



OUTSTANDING DESIGN STRATEGIES

FOR INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Outlining a community's unique set of challenges and graphically presenting a range of solutions is the clear advantage of a Design Charrette. It provides an opportunity for individuals and groups with varied interests and socio-economic backgrounds to visualize solutions to a broad range of community issues. The types of challenges typically addressed with a Design Charrette include:

- Livability
- Density
- Sustainability
- Preservation
- Landmarks, Gateways & Urban Legibility
- Streetscape Design
- Transit Integration
- Traffic and Parking
- Pedestrian Connections
- Community Gathering Spaces
- Public Open Spaces
- Public Amenities
- Mixed Use Structures
- Housing
- Building Design
- Signage

VISION WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

The American Institute of Architects San Mateo County (AIASMC) Design Charrette generates multiple visions rather than a single solution. The ability to quickly conceive and illustrate a number of possibilities for the future can be crucial in helping communities define and achieve their goals.

A rich variety of illustrated concepts can break through political deadlock and refresh a debate that is often limited to words and emotions prior to a Design Charrette, overcome the inertia of preconceived notions and illuminate a path to the future. They become the basis for further study, discussion, debate and eventually for civic action.

AIASMC has conducted many successful Design Charettes over the past 25 years reflecting the Chapter's longstanding dedication to the needs of the communities of San Mateo County.

"Make no little plans, they have no magic to stir men's blood. Make big plans, aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will not die."

Daniel Burnham (1846-1912)
Architect and Urban Planner

COLOR OUTSIDE THE LINES

The AIASMC Design Charrette is rooted in community outreach. It creates an armature for gathering input from the broadest possible range of organizations, advisory groups, public advocates, unaffiliated individuals, and governmental interests.

INSPIRE AND ENGAGE PARTICIPANTS

- Architects
- Architectural Interns
- Planners
- Landscape Architects
- Allied Professionals
- Historians
- Design Students
- Members of the Public
- Chambers of Commerce
- Special Interest Groups
- Governmental Agency Staff
- Public Officials
- Community Organizations

OUTCOME



SAN MATEO DOWNTOWN TRANSIT CENTER
MAIN STREET CHARRETTE CONCEPT 1994



SAN MATEO TRANSIT CENTER 2009
DEDICATION 2009

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX



WHAT IS A CHARRETTE?

The term Charrette is derived from the French word for cart. At the Ecole des Beaux Arts, the premiere school of Architecture in 19th Century France, Architecture students were challenged with design assignments requiring intense work and were subjected to tight and inflexible deadlines. These exercises would culminate in feverish bursts of creative effort as the designs were drawn on large format boards for final presentation. The arrival of the deadline was always marked by the appearance of the Proctor's cart, the "charrette," making the rounds of the student quarters to pick up their work.

Design Charettes organized by the American Institute of Architects San Mateo County Chapter (AIASMC) are 12-hour long, full day workshops. They involve a significant commitment of time and energy from volunteers, including Chapter members and a broad range of allied professionals and students. Everyone is invited to come together for a day to focus attention on an issue, problem or area of concern that has been defined by the host community. The fruits of the intense brainstorming and design session are presented to the community that evening, and serve as the springboard for future public debate and detailed follow-up work by the sponsors of the Charrette.

The Chapters' efforts are rooted in Members' belief in the importance of community service and leadership by the Architectural profession. These events present valuable opportunities for Architects and other design professionals to serve the public. AIA members understand that a combination of unencumbered creative problem solving and direct community participation are often the best way to begin addressing complex design and development issues.



INVOLVED!

PAST DESIGN CHARRETES:

Single Site:	
Greyhound Bus Depot	Burlingame 1991
Shelter Network	San Mateo 1992
Samaritan House Clothes Closet	San Mateo 1993
Downtown Transit Center/Main Street	San Mateo 1994
New Millennium - New Library	San Mateo 1996
District:	
B Street Charrette	San Mateo 1983
San Mateo Avenue	San Bruno 1986
General Plan Elements	San Mateo 1989
Main Street	Half Moon Bay 1990
Downtown Charrette	Redwood City 1992
Bayshore Charrette	Burlingame 1994
Broadway Charrette	Burlingame 1994
South Laurel Street	San Carlos 1995
Porta di Grande	South San Francisco 1998
Community Charrette	East Palo Alto 1999
Bayshore/Geneva Avenue	Daly City 1999
Main Street	San Mateo 2001
Gateway to Central Park	San Mateo 2004
Imagine a Downtown	Menlo Park 2005
Destination SoBA (Howard Avenue)	Burlingame 2006
Mission Street Urban Design Charrette	Daly City 2008

Regional:	
Smart Growth Vision for the Silicon Valley	San Francisco to San Jose 2000

INITIATIVE

PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

In the world of the future, development must take into account the triple bottom line: Ecology, Economy and Equity. Sustainability is more than just a buzzword to AIA professionals who are taking a leading role putting sustainable ideas into practice.

"We live in two interpenetrating worlds. The first is the living world, which has been forged in an evolutionary crucible over a period of four billion years. The second is the world of roads and cities, farms and artifacts, that people have been designing for themselves over the last few millennia. The condition that threatens both worlds—unsustainability—results from a lack of integration between them."

Excerpt from "Ecological Design"
by Sir Van Der Ryn
Former California State Architect
Founder of UC Berkeley Ecological Design Program



INGENIOUS!

PLANNING A COMMUNITY FOR THE FUTURE

Time and again the AIASMC Design Charrette process has helped open doors to new ideas that might not have been seen or thought of before.

The AIASMC is proud of its track-record, assisting communities as they challenge the status quo and chart a course for the future. Concepts born of these Design Charettes have been instrumental in bringing to life some of the wonderful buildings and urban spaces seen on the Peninsula today. We hope to continue this legacy, and be inspired to improve on it!

"Given the choice, I wish to be aligned with a design belief that truly beautiful places, both the monumental and the common, begin in the realm of rules but then evolve formally and functionally to transcend rules. This takes place in a creative process that is wonderfully human. It is based in intelligence, logic, intuition, and a celebration of the real time experience and perception of Architecture. Here the contemporary can be timeless, and the old can be new."

John Lucchesi AIA 2006 AIASMC President

INFLUENCE



THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

The AIA has been the leading professional membership association for licensed Architects, emerging professionals, and allied partners since 1857. Initially the group sought to create an organization for Architects that would "promote the scientific and practical perfection of its members" and "elevate the standing of the profession." Since then the AIA has been a leader in helping breathe fresh air into cities across the nation. This overview of the AIA San Mateo County's Design Charettes on the San Francisco Peninsula is part of the "Blueprint for America" - a cornerstone of the AIA's 150th Anniversary Celebration. The "Blueprint" is intended to inspire communities across America to come together around Architecture, creating opportunity for collaboration and sharing of ideas and techniques for creating livable communities.



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