
CITIZENS COORDINATE FOR CENTURY 3



C-3 SPEAKS – MAY 2018 BREAKFAST DIALOGUE

Temporary Paradise? Then and Now

This 1974 'Regional Reconnaissance' created by Kevin Lynch and Donald Appleyard represents the first "sustainability" planning document for the San Diego region. It encouraged us in beautiful prose and depictions to preserve our natural resources, integrate our environmental and geophysical attributes into regional planning, and develop the bi-national economic and cultural assets inherent in our region - all tenets of sustainability today.

This spring, C-3 re-introduces this document by presenting our commemorative reprinting featuring contemporary essays by locally recognized planners.

Panelists: Dr. Larry Herzog, Essayist – Temporary Paradise Commemorative Reprint; Mike Madigan, Chief of Policy to Mayor Pete Wilson 1974; Rene Peralta, Essayist and Editor – Temporary Paradise Commemorative Reprint; Michael Stepner, Essayist – Temporary Paradise Commemorative Reprint

Moderator: Roger Lewis, Lead Editor – Temporary Paradise Commemorative Reprint

Excerpt: Temporary Paradise? In Brief

San Diego has a very possible future in which its splendid assets have been conserved, and its amenities shared more equitably among its people. The city should begin to take thought for the long-term quality of its environment. We suggest a way to do that, and end up with a few questions and a few basic principles.

We hope San Diegans will find this report provocative, will agree and disagree with it, and will make their feelings known. Most of all, we hope that San Diego takes charge of its future.

At the time Temporary Paradise was published, San Diego was struggling with serious economic problems. According to Mike Madigan, Chief of Policy for then Mayor Pete Wilson, "There was a great deal of thinking at the time about the lack of financial resources in the region. We had to be creative. And what we see today are consequences, good or bad, of the activity in that time frame."

Hamilton Marston intervened and offered \$10,000 to hire people to conduct a type of regional reconnaissance in San Diego – to rethink how things were happening here, including among other

priorities, the city's relationship with Tijuana. Interesting enough, Tijuana had hired someone to lead a new planning effort at the same time for that side of the border.

"The opportunity to work with two iconic leaders in the field of urban design doesn't come along very often," said Mike Stepner, local architect who spent one and one-half years with Lynch and Appleyard working on the plan. "Lynch and Appleyard came in and said things, looked at things that other people couldn't, and they planted a lot of seeds for ideas that are still relevant today."

"The first time I read *Temporary Paradise* was in Mike Stepner's class," noted Rene Peralta. "In Mike's class, we were looking at landscape architecture as a type of infrastructure. Meanwhile, on the other side of the border, Tijuana was growing its urban center and wrestling with very interesting issues about landscape infrastructure. I was struck with the idea of how do you pull those two issues together? Thinking about globalization in Mexico vs a strict planning ethic in San Diego. I felt like the ideas in *Temporary Paradise*? were applicable to our current challenges."

"Someone told me something once about San Diego that caught me in my tracks," said Professor Larry Herzog. It was that "Tijuana is the city that makes San Diego unique among the great cities of the U.S." I was already sensing that what made San Diego special was the sum of the two cities larger than the separate cities alone, and he confirmed that point."

According to Mike Madigan, "*Temporary Paradise*? led to greater collaboration between Tijuana and San Diego – at least during Pete Wilson's term. It also led to greater preservation of open space, and establishing a framework for what is now the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP)."

When asked if there were any unexpected surprises with *Temporary Paradise*", Mike Stepner responded, "The one thing they talked about which we are still struggling with is this: They said to never widen another street – yet we have let the design of the street system design our communities and that has created a lot of problems. That means we cannot walk to a lot of places, we struggle with more pollution, we haven't invested the way we should in our transit systems, and we as San Diegans have become used to be autocratic. It would have changed a lot in our community if we hadn't widened our roads."

In reflecting about his own essay, Rene Peralta shared, "Plans in the U.S. and plans in Mexico both stop at the border. I was trying to understand why there wasn't more connectivity and realized San Diego has much more control about what happens around the border, while Tijuana does not. Mexico has more of a federal planning system than local. That makes it difficult to have a stronger opinion of what needs to happen to work more with San Diego."

During the discussion there was much consensus that *Temporary Paradise*? had a positive influence on San Diego regional planning, much of which we are still benefitting from today.

