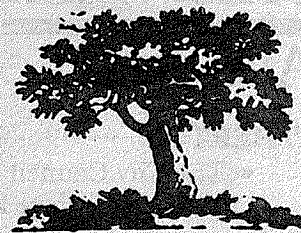


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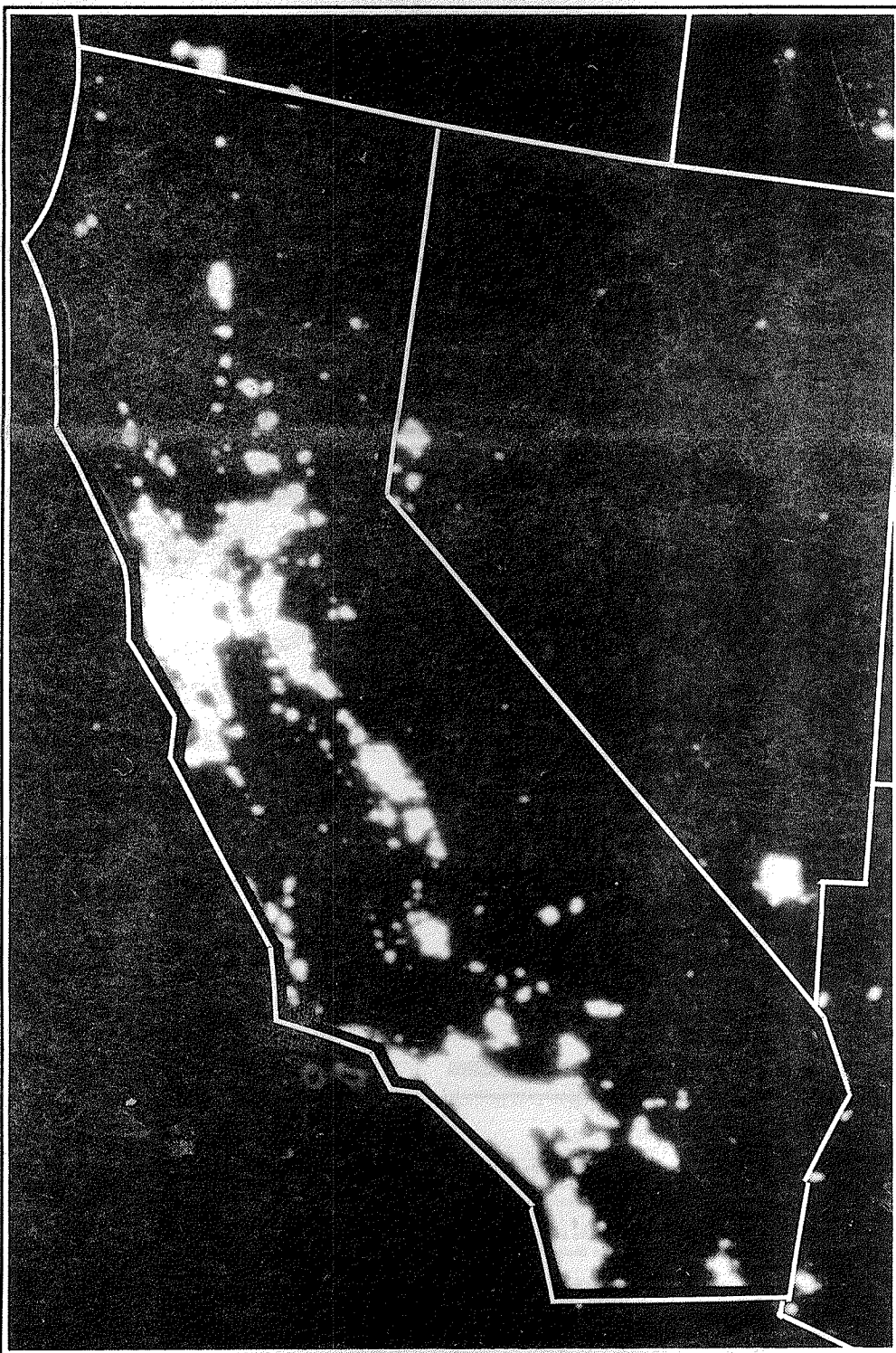


Vol. XXV, No. 5 January 30, 1991

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Curbing urban sprawl

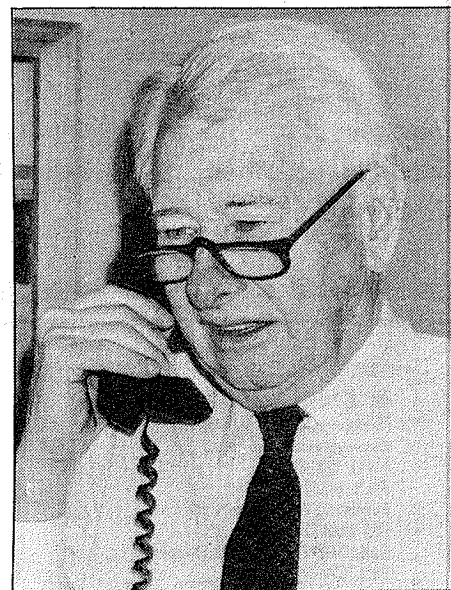


Urban sprawl in Northern California, judging from this nighttime satellite photo, is as great or greater than in Southern California. Scott Wylie of Menlo Park and Mel Lane of Atherton are among those who are actively working to do something about it.

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Scott Wylie



Mel Lane

Lights in California as recorded on a clear night by an Air Force defense meteorological satellite.

EPRI JOURNAL

Will regional government work?

Scott Wylie of Menlo Park and Mel Lane of Atherton are working with Bay Vision 2020, which aims to create a super-agency to curb urban sprawl

BY MARION SOFTKY

Can the Bay Area avoid going the way of Los Angeles? Yes, says a new report, but only if it adopts more centralized, less sprawling patterns of growth and a government to make them happen.

Bay Vision 2020, a blue ribbon commission of 31 prominent Bay Area citizens, has provided a blueprint for a Bay Area future with a better environment and a healthier economy. It proposes a simpler regional government that might be able to lasso runaway sprawl, revitalize decaying urban areas, and lead the Bay Area to more wholesome growth.

The time is ripe for such an initiative, says Scott Wylie of Menlo Park, director of communications for Raychem and a member of the commission. "A new Governor means a time of new beginnings. We thought it was a good time to create the possibility of a new kind of government for the Bay Area."

The Bay Vision 2020 report calls for saving open space and cleaning the air by concentrating growth in existing cities and in designated areas that could be served by transit. To keep new development from continuing to leapfrog farther into the country, it recommends consolidating three existing regional agencies into a single Regional Commission with authority over air quality, transportation and land use.

These agencies — the Association of Bay Area Governments, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and the Bay Area Air Quality Management Board — are already exercising most of the powers proposed for the new Regional Commission. The need is for coordination, notes Mel Lane of Atherton, former publisher of Sunset Books and Magazine and another member of the commission.

"Our growth needs to be managed better than it has been. We're paying a price for lack of coordination," he says.

The problem

More than 75 employees at Raychem commute over 80 miles each way to homes in distant towns like Modesto, Patterson or Discovery Bay. "They leave before the sun comes up and return after the sun goes down every day," says Mr. Wylie.

The driving force beyond this phenomenon is housing prices, adds Mr. Wylie. "The quest for affordable housing has pushed them into the Central Valley," he explains. "As you restrict the supply of housing, you create the pressures that result in sprawl."



PHOTOS BY MARION SOFTKY

SCOTT WYLIE, left, and Mel Lane hope to curb urban sprawl.

Sprawl leads to traffic jams, dirty air, loss of open space, and decline in the quality of the environment. Inner cities and developed areas are left behind. The quality of living and the economy are hurt.

"At heart it's a question of where people live and work and how they get there, which is the traditional province of cities and counties," says Mr. Lane.

Sprawl hasn't been created on purpose, adds Mr. Wylie.

"This has happened and will continue to happen unless we create a place in government where we can explore trade-offs and manage our growth as a region.

"That's the guts of the thing," he concludes.

Regional government

Part of the problem of traffic gridlock is government gridlock, caused by lack of coordination among more than 800 mostly independent agencies in the Bay Area.

"We have plenty of government in the Bay Area, but what we have is not well coordinated," says Mr. Wylie.

Decisions on land use are made by nine counties and 98 cities. In addition, 721 special-purpose districts (not counting school districts) are responsible for functions ranging from local — water, fire and hospitals — to regional — air quality, transportation and land use planning.

The 31 members of Bay Vision 2020 spent a year grappling with issues of growth and government. Members came from diverse groups and from all around the Bay Area.

The commission was sponsored by three groups, including historical antagonists from the environmental and business community. The Greenbelt Alliance joined the business-oriented Bay Area Council and an organization of elected city and county officials chaired by Santa Clara County Supervisor Ron Diridon.

Los Angelization?

Their mission: to devise patterns of growth and a form of government that can head off the "Los Angelization" of the Bay Area.

The key to managing growth is to

combine responsibility for transportation, land-use planning and air quality, the commissioners agreed. "We concluded we should start with the minimum that meets the needs and is practical. Other functions can be added later," says Mr. Lane.

Mr. Lane, who has already pioneered two major regional agencies, believes this one may be easier. Most of the authority over transportation and air quality already lies in the existing air and transportation agencies, he notes. The three existing agencies also have money, so "funding will not be a problem."

Mr. Lane was the original chairman of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission for seven years before he left to be first chairman of the California Coastal Commission.

Services and growth

The thrust of the new agency will be to encourage growth to be concentrated in areas with services. Urban limit lines would prevent growth into areas valued for agriculture, environment or open space.

The policies "translate into higher densities where people work and a better correlation between housing and workplaces," notes Mr. Lane. "One major piece has to be more public transit along corridors of heavy population."

"We should define places where growth is appropriate," adds Mr. Wylie. "That can put an end to sprawl and allow us to use urban areas effectively."

Larry Orman, executive director of the Greenbelt Alliance, explains the Regional Commission will concentrate on major issues.

"The Regional Commission is unlikely to get power to force local government to approve something it doesn't want," he says. "It is more likely to give veto power over projects they do want."

Mr. Lane and Mr. Wylie expect the Regional Commission to have a variety of incentives and regulatory powers — carrots and sticks — to carry out its plans. Many of these already exist in powers of the Air Quality Board and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

"We should use incentives where we can," says Mr. Lane. "That allows for some of the diversity we have and don't want to give up."

Then the fate of Bay Vision 2020 lies in the Legislature.

(Continued on next page)

Regional planning means wrestling with tough trade-offs

Bringing new governance to the Bay Area will not be easy.

"This is a world of tradeoffs," says Mel Lane of Atherton, member of the Bay Vision 2020 Commission. "There's the normal fear of change we all have. Cities and counties wonder what power may be taken away. Land developers wonder where they will get permits and what the rules will be."

The price of more open space in outlying areas will be higher densities in cities.

Take El Camino Real in Menlo Park. It

has changed markedly in the last 20 years and will change more during the next 20. How should this change be directed?

"The question is: what do you when the opportunity for redevelopment appears? How do you steer it over time?" asks Scott Wylie of Menlo Park, another commission member.

He suggests the El Camino corridor be redeveloped for affordable housing and moderate commercial activities.

"That's where you want development to occur because that's where you can move

people," he says.

"I'm talking about places people can live. There's not much opportunity for people to live close to transportation," he adds. "Mass transit only works when you have people near it."

Mr. Wylie continues, "You can't have your cake and eat it. If you want to protect open space and keep the hills beautiful and have population growing and don't want people living in Modesto, you're going to have to provide housing here."

Meetings

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors was to discuss Bay Vision 2020 Tuesday, Jan. 29 at 9:30 p.m. in the Supervisors Chambers, Hall of Justice and Records, 401 Marshall St., Redwood City.

The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area will feature a program on Bay Vision 2020 at Bay Area League Day, Saturday, Feb. 9 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Oakland Museum Auditorium.

For information call the local League at 325-5780 between 10 a.m. and noon Monday through Friday.

New animal-welfare group set up in Skyline area

The Skylonda Animal Network, formed to help solve animal problems in the Skyline area, will hold its first meeting Tuesday, Jan. 29 at 7:30 p.m. at the Skywood Restaurant in Skylonda near the corner of Route 84 and Skyline Boulevard.

The new group is being founded by June Genis, former Libertarian candidate for Congress and opponent of the county's new ordinance controlling breeding of cats and dogs.

Ms. Genis, a member of the Stanford

Cat Network, hopes to establish a similar voluntary program to care for stray animals. She hopes to develop other programs to help with animal problems such as a local subsidized spay neuter program, a voluntary registration program with optional tattoo identification service, and local animal rescue work.

"The Skyline area is already a prime dumping ground for people who don't want to fulfill their obligations to the animals they have adopted," Ms. Genis said.

For information, call 723-4422

REGIONAL

The fate of Bay Vision 2020 lies with the Legislature

(Continued from previous page)

The draft report is being reviewed throughout the Bay Area by governments, civic and private groups. The Bay Vision 2020 Commission will collect input until the end of February when it will prepare a final report for distribution in March.

"Each new regional government has to have individual legislation," notes Mr. Lane.

There will be lots of action on regional issues this year. Governor Wilson is proposing regional measures, and Assemblyman Willie Brown has already introduced another version of last year's regional government bill.

It will be necessary to build a constitu-

ency to get this proposal adopted, Mr. Lane says. "It's hard to generate public support for regional government; it's harder to get your arms around. Save the Bay or Save the Coast had more emotional support."

"This is more intellectual, but less of a change. We're taking three agencies that already exist," he says. "This is not another level of government."

Mr. Wylie adds, "A regional commission gives these questions a chance to bubble up. It's not a question of what you think the future ought to be; it's a question of whether you have a place governmentally to talk it through, make a decision and get on with it?"

County demonstration project aimed at 'diverse' student population

A new statewide demonstration project to help schools find better ways to meet the needs of a diverse student population is being set up in the San Mateo County Office of Education in Redwood City.

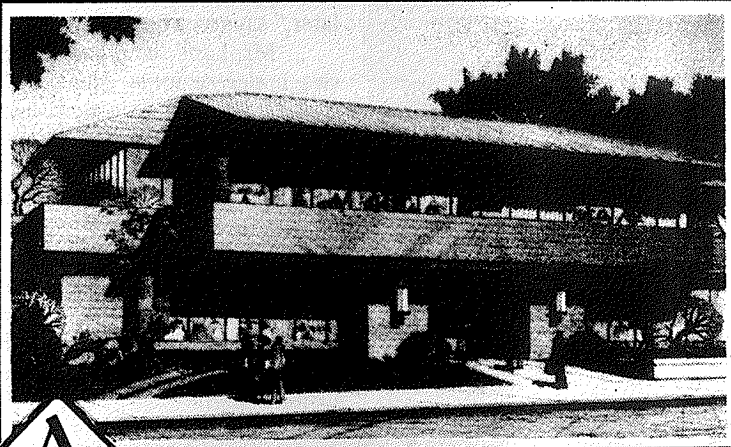
County Superintendent of Schools Floyd Gonella said this project "presents an exciting opportunity for schools to use imagination and creativity to engage all students." The project, tentatively called the California Center for School Restructuring, will be administered by the county office of education.

Funded by Senate Bill 1274, the center will establish a series of demonstration pro-

grams. The bill's intent is to provide maximum latitude and flexibility to schools and districts to come up with comprehensive demonstration projects.

The center will provide assistance to schools throughout California that seek funds to become demonstration sites and also provide support to them if they are selected.

Superintendent Gonella said Dr. Maggie Szabo, former Bay Area coordinator for the Coalition of Essential Schools, has been named the project administrator. She received a doctorate from Stanford University, has taught high school English, and has served as a curriculum coordinator.



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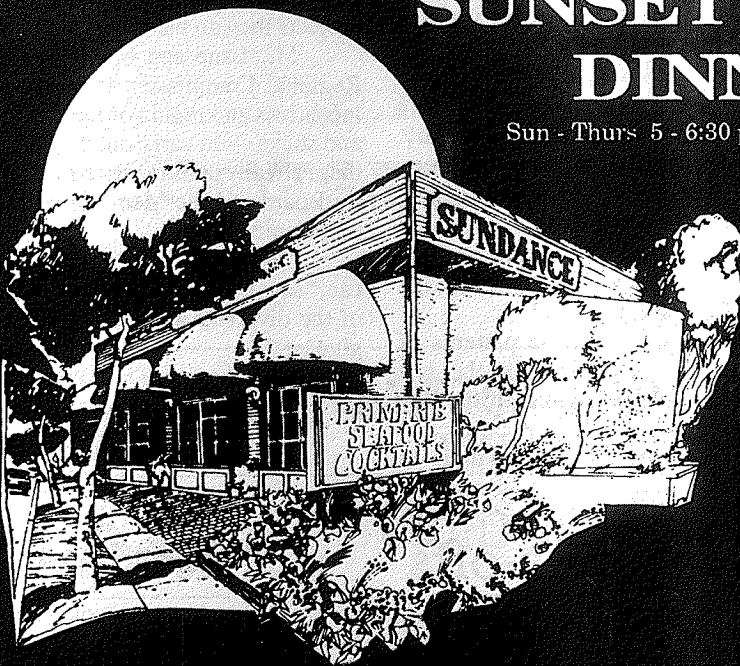
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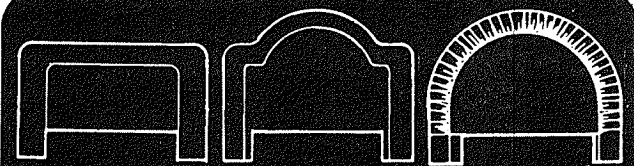
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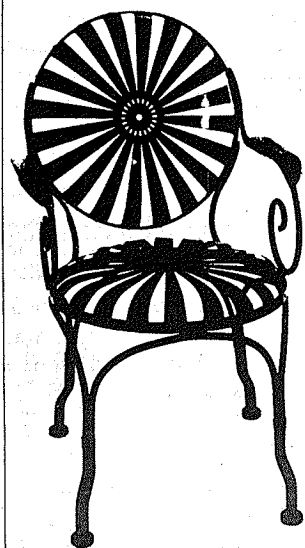
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