

The Makabusi Urban Design Archives

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(Articles From September 2001)

Please follow the below links to jump to each article

[September 3rd, 2001 BAKERSFIELD METRO FREEWAY SYSTEM STUDY AND AIR QUALITY](#)

[September 4th, 2001 BAKERSFIELD CHARTER REVISION](#)

[September 5th, 2001 URBAN DESIGN MEANS FULLY UNDERSTANDING MOBILITY](#)

[September 7th, 2001 DOWNTOWN "RIVERWALK" BEGINNINGS HAUNT PRESENT DECISIONS](#)

[September 8th, 2001 URBAN DESIGN & PRIVATE/PUBLIC MEETINGS](#)

[September 9th, 2001 NEW URBAN DESIGN INFORMATION WEB SITES](#)

[September 10th, 2001 BAKERSFIELD AS AN URBAN DESIGN PARADISE](#)

[September 11th, 2001 COULD URBAN DESIGN DEFEAT SUCH A DISASTROUS SYMBOLIC ATTACK?](#)

[September 12th, 2001 THE INTERACTIVE MEGALOPOLIS](#)

[September 14th, 2001 URBAN DESIGN AND EMINENT DOMAIN](#)

[September 20th, 2001 THE NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE](#)

[September 22th, 2001 URBAN DESIGN COALITION](#)

[September 24th, 2001 URBAN DESIGN AND THE FUTURE](#)

[September 25th, 2001 URBAN DESIGN AND NATURAL RESOURCES](#)

[September 27th, 2001 URBAN DESIGN PROFILE OF A BAKERSFIELD CITIZEN](#)

[September 28th, 2001 URBAN DESIGN PROFILE OF A BAKERSFIELD CITIZEN](#)

[September 30th, 2001 URBAN PLANNING FUTURES FOR TRANSPORTATION](#)

September 3rd, 2001

BAKERSFIELD METRO FREEWAY SYSTEM STUDY AND AIR QUALITY

Postulating with out all the facts is a dangerous game. However this pathetically poorly organized effort to create a workshop on this issue is founded on a Kern County of Governments (KCOG) sandy foundation.

Without even receiving the 130 promised solutions it is easy to speculate after receiving only thirty or so, that the Reasonably Achieved Control Measures (RACM's) are banked into four categories: already in place, possible COG, possible others and summarily disqualified.

If the causes of pollution are well known, why isn't these core maladies addressed first? The hypothesis should be based on the cornerstone of bringing real estate development together with marketing and investment decisions toward clearly understanding the hand in glove approach necessary between land-use and transportation.

Mobile sources are the largest contributor to pollution in our area. The motor vehicle competes directly with our desires for a pleasant 15-minute walk to reach our perishable purchase and cultural/recreational needs, as well as for maintaining our general health and well being. Solution meld these local markets and other well-defined small scale commercial and cultural/recreational features, with a pedestrian network in all new subdivisions.

A similar approach should be made for separate and safe bicycle paths to schools and educational needs in future subdivisions. How many bike advertisements do we see on TV in comparison to motor vehicles? Why I know of a commuter who can demonstrate a daily 20-mile round trip commute with an electric powered bicycle! We use an electric powered scooter to get around our farm! We have a propane conversion on our 1982 Chevy truck to tow our horses around. What is everybody else doing?

Maybe we need a jolt of coughing and asthma in 90% of our population with 25% of our community carrying Valley Fever to quickly learn how to use our two feet rather than the present motor vehicle. We can conserve energy use as has been shown with recent electricity and gasoline costs.

Until a well-founded group of well-versed local individuals are openly called upon by our officials in regional governance to help in this effort, the study is and will become another thorough waste of time and costly effort.

The persistence of ignoring the intelligence already available in this community is the primary hallmark of politburo fear of Bakerfolks.

Many willing knowledgeable citizens are committed to adopt policies to benefit reaching some better measure of clean air for life together in this southern San Joaquin Valley.

A solution is paramount. When are we going to get together?

BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.

Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California

[Back To Top](#)

September 4th, 2001

BAKERSFIELD CHARTER REVISION

This is a letter sent by Sriram Khe to the Mayor & City Council. It should be read carefully as a prognosis worthy of application.

Sriram Khé 3504 Rancho Sierra Bakersfield, CA 93306-1822 Tel.: 871-3980 Email: skhe@csub.edu

August 28, 2001

The City Council City of Bakersfield 1501 Truxtun Avenue Bakersfield, Ca 93301

Dear Mayor Hall and Council Members:

According to the charter adopted in 1915, the council that governs the city is composed of seven members. For the reasons that follow, I urge the council members to consider revising the charter in order to increase the number of wards from seven to thirteen.

When the charter was adopted in 1915, Bakersfield had a population of about 18,638. The city area was only seven square miles. Eighty-six years since the adoption of the charter the city is very different: the population in 2001 is estimated at 254,400 in an area of 114 square miles.

The implications of such a growth are that

(a) each member represents about 14 times more people than in 1915, and

(b) on an average each ward is 16 times as large as the wards were in 1915. These data are summarized in the following table.

1915 Population -18,638 2001 Population-254,400

Area (sq. miles) 7 Area (sq. miles)114

Council Wards 7 Council Wards 7

Population per Ward 2,663 Population per Ward 36,343

Average Area (sq. miles) per Ward 1915 — 1

Average Area (sq. miles) per Ward 2001 — 16.3

* Wards are demarcated based on equal population, which means that the areas of some wards could be larger than this average.

A square mile that each council member represented in 1915 was essentially a neighborhood that a member could easily walk. Now, with the city having grown unequally in different directions, a ward, on an average, is 16 square miles. It has, therefore, become impossible for a council member to “walk the ward” and talk to constituents.

Second, the average 16 square miles that each ward represents is a collection of bunch of neighborhoods. It is not uncommon for these various neighborhoods within a same ward to have different opinions on the same project/proposal. The net result is that “unhappy neighborhoods” feel that their views are not adequately represented.

Third, when it comes to political representation, population is not the determinant of outcomes because population includes both eligible voters—citizens at least 18 years of age—and ineligible voters—children, non-citizens and those institutionalized. In 1915, household sizes were more than the typical household size of today because of the trend over the years for parents to have fewer children. This means that potentially a greater percentage of the population wards could be eligible voters in today’s contexts. It also means that the per-voter representation has therefore diluted quite a bit over the eight-six years.

Finally, the city is projected to grow at a similar, if not a faster, pace in the near future. If we retain the same seven-ward structure, we are looking at a tremendous dilution in representation of people that frequently leads people to believe that “you cannot fight city hall”. This relative dilution of the individual citizen’s powers also contributes to the high level of influence special interest groups are able to have on policy issues. Retaining the seven-ward structure as population continues to grow will mean that focused, special interest groups will become even more powerful in the future.

In order to address these issues, I suggest that the city be broken up into more wards than the seven we now have. Each council member will then be able to better articulate the preferences of a smaller number of people. While it may not be realistic to have small wards such that it will facilitate “walking the ward”, a smaller geographic area, on an average, will also help both the members and the population know each other.

Therefore, from a pragmatic perspective, thirteen wards will mean that each member will represent the voices of about 20,000 people in an average area of about nine square miles. This, I am sure you will agree with me, will lead to a representative government that will improve on the existing system.

Should you have comments or questions, I will be delighted to discuss them with you.

Sincerely,

Sriram Khé, Ph.D.

WHY SHOULD WE NEED TO LISTEN TO SOUTH AFRICA?

[Back To Top](#)

September 5th, 2001

URBAN DESIGN MEANS FULLY UNDERSTANDING MOBILITY

Urban design is entering a most exciting future. The shackles of rigid orthogonal geometries are beginning to break with the status quo. Long set by civil engineers mastery of continent mapping and measuring using square mile coordinates throughout the United States, this influence appears to be changing.

Some architects have passed through the “deconstructionist” fad of attempting to break with the three dimensional rectilinear box. The new contorted structures so formed produced awkwardly weird objects and spaces. Now the thing to experiment with are curvilinear surfaces much like those in Frank Geary’s recent experimentations.

Surprisingly enough these creative building exercises presently being offered by architects to a variety of buildings have been enabled by the ever-widening freedom offered with computer use. For Architects to simulate a virtual reality in motion has allowed those who have never imagined in three dimensions a vast new open door

to the creation of building new places. It has also allowed other disciplines to enter into a collaborative process for the invention of these new structures.

Much like children when first offered clay to mold interesting new things, the clumsiness of these new architecturally invented shapes have not shared the discipline of clear understanding, that it is the circulatory aspects that gently integrates the path of mobility within and connected to such spaces. The present architecturally arranged circulatory aspects are wanton to exaggerate unnecessarily the functions of man passing through or connecting between the desired volumes so formed.

It is as if Architects have discovered external shape possibilities that can be created for reflection of light suggested by arbitrary yet pleasing sculptural forms. However the naval architect considers external shape as a formed utility that allows for the mobility of balance and efficient passage of the vessel through water. The automotive and aircraft engineer considers external shape as one that gives the least resistance through air. The computer chip architect has invented residual hardcore spaces to frame the fastest movement of light along circulatory channels.

There is much to be done with architect's understandings of structure that forms internal spaces while at the same time suggesting external shape. Unless the circulation system is more clearly understood to fit human movement within the buildings purpose, architects will be entering yet another fad.

The arrangements for such diversely sculptural buildings together in a new city form, is when true urban design becomes the ultimate challenge.

We can now with new tools use a machine aesthetic to achieve a more natural aesthetic. The "fittingness" of such man made objects to places will become dependant on the hierarchical understanding of linkages from the mental to electronic, to physical mobility observed and so superbly integrated in nature.

BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.

Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California

[Back To Top](#)

September 7th, 2001

DOWNTOWN "RIVERWALK" BEGINNINGS HAUNT PRESENT DECISIONS

Wednesday night at the Bakersfield City Hall after an Indian prayer chant by a priest (Holy Man) from the Kern County Temple, which when interpreted was to bless and guarantee good things to come, one left the meeting with a good deal of pessimism about the proposed project.

It is not strange that a flash of news as late as 3:30pm the same afternoon occurred, revealing that a brand new bonafide offer had been made by a secret and unnamed qualified Baseball Team buyer for the Bakersfield Blaze?

A TIMELY UNPLANNED EVENT.

It is not strange that Council had all the questions on project costs, property acquisition via eminent domain, financing, developer market plan and leases answered by City Manager Mr. Tandy, California Baseball League President Mr. Guigliari and developer Mr. Olmscheid. After all aren't these three gentlemen the initiators of the whole downtown entertainment development drama?

THE SELF INTERESTED SWASHBUCKLING THREE MUSKETEERS.

It is not strange that the key decision for development to move ahead on a new stadium is corner stoned by these three musketeers arranging a negotiation to occur between a private sector baseball team owner and a possible new private baseball team buyer? This outside intervention activity forcing a private negotiation is without public control.

A STADIUM MAYBE A PRIVATE/PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT BUT NOT A PROJECT WHICH CASCADES FROM PRESSURE ON A SINGLE PRIVATE BUSINESS EXCHANGE DECISION.

It is not strange that a public redevelopment proposal based on a now two and a half year old poorly framed economic study, without the following competitive RFP for developers to compete in the open marketplace, has caused both heartache and a huge headache for this proposed “Entertainment Project”

CITIZENS STILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO SUBSIDIZE THIS PRIVATE/PUBLIC BUSINESS FOR PUBLIC GOOD WITHOUT A VOTE.

It is not strange that a prediction could be made before the Wednesday Council meeting that the final vote for the project extension would end as a predictable 5-2 result.

ONLY TWO ELECTED OFFICIALS CONSISTENTLY REPRESENT THEIR CONSTITUENTS BY PROTESTING PUBLIC INVESTMENTS OF THIS MAGNITUDE TO OCCUR WITHOUT A PUBLIC VOTE.

The substance of project equity, long term and short term financing were not shared. Bad redevelopment beginnings will always haunt this process of public/private decision-making. However my hope is that the Indian prayer chant overwhelms these problems and produces a better-balanced and more acceptable redevelopment project.

BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.

Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California

[Back To Top](#)

September 8th, 2001

URBAN DESIGN & PRIVATE/PUBLIC MEETINGS

Bringing civility to public debate is now a new TV focus. Depending on the level of controversy it is beginning to happen with much hoopla on all TV Channels and even NPR. This is a shame.

The recent international “conference” on racial matters in Durban, South Africa, brought out the word “reparation” repeatedly. The last time I heard this word spoken was during a Cornel West Lecture at California State Bakersfield, some time ago. Having acquired the Cornell West Reader I searched for anything on this reparation issue yet found no sterling written thoughts.

Having just suffered the reality of family being burnt out off their farm in Zimbabwe and listening to the cautious solution proffered by three African countries for white farmers “reparation” it will be most interesting to see the final written results of this controversial debate.

Last week in a Los Angeles Times an article titled TOXIC WASTE FIGHT: NO ROOM AT THE INN. Again the troubled debate in Nevada was - nuclear burial spot now spills over to where to hold a public meeting! The meeting has been moved to the National Nuclear Security Administration offices.

The Federal Energy Department fearful about an expected large turnout and the prospect of civil disobedience given the passionate objections to use Nevada as a nuclear waste dumping ground changed the early meeting site in Las Vegas as it was considered unsafe! Opposition sees this new meeting venue as inappropriate and intimidating because it is far from public transportation, surrounded by a fence topped with barbed wire, monitored by armed guards and most critical of all, too small a room! Amazingly enough the department agreed to televise the meeting by closed circuit to venues in Carson City, Reno and Elko. The purpose of the hearing is to solicit public reaction to an EIR adoption.

Closer to home at a meeting of the Bakersfield Planning Commission it was likened by Terrie Stoller a Commissioner in her letter published in the Village News as “reminiscent of a Roman lions’ den. What a frightening experience for Cal State’s two economics professors, Abbas Grammy and Sriram Khe, who had been invited to make a presentation of a yearlong study regarding the costs of development as it relates to the proximity of existing infrastructure. The intent of the study and recent presentation was to encourage a useful and needed discussion among our planning commissioners regarding the costs of development in Bakersfield.

The thought was that maybe the incentive of lower fees might help keep development contiguous to the city instead of sprawling out onto farmland. This study was done to create dialogue, not suggest a course of action or to set policy. Some commissioners recognized this intent, treated the presenters with respect and were willing to discuss incentives. However, unfortunately for other commissioners, it appeared through their comments that they were more interested in subsidizing and favoring special interests on the urban fringe than exploring alternatives that may benefit the taxpayers of Bakersfield.

The Bakersfield Planning Commission is a forum for public participation. These professors had been invited by the commission to make this presentation. After watching this attack I wonder whom in their right mind would subject them to such abuse? The professors deserve commendation for their cool demeanor and professionalism during this harassment. If we want the public to become more involved in local government decision-making bodies, then we need to remind the commissioners of their responsibility to set an example of acceptable conduct in the public forum.”

Although a proposal of notice has been given twice over two years to the Kern Council of Governments for the TV transmission of their meetings to the public at large on regional affairs, nothing has been done. Too little notice has been given to KCPA-TV in this community. They are asking Kern County and the City of Bakersfield for a community Public Access TV. Channel.

What is it in the minds and hearts of people of our politburo as well as our Bakerfolks that keeps a healthy discussion about building our community at bay? Do both private and public sectors fear one another enough to display such behavior about the needs of the community being aired in civil debates?

Bakersfield must cease and desist in selling itself as a place of cheap housing, cheap entertainment, few bikeways, few good quality open recreational green spaces, no historic downtown and flatland suburbia. A comment heard these days more frequently than not is that Bakersfield is the geographical “belly button” of California. This Bakersfield “belly button” is presently being slimed with dirt and oil by Bakerfolks!

My hope is that Bakerfolks with their lack of civil sensibilities and inability to debate will fast change their hardened attitudes toward more clearly understanding the essence of urban design. Let’s listen, reflect, deliberate and then take positive actions for our community. We must not allow ourselves to become the smelly armpit of California.

BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.

Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California

Back To Top

September 9th, 2001

NEW URBAN DESIGN INFORMATION WEB SITES

When scanning the different material that comes in front of me which might be useful I mark them for interest. After visit evaluations one has to determine whether they are in fact a useful resource.

Here are a few in the energy area of our physical reality:- <http://www.energystar.com>; <http://www.ase.org/>; <http://www.eren.doe.gov/> . Suggest that if you want to save energy and save money take a visit.

How about House Plan Services <http://www.udhomes.com>; or <http://www.homestyles.com> for a portfolio.

Rather speak to your local architects!

Of course if you are beginning to be a Greyhead or Greybeard and are seeking active adult retirement communities got to:- <http://www.villasofamerica.com>; or <http://www.delwebb.com>; www.ushome.com; and finally www.idigroup.com. Rather look out for your local retirement communities. The trend is to find a likeable place near the family you have produced locally.

If you are into finding out the latest housing price study online, go to <http://www.ofheo.gov>. Remember housing needs by 3.7 million working families are critical These families spend more then 50% of their income for housing. In the last two years critical housing needs rose by 23%.

BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.

Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California

Back To Top

September 10th, 2001

BAKERSFIELD AS AN URBAN DESIGN PARADISE

Urban Designers need their designs to be seen, to be noticed, to be regarded but most of all to be understood. Is this not the same need for most artists, whether architects, painters, sculptors, poets, musicians, photographers and writers?

This City of Bakersfield is presently based on limiting future images being spread amongst its citizens of the very things we need to see, digest and acknowledge. Bakerfolks have ideas that are extraordinarily unique. Their ideas are the very images we all need to expose ourselves to so that we can weave together a collective stream of images to reach from a virtual paradise to a built paradise.

This is something we can do together. It is these idea images we need to see more frequently in order to create the building of a stock of favored ideas. This will allow the best visual ideas to percolate to the top and the lesser of those to the bottom. Do you think this effort could provide a better visual guide for a better city?

Now what if we could give the Bakersfield Metro Area decision makers a visual source to show off an unlimited an unforgettable group of future images for their own desired indigenous paradise?

A humble answer would be if Bakerfolks would care to send these images to Makabusi Inc., we would happily publish these images on the web page, catalog and keep them as an inventory of what Bakerfolks see as their paradise. Always accessible to be referenced as reminders for those who need to make future decisions about better aesthetic environs?

Given that this is a success we could then add the word dreams of writers, the sketches of architects, the colors of painters, the shapes of sculptors the songs from musicians and the photographers pictured insights. Imagine concluding with poems about Bakersfield. Wonderful. Let us begin.

At last a way to build a shared new environment.

BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.

Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California

[Back To Top](#)

September 11th, 2001

COULD URBAN DESIGN DEFEAT SUCH A DISASTROUS SYMBOLIC ATTACK?

Well today's events present a personal challenge. How should one articulate a communication with the people one meets during the course of this day of shock to the core of our system of freedom?

One returns to the principles of one's understanding and belief in God. Today, I turned as I do frequently to my diary carried with me on travels off our small farm. This is what is on the front page. These word pictures come from a man of peace Mahatma Ghandi, and are simplified.

BUILDING

THE THINGS WE BUILD WITH ARE:

Respect for people

Principles with politics

Conscience with pleasure

Work for wealth

Character with knowledge

Morality with business

Humanity with science

Sacrifice with worship

Normally at the end of my emails – only if I remember to apply my signature, this is what follows:

Make Ignorance your daily opponent,

Indifference your constant foe,

And Prejudice your lifetime enemy.

Somehow reading this slowly and repeatedly calms my soul and keeps my spirits high. There are few if any solutions to urban terrorism attacks of cities.

BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.

Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California

[Back To Top](#)

September 12th, 2001

The Interactive Megalopolis

The Interactive Megalopolis: Putting the Genie Back into a Bigger Bottle

September 3rd and 10th, 2001 - This is the last of the five conceptual web stories on the relationship between land development trends, transportation, and global warming that began in July. No stories were published in August.

In 1948, English and American city planners convened a congress celebrating the 50th Year Anniversary of the Garden City Movement when in 1898, Ebenezer Howard published his “Garden Cities of Tomorrow.” This pattern of urban development was presented as an alternative to urban settlement patterns characterized by massive scale, lack of green space, and other congestion problems.

The main object of the concept was the establishment of satellite towns around a major city to be arranged in a radial pattern and separated by sufficient open spaces. Each garden city was to be a self-sufficient unit containing both residences and places of work, within walking distance from each other, and surrounded by a permanent agricultural belt. And each satellite town was to be limited in size and the need for expansion was to be satisfied by the foundation of new garden cities.

Schematic of Ebenezer’s Garden City Concept

Go to <http://www.Magplane.com> for the graphic

At the conference, amid the enthusiastic reception the Garden City Concept received from urban planners, one noted planner questioned the feasibility of the concept. While technically admirable from an urban design perspective - creating a scale of transportation needs for the majority of urban activities at a pedestrian level - Hans Blumenfeld (1895-1987) had three fundamental reservations about the concept.

1. The first and most important is the contradiction between the self-sufficient contained town objective (restricting places of work and residence in the same city or town) and the increasing specialization of labor in the industrial age. In the New Economy, this contradiction is even more pronounced.
2. The presumed ability to limit the size of urban developments within the satellite towns and within the central city in a free market economy.
3. The transportation network would require commuters and other travelers to travel into the central city to connect to another transportation network to travel between satellite towns.

(Admittedly, the choice of transportation technology or mode alone does not automatically control urban growth. The location liberating effect of the Magplane will still require coordinated land use controls to prevent unstructured urban growth. However, because the guideway/magport installation will still be somewhat more difficult than adding present day freeway on/off ramps, the Magplane System should promote closer transportation land use integration than does the automobile mode.)

But the irony of this compact development would be that such industries and residential development would locate in the vicinity of the Magport because the Magplane would provide accessibility to destinations that are much further than the present metropolitan range. To reach this next stage of urban development, we will have to excoriate urban planning orthodoxy requiring our urban regions to be “self contained” or “self-sufficient.” In fact the opposite should be celebrated and exploited if only to encourage the centralization of the built urban environment. In this way we can put the Genie back into the bottle but the bottle will be much bigger than the metropolis whether the Interactive Megalopolis or the Metropolitan Interlocking Region that the urban planners of China are favoring.

The above article is published with the express permission of Richard Zavergiu the author. Please visit <http://www.magplane.com>

Road map for racial progress

[The final documents from the World Conference Against Racism are far from perfect.](#)

Opposition party gains partial victory in Zimbabwe. Let us hope that the same can be achieved in Harare.

[Opposition party victory in Zimbabwe.](#)

[Back To Top](#)

September 14th, 2001

URBAN DESIGN AND EMINENT DOMAIN

A lot of thinking has been done lately by some Bakerfolks about the dilemma of the use of redevelopment powers in the community. Perhaps we should be creative and offer better and more inventive issues to cause a more dynamic change for our dumbfounded citizens.

After all it is quite cheeky to present any alternative in opposition to the bureaucrats best solution to promote the desired economic and urban design pattern of growth in this community.

All the politburo-sourced solutions we Bakerfolks have experienced, are driven by status quo and the eternal desire to move forward at any cost without the citizens vote. We also find that our elected and appointed officials are deaf to any of our expressed needs.

A first suggestion might be for the City of Bakersfield to overstep its brokering and eminent domain powers to just acquire the Bakersfield Blaze from the Pattons to solve all the current problems.

A few more suggestions perhaps are for Bakersfield City to use its expansionistic eminent domain powers (akin to city boundary annexations) to branch out and acquire the following “blighted” areas as well:

The controversial grocery store in SE Bakersfield—even before it is built

The East Hills Mall

The UA movie complex on Bernard Street

The Power Plant on Rosedale Highway, and

The entire string of vacant stores on Ming Avenue

Meanwhile we should equally encourage the County of Kern to similarly spread its meaningful urban servicing empowerments to acquire

The Borba Dairies

The Agricultural land for all Southern California's sludge dumping needs

And a proprietary "incentive" investment interest in El Tejon's subversive new town development.

This will allow for unabated leapfrog development in outright defiance of the new LAFCO's control laws.

Another meaningful development for both governments consideration is to convince local officials that a new Casino needs to be located downtown on the south side of the Convention Center. This should prop up the recent downturns in all the finagling that's been transpiring with the landowners under the shadow of the Multi-use stadium/entertainment Center. At least these landowners will not be lowballed for their properties.

Finally, it is not but a step away when some known local urban/environmental radicals will propose that a square mile of land around Old Town Kern be devoid of any zoning whatsoever. Imagine this zone where absolutely any land use and experimental transportation would be acceptable!

Now this would be so dynamic and would obviously show off the creative abilities of all the aspiring development capabilities in the United States of America and beyond in a new light for new era redevelopment. No need for any economic development studies for this area. Gosh imagine fiber optic cable service to yuppies stacked in mixed-use buildings, telecom freaks, bio engineering laboratory stiffs, robotic and nanotechnology nerds. Why this is a high tech community!

Redevelopment at any future date can only happen for Bakerfolks who have no fear of the future and can act without any impediments. One huge disadvantage for private developers is how to get equal consideration, as has our City Manager, to make development presentations with unnamed and "secret" entities! This is not the way to build a better Bakersfield.

BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.

Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California

[Back To Top](#)

September 20th, 2001

The New York City Skyline

Somehow we need to replace the W.T.C. architectural icon in defiance. It is a symbol of freedom which should never disappear.



Trade Center architect discusses buildings

CNN's Leon Harris spoke with Aaron Swirsky, part of the architectural team led by World Trade Center chief architect Minoru Yamasaki, on the way the building was designed.

WTC DESIGNED TO SURVIVE A PLANE CRASH

The World Trade Center had been designed by the architect to survive a crash from a Boeing 707.

WORLD TRADE CENTER CAN BE REBUILT

Can this promise be delivered?

World Trade Centre - New York - Some Engineering Aspects

Why The World Trade Center Collapsed. Why The World Trade Center Collapsed.

Fall of towers leaves big gap in skyline and in N.Y. psyche

The attack on New York's World Trade Center has left a gap in the city's celebrated skyline.

Why the towers collapsed

The jetliners hit the World Trade Center buildings at a vulnerable point.

[Back To Top](#)

September 22nd, 2001

URBAN DESIGN COALITION

Who should comprise the core of an emerging local coalition of urban designers? It should consist of sharing sometimes the sensitive nature of intelligent information gathering for the pursuit of local and regional city building priorities. Remember the definition of an urban designer. We all are urban designers. This includes elected politicians, appointed public servants, engineers, architects, planners, economists, environmentalists and Bakerfolks.

The private sector leaders need to discuss a range of proposals meant to improve the coordination of public safety and city building activities within the community at large.

The organizational structure of this coalition including those who should lead it and how information should be shared among its members is currently being formulated and under debate.

Urban Design members should not be reluctant to fully disclose their own information and capabilities. However, without the ability to create or control the use of urban intelligence, such as how and when to oppose or support an issue or when it should be launched into governance processes, Bakerfolks are stalling an effectiveness to resolve these common issues. This matter is still open for further discussion, but should be resolved soon.

As in the past, urban intelligence is usually sourced by the public sector whom only choose to share varying degrees of information, depending on whether it is of national, state, county and city interest. This is primarily dependent on the public/private relationships and the levels of community trust.

The urban design coalition should be more effective at providing some alternative private positions for its various members. Due to the diversity of each urban design coalition member, teamwork should occur if each member has an ability to publish their own position of the issue at hand. This capability should thus diversify the blame for any collective actions taken by the urban design coalition. This should give comfort to each participating member and thus relieve the embarrassment of being on the same team and having to agree with an urban design coalition resolution at creating a formalized action to oppose or approve every arising city building issue.

The structure and trust required for most critical aspects of the urban design coalition functions are being discussed. Articles are being drawn to focus urban design coalition member's interests. The need for information sharing called for by the urban coalition should be permanent, timely and comprehensive consultations at all levels. Leadership and presentation of actions will rest on a loose and rotational set of urban design coalition members in good standing.

Individual urban design coalition members positioning over functions and control of matters in the past have been conducted at a low volume publicly. This choice of implementing actions on issues do cut to the heart of community's relationship with all Bakerfolks. This is a complex public awareness relationship that should mix somehow intense support and cooperation with distrust and competition.

It should now be possible to regularly share urban design coalition secrets within its organizational structure. Although priorities should certainly differ they will shift more substantially across the membership profiles of interest leading to an ability of offering solutions to conflicts and resolutions as to when and how to act on different issues.

For any long-term urban design coalition to succeed, there must be an appropriate structure and a core of trust that allows for the sharing of intelligence across the membership. These should take time to develop on this new weblogger Internet tool but should not hinder the speed and effectiveness of its functions for and against governance functions.

Unified and effective urban intelligence should put Bakerfolks on more equal footing with local governance — a goal the urban design coalition has sought for some time.

The urban design coalition desires to offer better alternative solutions from any angle we see fit, puncturing the conventional wisdom and status quo for building better local places to inhabit.

BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.

Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California

[Back To Top](#)

September 24th, 2001

URBAN DESIGN AND THE FUTURE

Have we all lost our bearings in urban design? The recent obliteration of an architectural icon such as the World Trade Center should change the interdisciplinary art of building cities.

Architects, Engineers, Planners and Urban Designers (AEP/UD), whom we presume to be particularly sensitive to dilemmas and dreams, should be peering apprehensively into the abyss of the future.

What do this group, who love the most difficult social art believe is important, to see? What is the role of this group in this present crisis? How will this group change in response to the new circumstances in which we live?

Observing all the other arts fighting back to fund a recovery, one is astounded by the fact that not one architect or planner has commiserated with me on this transcending issue which should impact their daily lives. To share thoughts on this future from the different fields involved in building cities is obviously a most uncommon pattern of communication. To raise money as a series of professional groups (AEP/UD) is almost an unthinkable act!

One may infer from this lack of being in touch with one another, that there exists a great helplessness. This group does have a common belief that they love what they do, but that this event will only marginalize what they should do for this crisis should not be ignored. To create some alternative at this moment might seem to be irrelevant, even offensive however maybe this should a new focused priority.

To understand how this group might evolve, and what role they might play in this national crisis, is still something, which might never be revealed. One hopes that this (AEP/UD) group finds a way to do something new and revolutionary. They will keep doing what they do because that is what they know how to do and it gives them a kind of animal comfort to do it. The stunning opportunity presented with this crisis is a challenge that many architects however cannot or will not take advantage of in the form of true leadership in this most complex of social Art.

Our culture owes its strength to its mongrel diversity, and architecture still counts, building for it's own sake does not. This mongrel group suggests that maybe they should forge a greater cooperation with all the professional and manufacturing/construction industries involved in the building of great architecture.

How we make good urban design, how we use it, what decisions are made about what to present — will not come at once. The (AEP/UD) and constructors have historically both lagged behind and only anticipated much of the present status quo. Now this most difficult of social art should anticipate these inevitable changes coming to a different urban form. What will happen to this group now will depend largely, of course, on what happens to our country, and somewhat to who participates as “the developer/financier”.

Our own group faith as one who has been shaped by my love for urban design is that we as a cultured nation will find a way to draw on and extend our artistic diversity and contribution. We must retain our values, and those values very much embrace the sometimes-messy creativity of urban design.

Architecture harbors safe places for life itself. New forms of transportation such as integrated mobility should also take advantage of this moment in time to weave more coherent and safer places to inhabit. Urban design should lead us into new city creations if not directly or, more likely indirectly from the present into a more desirable future.

BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.

Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California

Back To Top

September 25th, 2001

URBAN DESIGN AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Our urban environments have changed remarkably over the last century. Most homes were modest; roads were better suited for horses than “horsepower.”

The changes haven’t always been good for us. Our technological revolution however has been a weakening of family and community ties, a loss of spirituality and a dilution of our moral standards. Nature, too, has had to bear part of the cost, and its share of the bill seems to be getting larger all the time.

As recently as 20 years ago, our farm in Rosedale has been nice. Rosedale is now different – more crowded and hectic. Sprawl can be a gradual process. You don’t notice it until you compare the past with the present. How many more houses, people, and cars are now present where we could ride our horses in any direction 10 years ago?

Several things happen to natural resources as development occurs. First, with more houses on the landscape, natural resources are destroyed. Farmland is lost for every house that is built. The new homes and mowed yards displace natural habitat.

Sprawl also results in habitat fragmentation. Animals can no longer travel safely from one patch of habitat to another. Biologists and ecologists have reported declines in plant and animal diversity and population numbers wherever development occurs.

Impervious surfaces, warmed by sunshine, also get hotter and stay hotter for longer periods than natural vegetation. Bricks and concrete used in buildings and streets slowly release heat long after sunset, making the downtown areas of Bakersfield routinely five to 15 degrees warmer than the surrounding countryside.

We may not be able to stop urban sprawl, but we can counter some of its negative effects. The key is for developers and modern-age settlers to include nature in development plans.

Trees, grassland, and other natural habitats have benefits and values beyond providing places for our wild species to live. Trees provide important protection from heat, storm water runoff, noise reduction, light pollution and lower heating and cooling costs. Natural areas provide recreational opportunities, help clean the water and the air, and improve the quality of life for people.

The presence of natural features has been shown to increase a property’s real estate value. It even increases the value of neighboring properties. When developers take such values into account, natural features can become an important part of the development infrastructure, just like water and electric lines. Very few developers have taken this track. They do not leave buffers between farmland and subdivisions. They do not construct natural footpaths and provide linear parks that wildlife can use as natural corridors when traveling.

Urban sprawl is not just a city issue; it’s a statewide issue. San Joaquin Valley’s natural resources are being affected, and it will take many people working together in different ways to make a difference. Once our natural resources and habitats are destroyed or fragmented, they are gone forever. With some forethought, development and natural resources can coexist.

Bakersfield City, Kern County, developers, and builders can incorporate nature into the development process in several ways.

1 Identify and save key natural features on future development site.

2 Save for example the Goose Neck Slough corridor and blocks of orchards and scrubland as part of common areas. (Riverlakes Golf Course has almond orchards!)

3 Use water recharge lands as part of a series of connected storm water control systems.

4 Minimize impervious surfaces by reducing road and parking surfaces, or by using traditional materials to filter storm water run-off.

5 Fit buildings into the landscape to minimize grading and other construction impacts, and add thermal chimneys to their collective arrangements.

6 Require the planting of trees and re-establishment of native plants.

7 Let us eliminate some of our sidewalks on our major street systems and rather place them cost effectively into a plan of pedestrian and bikeway corridor networks to link our suburban “villages” to schools, parks and local market centers.

8 Make sure the green space forms a connected system that encourages safe wildlife travel across our desert valley floor.

The last recommendation is one of the most important ones to consider in future Bakersfield subdivisions. Instead of a hundred year flood design calculation resulting in the excavation of a huge storm water capture pit, which is always fenced off excluding both people and animals, let us rather anticipate linking these areas for wildlife corridors, buffers and open space – even if this space is partly a productive small rural farm!

There is absolutely no harm in forming a patch quilt of both linked urban and open space areas. It is just that we have never sat down to design this obvious pattern about which could bring about a better quality of life for both people and animals. Let’s do it!

BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.

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[Back To Top](#)

September 27th, 2001

URBAN DESIGN PROFILE OF A BAKERSFIELD CITIZEN

Having been brought up and called upon most times to debate the “other point of view” one must for the intellectual effort attempt sometimes to at least list the bad things as well as the good things about the places we inhabit.

If this angers readers please respond with your ideas in order to make this web page CREATE a good dialog about things that matter in the building of cities.

As ONE Bakerfolk myself please honestly answer the following questions for yourself if you are in search of the truth for a better community: -

1 Do we want to live in a place where we do not know more than seven of our neighbors?

2 Do we want to live in a place where we only feel safe because we live with similar folk because of race?

3 Do we want to live in a place where we only feel safe because of sexual preferences?

4 Do we want to live in a place where we only feel safe because of similar shared religious beliefs?

5 Do we want to live in a place where we only feel safe because of similar social age groupings?

Bakerfolks do you all desire to know the art of living? According to Henri Frederic Amiel, philosopher and writer (1821-1881) “It is contained in one phrase: — make use of suffering.”

Bakersfolks do you agree?

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Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California

[Back To Top](#)

September 28th, 2001

URBAN DESIGN PROFILE OF A BAKERSFIELD CITIZEN

The last article was a search for some honest answers. Today’s is part two. The most difficult part is to ask the right questions. So here are five more questions for your consideration.

1 Do Bakerfolks live in a contagious era of fear amongst secular groups?

2 Are Bakerfolks limited to enjoying their experiences in the majority of only three places – one’s house, one’s vehicle and one’s work place?

3 Are Bakerfolks lives infiltrated with uncontrollable reverence to TV influences on our community’s toxic farm and oil landscapes?

4 Are Bakerfolks lives influenced by “entertainment venues” of the same bland fare as found in New York?

5 Are Bakersfolks able to confront rubbing shoulders with strangers in a downtown?

In the better world of Bakerfolks we need to expand far above and beyond the answers to these five questions. If we can change some of our attitudes we can build finer and more human places to enjoy together.

“In the real, real world, governed by both the market and natural economies, all of life together is locked in a Cadmean struggle. Left unabated, the struggle will be lost, first by the biosphere, and then by us.” Edward O. Wilson, *The Ecological Footprint: The Biosphere And Man*, Vital Speeches of the Day (New York), Feb 15, 2001.

BY Graham Kaye-Eddie – Master Urban Designer.

Makabusi Inc. – Bakersfield – California

[Back To Top](#)

September 30th, 2001

URBAN PLANNING FUTURES FOR TRANSPORTATION

Governance at all levels from Federal to State to City are pretty poor crisis management organizations. Policy making as practiced today with all the multitudinous Democratic, Republican, Academic and Private Policy Research Institutes are failing to evaluate the worth of transportation futures in a urban design context.

Diminishing natural resources, volatile economic postures, single purpose programs and special interest projects abound. They cause unintended and troublesome consequences. This “adhococracy” is facing the capitalism of unimaginative urban development. So much rhetoric about these issues yet so few fine livable projects.

A serious look at city building priorities and impacts needs at least one single person in the politburo involved with the responsibility and accountability of examining the future of American cities. Organized governmental intervention as a formal mechanism does not exist today. As the result no one is in charge!

This piece meal governance approach is shocking. Why even the smallest surviving businesses have a futures outlook ready to take action of a advantageous opportunity. However they are lighfooted and not a lumbering sleepy giant. All growth plans from Federal to State to City are without creative urban design plans.

The best example of this is the desperate plight we now find ourselves in with regard to transportation alternatives. The Airline industry is now pumped-up with government subsidies. The current emergency alternatives are looks in the rear at Amtrak as our rail savior or more of the same congested SOV driving on under maintained roadways. This is no way to provide added mobility for our future generations or for us presently.

The desperation found in present governance efforts toward finding new transportation and urban design answers to national, state and regional large scale problems might be governances framework for creating design solutions. This is typically achieved in a oversimplified way by reacting in isolation. The response in California to a energy crisis, was brought about as a solution in secret. Under the covers, government urban design solutions have had the unfortunate history of providing some horrible failures.

Unfortunately a common conclusion maybe drawn by governance with regard to evaluating any future transportation innovation. It is a sad use of words, which tosses aside prejudicially any inventive urban transportation solution as “unproven technology.” This predominant governmental attitude on the one hand is quite extraordinary in the face of NASA advances in providing unique mobility answers at zero gravity. On the other hand it is shameful to know that government permits present use of safe advanced maglev technology in recreational parks for rides with speeds at 3 times the force of gravity.

Eternal vigilance is required to ensure that governance should create fair competition to advance the quality of mobility in our national state and local urban areas. This needs leadership in really establishing transportation agencies that show a relationship to future urban growth with a clear new path of change for directing new mobility means and its supporting infrastructure.

Make Ignorance your daily opponent, indifference your constant foe, and prejudice your lifetime enemy.

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[Back To Top](#)