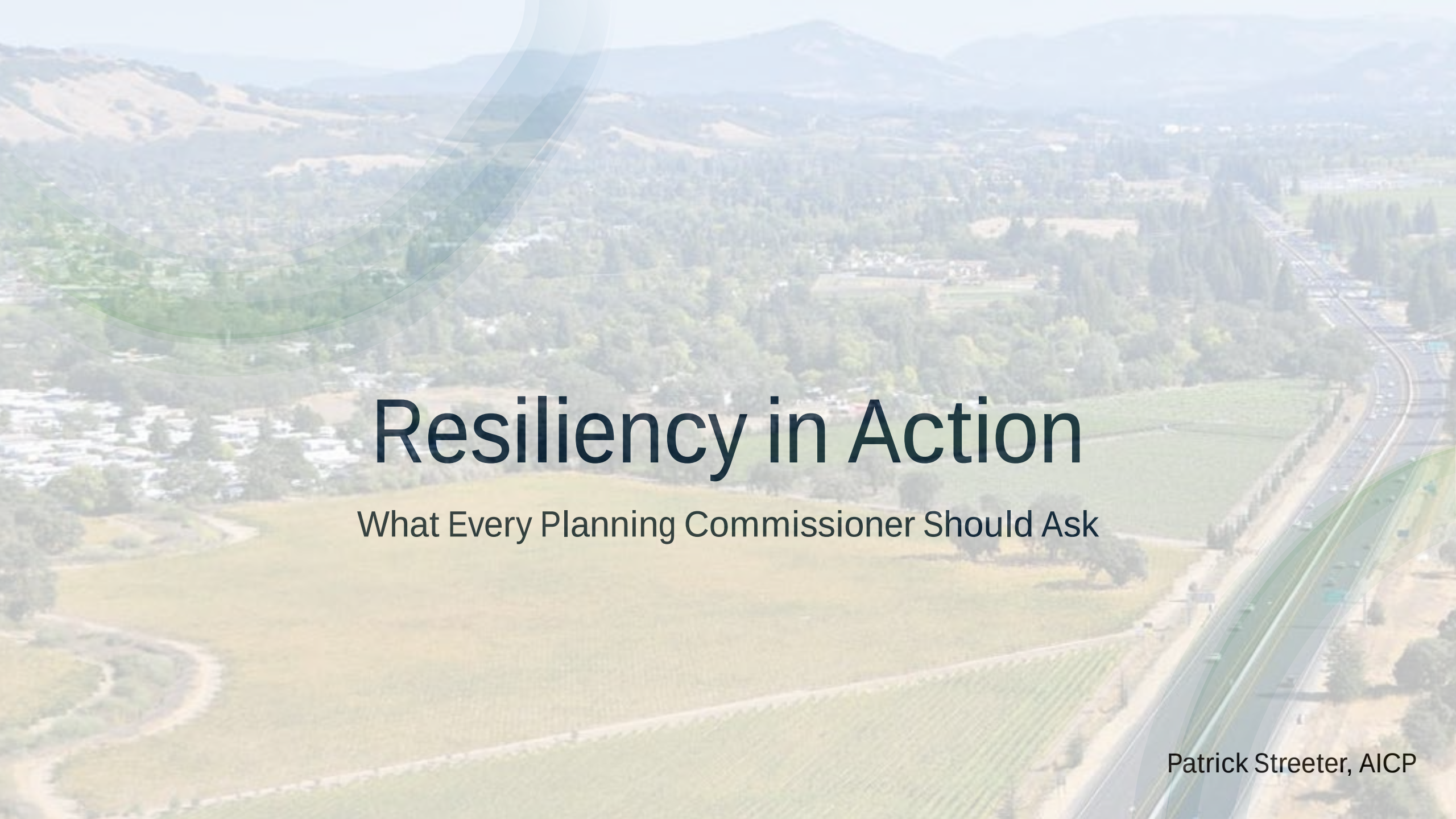
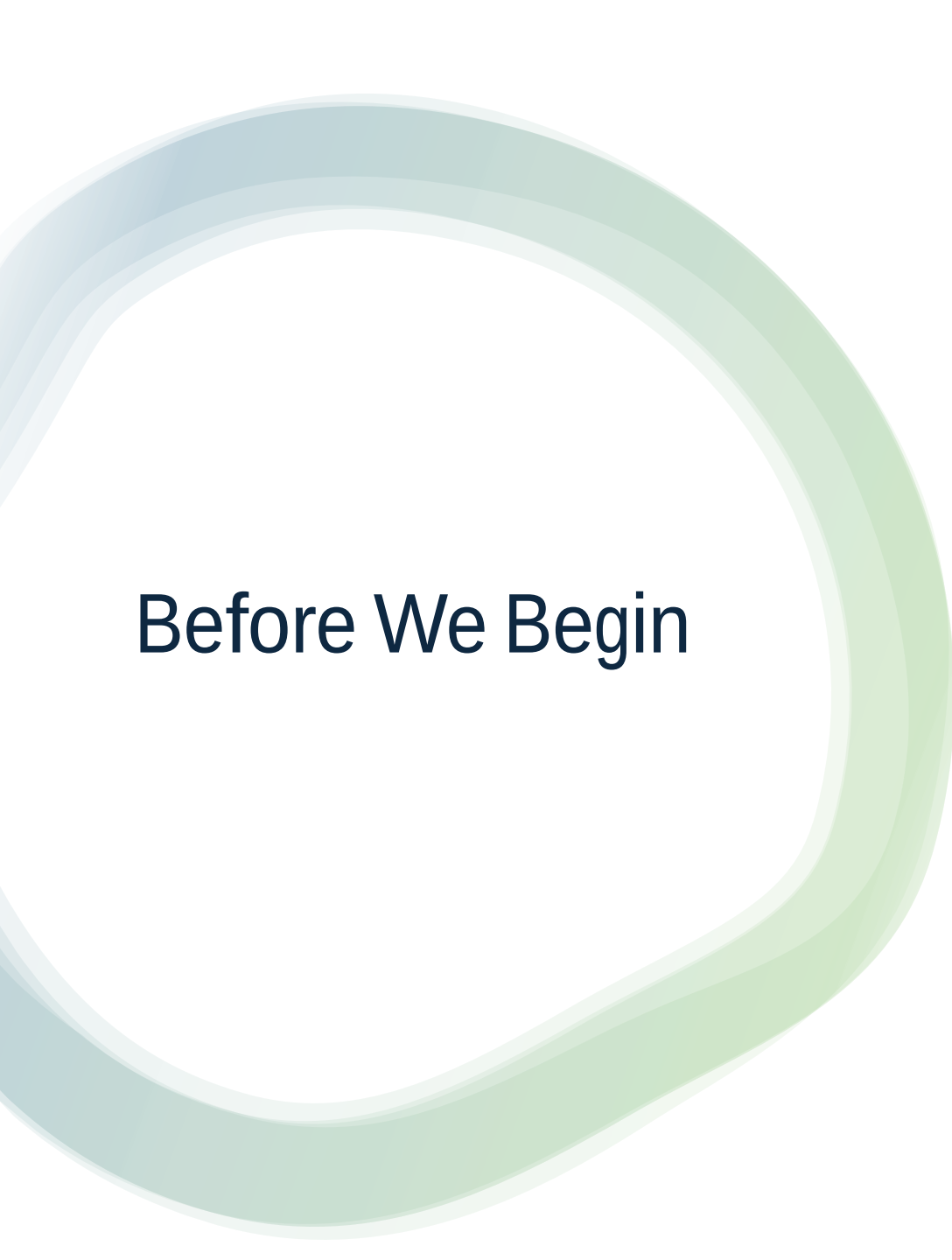


An aerial photograph of a landscape featuring rolling hills, dense green forests, and a multi-lane highway with traffic. The foreground shows a large, open field. The background includes distant mountains under a clear sky. A semi-transparent blue circular graphic is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Resiliency in Action

What Every Planning Commissioner Should Ask

Patrick Streeter, AICP



Before We Begin

The next slides include images of fires, flooding, and disaster impacts. For many in this room, these are not abstract events but lived experiences. I share them respectfully, to ground our discussion in real-world consequences.

From Both Sides of the Dais

Commissioner Perspective

- Former Chair, Petaluma Planning Commission

Staff Perspective

- Community Development Director, Town of Windsor
- Senior Planner, Santa Rosa (Deputy Planning Chief, EOC – Tubbs Fire)
- Urban Planner, NYC Mayor Bloomberg's Resiliency Initiative

Resiliency Is No Longer Optional

- Floods, fires, heat, seismic events are increasing in impact
- Development decisions last 30–50+ years
- Planning Commissions shape long-term risk
- Every approval is a statement about the future



A satellite image of a massive superstorm, likely Superstorm Sandy, swirling over the ocean. The storm's eye is visible in the center, surrounded by dense, spiraling cloud bands. The ocean surface shows some darker patches, possibly indicating deeper water or ice. The horizon of the Earth is visible at the top of the frame.

What Superstorm Sandy Taught Us

- Exposure of systemic vulnerabilities
- Infrastructure failure cascades
- Recovery speed matters as much as prevention
- Policy affects real people
- Resiliency = ability to withstand, adapt, and recover

An aerial photograph showing a residential neighborhood. In the foreground, several houses are visible, including one with a prominent red roof. A paved road curves through the middle ground. In the background, a large area of land is covered in ash and charred, skeletal remains of trees, indicating a recent wildfire. The sky is hazy.

California's Unfortunate Reality

- 2017 Tubbs Fire reshaped regional planning
- Neighborhood-scale destruction
- Evacuation and notification failures exposed
- Rebuilding was not simple replacement
- Modern codes increased cost and complexity
- Sparked adoption of Resilient City policies

Policy Meets Projects at the PC



General Plans and Health & Safety
Elements set direction



Projects implement policy



CEQA establishes risk



Commissioner questions influence
outcomes

Three Questions

Does this decision increase or reduce our community's vulnerability to known hazards?

How will this project perform as conditions change?

Does this decision strengthen or undermine our adopted resiliency goals?

The Mercury News

Kincade Fire: Relief washes over Sonoma County

Firefighters hold off blaze, allowing evacuees to come home



1. Does this decision increase or reduce vulnerability?

- Are we placing people or infrastructure in known hazard areas?
- Are evacuation routes sufficient?
- Are emergency services impacted?
- Does density increase risk exposure?

2. How will this perform as conditions change?

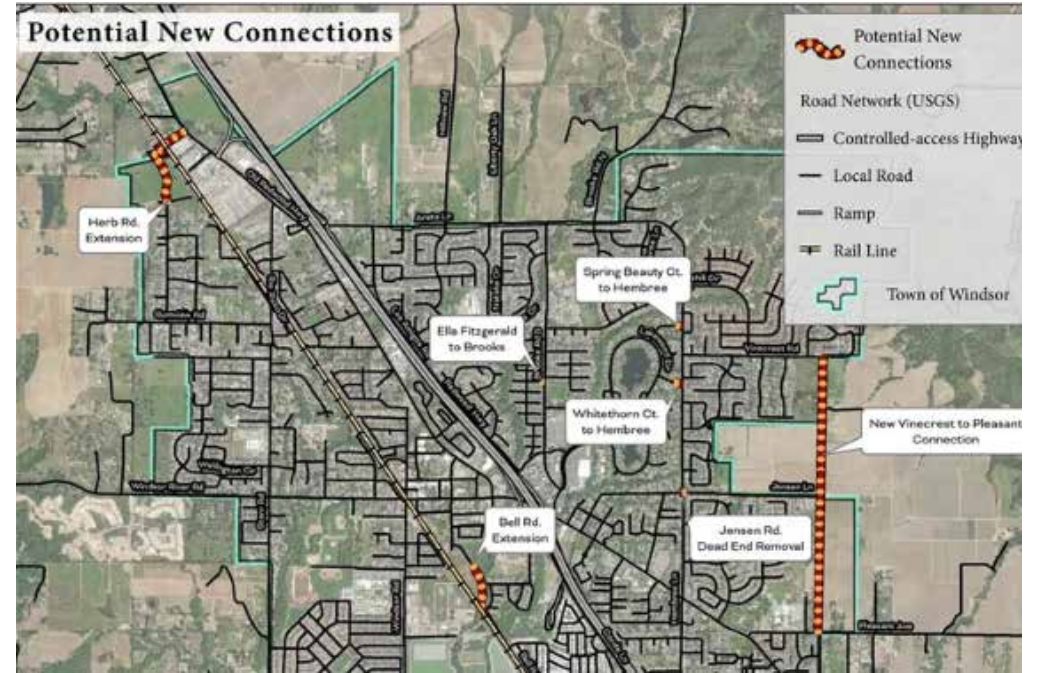
- Designed for today's climate, tomorrow's?
- Drainage capacity under heavier storms?
- Heat impacts on materials and landscaping?
- Infrastructure redundancy?



AI Generated, obviously

3. Does this strengthen or undermine adopted resiliency goals?

- Consistent with Safety Element?
- Aligned with Hazard Mitigation Plan?
- Reinforcing adopted resiliency ordinances?
- Sustainability policies in General Plan or CAP?
- CEQA findings support long-term safety?



At the Public Hearing (but preferably before!)

Practical Questions You Can Ask:

“How does this project address long-term wildfire risk?”

“What happens if evacuation routes are compromised?”

“Does the CEQA analysis consider future climate assumptions?”

“How does this align with our H&S Element?”

“How will this project reduce risk for existing and future development in the area?”

Resiliency Without Overreach

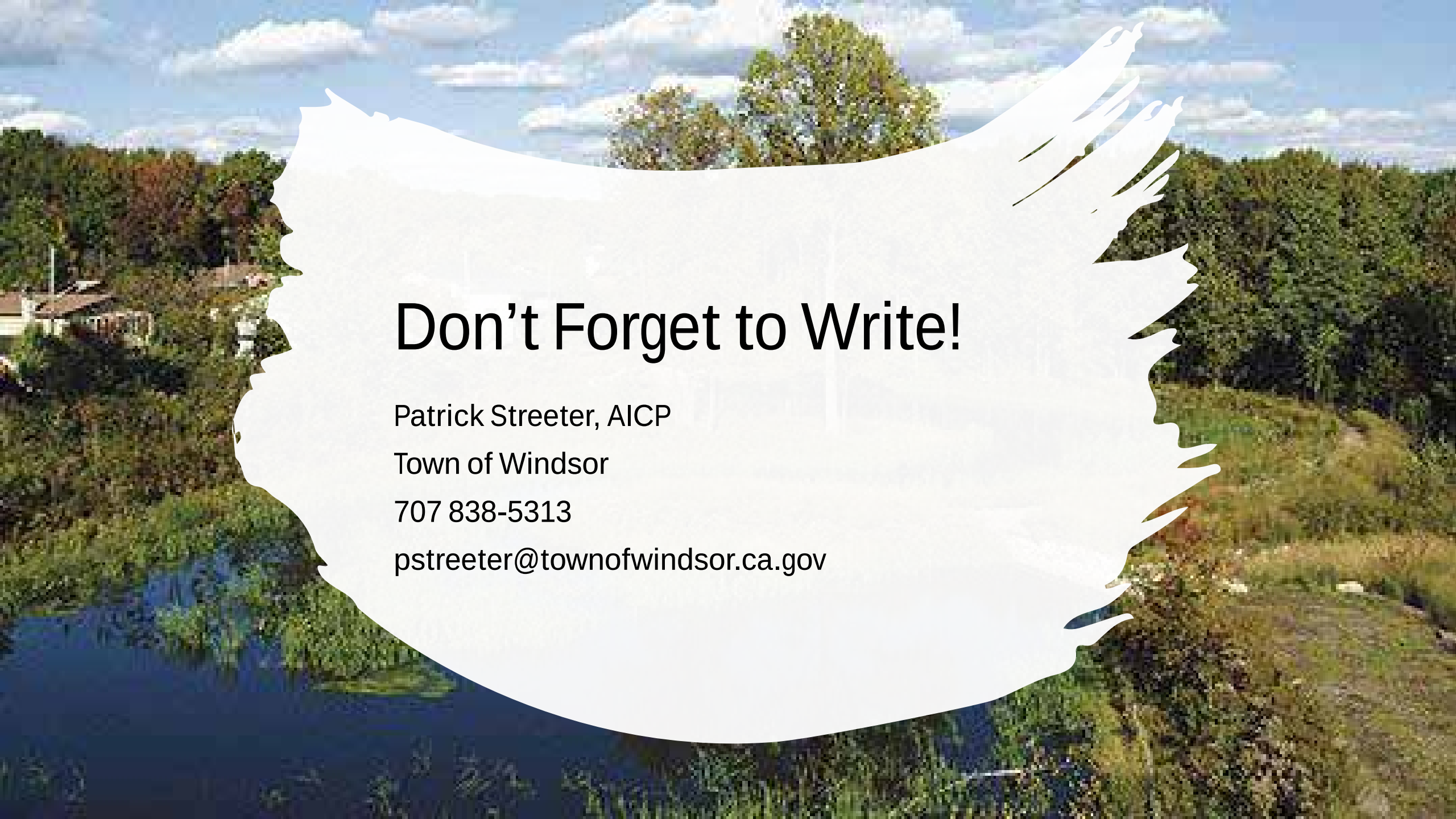
- It's about informed approvals
- Stronger and unambiguous conditions of approval
- "Getting to Yes"
- Better findings and records
- Incremental improvements add up
- Building community trust





On Paper Today, Built Environment Tomorrow

- Resiliency is local
- It scales to cities of any size
- It doesn't have to be (and shouldn't be) an add-on or an obstacle



Don't Forget to Write!

Patrick Streeter, AICP

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