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reading for  
you!*

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# What's New

## In land use planning

*RFM Land Use Consulting*

## Engaging the Community

You are doing a Mobility Study in your County. It is the intent to find out how traffic (pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle) is moving through the community. From this, it is hoped to improve the flow. So why engage the Community?

Well, the obvious answer is that they live there...they know where the bad intersections are, that to get from Point A to Point B takes forever because of the route they need to take, etc. Aside from that, they have the right to know what's going on in their community. To include their input on the final product makes a more useable study that can be turned in to action items.

Ideally, one should have an outreach program that gets as good a representation of the demographics of

the community as possible (in that I mean old, young, working, retired, been in the community forever, and those just moved in just to name a few). This, obviously, will get a better big picture from which to work from. It has the added bonus of getting more of the community involved and having a say.

In order to do this, it may take a number of meetings held at different times of the day at different locations. Have one in the morning, one at the "lunch hour", one in the early evening after normal work hours. At a community center, school auditorium, library or other centralized location.

The engagement process applies for any project, any community. If it affects them, include them!

### Join me on...

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### Why Do CEQA?

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) has been around for quite a number of years, yet some have questioned why do it?

The basics of CEQA are that it evaluates what types of potential impacts a particular project may have on the surrounding environment. From there, what are called mitigations can be prepared to help minimize those impacts. This information is to help assist the decision makers in determining if the project should be approved, and if so, what can be done to minimize damaging the environment in the process.

With that said, not all projects require a full on evaluation. That is where the Categorical Exemptions (those projects that don't have any impacts or are to minimal to be of concern), come in to play.

And not all projects are required to have an Environmental Impact Report (EIR – the “granddaddy” of environmental evaluations). It depends on what the project is, and where it is, that determines the level of evaluation.

Each project that comes in to a jurisdiction must be evaluated as to what level of determination to be done. This

### Why Do CEQA... (Cont.)



is typically up to the lead planner assigned to the project.

But, you ask, why do a determination? When it gets down to it, CEQA is done to not only help minimize environmental impacts, but it is also done to provide information for the decision makers.

Not only do the decision makers need to have an analysis of the project itself (what is it, what are the benefits – or lack of – of the project, consistency to general

plan and zoning, etc.), but also they need to know if there is an environmental impact as a result of the project. They are the ones making a “yes” or “no” decision, so anyone doing their jobs will require all aspects of the job.



### *To Laugh, or Not to Laugh, that is the Joke...*

6:30 is the best time...hands down

Everybody knows Albert Einstein was a great guy...however his brother Frank was a real monster...

Sis-boom-bah!! The sound a sheep makes when it explodes! (Thank you Carnac the Magnificent!)

Police: we're looking for a suspect with one eye...Citizen: wouldn't it be easier if you used both eyes??

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Yes, Planners do have a sense of humor!!

### Do I really need a consultant to help me?

Honestly, it would not hurt to have what amounts to a neutral third party helping you through the process.

In all my years "behind the counter" I could only go so far in regards to dispensing advice on how to prepare an application to someone. I could not tell them HOW to draw their plans, only that certain aspects were missing and needed to be done. If they had someone who knows what is being looked for in an application packet, it sure would speed things along.

Granted, having a consultant on your side will add some cost to the process, but if the consultants knows what they are doing, it will save you time in re-doing your application packet, understanding your responsibilities should your application be approved, or what the steps are should it be denied, and having someone who can speak and understand the lingo is always a plus.

Additionally, having someone to assist with the process along the way, if there were times you had to work, attend to family events, could not attend a key meeting, it is a benefit to have someone there on your behalf who can then reply back and keep you up to date on the process.

When choosing a consultant, do your own due diligence! Ask about their experience, background, services provided, geographic areas they serve, and cost. How can they be contacted during the course of the contract; what are their billing practices; do they sub-contract if they don't have the experience or in-house staff to do the work? Ask for references.

Do note that not all consultants work out of a brick-and-mortar office building, some work out of their home. So, don't be surprised if they come to you, or the local coffee shop.



### What does the AICP mean on your business card?

Great question!

I was asked this once when I was attending a breakfast event here in town. I was more than happy to explain the AICP in my "elevator speech" mode (two minutes or less).

The American Planning Association (APA) is a professional organization of planners that is both nationwide, and state wide. It can be compared to the AIA (American Institute of Architects), the AMA (American Medical Association) and the like.

Within the APA is a certification arm called the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). This is a designation that shows you have met the criteria to become a certified planner (a certain number of years in the business

depending on your educational level) and have taken a lengthy test proving your knowledge of planning. This test goes well beyond the basics a planner should know (like what's a general plan?). It tests your knowledge of law, history, the people who've impacted the industry, ethics and more.

Once one has passed this test, it is up to the planner to get certificate maintenance credits (like continuing education credits) of a certain amount per every two years.

Having this designation is a way of proving your dedication to the industry, and lends credibility to oneself by the fact one is continuously keeping up with trends in the industry.





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***Where The  
Customer Comes  
First***

## Publications

I hope you have enjoyed this publication of RFM Land Use Consulting's newsletter! While short in nature, I hope you have found the information useful.

It is my hope to periodically publish a newsletter to keep my clients up to date with articles relating to the planning field, as well as highlight projects I feel are of note for the community.

If there are subjects of interest in the

planning field you would like to see here, please feel free to contact me with those ideas, and I will endeavor to include them in future publications.

Future editions will be sent via email for those who subscribe, and are clients.

Go to [www.rfmlanduseconsulting.com](http://www.rfmlanduseconsulting.com) to subscribe to this newsletter, it's free!

Thank you for reading!

### In future editions of the newsletter...

- Affordable housing
- Telecommunication (cell towers)
- The General Plan
- The Zoning Ordinance
- California APA Conference
- Services provided
- NEPA
- Housing Rehabilitation
- Starting consulting business