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THE INFRASTRUCTURE INFORMER
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*** December 2002 Issue ***

The Electronic Newsletter of the Institute for Civil Infrastructure Systems (ICIS) at New York University's Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service
(<http://www.icisnyu.org/>)

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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INFRASTRUCTURE NEWS

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WATER: Focus on the Imperial Irrigation District Water Transfer

"In Water Transfer, Farmers vs. Sprawl"

"It would be the largest farm-to-city water transfer in US history. And in a state that is both the nation's most populous and its most agriculturally productive, the controversial plan goes to the core of California's identity. The farm-rich Imperial Valley is being asked to share its imported water supplies with burgeoning San Diego suburbs. If it doesn't, the US Interior Department threatens to suspend the flow of surplus Colorado River water by year end." (The Christian Science Monitor)

Source: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/1211/p01s03-usgn.html>

"U.S. Cuts Allotment for California Water"

"The Interior Department said today that it would cut California's share of water from the Colorado River next year to ensure allocations for six other Western states. The reduction would be enough to supply roughly 1.4 million people, the government said." (NY Times)

Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/28/politics/28CALI.html>

"California Water Users Miss Deadline on Sharing Pact"

"Efforts by water officials in Southern California failed today to reach a deal on water usage from the Colorado River before a midnight deadline. As a result, the Bush administration said it would cut flows from the river to the state's cities and farms beginning in January, making it the first time the federal government has imposed such a penalty." (NY Times)

Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/01/national/01WATE.html>

"Failed Deal in California Cuts Water for Nevada"

"As officials in Southern California prepared for cuts in water deliveries from the Colorado River, neighboring Nevada was poised to lose 11 percent of what it gets from the river, even though the state's water agencies did nothing wrong. Federal officials said the reduction for Nevada was an unavoidable consequence of failed negotiations in California over how to divide water within Southern California." (NY Times)

Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/02/national/02WATE.html>

"Draft EIS: Imperial Irrigation District Water Conservation and Transfer Project and Draft Habitat Conservation Plan"

This link contains information on the recently completed DEIS for the proposed water conservation and transfer project in the aforementioned articles. The plan would transfer the rights of up to 300,000 acre-feet per year of water from the Colorado River from the IDD to San Diego County Water Authority, Coachella Valley Water District, and/or Metropolitan Water District.

Source:

http://www.is.ch2m.com/iidweb/current/documents/QSAPEIR/Reclamation_Statement.pdf

WASTEWATER

New York State Sues Yonkers for Sewage Discharges:
"City Identified As Major Source of Pollution in Bronx River"

"Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, on behalf of New York State, today sued the City of Yonkers over repeated discharges of raw sewage into the Bronx River. An investigation revealed that since 1999 the City of Yonkers has illegally discharged thousands of gallons per day of untreated sewage into the Bronx River from at least four pipes owned and operated by the city. Laboratory results have shown that the pollution contains the bacteria fecal coliform, an indicator of raw sewage, in concentrations as high as 250

times more than allowed by New York State water quality standards." (Office of the NY State Attorney Eliot Spitzer)

Source: http://www.oag.state.ny.us/press/2002/dec/dec06a_02.html

"Septic Rule Change May Spur Building"

"The Swift administration is considering a change in the rules governing septic systems that could open up thousands of acres of land for development in Central and Western Massachusetts, smoothing the way for much-needed housing but also triggering concerns about sprawl. The modification would allow treated wastewater in septic systems to filter through the ground at a slower rate than is now required. If the change is approved, septic systems could be built in soil types where the filtering process has been too slow under the current standard." (Boston Globe)

Source:

http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/335/metro/Septic_rule_change_may_spur_building+.shtml

"Performance of Pavement Subsurface Drainage"

The National Cooperative Highway Research Program recently released its findings on the effects of subsurface pavement drainage. The paper appeared in the November 2002 Research Results Digest, and can be viewed at the link below. (NCHRP)

http://gulliver.trb.org/publications/nchrp/nchrp_rrd_268.pdf

SOLID WASTE

"S.F. Turns Greener:
City Reaches State-Mandated Goal of Recycling 50% of its Waste"

"As of today [12-12-02], San Francisco can brag that it has surpassed the state's mandate that cities recycle more than they dump in landfills, and city officials are crediting modern recycling facilities and economic incentives that make recycling pay for consumers. While recycling rates have grown nationwide over the last 15 years, that growth is beginning to lose steam. New York, for example, temporarily halted the collection of plastics and glass, calling it 'labor intensive' and 'inefficient.'... Not so San Francisco and other cities in California, which are forging ahead with zeal. The city joins some 35 other Bay Area cities in meeting the state's goal of recycling 50 percent of the garbage that would otherwise end up in landfill." (San Francisco Chronicle)

Source: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2002/12/12/BA78174.DTL>

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

"Updated Study Shows Higher Risk of Fatality from Cell Phones While Driving;
Costs and Benefits of a Ban are Roughly Equal"

"A new evaluation by the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis (HCRA) estimates that the use of cell phones by drivers may result in approximately 2,600 deaths, 330,000 moderate to critical injuries, and 1.5 million instances of property damage in America per year... The benefits of a ban would be worth approximately \$43 billion... Those savings would be roughly offset by the economic value of the banned calls, also around \$43 billion annually... 'in economic terms, a ban on the use of cell phones by drivers would be a wash when comparing the benefit of reducing crashes against the cost of eliminating those calls.'" (Harvard Center for Risk Analysis)
Source: <http://www.hcra.harvard.edu/cellphones.html>

TRANSPORTATION

"Are SUVs Really Safer than Cars?"

Are SUV's really safer than cars? Do they pose a greater risk to other drivers? Scientists at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory analyzed highway traffic fatality data in this interesting and surprising report.
Source: <http://www.uctc.net/access/21/Access%2021%20-%202002%20-%20Are%20SUVs%20Safer.pdf>

"Cascading Billions For Transportation: Where's The Accountability?"

"Even as the federal budget tumbles into deep red ink, a coterie of lobbying titans are converging on Congress to demand not less but a lot more money... What results can be expected from radically expanded spending?" "The challenge is to insist on tying transportation aid to much smarter land use." (Washington Post Writer's Group)
Source: <http://www.postwritersgroup.com/archives/peir1202.htm>

Boston: "Beyond the Big Dig"

The Boston Globe adds an interactive feature to their site, covering the history, plans and future of Boston's Big Dig. The feature brings together a collection of articles, editorials, video clips, and graphics. (Boston Globe)
Source: http://www.boston.com/beyond_bigdig/

"Port Authority Launches Unique Cargo Distribution System

By Establishing First Regional Port in Upstate New York"

"The Port Authority today launched a unique barge and rail cargo distribution network that will provide jobs and economic activity for the region, speed the flow of goods to consumer markets in the region and help reduce highway truck traffic. The Port of Albany will become the first Northeast port to participate in the program. The Port Inland Distribution Network will move containerized cargo by barge or rail between marine terminal facilities in the New York-New Jersey area and regional terminals in New York, New Jersey and three other Northeast states." (Port Authority of NY & NJ)
Source: <http://www.panynj.gov/pr/pressrelease.php3?id=294>

"Local Speed Bumps Could Rattle Segway's Ride"

"Urban transportation panacea or mobility-oriented snake oil? The Segway Human Transporter is either, depending upon whom you ask. The device either will change the way we get around in cities, or it will be the pedestrian-version of the Edsel. No matter, we should gird ourselves for statewide debates during coming months regarding regulation of the Segway HT." (California Planning & Development Report)
Source: http://www.cp-dr.com/binn/main.taf?function=&type=detail§ion_id=2579

"Emerging Trends in European Public Transport"

The Transit Cooperative Research Program's International Transit Studies Program released this report regarding trends in European transit. The digest includes "transportation information on the cities and facilities visited, lessons learned, and discussions of policies and practices that could be applied in the United States." (Transit Cooperative Research Program)
Source: http://gulliver.trb.org/publications/tcrp/tcrp_rrd_54.pdf

"Handbook for Transit Safety and Security Certification"

The Joint Task Force on Safety and Security Certification has released a handbook for the establishment of a certification program to address transit safety and security. The publication is available on the Department of Transportation's web site, at the link below.
Source: <http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/publications/safety/SafetyCertification/pdf/SSC.pdf>

ENERGY

"Big-City Ambitions for Little Electric Cars"

"The major automakers may have abandoned the full-service, battery-powered electric vehicle as they pursue development of hydrogen-powered cars with fuel cells to produce electricity for power. But battery power isn't completely gone. It's just that the full-service car or truck designed to carry four or five people and move at freeway speeds for 80 to 100 miles or more between charges has been replaced -- for now -- by the so-called neighborhood electric vehicle, or NEV." (LA Times)

Source: <http://www.latimes.com/classified/automotive/highway1/la-hy-green25dec25,0,7837006.story?coll=la%2Dclass%2Dautos%2Dhighway1>

"Hydrogen: Empowering the People"

"While the fossil-fuel era enters its sunset years, a new energy regime is being born that has the potential to remake civilization along radically new lines--hydrogen. Hydrogen is the most basic and ubiquitous element in the universe. It never runs out and produces no harmful CO2 emissions when burned; the only byproducts are heat and pure water. That is why it's been called 'the forever fuel.'" (The Nation)

Source: <http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20021223&s=rifkin>

GENERAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Atlanta: "Price of Sprawl Shows in Commuting Costs: Transportation Can Outstrip Housing"

"Carrie Wolford never sat down and did the math to see how the cost of her commute from Paulding County to Buckhead compared with her mortgage... But when they add up their expenses, the slice of the pie in their household budget for transportation is bigger than housing... In metro Atlanta, that's not uncommon... Bruce Katz, director of the Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy at the Brookings Institution in Washington, calls this the sticker shock of sprawl." (Atlanta Journal-Constitution)

Source: <http://www.accessatlanta.com/ajc/business/horizon/1202/09commute.html>

Cleveland: "From Bike Lanes to Grass Roofs, Eco-Friendly Projects Blossom"

"A green revolution has taken root in Cleveland. And now it's beginning to sprout. In the last year, environmental projects that were once just concepts have become reality, spurred by more receptive government leaders, a small but dogged environmental movement and a growing recognition of the projects' value in making Cleveland a more vibrant, healthy city." (Cleveland.com)

Source:

<http://www.cleveland.com/cuyahoga/plaindealer/index.ssf?/base/cuyahoga/1039343427323250.xml>

Manhattan: "Urban Community Gardens Fight to Save Their Space"

"In the heart of downtown Manhattan, peeking out from between towering brick high-rises, is a little green oasis called the Liz Christy Garden... The SoHo neighborhood created and tends this leafy niche, which grows both food and flowers, and the residents have defended its right to exist... New York City's community gardeners have been waiting anxiously for more than two years to learn if the green spaces they love will escape the bulldozer." (Environmental News Network)

Source: http://enn.com/news/enn-stories/2002/12/12132002/s_48692.asp

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FOCUS ON THE REDEVELOPMENT OF LOWER MANHATTAN
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FOCUS ON THE WTC SITE PROPOSALS

"New World Trade Center Site Design Concepts"

The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation presents the seven new design proposals for the World Trade Center site. Read an overview of each team and their design concepts, and view slide shows of the proposals. (LMDC)

Source: http://www.renewnyc.org/plan_des_dev/wtc_site/new_design_plans/default.asp

"Rediscovering and Celebrating the Vertical Life"

Herbert Muschamp, the architecture critic for the New York Times, examines the WTC design proposals. An interactive feature, "Envisioning Downtown: New Plans for Ground Zero," can also be found at this link. (NY Times)

Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/19/nyregion/19APPR.html>

"New York Unveils New WTC Plans"

CNN's article presents an overview of the seven competing designs, a video of the proposals, and interactive gallery, and a reader poll to choose the best design. (CNN)

Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2002/US/Northeast/12/18/wtc.rebuilding/index.html>

"Gotham Gazette's Rebuilding New York City: The Nine New Plans"

The Gotham Gazette presents the new proposals, and chats with Rick Bell, Executive Director of the New York chapter of the American Institute of Architects. (Gotham Gazette)

Source: http://www.gothamgazette.com/rebuilding_nyc/

"The Teams' Challenge: Fill a Void With Meaning"

This article examines the THINK design team, led by master architect Rafael Vinoly, their philosophy, the design challenges they faced, and the three resulting ground zero proposals. (Washington Post)

Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A9745-2002Dec18.html>

CRITIQUES OF WTC SITE PROPOSALS

"Rudi Rants"

"Former Mayor Rudy Giuliani panned the new design proposals for Ground Zero yesterday, saying they fail to capture the profound meaning of Sept. 11. 'None of them accomplished overall what I thought should be [done],' Giuliani said of the nine plans released last week." (New York Post)

Source: <http://www.nypost.com/seven/12242002/news/regionalnews/65390.htm>

"Towering Struggle"

"After yesterday's unveiling of the much-ballyhooed Ground Zero design proposals from seven teams of architects, the people who have a direct financial stake in the site... must be having cows. And so should the public. It was hoodwinked into expecting wonderful, visionary ideas for downtown's aching, 16-acre hole... From a commercial standpoint, the proposals look doomed, hewn to the awkward and threatening shapes that make potential tenants cringe. To an ordinary New Yorker, they are bad architecture, worse urbanism and an insult to common sense." (New York Post)

Source: <http://www.nypost.com/commentary/65064.htm>

"Saintly or Sanctimonious? A Candid Critique
Of WTC Reconstruction Proposals"

James Howard Kuntsler offers a candid editorial critique of the WTC proposals. "The new round of World Trade Center reconstruction proposals are in and they are as ridiculous as the first bunch last summer." (Planetizen)

Source: <http://www.planetizen.com/oped/item.php?id=75>

OTHER LOWER MANHATTAN NEWS

"Mayor Unveils \$11 Billion Plan for Lower Manhattan"

"Bloomberg, delivering a 30-minute breakfast speech to the Association for a Better New York, likened his vision to that of Central Park planners in the 1850s, and what he proposed was perhaps as dramatic -- setting up a major new transportation infrastructure, expanding the city's waterfront development, creating new parks and tree-lined boulevards and building thousands of apartments." (CNN)

Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2002/US/Northeast/12/12/wtc.rebuilding/index.html>

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UPCOMING EVENTS
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Tuesday, January 7, 2003

Architectural Record WTC Panel

New York City

The Architectural Record, a McGraw-Hill Construction publication, will present "a discussion of the latest round of proposals for the World Trade Center site commissioned by the Lower Manhattan Development and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey... Robert Ivy FAIA, Editor of Architectural Record, will present the various schemes... Then a panel of experts will discuss the work and the strategies being undertaken for the area. The panelists include Paul Goldberger, architecture critic of the New Yorker, Richard Kahan, the President of the Urban Assembly and Take the Field, Bernard Tschumi, dean of the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at Columbia University, and Craig Whitaker, an architect and planner. Selected members of the LMDC and the Port Authority and the teams making the presentations have been invited to be respondents to the discussion." (Architectural Record)

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: McGraw-Hill Auditorium, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York City

Admission: \$10.

Reservations: 800-371-3238

Web: <http://archrecord.construction.com/news/daily/archives/021212arwtc.asp>

Monday, January 13, 2003 & Tuesday, January 14, 2003

Lower Manhattan Development Corporation Public Hearing

Public hearings held by the Lower Manhattan Corporation.

Time: 5:30 - 9:00 PM

Location: Pace University, Michael Schimmel Center for the Arts, Spruce and Gold Streets in Lower Manhattan

Web: <http://www.renewnyc.com/Participate/EventsCalendar.asp>

For more information contact the LMDC at (212) 962-2300

Thursday, January 30 through Wednesday, February 1, 2003

2nd Annual New Partners for Smart Growth Conference

New Orleans, Louisiana

"The 2nd Annual New Partners for Smart Growth conference in New Orleans will focus on forming new networks and creating new levels of understanding among multiple smart-growth interests. The conference will provide education and resources, as well as cutting-edge implementation tools, and should result in new partnerships for making tomorrow's communities better places to live. Opportunities for collaboration are growing out of the challenges and opportunities emerging in the 21st century--the New Economy and the unique urban geography it is creating, the demographic tilt of aging baby boomers and their housing and transportation needs, continued population growth and demands for more affordable housing, the public health impacts resulting from communities designed without opportunities to engage in physical activity, and the recent and continued threats to our national security and the safety of our communities." (Local Government Commission & Penn State University)

Location: Sheraton New Orleans Hotel, 500 Canal Street, New Orleans LA 70130

For Details: <http://www.outreach.psu.edu/C&I/SmartGrowth/>

Thursdays, February 6 through May 1, 2003

Community Planning and Development Mini-Courses

New York City

The Department of Urban Affairs and Planning at Hunter College brings a new mini-course in development and planning every Thursday between February 6th and May 1st. Students may register for individual sessions or the full series. Topics include traffic calming, implementation of 197-a plans, green buildings and sustainable communities, brownfield redevelopment, waste transfer stations and comprehensive waste management.

Times: Thursdays, 5:10-7:00 pm

Location: Hunter College, 68th St. and Lexington Ave.

Fees: \$25 per session

Contact: William Beaufort at 212-772-5517 or wbeauford@hunter.cuny.edu

The INFRASTRUCTURE INFORMER highlights innovative projects, practices, research and initiatives in the planning, financing, operation, and management of civil infrastructure systems. By focusing on innovation and collaboration among stakeholders, ICIS intends for the newsletter to both inform and connect various individuals and organizations from a range of disciplines and perspectives. It is also used to promote related infrastructure events and activities taking place around the country.

You are receiving this electronic newsletter because you have come into contact with ICIS in some way: virtually, through signing our web site guest book, or physically, through meeting someone connected to ICIS at a workshop or conference.

ICIS was established in January 1998 with funding from the National Science Foundation. Located at New York University, the ICIS consortium includes: NYU, Cornell University, Polytechnic University of New York, and the University of Southern California.

We welcome comments or suggestions for future issues and encourage you to forward this newsletter on to colleagues and others who might be interested. If you have trouble accessing the full articles of this edition, please send your correspondence via email to icis@nyu.edu.

