

# **The Makabusi Archives**

## **(Articles From November 2001)**

Please follow the below links to jump to each article

**November 1st, 2001** [URBAN DESIGN HOPE FOR THIS WEB SITE](#)

**November 2nd, 2001** [HOUSING CHALLENGE](#)

**November 4th, 2001** [SUNDAY READINGS](#)

**November 5th, 2001** [URBAN DESIGN RANDOM THOUGHTS](#)

**November 7th, 2001** [DOWNTOWN FUTURE HAS TO DEAL WITH INSTABILITY](#)

**November 8th, 2001** [THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT FOR BAKERSFIELDS FUTURE](#)

**November 11th, 2001** [WEEKEND URBAN DESIGN READINGS](#)

**November 14th, 2001** [CALIFORNIA HIGH SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY](#)

**November 15th, 2001** [STATUS OF CALIFORNIA HIGH SPEED RAIL & THE AUTHORITY](#)

**November 19th, 2001** [AMTRAK TROUBLE EVERYWHERE](#)

**November 20th, 2001** [WHEN MALFUNCTION AND ERRORS MEET](#)

**November 22nd, 2001** [THANKSGIVING QUESTIONS & ANSWERS](#)

**November 23rd, 2001** [BAKERSFIELD AND SIDEWALKS](#)

**November 25th, 2001** [WISDOM OF WORKING TOGETHER](#)

**November 26th, 2001** [WEBLOGGER DISCIPLINE](#)

**November 27th, 2001** [URBAN DESIGN AND HOUSING FUTURES](#)

**November 30th, 2001** [GRANT CROSS A YOUNG LOCALARTIST FIRST EXIBIT](#)

**November 1st, 2001**

## **URBAN DESIGN HOPE FOR THIS WEB SITE**

Well here I am again. I just have to ask my local readers for help. May I suggest that a painfully obvious and simple solution to a chronic city building industry problem: Why can't one simply create a centralized Web site about urban affairs for a variety of weblogger writers?

Let's imagine a basic yet tidy minimum list of expert specialties:

There are more public policy research institutions that one can chase a stick at! Therefore we should be able find quite a few political analysts who have a primary interest in local politics. Also we have heard and read the crispness from some legal minds on the process of government affairs and responsible law making.

There are quite a few economic institutions that are capable of offering some excellent thoughts and articles about our local affairs. Therefore we should be able to find a couple of economic analysts who are capable of sharing some of the numeric structures of our local communities.

There are some excellent and knowledgeable environmentalists drawn from the disciplines of biology, archeology, anthropology, sociology who have a sharp tongue and insatiable reading habits who can place into perspective some major concerns from which we will learn to accommodate our building with our natural environment. These talents should be charged to providing clarity of written thought about conservation and sensitive integration of the natural environment with man made things.

There are a multitude of service professionals in urban science, planning, education, engineering, architecture, transportation, landscape, geographic information systems, history, and art who comprehend the need for teamwork to contribute effectively to making good cities. Therefore again there are writers who can contribute their finely tuned perspective to improving the physical reality of our local environment.

There are a plethora of businessmen in agriculture, mining, banking, financing, manufacturing and assembly with material suppliers. These employers are skilled in taking risks and betting in effectively marketing their products. Their experience of accomplishments is essential in invention and initiative to bettering technology for food, shelter and transportation. They have short words of wisdom that should be written and shared as to how they have as a group advanced the urban realm for our citizens.

This web page needs at least five good authors drawn from these vast fields of different specializations.

I have a hunch I know why this idea will ultimately succeed. It will be those who clearly understand the interdisciplinary need for communications. The need for writing, enumerating and illustrating the local geography we inhabit together has never been more critical.

People who should be the leaders in these matters should contribute toward this web site development. Their impact should improve a collective and integrated leadership quality. Isn't the most popular three words sounding in America these days "United we stand?" Writing together on this web page should directly impact a better urban design future. Unique results are possible only in the context of such a written commitment to teamwork. My belief is strong that the right people will come forward and educate as all in this endeavor.

We are always both creating and being created by the world around us — which includes, crucially, other fauna and flora in the same fix.

The challenge is to write something of merit. Please contact me if you are willing to support this purpose.

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

**Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California**

[Back To Top](#)

**November 2nd, 2001**

## **Housing Challenge**

It is my belief that the challenge levelled by Makabusi to the local architects and designers couldn't have been more timely about low cost (cheap) housing. The need for it in Los Angeles is apparent. But in Bakersfield?

Build It - We Are Already Here

Paper outlines the Los Angeles, CA, business and development community's strategies to solve the affordable housing crisis at all levels: affordable housing, workforce housing and homeownership.

Contributed by Walter Kunz

[“Our goal is to enhance a development environment that will both accomplish the goal of building the 60,000 housing units that the Southern California Association of Governments \(SCAG\) have identified as the need for Los Angeles in the next five years, encourage and save the dwindling middle class in Los Angeles, and preserve our job base as we head into recession.” Full story: Downtown Los Angeles - Affordable Housing](#)

Then after attending the GRC of the Bakersfield Chamber this morning and listening to Mr Olscheid's presentation of the proposed “Entertainment Center” I was heartened to hear some of the changes toward urban design. We have all been waiting a long time for this project to evolve favorably and it appears that it might be coming together at last . (Two and one half years!)

There is no doubt in one's mind that the following news about Bakersfield will be heartening to the Bakersfield Chamber, BIA and Real Estate Developers. The one element missing for downtown is still housing — that is “market apartments and mixed use. “ To capture the promises of being the only single recommended City on the west coast for cheap housing is that one wishes there was another word for cheap! One wonders also whether this article is credible as it suggests a remarkable air quality standard in our community.

The 10 Cheapest Places to Live

[Homestore publishes it's ranking of the ten cheapest places in the U.S. to live — from housing to transportation.](#)

This is a must read for all architects, urban planners and artists in this community. It reminds me of Cornell West's Reader. In his chapter on Race and Architecture, to quote: “The future of architectural criticism rests on the development of a refined and revisionist architectural historiography that creatively fuses social histories of technology in light of sophisticated interpretations of the present cultural crisis.” (pp462)

Herbert Muschamp presents an excellent and exceptional article in this framework.

Power, Imagination and New York's Future

[Herbert Muschamp comments on the efforts to rebuild Lower Manhattan in New York and discusses the architectural culture of the city.](#)

[Back To Top](#)

**November 4th, 2001**

## **SUNDAY READINGS**

Some time ago a nutritionist who was a cricket player influenced me. At 85 years old he could compete with all of us youngsters. He gifted me a book that I still have “YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT.” Today what crossed my mind in scanning for urban design articles and after reading the LA Times a thought came to mind. I was aghast at my time devoted to feeding my mind. It was pitifully insufficient and shallow beyond belief! Imagine the horrifying thought that “YOU ARE WHAT YOU READ!” and/or “YOU ARE WHAT YOU SEE!”

These were sobering thoughts considering how shallow I have been serving all these three essentials in my daily life. So today my three captured resources come as follows.

### **AGRICULTURE “YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT.”**

When can I obtain this book and find the time to read the thoughts outlined in THE NEW AGRARIANISM: Land, Culture, and the Community of Life, Edited by Eric T. Freyfogle, Island Press: 292 pp., \$40.

The need to do this are the few written words about Arvin vs. Dinuba.

“In 1954, Walter Goldschmidt studied two comparable towns in the Central Valley, Arvin and Dinuba. One was surrounded by small farms, the other by large farms. The aggregate income enjoyed by the towns was about the same, as were their populations. But Dinuba, the town of small farms, had a middle class, a public life and plenty of commerce. In Arvin, the income went mostly to large landowners, who exported it; most of the other residents lived on welfare. Some might argue that Arvin was an image of what America has become. American farming is supported mostly through subsidies. We pay for the rich and the poor alike. We pay for the depopulation of the countryside and the deterioration of the soil and high petroleum use; we pay for the rich to get richer and the poor to get poorer and we pay for our own diet to get worse.”

This made me think that it was time for the Metropolitan Plan Update to consider the opportunity for a couple or more new distinctive zones for agriculture. The first is to allow for corporate monoculture practices. The second is to allow for “organic farming” and the third to allow for an urban-agrarian mix of “hobby farming!”

### **ARTS AND PHOTOGRAPHY “YOU ARE WHAT YOU SEE”**

This article made we appreciate the need of a more substantive position for our local photographers in our community. We have a few most professional photographers. I am sure they could be challenged to record our neighborhoods in a similar fashion as has been accomplished in Los Angeles. One wonders if the Kern County Library has thought of being the repository for such important collections? Are our local non-profit Art Associations desirous of stimulating this important sector of our arts community?

### **URBAN DESIGN AND CITY BUILDING “YOU ARE WHAT YOU READ.”**

Another article that caught my attention was “Torrent of Scorn Engulfs City Sign.” It was a story of a city “Gateway” project. As is suggested by the title some citizens of Santa Cruz are most unhappy about the sign.

Our past Mayor Price initiated a similar project and as usual the City of Bakersfield took it upon themselves to design such a sign. A design was approved quietly. These duplicative bulky objects can be seen on two selected sites. They are the beginnings of the sign construction process. These signs one hopes are much better than the old sign found on Hwy 99 announcing Bakersfield — “Fun, Stay, & Play ”

One waits with much anticipation to hear the reactions of our community at large, when these signs are finished and given night lighting.

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

**Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California**

[Back To Top](#)

**November 5th, 2001**

## **URBAN DESIGN RANDOM THOUGHTS**

A THOUGHT about cars — On this day in 1895, the first US patent granted to George B Selden for a car

A THOUGHT about linking to current trends in urban design go to the following web sites:

New Urbanism

dot com biz card: tnd towns

dot com biz card: sustainable.design.

Transporation and Urban Design - The New Drea...

A THOUGHT about South African President Nelson Mandela giving his 1994 inaugural address. He said the following:

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who are we to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be?..... You playing small doesn't serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so other people won't feel insecure around you.... And as we let our light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

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

**Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California**

[Back To Top](#)

**November 7th, 2001**

## **DOWNTOWN FUTURE HAS TO DEAL WITH INSTABILITY**

Urban designers are subject to group thinking. A “futures” team of people should formulate a program and use design as part of a project planning process. Sages warn that urban design futures have determinants such as economic feasibility, planning for land areas and building footprints with cost estimating and financing.

Actions toward this end suggest that stability is a false god. Strategic thinking is inclined towards instability. Persuading city fathers, team members and “stakeholders” to recognize our citizens popular will requires diplomacy. During the progress of project evolution there will be many wasted efforts on attempts to suppress or promote some friction between members. One should not lose both project teamwork and project purpose by over compromising the goals and objectives in order to maintain unity of consensus.

Projects need some level of instability. More than likely there is always one unthought of element that contributes toward a significant project change. What if change is both overdue and inevitable? Team members need to support the future project theme for the good of all, rather than through the threat of over-indulgence by a leader or an ego filled individual with a chip on the shoulder.

Focusing exclusively on short-term strategic thinking such as the multi use downtown stadium tied to an “entertainment development” has offered the possibility of imminent collapse, if either project did not meet certain goals. These strategies cause instability with long term tactics for greater tax increment incomes, better urban land use densities, added mixed-use (commercial and residential), future structured parking and roadway access as tactical moves for the years ahead. The strategic model should rather consider this initial project as impacting the futures of surrounding real estate, in a positive sense. This needs a downtown development framework plan.

New forms of political and private organization should be encouraged to move forward. The current inhibiting city administration should be able to rise above its old fashioned and inadequate approach to downtown urban renewal. The Bakersfield Old Boy’s club should also release its eminence grise and pass on its wisdom to the next generation of downtown developers.

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

**Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California**

[Back To Top](#)

**November 8th, 2001**

## **THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT FOR BAKERSFIELDS FUTURE**

For a place like Bakersfield to be transformed, one has to be sure that we as citizens know that our cities plan is “on track.” This implies that the single common thing we all share is our mobility together. It would include the future building and maintenance of pedestrian and bikeways, roadways, railways and airways.

When a chance arrives to seriously consider the future expansion of any one of these ways of getting around, we must take full advantage of the opportunity. This opportunity arrives for consideration on the 14th November 2001. The California High Speed Rail Authority’s Public Board Meeting will be held at the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Board Room, 1300 17th Street, Room 1A

One hopes that true citizen interest in this event will reveal who in the community is producing this opportunity. Our city doesn’t come with operating instructions. It is always in process of enhancing our mobility. Thus this High Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) proposed future is as important as the recent east west freeway considerations through our community.

This opportunity to get rapidly up and down California via HSGT is probably the single most important decision to be made for the next hundred years. It’s a whole new game – everything is in play. Who is going to be on the team?

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

**Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California**

[Back To Top](#)

**November 11th, 2001**

## **WEEKEND URBAN DESIGN READINGS**

The stories this weekend that caught my interest are numerous. Here are a few: -

It generally appears that Cities everywhere are going to have to brace for budget hits, this coming year.

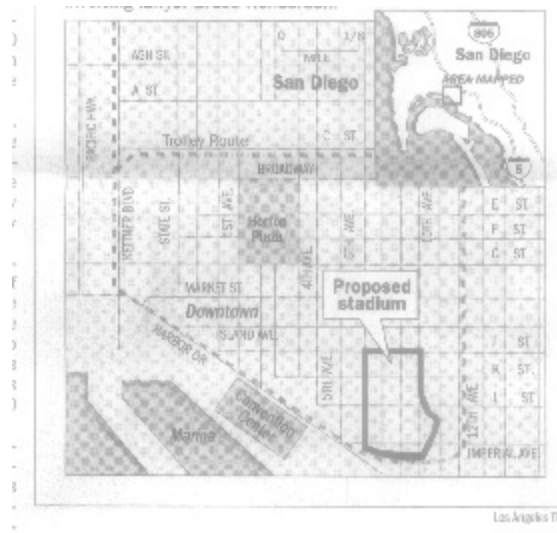
Again the California High Speed Rail Authority is speeding toward a dead-end siding solution for the next hundred years. Their politburo minds have been warped by current events in the railroad sector. Some facts were highlighted in the Wall Street Journal this week. Bombardier is suing Amtrak over delays in High Speed Train goes the article heading. Again attorneys on both sides are enjoying their roles of pointing fingers. It appears that the Canadian manufacturer could not deliver the train sets on time, while Amtrak could not deliver the track upgrades on time. Changes in design and lack of communication were rife in the \$710M contract.

So here we are again importing historic manufactured goods from a foreign country. Later we will be importing all the parts as well. What's happened to "BUILT IN AMERICA?"

While new home sales in California fell by 30% in the past quarter we in Bakersfield seem to be doing very well. One wonders how long this will last and who is running the statistics here locally?

Hmmmm Goleta is a new city in the County of Santa Barbara. One wonders about the aspirations of the City of ARVIN and its wish to annex land to the Grapevine. One must question if Arvin needs to work closely with El Tejon Ranch and it's future?

San Diego is having one hard time to build their ballpark downtown. A former councilman's relentless litigation has helped stall efforts to build a new home for the Padres and jeopardized the project.



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

**Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California**

[Back To Top](#)

**November 14th, 2001**

## **California High Speed Rail Authority**

Greetings Again

One wishes that one could find enough excuses to share my technical difficulties. Only kidding. There are no excuses for not placing daily things of interest on this web site. It's my human failure to not set aside enough time for reading and typing a few lines.

Well enough written on that subject.

The following was the presentation made today to the California High Speed Rail Authority. Although this handout was given to the Authority it was 500 words which were never spoken. My words had little to do with the text due to the fact that we citizens at these public hearings are only allowed three minutes to speak.

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.

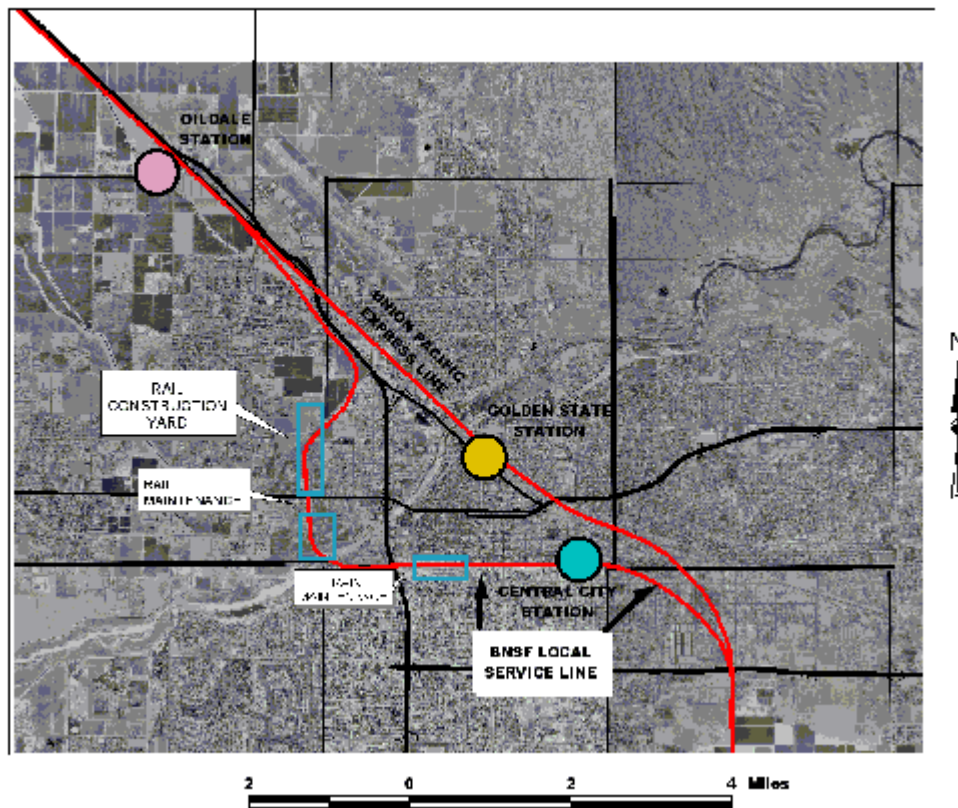
Geographically Bakersfield is California's strategic center of two major north and south metropolitan areas. So situated it has land available to promote construction assembly, maintenance and service of trains.

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.

## BAKERSFIELD HIGH SPEED RAIL STATION



The above was delivered to a struggling underpaid political body doing their best in the world of urban transportation futures. Assemblman Florez and Senator Acosta were particularly active during this meeting. They have been the two leaders who have honestly attempted to move this effort forward. We all commend them for this effort.

It was at this meeting that the Board Members of the Authority finally found an appropriate excuse to dismiss Maglev as a technology for application in this California High Speed Rail Authorities mandate. This was expected some time ago. This most prejudiced decision against a transportation technology advance for Californians should be overturned.

As a 1967 immigrant to America and having consulted for almost 25 years it is hard to think that my “Futures” expectations in this country for advancing urban transportation technology can drop to such a low level.

Imagine as a seven year old the excitement of going from Johannesburg to East London on the train for a summer holiday. Naturally I got some soot in my eye when leaning out to watch the steam engine puffing steam and smoke ahead of our second class coaches. When our last annual family summer holiday trip was taken I was a 17 year old. The two-way track electric line was in service. That was in 1965.

So here we are in the year 2001, 36 years later, and California decides to catch-up to a third world countries transportation technology. This is not the best gift for our next generations mobility needs.

Please read the articles that have been placed on this web site about transportation futures. You will clearly see that my interest in building better communities endorses Magplane — a magnetically levitated technology.

Some day Californians will wake up to the fact that we should rather lead the world in transportation invention and technology applications. Being a doubting Thomas and suggesting that there is no Maglev system revenue production in the world and that there is no guaranteed performance of this technology, is the Boards excuse for not taking any measure of risk to make a positive decision. This is quite astounding.

California has created some of the best technological advances in the world to transport objects into space exploration and yet cannot seem to advance urban transportation beyond steel-wheel-steel-rail! This is a most disappointing result.

To quote a recent excellent MIT report on future transportation [www.wbcsdmobility.org](http://www.wbcsdmobility.org) — “This “grand challenge” .....of a high speed technology choice for the HSRA..... is formidable in its own right..... there is another challenge, perhaps the most formidable of all, that must be overcome ..... This is the challenge of creating the institutional capacity to address complex, long-term issues like these; the ability to develop consensus about significant changes in the structure and deployment of mobility systems across..... (California) .....the world; and successfully designing, implementing, and monitoring such ..... mobility .....changes.

If they (Californians) rely on current institutional capabilities, both the developed and developing worlds will find it nearly impossible to develop consensus around how such issues ought to be addressed, develop the plans to implement the consensus solutions, and carry these plans through to fruition. Though technology almost certainly will play a major role in addressing each of the “grand challenges,” it is likely that limits on institutional capacity, not limits on technology, will determine the speed with which the challenges will be addressed — or whether they get addressed at all.”

To put it bluntly this California High Speed Rail Authority Board and Staff, with it’s body of “the worlds best transportation consultants” is rapidly showing us their inability to create a really new and better way of serving the future of transportation for Californians.

[Back To Top](#)

**November 15th, 2001**

## **STATUS OF CALIFORNIA HIGH SPEED RAIL & THE AUTHORITY**

Imagine if you can ride on a new California “high speed train” in 2025. Imagine that a new 700-mile stretch of steel rail lines is placed between Sacramento/San Francisco and Los Angeles/San Diego. The transit coaches you step into and sit in are built in Europe. The driving units are made in foreign lands and when delivered generate electrical power via smoking their diesel stacks.

The concept for this “so called proposed California approach” is a carbon copy of the high-speed rail French TGV trains which now serves some areas in Europe. The concept is based on going forward by looking in the rear view mirror! Why are we looking toward Europe for solutions? Don’t we have any of our own ideas? Americans have never been short of better technological solutions because of our innate inventiveness and courage to advance in front of every other nation on this earth.

Why go backwards? The proposed solution further attempts to link these newly made passenger steel rail corridors with local freight lines on the same gauge track, made from and parts forged in foreign countries. Oh my, how can we possibly move forward to “UNITED WE STAND?”

What legacy are we giving to our next generation for the next hundred years of enlightened travel use? We have and will still experience bad urban design futures given to us by our Governor Gray Davis in response to the electrical power crisis. Should we also go backwards to update a bankrupt railway system in the same manner of our electricity needs to show that we are currently paralleling third world capabilities for proper solutions? Or should we succumb to such a passive short term rail transportation “fix-up” because our aircraft industry has taken such a hit, due to September 11 terrorist action?

Why should we be constantly reminded of an early American Iron Horse concept and attempt to get Federal handouts in the way of emergency money to patch up a bad working, money losing, unfinished, old fashioned rail road system?

What is wrong with the conclusion found in the CHRA scenario? First this Board wants a fading railway industry to provide the old technology to be manufactured in foreign countries and shipped to California. They do this in the same week of the 24th October 2001, when NASA has a vehicle orbiting Mars. Are these men fearful of challenging American inventors and giving them the incentive for creating a whole new transportation industry in California?

Imagine for a moment this our California, the seventh largest economy in the world without leadership to form any new transportation expectations for our children’s mobility betterment in the new millennium. It is preposterous to think that we do not want to engage the existing manufacturing resources found only in California to create a worthwhile advanced high speed ground transportation system.

Let’s place the whole CHRA concept in the can. Why should Californians pay so much for an updated 190 mph steel-wheel-steel-rail system? This is not a high-speed ground transportation system by any stretch of the imagination. Let’s find some new leaders who are brave enough to forget what was not completed for passengers by the private railroad companies of the past. They do a good job moving heavy freight; let them continue to do this well.

In fact let’s ask for a new set of CHSRA decision makers who are not grouchy old men who loved riding in the trains of the past century. They are still playing with their boyhood Lionel steam engine locomotive railroad fantasies on their living room floors. There are better folks who should represent California’s future on the

California High Speed “Rail” (This should be substituted by High Speed Ground Transportation) Authority. These elderly gentlemen are unskilled in risk analysis of future alternative transportation technologies and therefore cannot lead Californians into an appropriate future.

Their present efforts have led to a sorry state of affairs. When one reads the following address to the “stakeholders” in a recent CHRA memo (October 12, 2001 from which summarized is “The Authority and FRA are reviewing staff recommendations for a first screening alternatives for the Bay Area Merced, Los Angeles-Bakersfield, Los Angeles–the Inland Empire, Orange County and San Diego regions. After receiving public and agency comments, staff will prepare a final draft for Authority approval at the November 14, 201 board meeting to be held in Bakersfield. The “Draft First Screening Report” and technical reports for each region are available on the Authority’s public website ([www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov)) Some of the key decisions may include: 1.0 Elimination of Maglev Technology; 2.0 Elimination of steel wheel steel rail that cannot share tracks with other services in urban areas; 3.0 On the San Francisco Peninsula, only continue investigation of Caltrain Corridor shared-track alternatives; 4.0 Elimination of a direct link to Los Angeles International airport; and 5.0 Investigation only “non-Electric” incremental improvements of the existing “Surfliner” service along the coast between Irvine and San Diego.”

The SCAG Maglev Task Force memo (October 18, 2001) was blunt, short and to the point about the status of the CHRA Project. “In summary, the screening report from the HSRA states that a high speed “train” operating on a dedicated track is no longer part of the vision. The new vision includes intercity trains that operate on shared track. There would be no service to LAX and only non-electric service south of Irvine. Also Maglev technology is excluded as an option. It has also been determined that a dedicated system is not practical in the Bay Area and in the Los Angeles corridor. As a result, a conventional train system is now envisioned. Essentially, the new direction can be described as an incremental improvement to the existing system.”

Only one conclusion can be drawn from the above statewide effort – no guts no glory. That is this is a mock “court” and study effort, set up with disregard for proper procedures to deliver a technological judgment, which unbeknown to all Californians has been arrived at in advance. Simply put this CHRA has produced a kangaroo court solution.

To resist the frigidity of old Iron Age technology, one should combine the body, the mind and the heart - to keep leadership thoughts in parallel with the vigor of the risk taking to be shared by all California citizens. To this end we should exercise Californians goals for better urban/environmental survival through advancement of a new transportation industry.

California has risen to projects such as the aqueduct, national highway and freeway systems, ports and airports. It has population groupings that are desperately looking to advancing speedier transportation solutions, far beyond the present wing lock and gridlock. We have world famous Universities, Research, Manufacturing, Space, Communication and Financing Institutions with abilities to challenge the purpose of creating such a better high-speed ground transportation system.

There is a better mobility system than steel-wheel-steel-rail for future Californians. Let’s make this transportation ignorance our daily opponent, indifference to future realistic technological possibilities our constant challenge, and lift our spirits toward new solutions as a means of new millennium inter-city mobility. Let’s not be fearful of making it so.

Throw out this CHSRA Board and start anew. They are focusing on the wrong transportation direction for the future of California.

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

**Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California**

[Back To Top](#)

## November 19th, 2001

### **AMTRAK TROUBLE EVERYWHERE**

Think the train is the way to go in these days of uncertain air travel? Think again. Amtrak, minimally efficient in the best of times, is at sea amid a crisis and heavier-than-usual demand. makes you wonder just what all that Congressional money has been buying.

After our shuttle flight to Washington was cancelled on Monday because of the American Airlines tragedy, we returned to the office to book an Amtrak ticket for Tuesday. We provided all the required information to Amtrak's web's site, clicked to secure the reservation and ..... were informed that the session had timed out and to please start all over again.

Instead we turned to the phone, dialing up Amtrak's automated reservation system. Everything went well until the computer locked us into a return ticket from Washington for the day before we would actually arrive there. The menu has no option for selecting the return date you call.

Thinking a warm body might untangle this mess, we dialed again, only to be consigned to Hold Purgatory. Giving up we walked to Penn Station and purchased our ticket there. Total elapsed time to make a reservation: an hour and a half.

We weren't Amtrak's only victims. At the next window, a woman was discovering that the phone clerk whom she had earlier asked to change her reservations had cancelled everything out.

Oh, and when we tried calling Amtrak HQ for some reaction? A busy signal.

[Back To Top](#)

## November 20th, 2001

### **WHEN MALFUNCTION AND ERRORS MEET**

#### BAKERSFIELD REFINERY.

Less dramatic, but just as valuable, are stories of disasters that didn't happen. These are the cases we never hear about, in which people see the warning signs and make the right moves. One in particular has a chilling resonance for our Bakersfield city. Back in 2000, a flaming flume appeared at the refinery on Rosedale Highway, one afternoon. This happened again last Tuesday but rather north of Rosedale Hwy. Again it was controlled without incident.

Knowledgeable oil folk realized that immediate action had to take place to preclude neighborhood vulnerability to a possible explosion. Under certain conditions, this could have quite devastating impact.

The city engineer was tempted to keep quiet about the flaw, so the alarm was not communicated with the media. The refinery shut down the correct valves in time to avert a tragedy. There still is no drawn-up plan to evacuate the area, given this occurrence might re-occur.

Sound advice about the avoidance of such a catastrophe should now be taken by the city. Refineries should be designed to be 'transparent,' so the user and the surrounding community fully understands what the system is doing and why, when a flume and smoke appears again. One hopes that maybe sirens are placed at appropriate points as they are in Beverley Hills when I was a resident there two decades ago.

Local citizens should pay attention to what their refineries tell them, and train themselves to cope with possible breakdowns and emergency procedures.

Bakersfield's critical systems, like power plants, should be designed and maintained with a ruthless intolerance for imperfection. Since San Jose is "disaster prepared" maybe it would be sensible for our bureaucrats to take a visit, and find out the procedures for emergencies.

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

**Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California**

[Back To Top](#)

**November 22nd, 2001**

## **THANKSGIVING QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

It is good to reflect on some questions such as these at this time today:

Have I taken pleasure in beauty? I picked up some feathers from our guinea fowls today. With the winter coming, the molting is almost done. The feathers are quite beautiful. Grey toned beginning with softest fine fluff at the base above which are on either side of the axial quill are three equally spaced rows of white spots formed in the most perfect white circles, below the outer feather edge. The fan shapes so formed about the quill spread out in a marvelous elliptical arch, balanced in two directions vertically and horizontally, with a soft concave curve that one can fold about the convex shape of the thumb. The most delightful tip of the feather is expressed with the convergence of a most perfect square of white dots.

**A BEAUTIFUL GUINEA FOWL FEATHER**

**"GUINEA FOWL FEATHERS"**

The square formed between the center of the dots found inside the elliptical end of the feather.

Have I fashioned humor or wit? This is my hardest task. I do try but tend to be too serious, but I did get a chuckle from the family regarding my need for some "pep pills!"

Have I forged genuine friendships? These past few months my hope is that the people with whom I have been working have become better friends.

Have I established a beachhead of civility and justice in my political interactions? I have attempted to serve Bakersfield with my beliefs in the prospect of a future high-speed rail station and a new east-west freeway placement.

Have I taken up roles in my profession with integrity and joy? I have been happily serving a good friend with an urban development project for downtown Bakersfield

Have I left the world a better, more interesting place than I found it? I am trying my best most days to think and write some sensible things for myself.

Have I done a few simple things today? — I have finished, feeding, cleaning out stalls and letting out our thirty horses to their respective pastures.

— Have I got further with fixing our dog pen? I shall need help to assemble a large dog pen for my two Kelpies. Labor is a time-honored practice.

— Written a note? This is the note: I wish all the readers a fine thanksgiving holiday. In this one sentence I am being respectful of people.

— Cooked a dinner? Our daughter is here from San Diego and we are deep-frying a turkey for the first time. This will be our pleasure without conscience.

—Performed a design—as well as it could be done? I will be resolving a cabin design conversion for a few hours today. There is no wealth without work.

FOR ALL THESE AND MANY OTHER THINGS I AM MOST FULFILLED, AND MOST THANKFUL.

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

**Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California**

[Back To Top](#)

## **November 23rd, 2001**

### **BAKERSFIELD AND SIDEWALKS**

If Bakersfield City Councilors and officials examined the utility of transportation corridors with some reality, we as Bakerfolks should see some changes taking place. As fast as possible!

We all know that future commute congestion will be taking us a longer time getting from place to place. This means there will be more cars on the road and more lanes being used more extensively.

In comparison have you all noticed anyone using the new beautifully landscaped suburban sidewalks? The occasional dog walker, jogger, skateboarder or person tending a broken down vehicle, is a rare sight indeed.

So here we have our engineering prescriptions for excessive street widths on either side of landscaped medians between 8'. 0" high block walls dressed up with landscaping. Mind you these miles and miles of landscaping do provide more shade than the recent unwilling rise to 30% shade cover for our commercial parking lots!

But lets ask why so few suburbanites are using these pedestrian amenities? Well it's about time the City Engineer and the Councilman of the area to take a walk down Brimhall. It is along these long stretches of concrete that they will find the harsh reality of a hard uninteresting walk. Surely they will notice that there is nothing worth observing along the way.

What they as pedestrians will experience are but a few things. If they have any hearing they will acknowledge the rising and falling sound of motor vehicles approaching and passing. They will appreciate passing under trees and thank the Lord for a bit of shade from the shimmering heat rising on a hot summers day. They should notice the lack of cyclists traversing inside the white painted lines marked for bike lanes. They should appreciate the cities fine landscape maintenance and wonder about the costs arising from the spots of water spilling over the sidewalks with the aroma of tended plants well pruned bushes and cut grass on the medians.

Compare this above stark experience by walking your dog down say 20th street from the canal eastwards toward downtown in Westchester. Why there are scattered sidewalks of concrete. There are grand trees giving adequate shade, there are fine houses on either side, which are most interesting to view in passing. The gardens are wonderful in their variety and aroma. Why every now and again one can greet a fellow human being with a hello. One even becomes aware of being watched sometimes from behind a curtained window. There are the infrequent yet startling scuffles of a dog, which causes a rise in ones heartbeat at the start of it's warning bark!

The old urban experience versus the new suburban experience gives cause for concern. The old still attaches the pleasantries of human contact. The new is devoid of human or animal contact.

It seems that our local transportation engineers are bound to covet only the passage of the single occupancy vehicle (SOV) operator. These engineers wish only to give these SOV drivers a fleeting chance of viewing their daily routes by excessively beautifying our major roadways. Should not the residential roadways be rather landscaped this way? Like 20th Street should not the provision of trees be provided alongside the internal roads? Should not the sidewalks rather provide residents access paths to a “Village Commercial Center?” Should not these paths also allow for safe bikeway access to school parks and community centers?

The cost of doing this would change the land planning design of subdivisions somewhat. The cost for internal improvements compared to the almost mediaeval concrete block boundary walls and false “gated entries” to a “secure and private housing only subdivision” should be almost equivalent in cost. The quality of human contact and “living patterns” within these subdivisions should be improved by great margins. Why even interesting walks could be achieved for both young and old! A visit by misbelievers should be made to the City of Valencia that even provided footbridges across major roads to interconnect subdivisions. This was done in the early 1975!

What happens to the edges then of these major roads? The engineers should not think of downscaled freeway sound walls or landscaped medians. They should rather line the road edges with the precast concrete crash walls found in freeway medians. Maybe these could be covered with ivy to make them green! At least fleeting glances of housing behind these might provide a little more joy than bland concrete block walls.

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

**Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California**

[Back To Top](#)

**November 25th, 2001**

## **WISDOM OF WORKING TOGETHER**

When will we place aside our individualism and work step by step together towards city building?

One must question for example whether our past captains of local transportation were working for our local good. Having just observed the return to the past with regard to the Kern County Transportation Foundation representation of community interests for “future” high-speed ”rail” may I still take up my cudgels and parry a blow against their attitudes toward roundabouts.

Of course the most famous Garces Circle would have gone if they had their way. They certainly never helped the circles design by offering alternative access to the business with existing curb cuts onto the circle.

However lets not fret the lack of action of the past. Rather lets examine what Burden offers as “physics of traffic movements to explain why a small roundabout can work more smoothly than a standard, four-way intersection: In a roundabout, there are only 8 “conflict points” where cars moving in different directions might potentially collide with one another; a four-way intersection has 32 conflict points.”

Another Burden example, several generations of firefighters have grown up thinking they can’t get to fires on time except over 40-foot-wide, suburban-style streets. Burden’s has a video of fire engines racing to a fire through 18-foot streets! And one has never heard of the local real estate development industry tendering a new code similar to that found in San Diego County for all new residences being fitted with sprinklers. Now is this wise or not?

The 2020 Vision forums of private decision-making has moved Bakerfolks away from the poisoned, argumentative, frustrating debates so common at most public hearings—where people almost always are merely responding to someone else’s predetermined ideas for change.

Both the 2020 Vision as well as the recent Cities downtown Charrette and products still languish for continued leadership from City Councilors, City Officials with Private Businessmen. After offering such enticing smorgasbord of chances to join together in results that everyone felt personally responsible for the outcome, not getting on with it, is a shame.

We should not be satisfied with the wisdom or lack of it from our retired engineers, councilors or businessmen

We have to stop looking for experts and leaders, and listen to ourselves. However listening is not enough. The demand is for perseverance in action. Let’s continue to join together.

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

**Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California**

[Back To Top](#)

**November 26th, 2001**

## **WEBLOGGER DISCIPLINE**

Here is no mistaking how one becomes subservient to patterns. It has taken some time to find out that we are servants to themes.

Theme one is the awareness of being enslaved to horses. Theme two is being bonded to urban design. Theme three is being a servant to “weblogging”. This realization has come slowly but when it surfaces it’s a contest between the inexorable frameworks of how one spends time activities in a day.

Have all webloggers noticed that there are days left out automatically on their calendar? Have webloggers noticed that the record keeping is by day? That is for both reading and writing. Do other webloggers go back to those days missed to fill in some blanks from recorded memory? It might make their calendar look a lot better. Or do webloggers go forward if they have a writing spree and program articles for future days?

This fabulous computer system is monitoring every thing one reads and writes. So the theme being built by weblogger might allow someone else to do a profile of my writings. Only God records all the things with we do with horses, drawings and other matters. Unless one places multiple live video cameras on ones daily activities. One should only allow God to monitor our total daily patterns!

Maybe it’s just me looking at these blank days on the calendar and thinking about finding valid excuses for not making appropriate entries of words. This arises from a sense of guilt! This somewhat disturbing pattern has made me acknowledge that one needs more discipline in daily life.

However in the long run one does things sometimes for monetary rewards and sometimes for the distinct love of it. Then sometimes one also doesn’t take much time for reading and absorbing of material.

The most fulfilling thing is to be short winded and produce words that matter into stories that are not only readable, but are meaningful. Oh well sometimes my words and designs come quite naturally. Other times it is a little more difficult.

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

**Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California**

[Back To Top](#)

**November 27th, 2001**

## **URBAN DESIGN AND HOUSING FUTURES**

Heaven forbid that Architects have to suffer further injustices. After scanning the Sunday LA TIMES the following three articles jolted my sensibilities.

The first was a story of a “commercial artist” Thomas Kinkade of Santa Cruz and his paintings. Imagine that this Californian is one who is making millions by getting other “artists” to touch-up historic reproductions of his pretty vistas. Then imagine again that Californians have turned this awful trend into real life, as an upscale development, and 300 “nuts and raisins” are visiting the patterned homes in Vallejo each weekend. For all these curious gawkers one can choose from 110 designs done by English architect Taylor Woodrow. Plans from 1,800 to 2,600 square feet sit on 4,000 square foot lots. Just cough up \$400, 000 and one of these apparitions is yours.

The second was a story of “false stone veneers.” Imagine a thin veneer of lightweight, synthetic sandstone applied to a new concrete block wall. Tract home developers from Corona Del Mar to Rancho Santa Fe are trying faux stone, limestone amongst dozens of manufactured stone veneers. This next building fad to be sent to the rest of the world as made in California does not deserve more words. Let’s Disney-Up every possible building!

The third story is about the 18 ocean view lots on 6.3 acres in Laguna Beach. Environmentalists are worrying about it’s effects on an adjacent 209-acre wilderness parcel even when a lineal park buffers it. The violation seems to be illegal grading. No documents have been found.

My surprise lately was traveling south toward Malibu on Hwy 101 and observing the grading done to allow for an amazing amount of mega-housing developments. These altercations – housing versus natural parkland — will never end. How to balance man made versus natural conservation seems to be a losing set of skirmishes on a major battlefield. Property development rights for the individual are winning in the short term over the plight of natural landscapes for all in the long term.

A solution might be to stretch advertising sheaths over buildings much like Golden Empire Transit has done on their transit buses. One cannot but admire a clothing designer doing this on his building! Maybe Bakersfield can be brightened by such an effort. Let’s start the trend!



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

**Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California**

[Back To Top](#)

**November 30th, 2001**

**Grant Cross a young local artist first exhibit**



Contact artist Grant Cross at (661) 323-3181 for customized artwork and political cartoons

**Is there any doubt about this message?**

**CONTACT ARTIST GRANT CROSS AT 661-323-3181 FOR CUSTOMIZED ARTWORK AND POLITICAL CARTOONS**

[Back To Top](#)