluding citizens from voting on large program expenditures involved with such approved projects.

Consider seriously all the improvements for both public and private redevelopment investments from vision to implementation. Understand which project really does improve the quality and culture of life in Bakersfield. Measure these projects for the good of all Bakerfolks both in the short and long term future.

My belief rests in the ability of individual Bakerfolks to the building of our civil society. My belief is also based in elected and appointed leaders helping us all to create the city we need to be proud of and in which we happily choose to spend the majority of our lives. So far the City and County have not demonstrated their true capabilities of managing these affairs.

With the present interest rates and probability of no further “wildcard” events, most things look positive. To continue our best attempts at city building we do need more than this moment for reflection.

**BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.**

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**December 13th, 2001**

## **BAKERSFIELD CITY COUNCIL MEETING — AGENDA — CITY CENTER**

It was most interesting listening to all the City Council comments regarding the City Center Project last night.  
12/12/01

Here are some further considerations noted from the City Center Project discussions. There are many more items to consider to reveal a better way to redevelop downtown.

Further consideration should be given to “thumb rule” calculations and modeling needs to suggest a base for forecasting a reasonable mix of land use “density” for downtown. Expectations of future uses in downtown should be carefully determined. This should reveal a pattern from which to create better traffic circulation and parking structure requirements.

One should consider reducing uncertainty for both public and private redevelopment activities, with a smarter legislative integration between the RDA and the City Council.

One should consider the basics of all projects as Design, Site Planning and Finance. Maybe it requires one oversight committee constituted with a mix of people from each of these areas of knowledge and expertise as being necessary for future redevelopment projects.

One should consider that “Project Development Costs” are borne by both public and private sectors in development. They are twofold. The “soft costs” that are the man hours involved with program development; the setting of consultants (or City Staff Team) team; then the hiring of disciplines needed to create the elements which should be project specific. The “hard costs” are cost estimates of the preliminary measured ideas before a commitment is made to move ahead. Both these soft and hard costs should be assessed before deciding on actions.

Finally in conclusion one should more seriously consider it to be most prudent having a “back-up” plan. If the proposed initial development plan fails for some reason or other, another plan should be there to replace it.

**BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.**

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**December 14th, 2001**

## **California High Speed Rail Authority — PRESENTATION**

Honorable Chair, Authority Board Members and Staff

The Governing Body of California has challenged this Authority with inventing a future mobility for the projected 45 million residents who will live and work in California by 2020. A new secure, reliable regional and intercity transportation system should act as the foundation of a strong economy. It should serve the future knowledge-based communities for a diverse set industries over the next hundred years.

Californians need to maximize the exchange of goods and services, culture, friendship, ideas, and knowledge. The transportation technology of choice should collapse distance by shortening time periods between San Francisco and Los Angeles and places in between.

Today we wish to share a brief design solution for the City of Bakersfield and it's Metropolitan area.

The approach path from the south and/or east converges into the Bakersfield metro area at approximately Hwy 58 and Mount Vernon Avenue. It is here that we suggest a two-path divergence of lines. One path should be directed northward towards the Union Pacific corridor. The second path westward toward the Burlington Northern & Sante Fe alignment. The Center City station should be located on the north side of the BNSF as pedestrian close to the existing Amtrak Station as possible.

This solution therefore locates two potential rail alignments for the Bakersfield Metropolitan Central City location.

The first path allows for high-speed non-stop line along the Union Pacific corridor. This will thereafter allow convergence northward toward either of the Burlington Northern and Southern Pacific corridors to the Bay area.

The second path suggests a local service line. This runs along the Burlington Northern Sante Fe alignment westwards and then northwards to serve Bakersfield passengers. The required deceleration and acceleration geometries would allow local access to the main high-speed line in both northerly and southerly directions.

This solution also proposes to take opportunity of adjacent industrially zoned land areas for both local and state high speed transportation service, namely: -

For cleaning, re-stocking and switching of the high-speed transportation trains in a close-by maintenance area

For an area given to high-speed transportation system guide way maintenance.

For a high-speed transportation system construction yard.

Geographically Bakersfield is California's strategic center of two major north and south metropolitan areas. So situated it has land available to promote construction assembly, maintenance and service of trains.

We ask the Authority to give serious consideration of these available land parcels on this local line and this solution to a central city station location. The fact that Bakersfield also has quite a record of skillful manufacturing is significant. We have a great desire to boost the oil/agricultural economic base, with this venture.

We hope the Authority achieves this project from concept to completion for all Californians. It will be the most significant accomplishment since the California Aqueduct.

As citizens of this Bakersfield metropolitan area, we believe that we deserve a central city station.

**BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.**

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**December 15th, 2001**

## **TRANSPORTATION AND DOWNTOWN BAKERSFIELD**

Transportation has always posed problems for downtown - and that was just as true if the conveyance was a horse-drawn tram, elevated train, or even subway - but the automobile was different. The mobility it offered made downtown an option for the middle class, not a necessity.

In the 19th century, that every city had to have a downtown, it was inevitable and desirable. This balance between the concentration of businesses and the dispersal of residences, are assumptions that nobody questioned in the late 19th century.

Unfortunately most American Cities followed the surveyor's grid of mile squares. Bakersfield subdivided this grid into smaller squares to give us "city blocks." Unfortunately the dimensions of the parking spaces in structures just do not quite fit well enough into these blocks. Our city is unlike Boston's that follows the curves and twists of 18th-century pathways.

It's very hard to live in a good downtown community because that concept is what [University of Michigan historian] Bob Fishman calls, 'the bourgeois utopia': It's a single-family home on a lot with nice trees and a lawn. Again we struggle to adapt the dimensions of parking cars in structures with apartments above for comfortable living. More than that we battle with the complexities of creating more parks and open spaces for people to enjoy in downtowns. The other things such as neighborhood shopping are also somewhat missing.

Bakerfieldians would be happy to live in downtown if they could somehow find a way to live in that single-family house on that quarter acre and raise their kids there! When that becomes increasingly difficult, and at present is impossible because of the nature of downtown, they move out into the suburbs.

Almost all my colleagues in the architectural, planning and engineering disciplines are involved in solving problems, offering solutions, and designing stuff. What is missing is the receptacle of downtown does not offer incentives comparable to suburbia that balances or surpasses the needs of living in the suburbs.

The density and intensity of living on the one hand needs to be explored against the balance of elements that will provide for a gracious civil interface of people. Is not walking together a little more safe than commuting by car daily much like lemmings into clouded dirty air!

Resolving the transportation problems downtown for both pedestrian and vehicles is the first mark to forwarding a better environment for people who might choose to live there.

**BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.**

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**December 16th, 2001**

## **History of Magneplane**

### **The development of maglev**

In the late 60s it was recognized that the speed of wheeled railroads is limited to 150-200 mph. No amount of engineering can make steel-wheeled vehicles go faster economically because of the stress and wear limitations of steel itself.

Alternatives to the wheel were being pursued seriously. Air cushion levitation was pursued in England, France, and the US, but was ultimately ruled out as being unworkable. Magnetic levitation, or maglev is credited as being invented by Jim Powell and Gordon Danby at Brookhaven Laboratories, on Long Island, in New York, but there is a patent as early as 1902 for using attractive magnets to reduce the friction of trolley cars.

The German Transrapid system is basically a maglev train. A train, especially a 2000 ton train, can not accelerate fast enough to be useful at high speeds for anything other than long trips. If you want to go from Hamburg to Berlin along with a thousand other passengers, Transrapid is perfectly acceptable, but it is not feasible to make any or very many stops along the way. It is noted that the TR08 has been reduced in size to as few as two vehicles, each carrying 60 first class passengers and each weighing only 188 tons, but the acceleration is one fifth that of the magneplane and it requires the mechanical movement of a section of track to provide switching, which severely limits the speed and increases the spacing between vehicles. The grade climbing capability is half that of the magneplane, which can climb a 20% grade.

### **The magneplane**

A radically new type of transportation, the magneplane, was invented which uses small 45, 100 or 140 passenger vehicles, operating along a guideway, which combines the features of an airplane, a train, and a car. It is really a bus that goes 300 mph, is fully automated, goes where you want to go, and when you want, with dynamic scheduling. Due to its relatively low speed compared to a jet airplane, and relatively high air friction compared to a jet airplane, the magneplane is not expected to compete with air travel for trips of 300 miles or more.

The magneplane was invented in 1969 by Henry Kolm and Richard Thornton of MIT, and developed by Magneplane International, Inc. with support from MIT, Raytheon, United Engineers, Avco, Alcoa and 3M. Additional funding was supplied later by the National Science Foundation.

When the Magneplane corporation was dissolved, the word "magneplane" became a public domain word, which can not be trademarked or used as a company name. A new, private company, Magplane Technology, Inc., was formed to continue the development of the magneplane concept.

### **Today**

Magplane Technology is expecting to complete an operational engineering prototype sometime in the next several years, using exclusively private funding.

Funds to develop the magneplane prototype were authorized by the US 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, but have not been appropriated yet. In 1998 the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, TEA-21, authorized funds to use towards deploying a maglev system in the United States. These funds will also need to be appropriated.

It is estimated that the development, construction and testing of a magneplane prototype would cost \$250,000,000 and take approximately six years. Guideways are estimated to cost \$15 million per mile, and require an almost zero area of right of way other than the existing highway rights of way. Stations (magports) can be conveniently located in shopping centers, residential areas, office parks and at entertainment centers.

Rather than focusing on what it will cost, it is better to focus on what the magneplane will provide - easy access to locations which otherwise are mired in traffic, both in the sky and on the ground. Almost every city in the world can be used as an example of impossible transportation systems. In New York City the average speed of traffic is now 7 miles per hour, and decreasing. Rollerblading is popular because it is twice as fast as taking a taxi. A magneplane on the other hand goes 5 miles a minute, meaning that instead of it taking an hour to go cross town it would take less than a minute. Getting from your office to the airport which in most cities means leaving your office two to three hours before your scheduled departure time would take three to five minutes, and if you are going somewhere less than 500 miles away, taking a magneplane the whole way would probably take less total time than flying.

Due to the aerodynamic advantage of a jet flying at 30 to 40 thousand feet and due to the higher speed of a jet versus a magneplane, it is more practical to fly in an airplane than it is to use a magneplane for trips beyond 500 miles in length.

For information, including information on a brochure and video, write to [info@magneplane.com](mailto:info@magneplane.com)

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## **December 17th, 2001**

### **ZIMBABWE WHISPERS**

South Africa's rand has weakened by more than 38% against the dollar in 2001. Money outflows have grown dramatically surging 19.3 Billion rand (\$1.6 Billion) in the first three quarters of 2001 from 11.5 Billion rand over the whole of year 2000. Fearing a possible 12% inflation and a possible civil war in neighboring Zimbabwe, where presidential elections are scheduled for March, this a serious decline of monetary value.

Mugabe's top rival was detained Friday and Saturday and charged with possession of an unlicensed two-way radio. Zimbabwe's president, who is facing March elections, has likened political campaigns to war.

**[BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.](#)**

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## **December 18th, 2001**

### **What is All the Fuss About It? The Segway**

December 17th and 24th, 2001 - Ever since Magplane Technology Inc. began, we have tried to present a balanced perspective on transportation, urban planning, The New Economy and our technology. While we believe that the Magplane Commuter System can radically alter the urban form to the benefit of all citizens, the speculations and theories put forward in this website have to be empirically tested. The theory of interconnected

urban nodes within a decentralized Interactive Megalopolis has to demonstrate that this new urban form is: desirable and achievable with the transportation technology offered by the Magplane Commuter System.

For the past year, we have all waited for the unveiling of Ginger, a revolutionary transportation device invented by Dean Kamen. During the first week of this month, Dean Kamen was quoted to say that IT “will be to the car what the car was to the horse and buggy.”

Well the truth is as an urban society we never did go directly from the horse and buggy days to the automobile. Here is a glimpse of some evolutionary modes of urban travel that altered the landscape of the city since the days of the horse and buggy. And it is important to remember that their introduction was welcomed initially as a means to relieve urban congestion. Voiture-Omnibus Paris, France 1819

The major contribution of the horse-car was mass transit. Before 1819, only the wealthy had access to transportation for destinations beyond a one-hour walk. As a result, the urban boundary expanded to a radius of about 5 miles or more. Later adapted in New York City in 1832.

Elevated Cable/Steam Car New York City 1867

This mode expanded the city along radial lines connecting far flung suburbs to Manhattan. However, congestion was never mitigated because most of the working population could ill-afford the service. Used primarily by the wealthier class to escape the city.

Elevated Street Railway New York, Chicago, Philadelphia 1895

While this mode did not have the same reach as the Elevated Steam Car, the Elevated Street Railway did extend the commuting distance for the working population considerably. The famous LOOP in Chicago was successful because in addition to speed and convenience the service was affordable to a mass market.

The Subway Boston, New York 1897 and 1904

Until the automobile, this mode of transport ushered in the greatest change to the urban landscape. In addition to speed, capacity and increased commuting distance at an affordable cost, the subway expanded the city for all of its residents and finally succeeded in relieving congestion. The Subway created the metropolitan region before the automobile.

The Automobile Every City 1904

The automobile was not the primary commuting mode in America before the introduction of the freeway system. The automobile needed the freeway system to transform urban America. In 1940, 32 million motor vehicles were registered for a national population of 132 million, or one car for every 4 Americans.

The Railway Commuter Chicago, New York and others 1920 to 1945

Capitalizing on available freight lines, railroads introduced commuting rail to link a growing middle class to far-flung suburbs. Its reach into the general population was limited and while considered a mass transit mode, the railway commuter did not reach into the working class.

The Freeway Every City 1945 to Present

More accurately, it was this innovation that expanded the urban limits dramatically, redesigning our cities. Its impact to the urban landscape is felt greatest in cities that experienced substantial population increases, such as the Southwest. By 1990, America had 138 million motor registered vehicles for a population of 249 million or one car for roughly every 1.4 Americans. Eventually and very soon, statisticians estimate that there will be one registered motor vehicle for every US citizen. According to the newest numbers from the Census: cars, trucks

and vans carried 111.7 million commuters to work—87.5 percent of all work trips in 2000.

Obviously the claim that IT can replicate the revolutionary impact of the horse and buggy to automobile eras is a stretch at best. According to John Landis of the University of California at Berkeley if the Segway is to impact the urban landscape significantly, “It has to be either faster or more convenient”. “It may be, but it isn’t now. Now it’s nothing more than a one-wheeled motorcycle.”

For every transportation evolution listed above, the congestion of the city was lessened through expansion as the new travel mode made more distant destinations accessible. The Segway on the other hand, does not expand commuting ranges for all citizens. Rather, it is targeted at pedestrians, and short distance public transport travelers and motorists. The success of the Segway is dependent on modal conversions not in inducing new travel.

For the sake of the employers and the employees of the New Economy, let us hope that Mr. Kamen is somewhat too optimistic because if cities do reorganize urban activities to promote the use of this device, then the contraction of the metropolis is all but inevitable. The arrival of the Segway is perfectly timed to exploit the growing backlash against the automobile and long distance work commuting. In fact, the inventor is pinning the hopes of the company on the contraction of the city and the banishment of the automobile from the central city.

By traveling at three or four times walking speed, and thus turning what would have been a 30-minute walk into a 10-minute ride, Kamen contends, Segways will in effect shrink cities to the point where cars “will not only be undesirable, but unnecessary.”

<http://www.time.com/time/business/printout/0,8816,186660,00.html>

The collapse of our cities if it were to occur, will be counterproductive to the economic well being of our urban economies. Rather than increasing economies of scale of an increasingly specialized labor force, the Segway may decrease labor accessibility at a time when the capital value of labor is greater than the capital value of fixed assets. As well, the contraction of the urban form will aggravate the spatial segregation of economic classes resulting in an ever more isolated working class. Urban planners learned this lesson in the aftermath of the 1965 Watts riots, when poor transportation links isolated this community with tragic results.

However, the Segway does hold very significant potential for many transportation markets: Shopping Malls; Postal Service; Policing and Security; Military; Airports and Industrial Plants/Warehouses.

We at Magplane Technology Inc. have always looked to the subway and the impact it had on our cities as a transportation model to emulate. Because its transportation attributes with the exception of speed comes closest to the transportation service needed to convert existing intercity travel markets into time, cost, and convenience equivalent intracity commuting markets. This conversion of current inter-city travel markets will improve the integration of adjacent urban economies leading to improved labor productivity for New Economy industries. And it is this central objective that will demonstrate the desirability of the Magplane Commuter System.

But perhaps the most optimistic comment about the Segway comes from Tim Loughheed of the Southam Newspapers in Canada and we at Magplane hope that this journalist will be proven right.

“More important Kamen wants it to capture other people’s imaginations, leading them to think about these social, political and environmental problems in a different way. ‘This new technology fills a wide gap in the current transportation continuum and gives us the power to solve many of the problems, created by rapidly growing megacities,’ he says.”

“There may be more to these words than mere rhetoric. The power to which he refers may have nothing to do with the HT and its success as a product. Instead, it may simply be the power of opening up people’s minds to alternatives, unusual or even downright bizarre posed by our conventional transportation options.”

Tim Lougheed, Southam Newspapers, December 17th, 2001

When you look under the tree this Christmas, will you be looking for IT?

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Where is Osama Bin Laden?



How did he disappear?

From Virginia to Louisiana, a Building Boom for Museums

[New art museums, or large additions to existing ones, are being planned, built and opened in more than a dozen Southern cities.](#)

Radio-active Waste

The Energy Department was sued by the state of Nevada, in its latest salvo in an ongoing battle over burying the nation's radioactive waste 90 miles northwest of Las Vegas. The suit asks the federal appeals court in Washington to stop the project before Energy Secretary Abraham decides whether to recommend Yucca Mountain as a suitable location.

Landmark farm bill goes 'green'

[Legislation before Congress would tie subsidies more closely to environmental concerns, a dramatic shift in agricultural policy.](#) By Laurent Belsie

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**December 19th, 2001**

## **“GINGER” AND THE HORSE**

The horse is a creation of God. “Ginger”, “IT” or Segway is the name given to a new wonder “scooter.” This is the idea of multimillionaire inventor Dean Kamen, a mortal man.

The world of transportation inventions is full of small steps that imitate the innate mobility found in nature. On the one hand we have always connected the horse and buggy demise to the motorcar. On the other can we compare this movable “Ginger” platform scooter performance to that of the horse?

“Ginger” is an enhancement to personal mobility that will allow people to make better use of their time,” suggests Dean Kamen. “Ultimately, “Ginger” can make urban environments more livable by [easing] “a long walk in less time.”

The two-wheeled scooter, officially dubbed as the “world’s first dynamic self-balancing human transporter,” is stabilized by a series of gyroscopes that with an onboard computer essentially imitates the mobility workings of the human body.

Because “riding” according to inventor Dean Kamen “Ginger” is intuitive as moving forward is accomplished by leaning slightly forward on the scooter’s platform. Built to travel at speeds up to 12 mph, “Ginger” has a range of about 15 miles from a single six-hour battery charge, Dean Kamen said. The scooters will eventually sell for about \$3,000.

Now lets examine the horse. Finding the center of gravity seated in the saddle riding with the slightest of body movements transferred through the seat and hands can move the horse forward, backward as well as bringing it to a skidding stop in an emergency. With practice the horse can turn in a small circle to the left and right. Surprisingly it out performs “Ginger” in many ways. The horse can move diagonally to the left and right. It can bounce on the same footprint or in a forward movement. It can also jump over things and hop forward on its rear legs! Oops, this is an unfair comparison because the horse is a quadruped and “Ginger” has only two wheels. It would however be fair to say that much of these movements by a good horseman can also be achieved with “no hands!”

The horse can easily compete better against “Ginger” in terms of speed and range of miles and possibly even a lower purchase price. What about challenging the differences in horsepower? Wouldn’t it be revealing to compare the energy efficiency input of the horse to see what equivalent incremental improvement might be found in the performance achieved by the mechanical “Ginger?” How many flakes of hay, with a coffee can of grain and water consumption per day for the horse would equal a single six-hour battery charge in terms of cost?

Where Ginger has it all over the horse would probably be the maintenance factor. Horse feed requirements, stall dimensions cleaning and shoeing are probably higher than worn out tire treads broken scooter handles or other technical feature breakdown replacement costs per year. The infrastructure pathways required for the all terrain features of Ginger are however far more costly to maintain even although pathways require a little more width than old or new horse trails. In fact the horse is far superior one would venture to say on all inclines and terrain in the way of overall performance characteristics.

During the “Good Morning America” show a comment was made; “It’s amazing the way “Ginger” zooms around without tipping over.” Remember how many stories suggested that horses carried their drunken owners back home safely after a party? One should insist that Ginger be programmed to do the same so that no DUI could be levied to a Ginger rider! It is difficult to imagine how to strap a person onto “Ginger” with an activated homing devise.

The most intriguing Ginger feature that has cost Dean Kamen the inventor over \$100 Million in development costs is the interface of computer with gyroscopes. Imagine the horse and rider has these features built-in at no cost. Now one must note these two items are the most important part of this invention for the future of our mobility. “Ginger” has some characteristics of the horse, but has a long way to go to engage safely or emulate the constant contact between horse and rider. The rider-horse relationship is far more agreeable and compatible for mobility.

Ginger as a mechanical devise still needs to advance the association of movement with a rider in a straddled seat position. This posture more fully coordinates human inclinations of directional leanings when engaged with an object moving in the variety of normal upright activities. “Ginger” under human feet is not as desirable or as safe as the butt being the center of human gravity a leather thickness away from the control of power between the legs.

If Dean Kamen thinks it’s the beginning of a huge transformation in transportation in this country, one can not understand why Dean Kamen’s “Independence 3000 IBot Transporter,” is not nurtured as the mobility improvement for people’s lives. This is another way to seriously challenge future mobility change for our urban environment. Maybe it’s three wheels in the long term that will transform the cities of the future!

One must point out that there is already a seamless American infrastructure path arranged for this difficult to define “Independence 3000 IBot Transporter,” – the hopefully “to be improved” wheel chair. Why one can use this devise to cross roads to access pedestrian sidewalks, to ramps, through doors, into buildings, to elevators, to cars, vans and recreational vehicles, to buses, to trains, to aircrafts – almost internationally. Now is this not the way of getting closer to a true future multi-modal transportation interface for people?

One might conjecture another path for a better Dean Kamen invention advance. Maybe it should be redirected to a low profile “three wheeled chair” introduction as a better invention for acceptance into the consumer marketplace.

If this path is not taken one wishes Dean Kamen to know that with the same \$100 million he would be able to own all the top level dressage horses in the world thus casting a total competitive monopoly on the next World Olympic Games. I know a lot of horseman who would be eternally grateful to be able to ride any one of these top class horses.

Probably the most exciting experience for Dean Kamen would be to ride a “high school horse.” He would find the organic connection, an essential ingredient of the bond between horse and man in motion together. This has existed for thousands of years and was discovered when man got off his feet to get around on a horse thus covering more distance in his domain of travel and adventure. All this achieved at a pace far faster than just a walk.

“Ginger” has a long way to go to emulate a horse and rider. God gave us an excellent design to ride.

BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.

**[BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.](#)**

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**[Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California](#)**

**December 20th, 2001**

## **Today In History**

On this day in 1892, Alexander Brown and George Stillman of Syracuse, New York, patented first inflatable automobile tire

On this day in 1984, Bell Labs announces it has developed the megabit memory chip, quadrupling the capacity of existing chips

National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial



Guess the dimensions. Is this a good public space?

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**December 23rd, 2001**

## **Wither the Automobile in the New Economy?**

Employer Location and Impact on Modal Choice

It's really people who drive the technology business."

December 3rd and 10th, 2001 - If you have ever seen the movie L.A. Story, there is a clip of comedian Steve Martin walking out of his house, stepping into his car and driving it no more than 60 metres down the same side of the street to another house whereupon he reaches his final destination. This parody of automobile behavior in Southern California is too often taken as gospel among transportation planners. "We can't compete with the automobile." "Only losers use public transport." Well, the truth is we forget how limited the performance of the automobile is, preventing us from assessing whether the automobile may be an outdated commuting mode in the New Economy.

The truth is that the decision to choose an automobile is almost always a rational modal choice for auto travelers. In New York City and London, England, public transport modes carry the majority of commuters. Conversely, in places like L.A., especially outside of the City of Los Angeles, the automobile is the most time and convenient efficient mode of transport. Often the choice of commuting mode is determined more by the location of an employer.

I remember in 1969 when my father's workplace, a factory, moved from the inner city to the outer edges of Montreal, in a suburb called Ville-St. Laurent. He used to commute by bus and it would take him less than one hour to get to work. But once Jarry Hydraulics Ltee moved, the location of the new plant alongside a major freeway 20 kilometers away where the bus network was not yet sufficiently developed, determined modal choice in a significant manner: it converted an employment force of bus commuters into auto commuters. My father began to car pool, eroding public transport market share.

At the time, I was puzzled why my father's employers wanted to move the company so far from our home. Obviously, the company needed more space for their assembly line and only a new suburban location was able to provide space at an affordable cost. For the industrial economy, the capital value of fixed assets such as land, buildings and equipment is greater than the capital value of labor, explaining the Jarry Hydraulics Ltee decision to relocate at a much more distant location regardless of the consequences to their employment force or the road network.

But today in the New Economy, the capital value of workers is greater than the capital value of fixed assets, portending major spatial implications in the organization of our urban activities. This shift is providing urban and transportation planners with a new opportunity to create centralized urban cores. But only if the new collective transportation mode can link employers to a larger labor force than can the present day commuting automobile.

There is an interesting article from Canada's Globe and Mail newspaper that appeared on the 19th of November. The article is appropriately entitled, "It's Really People Who Drive the Technology Business." The founder of Electronic Arts, Paul Lee explains how his organization is spread out with offices in Canada, the United States, Australia, Britain and Japan.

This spatially extended organization allows Electronic Arts to become the leading developer of computer games. No doubt the footloose facility of telecommunications allows them to manage their intellectual capital efficiently. But please note how often their workers must travel, demonstrating how telecommunications is creating a new demand for longer distance travel. If the company had chosen to centralize their workforce in one location, their ability to lead the market would never have materialized.

"Certainly it would be easier, especially for me and Don, to have everything in one location," Mr. Lee says. Don Matrick, president of Worldwide Studios, is also based in Vancouver. "But the reality of it is, we want really, really good people. We hire the best. And the best don't always want to leave where they are living.

Electronic Arts in contrast to Jarry Hydraulics Ltee, is bringing the work closer to their workforce. These companies are defying the limitations of the metropolis by reorganizing their workforce and creating new travel markets. We can be certain that unlike Steve Martin L.A. Story, Mr. Lee does not use the automobile to travel to his distant offices but travels by airplane, a collective transportation mode.

The creation of an expanded urban labor market beyond the metropolis to the Interactive Megalopolis, The Interlocking Metropolitan in China, or the Deltametropolis in The Netherlands will again influence the modal choices for commuters by changing the organization of work in spatial terms.

The automobile is largely limited in range to 100 kilometers or so, roughly one to two hours in commuting travel time. The Magplane Commuter System is able to transport workers hundreds of kilometers within 60 or

90 minutes, including station access and egress times. Because the Magplane system will still require passengers to get to the many stations that we can serve, a whole new type of centralized land development could occur as both employers and employees will wish to limit their commuting travel times if only to gain access to a larger labor market.

The irony is striking because the centralization of the urban core can also be achieved by the dispersal of urban activities over greater distances and the New Economy is providing us with this opportunity but only if we are able to exploit the continuing desire for New Economy companies to change their organization of work to achieve needed labor productivity increases.

In contrast to my father, I am allowed to work from Montreal rather than commuting daily into the Boston area where the offices of Magplane Technology Inc. are located. This generational change can only be explained by the changing nature of work in the New Economy and the location liberating effects of telecommunications and transportation technologies.

See Globe and Mail article: "It's Really People Who Drive the Technology Business."

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**December 24th, 2001**

## **URBAN DESIGN AND INTUITION**

Looking into the rear view mirror this year I must admit to continuing to be an intuitive designer. That was so in my past, and that remains so now in my present. My hope is that there is no end to continuing these adventures in design.

I never had a plan to begin an urban design. I followed no system other than the thinnest of programs. I like working intuitively. My aim every time was doing a good design. To create something that would be easy and interesting to share is important.

At every stage I could only work within my knowledge and sensibility and talent and world-view. Those things have developed design by design. And I had to do the design because there were no formulas about the subjects of the program to give me what I wanted. I had to clear up my world, elucidate it, for myself and create new environments each time.

My years at the university, and my years with different A.E.P. firms still seem to indicate that my experience was very thin, was not truly of the stuff of designs

There were other things that meant much more to the filing of images and experiences in ones mind. With all my travels it is the other senses of sight, sound and aroma of observed spaces formed within and between buildings that also matter. It is also the means by which one travels whether on foot, by car, by rail, by bus, and by aircraft that matters through these spaces in time. The excitement of arrival and sadness of departure are the emotions brought about by these movements. The feelings derived from spatially defined enclosures are important. It is only between brief silences that awareness of sharing spaces with anonymous humans, that one begins to measure with sensitivity the differences between these vastly different experiences from that of sharing intimate family moments.

I have always designed by intuition alone. I have no distinctive special layered, planar, and sectional, volumer or three dimensional design systems. In fact I have even tried Leonardo's design in reverse by looking into a

mirror and drawing. I have no guiding aesthetic philosophy other than to attempt to feebly emulate the extraordinary designs found in Nature. I think that probably lies with my ancestry as I feel we are more inclined to see the humor and pity in the designs of man.

There were a few instances of true debates about things of quality in urban design during this past year. But the greatest miracle for me was getting started each time. I feel – and the anxiety is still vivid to me - that I might easily have failed before I begin the process of design.

Proust in *Against Sainte-Beuve*. Wrote “The beautiful things we shall write (design) if we have talent,” Proust says, “are inside us, indistinct, like the memory of a melody which delights us though we are unable to recapture its outline. Those who are obsessed by this blurred memory of truths they have never known are the men who are gifted. Talent is like a sort of memory which will enable them finally to bring this indistinct music closer to them, to hear it clearly, to note it down...”

Talent, I would say is good luck, and much about spending a lot of time in the labor of love that is — simply drawing. I shall hope to have a greater urgency in me to draw more this next year for the sake of my urban design evolution.

Maybe this coming year will show some of the “stuff” of good urban design.

**BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.**

**Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California**

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**December 25th, 2001**

## **WHAT’S GOOD ARCHITECTURE IN BAKERSFIELD?**

Having suggested that the Bakersfield Downtown Architectural Committee commit some written and graphic standards to the preservation of some Bakersfield’s historic buildings, as well as, new developments, here are some thoughts.

Consider first assessing what historic buildings would be worthwhile keeping. Some buildings should be left intact, some buildings should be altered internally and some buildings should be demolished. A cluster of such historic buildings which identify either decades or groupings or distinctive individual period buildings should be declared a “historical district.” The plan for each district should then also integrate the ideas of street closures for majority pedestrian and transit use as well as for mixed use.

Consider also the definition of existing “other districts” such as financial, entertainment, commercial, governmental, ecumenical, educational, arts, housing, mixed-use, medical, parking with park open-space connections. These existing “district themes” will not only be helpful to consolidate future downtown needs, but should identify codes, zoning (density) and economic incentives. Depending on how well these series of “district themes” are identified in a broad sense to a given geographic area, the supporting infrastructure can then be anticipated.

Thus the forecasts for private sector developments can be matched by public fiscal supporting investments. Then communications, (fiber optic, wireless) road, parking, transit, park/open space needs, can match area by area and step by step, the necessary capabilities of being able to objectively support downtowns multiple growth and change patterns.

These above considerations if defined and marketed effectively as a plan should become the essential ingredients for a successful future downtown development framework. The ultimate test of this development framework will occur when the “stakeholders” (property owners) realize that they can take advantage of the proposed public urban redevelopment laws in a context of greater defined certainty.

The awkwardness and sometimes-frivolous marketplace of financing projects can be reduced if a business consensus can be reached about the downtown development framework. The evidence should reveal itself as a downtown that both locals and outsiders wish to happily experience as a unique and indigenous built environment.

All this is most dependent on high-quality architecture and superb land planning. Fine architecture is also a social good, one that more than repays the investment. A combination of exciting forms and careful attention to the scale and proportions of the buildings in relation to their surrounding context should underline all urban design in downtown. This serves to draw people out of their homes in the metropolitan area and into the public realm, encouraging Bakersfieldians to identify with their evolving downtown and become more active in them

Dignified and stimulating public buildings should also help to instill respect, commitment, and—by fostering participatory action—sometimes even a healthy skepticism toward the institutions that they house. All this is geared toward seeking a much “denser” and more richly textured city.

Bakersfieldians vacate in Europe to submerge themselves into an architectural contextual differences. Europeans on the other hand visit American cities. Europeans who come here go to New York City, where they marvel more at the collective height of the buildings than at their individual quality (the CitiCorp Building and a few others notwithstanding). If they go elsewhere, it is often to revel in the spectacle of kitsch architecture at Disney World or to make pilgrimages to the Grand Canyon and Yosemite. Our challenge and mission should we accept to build a marvellous place is to create something different and of quality to attract people from all over the world.

Bakersfield’s built environment should deliver a clear message to citizens and visitors: We should think that high-quality, thought-provoking, innovative buildings—whether institutional or commercial, residential or private—are not a luxury or a frivolity. They should become the norm for all our future building efforts to create a stimulating and worthwhile downtown. Let’s prepare together far better than our Boy Scouts do, before any future venture!

**BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.**

**Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California**

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