

NORTHERN NEWS



American Planning Association
California Chapter
Northern
Making Great Communities Happen

A Publication of the Northern Section of the California Chapter of APA



June 2014

SECTION AWARDS

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Report from the National Conference

Barry Miller, FAICP

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San Francisco SOMA
Looking east from 2nd and Mission
Photo: Jonathan Schuppert, AICP





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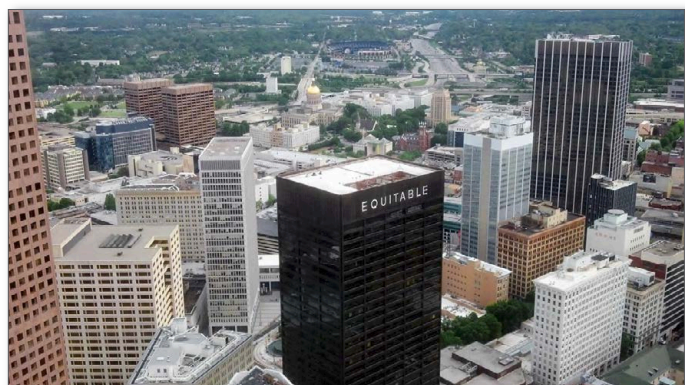
Report from the National Conference

By Barry Miller, FAICP

After three decades of professional practice, I've come to regard the annual APA conferences as one of the great perks of being an urban planner. Though I always attend on my own time (and my own dime), the experience of being under one roof with 5,000 urban planners makes it consistently worthwhile.

I can't say that this year's Atlanta conference — the 13th national conference I've attended — was one of my favorites. The venue left a lot to be desired, and I did not choose wisely in planning my four-day itinerary. Still, I couldn't help feeling uplifted being among so many colleagues, from so many different places, with so many shared experiences and interests.

As a host City, Atlanta exceeded my expectations on some levels. It had a larger and more vibrant downtown than I expected. It was more diverse and cosmopolitan than I expected. The legacy of the 1996 Olympics was visible in the infrastructure, parks, and public spaces. Centennial Park, in particular, was a real gem.



South-facing view from the Westin observation level, 74 stories above Atlanta. Photo by author.



Centennial Park and Downtown Atlanta skyline.
Photo by author.

I didn't sign up for an orientation tour. That was my first mistake, because I missed the chance to see Atlanta through a planner's eyes. This causes me to think that the orientation tour should be a mandatory part of the itinerary and not held concurrently with any speaker sessions. Similarly, I didn't sign up for any mobile workshops — though I was curious to see the Atlanta BeltLine project and the new developments along the MARTA lines. There was always the lingering fear that I'd miss a really great panel discussion or dynamic speaker — not to mention the extra \$60 or so for each workshop.

I spent most of my four days in the vastness of the Georgia World Congress Center, a gargantuan 3.9 million square foot building resembling an airport terminal — or three airport terminals, to be more precise. It was 1.3 miles from the conference hotel to the convention center, with signs along the route to remind us of the walk time. Since public health was a major theme of the conference, one really couldn't complain about the excessive walking. On the other hand, it was ironic to be in sessions on mobile food vendors and food deserts, when there was no place to eat within 15 minutes of the facility.

The sessions themselves were a mixed bag. The best sessions I attended featured speakers from right here in Northern California, including a great session on ethics and public health (facilitated by PolicyLink's Victor Rubin)

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Meet a local planner

By Siân Llewellyn, AICP



Alex Amoroso, AICP, is principal planner for the city of Berkeley, a position he has held for the past seven years. He was elected to the California Planning Roundtable in 2003 and is now an emeritus member.

Tell us a little bit about yourself

I live in Oakland, in the lower hills just above Fruitvale, with my wife, three dogs, several fish tanks (I'm a fish geek) and a large yard with orchard. Seeking fun brings me to the ocean almost weekly, to the East Bay hills for hiking, and into The City (SF is still "The City") to play. The East Bay and the rest of the region also provide entertainment — farmers' markets all over, Russian River retreat time, there's so much here.

I grew up in San Francisco — North Beach to start; Richmond District from there. I attended San Francisco State University for Urban Studies after Jesuit high school, same as Jerry Brown, but a couple of decades behind him. Most of my first 40 years were in San Francisco: Haight Ashbury and Cole Valley mostly. The most notorious of my addresses was San Quentin Village — outside the gates.

How did you become interested in planning as a profession?

Growing up in SF infuses urbanism at a young age. My grammar school commute started with a city bus and included a short ride each day on the Powell Street cable car among the tall buildings of downtown. Years of neighborhood walking and garage sales in the family station wagon, a dad who did real estate as a hobby and later a vocation — all contributed to my love of cities.

The formal education in cities was more of a delayed realization: I tried to be a business major first but failed miserably. Then I tried a range of classes from broadcasting and theater arts to urban studies 101. I was half way into my urban studies major before I realized it — and it just fit.

Tell us about your career in planning

I've had a long and winding career path. In the beginning, I jumped back and forth across the counter, from public to private and back again. My first stop was an internship in Tiburon, where community planning feels like a game of Monopoly. Other career highlights included staffing the Oakland Hills Firestorm Recovery

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"Our valuable product is the content.

Whether it's print, Internet, or something that hasn't been invented yet, they're all just delivery tools." —Wendy Brandes, board chair of the *Columbia Daily Spectator*, <http://bit.ly/1imQX1D>

Meet a local planner *(continued from previous page)*

Center, helping the hills rebuild after the devastating fire of 1991; early work on telecom planning, before there were ordinances and federal regulations to control anything; writing Regional Housing 2000 and other initiatives as senior regional planner for the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG); and a short stint as Deputy Director—Policy Planning at Alameda County, planning for extremes from agriculture and range lands to the densely populated unincorporated areas. Now I'm at the City of Berkeley, where liberal populism comes full circle to conservative.

What is the most significant planning challenge facing us today?

We suffer from a fear of change as a community — not just locally, but nationally and internationally. Our collective head-in-the-sand approach to our fast-changing environment and the slow move to address the changes concern me. This trickles into day-to-day decisions at all levels of planning, and I feel that we end up watering down results to allay fears, rather than addressing the issues head on.

Tell us about a favorite project

It has to be the ABAG regional housing needs allocation planning I did in 2000. I call this being the regional Darth Vader of Housing. No one was happy with the results — but in the end the Board voted in support of our plan almost unanimously. Communities don't like feeling that big brother is telling them what to plan for, but we really need to allocate housing for all levels of income to accommodate the economic growth that will keep our region strong.

That taught me a big lesson in negotiation, as we had to coordinate with 110 jurisdictions, but also taught me the requirement to plan with the bigger picture in mind and to stand up for the process to get to simple clear results.

What do you find most fulfilling about your job?

I like taking very complex and difficult-to-understand materials from a wide variety of disciplines and turning them into a manageable project that can be understood by the community. I think this is the essence of our job as planners.

The longer I am in this profession, the more I enjoy working with young planners to offer what I can — context, observations over many years of seeing past work come to fruition, or not, and why. They can take it or leave it, but the offer is there.

What are the most important qualities you look for in your staff or partners on projects?

It may sound clichéd, but I value honesty and the integrity to lead and take risks. I also want to see the ability to comprehend the big picture, even while in the trenches of a particular report or project, as well as personal and professional calm in the face of adversity.

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Meet a local planner (continued from previous page)

What is your advice to planners starting out?

Enjoy the ride and recognize that you are doing your job, even if in the end everyone is equally displeased with your outcome. Remember to take vacations — recharge and do things outside of work. Planning can burn you out!

Interviewer Siân Llewellyn, AICP, has been with AECOM for more than 14 years. She is a vice president in the design + planning practice, and lives in San Francisco. ■

Planners' collaboration program in Brazil

Interested in working with planners in other countries? Thanks largely to Bruno Borges and Nancy Cole, our overseas colleagues in São Paulo, the California Northern Section is close to establishing a pilot international collaboration and exchange program — starting with São Paulo, Brazil. This effort is intended to continue to build upon contacts made during Section-sponsored planning tours, currently being organized by international co-director, Hing Wong, AICP.

The proposed program would provide a way for planning professionals and students to participate in activities and shared experiences abroad. Collaborating agencies in this effort include the municipality of São Paulo, SP Urbanismo (a state-owned enterprise, under the Urban Development Agency of São Paulo City Government), and Mackenzie Architecture College at Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie, a private university in São Paulo.

The proposed agreement and work plan is expected to focus on activities related to TOD implementation; long range regional planning, zoning, climate change mitigation and adaptation; economic development; and financial and regulatory mechanisms. Anticipated co-benefits include learning about new planning and implementation strategies, exchanging locally developed techniques that address universal urban planning and development challenges, and establishing an international network abroad.

Once an agreement is signed, participation of California-based universities within the program will also be sought to enable increased student participation and more focused research efforts.

According to Northern Section international co-director Alex Hinds, who has been working to establish the program, "Purposeful international travel combined with a steep, meaningful, learning curve is as good as it gets!" ■





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Who's where



Erik Balsley, AICP, formerly senior planner at Michael Baker, Jr., in Oakland, is now a senior consultant for Markon Solutions' Oakland office. Balsley received his Master in City Planning and Bachelor of Science in Planning degrees from MIT. He currently serves on the Northern Section Board as a Local Host Committee Conference Co-Chair for the 2015 APA California Planning Conference. He previously served as Northern Section's Communications Director and Associate Editor of *Northern News*.



Scott Davidson, AICP, is now Director of Contract Planning Services at MIG consulting. He previously was city planner at Pacific Municipal Consultants (PMC) for seven years, and principal at Davidson Land Use Consulting for over eight years before that. Davidson serves on the Board of APA California-Northern as Advertising Director. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Policy Analysis and Planning from UC Davis.



Gil Kelley, AICP, is San Francisco's new Director of Citywide Planning. He will oversee urban design and planning policies, and development of long-term plans. Kelley was Berkeley's planning manager from 1985 to 1988 and director of planning and development from 1988-1999, and director of planning in Portland, Oregon, 2000-2009. After leaving Portland, Kelley spent a year as a Loeb Fellow at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design. He holds a Master of Science in City Planning from MIT and a BA in Political Economy from The Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington.



Ned Thomas, AICP, is now Community Development Director for the Town of Windsor. He earlier served as principal planner for the City of Henderson, Nevada, where he led the city's award-winning sustainability program. Thomas holds a Master in Urban Planning from Harvard, was a Fulbright Scholar in Japan, and holds a Bachelor of Science in Geography from Brigham Young University.

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Who's where? (continued from previous page)



Alex Westhoff, AICP, is now a long-range Planner with the Marin Community Development Agency. He was for seven years an associate environmental planner for the Delta Protection Commission, where he worked on a feasibility study that led to establishing California's first National Heritage Area. Westhoff holds Master degrees from UC Berkeley in City and Regional Planning, and in Landscape Architecture in Environmental Planning; and he has a Bachelor of Science in Animal and Plant Systems from the University of Minnesota.



Carline Au is now the UC Berkeley student representative to the Northern Section Board. Au has a BA in Community and Regional Planning from UC San Diego. She is a first-year Master of City Planning student at UC Berkeley, concentrating on Housing/Community Development and Urban Design.



Melissa Ruhl is now the San Jose State University student representative to the Northern Section Board. Ruhl has an MA in History and a BA in Philosophy and History, both from the University of Oregon. Currently enrolled at SJSU, she expects to receive a Master of Urban Planning in 2015. Ruhl will be interning with the City of San Francisco Planning Department this summer. ■

Seniors grow in number and diversity. "New data from the U.S. Census show the country's older demographic is expected to double in the coming 30 years, and is already having a major impact on long term care services, communities, and businesses. Two new Census reports released May 6th indicate the age group 65 and older is expected to reach 83.7 million in 2050, up from 43.1 million in 2012. The demographic also is becoming more diverse, projected to be 39.1 percent ethnic minority in 2050, up from 20.7 percent in 2012." —Elizabeth Ecker, <http://bit.ly/1kMSqkK>

California Planning Foundation, award and scholarship winners

Northern Section winners, \$1,000

Danielle Dai, UC Berkeley
Lauren Seyda, San Jose State University
Annelise Dohrer, Sonoma State University
Ma'ayan Demba, Stanford

Statewide winners from Northern Section

Gabriel Kaprelian – UC Berkeley – runner up for Outstanding Student Award, \$3,000
Maria Javier, SJSU – runner up for Outstanding Student Award, \$3,000

California Planning Roundtable Memorial Scholarship

Alex Stoele, UC Berkeley, \$1,000
Emma Reed, SJSU, \$1,000
Aliza Paz, SJSU, \$1,000

Ken Milam Scholarship

Logan Harris, UC Berkeley, \$1,000

Google's self-driving car's city-street reality.

"To build a comprehensive model of city driving involves painstakingly slow development. Google is adding new streets in Mountain View every week, but that's just a single city. Presumably tackling new urban centers, and dealing with varying municipal and state driving laws and different driver behavior, will involve additional work. Google also says it needs to do more work with situations that humans handle via social signals, like four-way stops, lane changes, and merging." —Darrell Etherington, <http://tcrn.ch/1nLYIQD>

Jobs, housing, and rent

The three-layer cake

By Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP

It seems like it's all about rents, but it's not. It's about the lack of the right kind of housing in the right place.

I used to carry around a sketch of a round, three-layer cake with a slice removed so you could see the layers. The middle layer was labeled 'Transportation.' The others were labeled 'Housing' and 'Jobs.' I drew the cartoon after a 1957 lecture where Penn Prof. William L. C. Wheaton thusly analyzed a planning problem: "It's a three-layer cake, and no matter how you approach it, you have to take a slice out of each layer." Ideally, the cake is baked with three equal layers. Lopsided cakes are to be avoided.

If you don't care for cake, you might want to compare housing with water. We build cities where there's no water, so we find (produce) the water elsewhere and transport it to where we need it. And because we didn't build housing where we need it, we constructed 'pipes' to transport our workers from their homes to their jobs. Both systems have serious limits, as we increasingly recognize.

Apparently people enjoy watching a crisis worsen. Rather than do anything to analyze and attack the problem, we deny its existence or complain about its impacts:

- We don't build housing on the Peninsula or in Marin, then we complain about the resulting traffic as people go from homes to jobs and vice versa.
- We enact height and density limits that constrict the housing supply, and then we complain when the better off among us buy and improve what used to be affordable ownership housing.
- We either do not control rents, or do so half-measure; then we complain when the rents are bid up on formerly affordable rentals.
- And then we attack the symbols — for example, the buses that are used to more efficiently transport workers in order to nibble away at already severe traffic problems.

Perhaps we've come too far, and the problem is unsolvable. Certainly that's what I've been reading in the media this past month, as you'll see from these short excerpts on pages 8 and 29.

(continued on next page)

Costly rental requirements communicated, then rescinded

KCBS Radio, May 6, 2014

Doug Sovern, <http://cbsloc.al/1kK2Stg> • “Tenants at a rent-controlled apartment building in San Francisco received notice from their landlord, Robert Shelton, that they need to prove an annual income of \$100,000 in addition to a high credit score. The letter was slipped under the door of every unit at the building near Fillmore and Haight Street and was dated April 25th. In addition to the six-figure annual-income requirement, the letter [also added a requirement that the tenant have] a FICO credit score of at least 725. Tommi Avicoli Mecca from San Francisco’s Housing Rights Committee said it’s illegal to make current tenants meet such requirements. ‘If the building’s under rent control, they can’t do it. They can’t post-screen people.’ Landlords can, however, use credit checks and income screenings for potential tenants in advance of signing a lease or renting. The renters in this case wondered if it was a form of intimidation to persuade lower-income tenants to move out.

“Shelton [subsequently] sent the tenants a new letter May 6th rescinding the correspondence. ‘The information contained was flawed. My apologies for the confusion created.’”

Families with rental vouchers can’t find units

Marin Independent Journal, May 4, 2014

Richard Halstead, <http://bit.ly/1g3UH8r> • “The Marin (County) Housing Authority issued 95 new Section 8 vouchers within recent weeks, but recipients of the vouchers now face the daunting task of finding rental housing they can afford. The budget sequestration cuts in 2013 forced the Housing Authority to reduce the number of vouchers it was supporting from 2,145 to 2,026. It recently got the green light to issue up to 2,121 vouchers, but the amount of support it provides per voucher has not been increased; in fact, it has been reduced. There are currently 7,900 on the Marin Housing Authority’s waiting list for housing vouchers and another 4,500 on the authority’s waiting list for a public housing unit.

“The average rent for a one-bedroom unit in Marin is \$1,885 per month. The housing authority’s current allotments are \$1,281 per month for a one-bedroom unit, \$1,616 per month for a two-bedroom unit, \$2,195 per month for a three-bedroom unit, and \$2,654 per month for a four-bedroom unit.

“Meanwhile, residential rents in the Bay Area have been climbing at double-digit rates for about three years. Marin County rents jumped 9.6 percent in the first quarter of this year, according to RealFacts. The county currently has a 97.4 percent occupancy rate.”

Rent too high? Move

The New York Times, April 29, 2014

Shaila Dewan, <http://nyti.ms/1ng0waB> • “The developed world’s wealthiest cities are facing housing crises so acute that not only low-income workers, but also the middle and creative classes, find them increasingly difficult to afford. Redfin, the real estate website, found not a single home on the market in San Francisco that would be affordable on a teacher’s salary. In many cities, renting is even more expensive. The rules of the market say people should simply opt to live someplace cheaper. But in today’s economy, that’s not so simple.

“Lots of people think they know what to do to fix housing: Rent controls. Require developers to set aside low-cost units. Build subsidized housing. Distribute rent vouchers or, as San Francisco has recently done, funnel taxes and fees into a housing trust fund.

“Yet many of these solutions are dwarfed by the sheer size of the problem. Sydney, where the median rent on a two-bedroom apartment is now \$2,600 a month, aspires to build more than half a million units by 2031, a goal for which it would have to double its normal pace of construction.

“There are other complications as well, said Eric Belsky, managing director of the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard. ‘Economic forces relentlessly push back. Take a crummy neighborhood and build a really nice affordable housing complex in the middle of it. You’ve just made everything around the complex more desirable, and thus more expensive. You’ve lowered some people’s rent, but raised everybody else’s.’”

(continued on page 29)

Modernizing the development permit system

A Santa Clara County example

By Scott Lefaver, AICP, Chair, Santa Clara County Planning Commission



The planning process and its sometimes difficult and time-consuming path has been under critical review by news-papers, political leaders, and applicants, among others. In recent years, the County of Santa Clara faced criticism for a slow, expensive, cumbersome permit process with continuous uncertainty about outcomes. Those trying to obtain a permit didn't know who the main contact person was within the County, and it seemed the process changed depending on who was reviewing the plans or permits. There was a sense within the County leadership that the process was not serving the needs of the community.

In 2013, County Executive Jeffery Smith gave the new Director of Planning and Development Nash Gonzalez and the new Planning Manager Kirk Girard the task of changing and updating the process.

Gonzalez and Girard enlisted the help of the County's four-year old Center for Leadership and Transformation. The Center, located in the County Exec's office, was formed on the principles that lasting, organizational transformation can be achieved when the County "encourages employees and equips them with methods and processes to lead change, ... [and] empowers employees to suggest and participate in innovation, actionable solutions, and breakthrough ideas..." The Center thus encourages cross-functional collaboration and empowers employees to act as change-agents and direct problem-solvers. For the planning department, the Center helped break down barriers, leading to a more efficient, leaner, and innovative unit operating at a much higher administrative level. That, in turn, meant fewer tax dollars spent on processing, and greater focus on the essentials of planning.

The Center and the Department put together a Transformation and Modernization Project with general goals and specific objectives. The goals include:

- Cultivate improved customer relationships.
- Re-engineer the permit process.
- Modernize information technology.
- Lead, inspire, and develop staff.

The specific objectives include:

- Twenty percent increase in customer satisfaction scores over a baseline survey.

- Achieve a 13-week building permit application processing time for 80 percent of Stanford University projects in 2015 (represents a 50 percent decrease in length of time).
- Achieve 40 percent decrease in average permit processing time for all other permits compared to historic baseline.
- Complete 90 percent of staff training in new methodologies and change organizational culture by 2015.

There are huge savings and benefits for the community when these objectives are met, not only in convenience and predictability in the development process and dollars saved by the applicant, but in actual dollars gained by the County. The savings will come about because there will be fewer staff working on, and fewer staff hours spent moving an application through the process — but a greater amount of straightforward collaboration between staff and applicant.

Planning Director Gonzalez told the Board of Supervisors in February, "Reducing the average building permit processing time from seven months to three months for Stanford University applications alone is estimated to save as much as \$5 million per year in reduced project capital costs."

The County Planning and Development staff now surveys customers on the strengths and weaknesses of the Department. The staff also holds focus groups with customers to build more positive relationships with those who come to the permit counter. Coming next year is a Central Permitting Office — a one-stop shop for most permits — and an interdepartmental, shared information technology platform that manages permit data and automates workflow.

The result is a customer-centric, team-oriented permit process that Gonzalez says will speed permit processing and dramatically increase customer satisfaction.

In development are online applications submittal and tracking, electronic plan checking, and document management.

According to Gonzalez, Sunnyvale and Milpitas have instituted similar programs with great success. ■

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APA California members receive a 10 percent discount on most Land Use and Natural Resources courses at UC Davis. You can earn **AICP | CM** credits, stay up to date on the new policies, laws, and practices, and learn from experts in the field.

New! Permitting Cultural Waterholes and Hangouts – Planning for the Next Generation, Hosted at Bike Dog Brewery:

Microbreweries, urban wineries, entrepreneurial incubators, maker spaces, and other small startup businesses are revitalizing and reshaping the social and economic fabric of our communities. Join UC Davis Extension Land Use and Natural Resources and Sacramento Valley APA to learn about one local case study where good planning and good beer have been fermenting community development.

Instructors: Mayor Christopher Cabaldon, David Tilley, and Raef Porter. AICP | CM 2.5

Advanced GIS – Productivity, Geoprocessing and Analysis:

Through an in-depth analysis project, participants will work with a variety of geoprocessing tools in ArcGIS, learn better work routines, and learn how to improve their workflow using ModelBuilder. *Instructor: Karen Beardsley.*

AICP | CM 20.0

Redesigning the Zoning Ordinance: Discover how to transform your zoning ordinance into an understandable, streamlined, defensible, and effective planning implementation tool. *Instructors: Bruce Jacobsen and Laura Stetson.*

AICP | CM 6.0

Regional Planning and Sustainable Communities

Strategies: This course will focus on SB 375 key requirements, review the relationship between modeling and planning, and consider opportunities and constraints going forward. *Instructor: Bill Higgins. AICP | CM 6.0*

Successful CEQA Compliance – An Intensive Two-Day Seminar:

Learn how to clearly understand and comply with CEQA guidelines in this interactive seminar, designed to assist public agency staff, consultants, attorneys, developers, members of environmental organizations and others.

Instructors: Terry Rivasplata and Maggie Townsley.

AICP | CM 12.0

Tribal Water Law and Policy: This class will cover the legal foundation and policy behind Indian water rights and how these rights fit in California's water allocation system.

Students will review recent developments involving Indian water rights, including quantification through litigation and congressionally approved water rights settlement.

Instructor: David Sandino. AICP | CM 6.0

Using GIS to Manage, Analyze, and Promote Sustainability:

This course will identify opportunities to promote, implement and manage sustainability projects through the use of GIS.

Examine, at the macro level, the ability of GIS to analyze climate and environmental trends and identify potential high risk areas. *Instructor: Robert Earle. AICP | CM 18.0*

For course details and to enroll, visit

www.extension.ucdavis.edu/land

Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ucdelunr ■

More on CalEnviroScreen 2.0. "California EPA just released a supplementary report that analyzes the relationship between CalEnviroScreen scores and race and ethnicity. If you are Latino, chances are 50–50 that you live in one of the worst scoring census tracts in California — that is, in one of the top 30 percent most burdened. In contrast, if you are non-Hispanic white, your odds are only 1 in 12, or just over 8 percent." —Ramya Sivasubramanian, <http://bit.ly/1nLX87L>



2014 Awards presented by APA California – Northern

Northern Section handed out its annual Planning Awards on May 16th at Parc 55 Wyndham, Union Square, San Francisco. The seven Awards of Merit and seven Awards of Excellence, summarized below, recognize significant planning efforts.

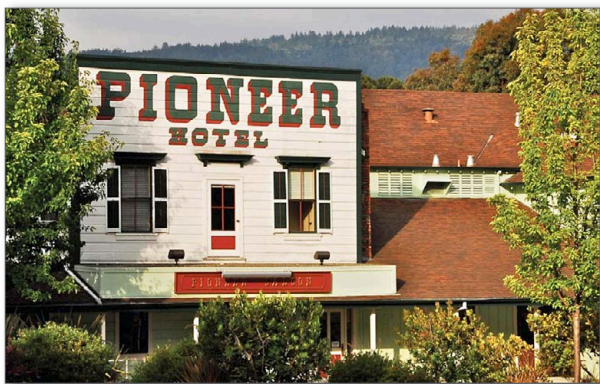
Six distinguished planners from public agencies, private practice, and academia comprised this year's Awards jury:

- Prof. Nico Callavita, AICP, San Diego State University
- Carmela Campbell, AICP, Planning Manager, Union City
- Susan Frost, recently retired from City of Livermore
- Diana Keena, AICP, Senior Planner, Emeryville
- Barbara Nelson, AICP, Community Development Director, Healdsburg
- John Steere, AICP, Contra Costa County Public Works.

AWARDS OF MERIT

Comprehensive Plan, Small Jurisdiction — Award of Merit
Woodside General Plan and Residential Design Guidelines,
<http://bit.ly/1miHxdn>

Woodside is an urban-wildlife interface community that wants to protect its rural character from the construction of huge estates. This project includes a general plan and residential design guidelines. By forming a 35-member task force and committees — and recruiting volunteers — staff won over a distrustful citizenry and completed the plan and guidelines on a small budget.



Award of Merit for a Small Jurisdiction Comprehensive Planning
Petaluma SMART Stations – Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
Master Plan and Smart Code, <http://bit.ly/1miHVIZ>

This plan provides a comprehensive vision to capitalize on the future Sonoma-Marina Area Rail Transit (SMART) stations within Petaluma and guides future development toward uses that support transit ridership. The project also amends the city's 10-year old Smart Code to ensure that public space and private buildings focus on the

pedestrian experience. Along with multi-day charrettes and stakeholder interviews, a 17-member Citizens Advisory Committee provided input throughout the process.



Award of Merit for Comprehensive Planning in Small Jurisdiction
City of Mill Valley MV 2040 General Plan, <http://bit.ly/1mil6nl>

In-house planners directed the process and prepared the plan as a catalyst for creating social capital and trust between staff and the myriad citizen, activist, and business cultures in Mill Valley, while cultivating livability, quality of life, and sustainability through comprehensive planning policies. The plan used "capacity analysis" to identify new and affordable housing opportunities. This readable



plan, with graphics that convey Mill Valley's character, is an effort to integrate new development into the town's historic fabric.

(continued on next page)

Award of Merit for Innovation in Green Community Planning
Nanhu New Country Village, Jiaxing, China, <http://bit.ly/1miKnPv>

Nanhu Village is being developed in phases on a 2,700-acre site at the western edge of Jiaxing, a city one-half hour from Shanghai via high-speed train. The project reconciles national farm reform goals with urban growth, integrating agriculture and urban development in a contextually sensitive, environmentally responsive, village setting. The project maintains over 1,700 acres of land as working farms, including eco-tourist organic farms, while consolidating development into a modern 740-acre village.



Award of Merit in Transportation Planning
San Francisco's WalkFirst program, <http://bit.ly/1miKL06>

Mayor Ed Lee's Pedestrian Strategy directs departments to reduce serious pedestrian injuries or fatalities, increase walkability, and make all neighborhoods safer for walking. WalkFirst, an exceptional example of interagency coordination, was initiated to prioritize capital improvements over the next five years. An interdisciplinary team developed a data-driven, quantitative approach to select priority locations for improvements. The result is a \$17 million capital improvement program, to be implemented in the next fiscal year, to safeguard the most vulnerable pedestrians — seniors, children, and people with disabilities.



**How would you fix
San Francisco Streets
to improve Pedestrian Safety?**

Urban Design Award of Merit
Ocean Street Area Plan, Santa Cruz, <http://bit.ly/1smdNfG>

Ocean Street is the first street people access when coming into Santa Cruz from the interstate (State Routes 1 and 17). This project includes a plan and design guidelines to revitalize that street and create a gateway, while minimizing impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods. It aims to make the street friendlier to pedestrians and bicycles, encourage street-front retail development, and improve connections to the nearby San Lorenzo River. The plan envisions beauty, art at gateways, trees, and good building design.



Academic Award of Merit
The Spartan Keyes Neighborhood Assessment and Community Engagement Report, <http://bit.ly/1sm9dhq>

This work by San Jose State University Urban Planning Masters students, CommuniverCity, and the residents of the Spartan Keyes neighborhood, offers a comprehensive synopsis of the neighborhood's characteristics, an overview of the community's priorities,



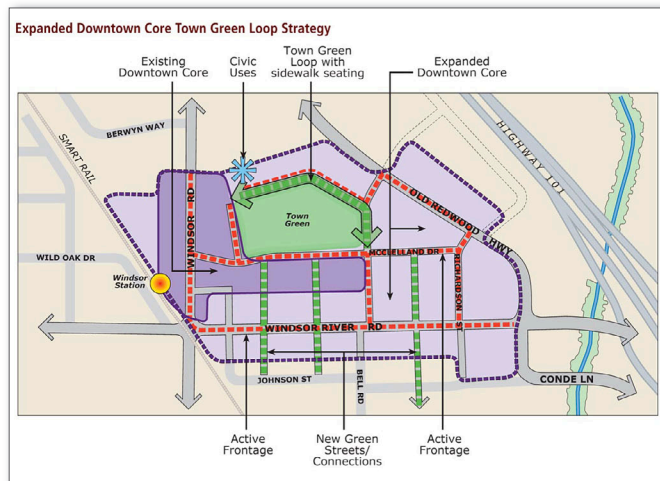
and a summary of the community outreach that accompanied these efforts. The report analyzed a variety of socio-economic and physical factors affecting this primarily residential, prominently Hispanic neighborhood near San Jose State, and concluded with an analysis of what makes a community great.

(continued on next page)

AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Award of Excellence, Comprehensive Plan – Small Jurisdiction
Windsor Station Area/Downtown Specific Plan,
<http://bit.ly/1sFQXBF>

To accommodate an imminent Sonoma-Marin Area Transit station, Windsor is expanding its six-block downtown between Highway 101 and a new town green. The plan accommodates 5,200 residents and 2,600 jobs in the small downtown, plus residential neighborhoods on the other side of the tracks and Windsor Road. The expanded downtown features pedestrian streets and paths, and bike lanes and a bike path that radiate out from downtown. A new street completes the Green Loop around the Town Green. An implementation section addresses costs, revenues, and phasing. Parallel planning and environmental review make this a self-mitigating Specific Plan. Already approved or under review are 870 dwelling units, and a hotel feasibility study is underway.



Award of Excellence, Innovation in Green Community Planning
Camp Pico Blanco Scout Reservation Conservation Plan,
<http://bit.ly/1sFRm7i>

The Reservation comprises 800 acres on Little Sur River in the Ventana Wilderness and Los Padres National Forest. Within the reservation, the 100-acre camp provides outdoor and educational experiences to thousands of young people. The plan's guidelines and best practices for resource management of the property balance preservation of the wilderness area with outdoor recreation and education, and establish a methodology transferable to other organizations involved in resource management. Among the 60 prioritized actions are forest management, watershed management and steelhead protection, sensitive species protection, nature education, scientific research, and recreational use management.



Award of Excellence, Transportation Planning
Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network Master Plan,
<http://bit.ly/1smfGZV>

This award honors efforts to increase transportation choices and reduce reliance on automobiles. The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail will add 50 miles of multi-use pedestrian/bicycle trail the length of Santa Cruz County along the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Approximately half the county's population is located within a mile of the 32-mile-long Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line that is the continuous spine of the Trail network. The Master Plan — product of decades of work — has enjoyed a high level of public support and participation. The plan provides detailed implementation measures for each of 20 trail segments. The Plan also benefits the environment, public health, economic vitality, accessibility, and appreciation of coastal resources.



Photo: Suzanne Ise

(continued on next page)

Award of Excellence, Best Practices

21 Elements/Grand Nexus Study, San Mateo County,
<http://www.21elements.com>

San Mateo County's "21 Elements" has brought the county and its 20 cities together in a cooperative venture that offers assistance with housing element preparation, a sharing of best practices and data, and agreement on a subregional distribution of the housing allocation. Until recently, however, the cities prepared separate commercial or residential linkage fees studies. Now 15 of the 20 jurisdictions have agreed to a joint "Grand Nexus Study," with huge time and cost savings for all. Economists warn that imposing linkage fees in one jurisdiction could push development — and related application fees — beyond town boundaries. The communities in the Grand Nexus retain the developments and fees, generating much needed local funding for affordable housing.

Award of Excellence, Emerging Planning and Design Firm
Raimi + Associates, <http://www.raimiassociates.com>

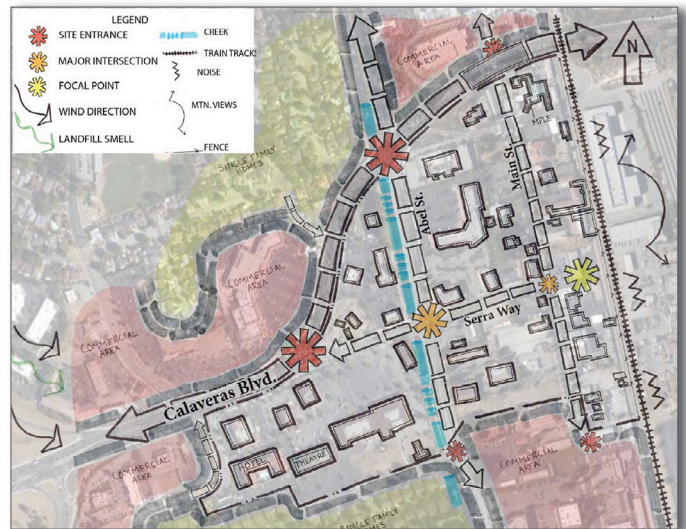
This category's criteria include work quality, influence, ethical practice, outreach, and engagement. In the eight years since the firm began, Raimi + Associates has become a leader in comprehensive planning in California and the US. The firm's commitment to improving the effectiveness of planning in people's lives is demonstrated by the health plans and elements it has helped pioneer, and in the metrics developed for the United States Green Building Council's LEED ND designation. The firm's City of South Gate General Plan was one of the first to integrate "form-based" urban design into land use designations. "Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles" — a health element and related implementation programs — includes a map-based health atlas for Los Angeles and an interactive website. The firm's work is inclusive, community-centered, and grassroots reflective.



Award of Excellence, Academic Award

Urban Design Visions for Milpitas, Cal Poly – San Luis Obispo
Community Design Lab, <http://bit.ly/1sFTD2a>

Over a 10-week period, the Fall 2013 Community Design Lab and the City of Milpitas prepared a land use and urban design study for the California Circle and Main at Serra areas. Under Drs. Vicente del Rio and Hemalata Dandekar, the students produced a well-informed, insightful, and innovative range of visions for the two areas of Milpitas. Seven teams collected and assessed data, developed visions and concepts, and prepared final proposals for presentation to the Milpitas Planning Commission. The students gained an understanding of urban design, its influence on strategic city development, and its use in implementing the General Plan in a political context. It also gave them a taste of the problems, constraints, limitations, and frustrations of a real-life professional endeavor. The final document represents an impressive amount of work.



Juan Borrelli, AICP, was presented with a special Award of Excellence for his years of leadership. A Northern Section board member for over 11 years, Juan served as Section Director, headed up conference committees, and held important positions with APA California and the California Planning Foundation. As Section Historian, he is making decades of information readily accessible. Northern Section expresses its profound gratitude for Juan's efforts and accomplishments.

(continued on next page)

2014 Awards presented by APA California – Northern *(continued from previous page)*

Award of Excellence, Planning Landmark

The San Francisco Bay Trail, <http://www.baytrail.org>

A 500-mile trail rimming San Francisco Bay is now two-thirds built. No United States metropolitan area has a regional trail of this magnitude or experience.

A Planning Landmark must be 25 years old or more, historically significant, must have initiated new directions in planning, and/or impacted American planning over a broad time range. The Bay Trail Plan was adopted 25 years ago in 1989, and the nonprofit Bay Trail Project was born. The small organization built an extensive network of agency and organizational partnerships and created a large group of public, private, and nonprofit Bay Trail advocates. These partnerships have been key to resolving issues and creating strategies for trail development amid sensitive natural resources, complex property ownerships and land uses, and diverse public interests and environmental regulatory jurisdictions.

For its inclusive and unifying vision, the Bay Trail enjoys broad political support in all nine counties and 47 shoreline cities. All jurisdictions through which the Trail passes have adopted

resolutions supporting the vision, and most have incorporated specific Bay Trail language in their general plans. This remarkable, path breaking, planning landmark serves as a model for legislating, planning, and implementing regional trails. ■



Northern Section wishes to acknowledge a generous contribution by Placeworks toward the cost of the Awards Gala.



Where in the world?



Photo by James Castañeda, AICP (*Answer on page 20.*)

Suburbs are far from dead. "North America's suburbs are growing and changing fast. In the U.S., diverse suburban neighborhoods now outnumber diverse city neighborhoods by more than two to one, and diverse suburbs are growing more rapidly than predominantly white ones." —Amanda Kolson Hurley, *Forefront*, <http://bit.ly/1fykjjx>

Alameda and Solano counties top racial diversity list

By Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP

Perhaps we're all tired of lists by now, but I took note of Randy Olson's blog that two of the five most racially diverse counties in the U.S. are right here in the Bay Area. Most planners I know strive for diversity, so hats off to Alameda and Solano counties for topping this shortlist.

Fourth-ranked Alameda County, with a population of 1,573,254 on January 1, 2014, is home to Berkeley (population 117,372), Oakland (population 404,355 and site of APA California's 2015 annual conference), and Fremont (population 223,972). Fifth-ranked Solano County (population 424,233 on January 1, 2014) includes Vallejo (118,470), Fairfield (110,018), and Benicia (population only 27,454 and the site of California's first state capitol).

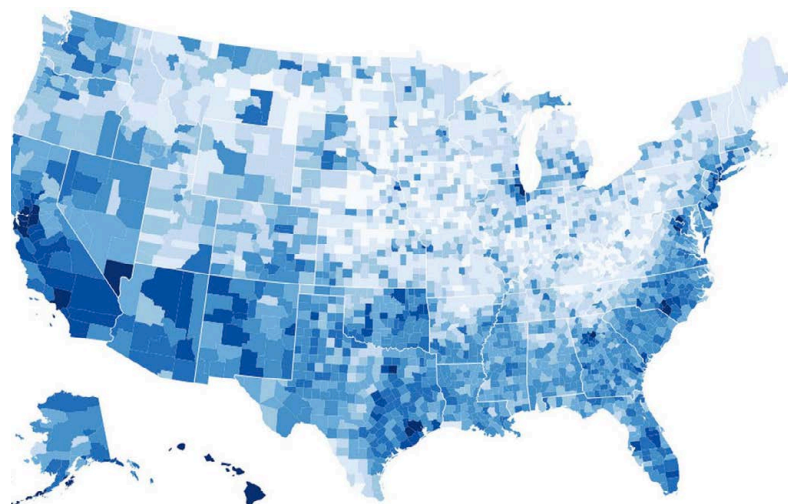
I can't offer data or opinions as to how integrated the reported diversity is within Alameda and Solano counties (you may wish to comment). The research objective, however, was to assemble the big picture for our entire country, and the map is startlingly revealing. While just a snippet of the data from the units that make up that picture, of the top five counties (listed below), Solano has the highest percentage of white/non-Latino; Queens has the highest percentages of African Americans and Latinos; and Aleutians East Borough has the highest percentages of Native Americans and Asian Americans.

You'll find Olson's methodology on his blog of April 29, 2014. He notes:

"The U.S. is typically viewed as a melting pot of races and cultures, but recent maps showing the ethnic distribution of the U.S. seem to hint that the country isn't as well-mixed as we all thought. In this visualization [across nearly 3,000 counties], I mapped out the racial diversity of the U.S. to give us a better sense of the hotspots of diversity. One of the most notable features is that the Midwest and Northeast are fairly homogeneously white. Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine stand as the pinnacle of racial homogeneity, each with only one or two counties with even a blip of diversity."

<http://bit.ly/1iQpOV2>

The rest of the east coast, deep south, southwest, and Washington state jump out as diverse.



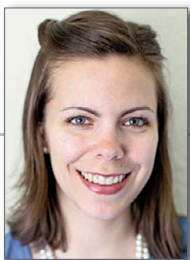
U.S. Racial Diversity by County, 2010.

(Darker = more racial diversity.) Data: census.gov/2010census.
Author: Randy Olson (randalolson.com) @randal_olson

The "five most diverse counties" in the U.S., according to Olson's calculations, are:

1. "Aleutians West Census Area, **Alaska** (31.4 percent white/non-Latino, 5.7 percent African American, 15.1 percent Native American, 28.3 percent Asian American, 13.1 percent Latino, and 6.4 percent other).
2. "Aleutians East Borough, **Alaska** (13.5 percent white/non-Latino), 6.7 percent African American, 27.7 percent Native American, 35.4 percent Asian American, 12.3 percent Latino, and 4.4 percent other).
3. "Queens County, **New York** (27.6 percent white/non-Latino, 17.7 percent African American, 0.3 percent Native American, 22.8 percent Asian American, 27.5 percent Latino, and 4 percent other).
4. "Alameda County, **California** (34.1 percent white/non-Latino, 12.2 percent African American, 0.3 percent Native American, 25.9 percent Asian American, 22.5 percent Latino, and 5.1 percent other).
5. "Solano County, **California** (40.8 percent white/non-Latino, 14.2 percent African American, 0.5 percent Native American, 14.3 percent Asian American, 24 percent Latino, and 6.2 percent other)."

Randy Olson is a third-year PhD student in Michigan State University's Computer Science program, where he studies biologically-inspired artificial intelligence and evolutionary processes. He holds a B.S. with Honors in Computer Science from the University of Central Florida, Orlando. ■



Norcal roundup

Assembled by Jennifer Piozet, associate editor

Novato levee breached to restore tidal marsh

NBC Bay Area, April 25, 2014

Joe Rosato, Jr., <http://bit.ly/1iXCpds> •

“With a swooping bite from the bucket of a large tractor, a portion of shoreline in Novato transformed back 130 years. On April 25, the California Coastal Conservancy used heavy machinery to chew through an old levee, allowing bay waters to flood the plains of the former Hamilton Army Airfield for the first time in over a century.”

“The 650 acres were originally wetlands. But like most of the shores fronting the San Francisco Bay, it was leveed and used for farming. In the 1920s, the military bought the land and created the Army Airfields, replacing the sprawling pea fields with bombers and fighter jets.”

Originally the ‘Marin County Airfield,’ it became Hamilton Army Airfield in 1932, and Hamilton Air Force Base in 1966. The Air Force curtailed its activities on the base in October 1973. In 1976 an agreement was reached to close Hamilton as part of the post-Vietnam War drawdown. In December 1988, The Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommended closure of the last 700 acres of government land at the airfield. The US Navy vacated its Hamilton housing in 1996. —Wikipedia,

<http://bit.ly/1iXFZUM>

“Besides providing much needed habitat for shorebirds, the new marsh will serve as a buffer for humans as it rises along with the sea level. The Army Corps of Engineers will monitor the marsh for 13 years.”

Tech companies still need Silicon Valley

GlobeSt.com, May 5, 2014

Natalie Dolce, <http://bit.ly/1nflkhd> • “We have had many discussions over the difference between the tech companies taking space in downtown San Francisco and the huge campuses that are being built in the Silicon Valley and whether or not those campuses would take activity away from the City. According to new data from Jones Lang LaSalle, tech companies still see the need for Silicon Valley presence.

“It has been well documented that Silicon Valley firms have opened numerous satellite offices in San Francisco, but as with all office-space needs, the difference is employee-driven: Where do they need their talent to work?

“[According to] Markus Shayeb, SVP of tenant advisory at Transwestern’s San Francisco Bay Area office, ‘It’s a difference of size and youthfulness. There are older, mostly larger firms whose clients are all around the world and don’t need their employees to be in San Francisco to service customers in India. There is also the generational issue: If you’re a more established company such as Hewlett-Packard, a large share of your employees can live and work in the suburbs.’”

Permanente Creek crossing in Google’s hands

San Jose Mercury News, May 9, 2014

Jason Green, <http://bit.ly/1nHg5FY> • “Google is looking to take the reins from Mountain View on a project that would make it easier for bicyclists and pedestrians to cross Permanente Creek at Charleston Road. In May 2013, the City Council approved a signalized at-grade crossing for the Permanente Creek Trail. A bridge and an undercrossing at the intersection were rejected as too expensive, and the latter would have resulted in the removal of 20 trees, a no-go for the council.

“Google, however, was in favor of an undercrossing. Google assembled a team of landscape architects, civil engineers, and environmental consultants to see whether an undercrossing could be designed that addressed the council’s concerns about cost and trees. The proposal calls for Google to build a new bicycle and pedestrian bridge between Charleston Road and Highway 101. And the tech firm would widen and restore the creek channel. However, 98 parking spaces at Google would have to be removed.” Update at <http://bit.ly/1jmrTyc>

(Norcal roundup continues on next page)

BRT stalled in Bay Area

SF Gate, May 9, 2014

Michael Cabanatuan, <http://bit.ly/1jUMtEx> • “Bus rapid transit projects in San Francisco, the East Bay, and the South Bay are still in the works, but they have stalled after running into community skepticism and opposition to the removal of traffic lanes and parking spaces. The opposition from merchants and residents has caused some cities, even progressive bastions like Berkeley, to refuse to allow transit-only lanes or to drop out of BRT projects altogether.

“The Bay Area’s first BRT line to start construction — and the one likely to be the first to carry passengers — is the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority’s route from Santa Clara to San Jose’s Alum Rock neighborhood. Construction of the 7.2-mile line started in March, and the first bus is expected to roll in fall 2015 — about 11 years after the idea was conceived. Compared with the proposal to put a BRT line on Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco, that’s speedy. AC Transit’s efforts to bring BRT to the East Bay — originally from San Leandro to Berkeley — have been equally lengthy and perhaps even more hard-fought.”

Affordable housing denied; site sold

Palo Alto Online, April 29, 2014

Gennady Sheyner, <http://bit.ly/RKjd99>

• “After seeing its plan for a housing complex on Maybell Avenue collapse in a referendum last November, the Palo Alto Housing Corporation has completed the sale of the 2.46-acre site to a Cupertino-based buyer, Golden Gate Homes LLC, county records show. The Housing Corporation, a nonprofit that develops and manages affordable-housing complexes throughout the city, has received several loans to purchase the old orchard site around Maybell and Clemo Avenues. It was planning to build a 60-unit complex for low-income seniors and 15 market-rate homes, a number that was later reduced to 12. Though the council unanimously approved the proposed housing development in June, the decision was later overturned by voters in a November referendum. Palo Alto had loaned the nonprofit \$5.8 million for the purchase, and council members agreed in December not to demand immediate repayment of the loan.

“The site zoning designation, R-15 (with a small portion that is R-2), makes it likely that the orchard could see an influx of housing, though proponents and opponents in last year’s Measure D referendum reached different conclusions over how much housing it should accommodate. City officials have said the site’s zoning would accommodate between 34 and 46 housing units, depending on the number of units the developer chooses to devote to affordable housing.”

Dublin CA’s miracle

San Francisco Magazine, May 5, 2014

Scott Lucas, <http://bit.ly/1fMMEIS>

• “California released its annual estimate of the state’s population — showing which cities were growing and which were shrinking. Surprisingly, the municipality that saw the highest percent increase (that wasn’t thanks to a bulge in new prisoners) was Dublin — a bedroom community nestled at the crossroads of the 580 and 680 freeways. Even more surprising are the lessons for urban planning that the rest of the region can learn from the city.

- Cluster dense new housing near mass transit
- Build housing at all points on the economic spectrum
- Beat the sprawl
- Attract jobs
- Think regional, build local
- Class up the joint a bit.”

Doublewide sidewalk for Napa students

Napa Valley Register, May 12, 2014

Janelle Wetzstein, <http://bit.ly/1iMoY0a>

• “A dilapidated portion of Central Avenue near Napa High School will soon receive some much-needed sidewalk and street improvements. Typical sidewalks in the city of Napa are about five feet wide. But the heavily trafficked concrete walkways near the high school will be twice that, offering an extra five feet of walking space to students trekking to and from school. The project will be paid for with federal Community Development Block Grant funds.”

(Norcal roundup continues on next page)

Berkeley joins Bay Area Bike Share family

Berkeley High Jacket, April 30, 2014

Mira Chaplin, <http://bit.ly/1qxYdSq> • “The Metropolitan Transit Commission recently approved \$8.7 million to finance the extension of the Bay Area Bike Share program to Berkeley and other East Bay cities. The East Bay will receive 750 bikes, three hundred of which will be in Berkeley. The rest will be in Oakland and Emeryville.

“Under the plan, there will be around 60 bike stations in the East Bay, each of which can hold between 10 and 15 bikes. People who bike to BART and then ride to other parts of the Bay Area will be able to pick up a Bay Area Bike Share bicycle on the other end, because Bike Share memberships apply in all cities participating in the program. Berkeley already provides free bicycle accommodations at BART stops and has constructed bike lanes along many major roads.”

Sacramento River used as emergency water source

NBC Bay Area, April 30, 2014

Jodi Hernandez, <http://bit.ly/1jm8tDy> • “California’s severe drought has forced the East Bay Municipal Utility District to pump water into the Bay Area from the Sacramento River. EBMUD started tapping the river for the first time on April 30th to increase the region’s water supply during the drought. The San Pablo Reservoir is one of the destinations for water pumped from the Sacramento River. The emergency water supply will serve Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The utility has been preparing for more than four decades for a drought like the current one. EBMUD has spent nearly \$500 million building pipelines and pumping plants to move Sacramento River water to the East Bay. The utility will continue to pump water from the river through June.”

Brooklyn by the Bay

The New York Times – Fashion and Style, May 4, 2014

Matt Haber, <http://nyti.ms/1npks8B> • “Many people seem to be hoping that the Oakland-as-Brooklyn narrative — or at the very least, the idea that Oakland is a top-flight creative capital — takes off.

“For many residents priced out of San Francisco, Oakland has come to be seen as a welcoming oasis.

“What keeps Oakland from being merely a cheaper option than San Francisco, however, is the way the city’s deep cultural roots entwine working-class African-American and ethnic communities, progressive politics, arts, food, and more recently — technology entrepreneurship.

“It’s the new homeowners whom some long-time residents are eyeing warily. Gentrification is as ubiquitous a topic in the cafes and bars of Oakland as pour-over coffee and Google buses are in San Francisco. The fear that rising housing costs will push out working-class families and truly turn Oakland into the next Brooklyn — a shabby-chic bedroom community that feeds white-collar workers into the bustling metropolis next door but doesn’t see much of them or their money — is an ever-present one, especially when reporters from the national news media come calling.

“The governor has lived in Oakland since 1994 and remains one of the city’s biggest cheerleaders, favorably citing its ‘edgy quality. You have a very lively scene. It’s restored vitality to downtown that hasn’t seen excitement in 60 years.’” ■

Answer to “Where in the world?” (Page 16)

Late afternoon, Stockholm, Sweden. Looking northwest to Stockholm City Hall (tower at far left) and the island of Gamla Stan. The two centermost steeples are the German Church and — to the right and behind it — Stockholm Cathedral. Photo: James Castañeda, AICP.

Energy initiatives announced by the President in Mountain View May 9th “are sweeping and hard to criticize. Perhaps most importantly, a range of federal policy reforms from DOE energy efficiency and building code standards to HUD financing programs for low-income housing energy improvements, to a DOE program to replace 500,000 outdoor lights with high-efficiency illumination will definitely have an impact.” —Chris Clarke, <http://bit.ly/RBs9xe>

Infrastructure Financing Districts

Capitol Reporter, May 13, 2014

Julie Snyder, <http://bit.ly/1mWO4Jn> • “On May 13, Governor Jerry Brown released the May Revision of his January budget. The single housing-related item in the May Revision involves changes to the governor’s January infrastructure financing district (IFD) proposal. Rather than amend the existing IFD law, Brown now proposes to create a new statute allowing ‘Enhanced IFDs.’

“The primary difference between the January version and this one appears to be that cities and counties that have not resolved their outstanding redevelopment agency-related lawsuits will be able to participate in the current IFD program, which will continue in existence without modification. As in the January proposal, Enhanced IFDs would allow investments in homes affordable to low- and moderate-income households and require a 55 percent vote of the public to create a district and levy new fees or assessments. Local and regional housing advocates view this vote requirement as an almost insurmountable barrier to use of IFDs for housing.

“The Legislature now enters a four- to six-week flurry of budgeting activity. Legislators forfeit their pay if they haven’t sent a budget to the Governor by June 15th. July 1 marks the start of the new fiscal year.”

Santa Barbara may restart 90s desal plant

The Sacramento Bee, May 4, 2014

Alicia Chang, <http://bit.ly/1jC8qYH> • “[In 1992, Santa Barbara’s] \$34 million desalination plant was fired up for only three months and mothballed after a miracle soaking of rain. After the plant was powered down, the city sold off parts to a Saudi Arabia company. The guts remain, walled off behind a gate near the Funk Zone, a corridor of art galleries, wineries, and eateries tucked between the Pacific and U.S. 101.

“While it may seem like a head-scratcher to put the plant in hibernation soon after it was built, officials said the decision saved the city millions of dollars in unnecessary operating costs. Any restart would require city council approval, which won’t vote until next spring after reviewing engineering plans and drought conditions. The city estimates it will need \$20 million in technological upgrades, a cost likely to be borne by ratepayers.

“Santa Barbara, population 89,000, relies on water piped through tunnels from the Santa Ynez Mountains. But with Lake Cachuma, the main reservoir, dangerously low, the city expects desalination to play a role. Santa Barbara has enough water for this year and even next year by buying supplemental supplies and as long as residents continue to conserve. The earliest restart date would be summer 2016.”

Will California send water uphill?

KCRA.com, May 6, 2014

Garance Burke, <http://bit.ly/QGRKnH> •

“Water has flowed from Northern California’s snow-capped peaks to the south’s parched cities ever since the California Aqueduct was built in the 1960s. Now, amid one of the worst droughts in history, state officials are considering an audacious plan to send some of the water back uphill. It would also be a complex engineering challenge, requiring millions of dollars to defy gravity. Still, water agencies in the desperately dry farmlands around Bakersfield say the investment is worth it to keep grapevines, pistachios, and pomegranate trees alive.

“The state Department of Water Resources is reviewing the proposal, drawn up by five districts that sell irrigation water to farmers. The districts would bear the cost, estimated at \$1.5 million to \$9.5 million. Under the plan, water districts would be allowed to pump into the aqueduct the emergency supplies of water they store in underground reservoirs in Kern County, about two hours north of Los Angeles. That banked water and other extra supplies would raise the level of water within a small, closed section of the aqueduct.

“Then, pumps powered by diesel engines would push the water over locks and back upstream, against the southward pull of gravity. Farmers upstream could then pump the water out to their fields. Altogether, the districts want to move 30,000 acre-feet of water along a 33-mile stretch between Bakersfield and Kettleman City. As the project awaits final approval, water districts are already ordering pumps and making arrangements to get diesel engines.”

(California continues on next page)

San Francisco time lapse. “The ‘Empty America’ series begins in San Francisco. From the Golden Gate Bridge to Fisherman’s Wharf to Lombard Street to Ghirardelli Square to the Bay Bridge — get a good look at some of San Francisco’s most iconic landmarks (wiped empty of tourists and traffic).” Published October 15, 2012, at <http://youtu.be/jDaAo63bivc>

Congressional report predicts rising sea levels for California

KCBS, May 6, 2014

<http://cbsloc.al/QGUeT1> • “Climate change’s assorted harms ‘are expected to become increasingly disruptive across the nation throughout this century and beyond,’ the National Climate Assessment concluded May 6th. For California, the report found the sea level has risen seven inches from 1900-2005, ‘atmospheric rivers’ or ‘Pineapple Expresses’ funneling non-stop rain into the Bay Area will increase in frequency, and the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta will increasingly be threatened by rising salinity into water supplies and wetlands, coastal erosion, and increase runoff.”

Also from the climate report: “The San Francisco Bay and San Joaquin/Sacramento River Delta are particularly vulnerable to sea level rise and changes in salinity, temperature, and runoff; endangering one of the ecological ‘jewels’ of the West Coast, growing development, and crucial water infrastructure.” The full climate assessment is available at <http://nca2014.globalchange.gov>

The coast will not be clear. “As tropical cyclones move into higher latitudes, coastal populations and infrastructure poleward of the tropics may experience increased risk, especially endangering coastal cities not adequately prepared for them. The greatest amount of poleward migration is found in the northern and southern Pacific and South Indian Oceans.” —NOAA, <http://1.usa.gov/1jtUQ5d>

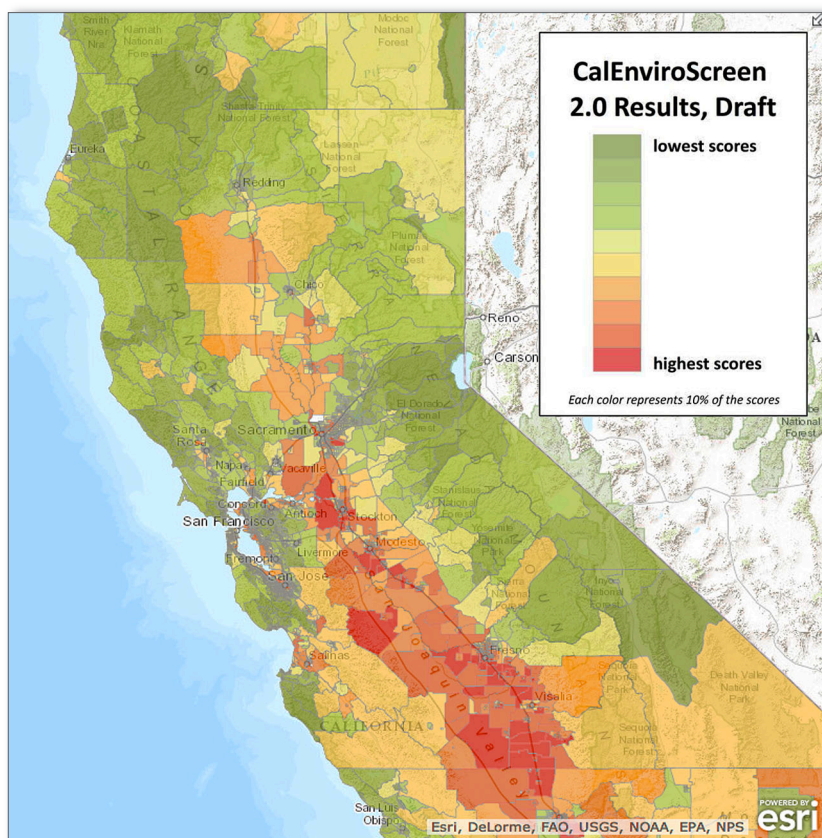
Statewide pollution burdens: seven-layer interactive map

Los Angeles Times, April 22, 2014

Tony Barboza, <http://lat.ms/T19vAc> • “The California Environmental Protection Agency has released a statewide list of census tracts most burdened by pollution, providing a first-of-its-kind ranking certain to pressure regulators to clean up neighborhoods with long-standing health risks. Many of the worst pollution pockets identified and mapped by state officials are in the San Joaquin Valley, Los Angeles County, and the Inland Empire.”

Interactive map by Thomas Suh Lauder, <http://bit.ly/1ipw0c5> • “An analysis by the California Environmental Protection Agency and Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment scores and maps more than 8,000 census tracts statewide by how affected they are by multiple sources of pollution. Use the search field to find pollution levels for any census tract in California. Try an address or ZIP Code and be sure to include the state (CA).”

CalEnviroScreen • The map below is an example of a statewide search for two layers — air and water pollution — using CalEnviroScreen. For a detailed explanation of categories and specific pollutants, see “Draft California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool, Version 2.0,” <http://bit.ly/1ipwdfq> ■



Interactive map results for air and water pollution using CalEnviroScreen 2.0

Saving Marktown, Indiana

The Atlantic Cities, April 30, 2014

Stephanie Garlock, <http://bit.ly/1mZYmf4> • “Built in 1917 along the industrial coastline of East Chicago, Indiana, Marktown was envisioned as a worker’s paradise that would supply a steady stream of labor for the Mark Steel Company next door. When it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975, the application boasted of the ‘charming northern European village effect’ in what boosters still call the ‘Brigadoon of industrial housing.’ Just a quarter of the 190-acre plan was ever built.

“Over time, industrial East Chicago hemmed in the neighborhood. Factories surround it on all four sides, with three steel plants and a BP petroleum refinery. In a neighborhood census just a few years ago, 25 percent of the housing units were vacant. A full 63 percent required such extensive roof renovations that surveyors could note the disrepair from the street.

“Just five or six hundred people live in Marktown now. As of this February, BP had purchased 22 properties in the neighborhood, and a BP spokesman told the *Times of Northwest Indiana* that they had plans to turn any converted lots into green space.” The *Atlantic Cities* article includes 11 images.

What young Americans want

Grist, April 25, 2014

Ben Adler, <http://bit.ly/1nAoiOt> • “Young professionals [are] ditching suburbia for dense coastal cities ... because many of those cities [are] walkable, sustainable, and urban. That’s why the cities at the top of *Niche Ink’s* list [<http://bit.ly/1nAnjOf>] are there despite being expensive. [San Francisco is fifth; San Jose is eleventh.] Their strong economies are both an attraction to, and a result of, the large numbers of educated young people who want to live there so badly they will pay a high premium to do so.

“Walkable urbanism is in short supply. If more cities and suburbs changed their policies to create more appealing urban communities, they might deserve a spot on a ‘top cities for millennials’ list.”

And planners, don’t miss the Arlington Rap:

“If you have any appreciation for the urban experience, and you walked around, say, Logan Circle in D.C., and then Arlington, Virginia, you’d never conclude that the plastic, mall environment of the latter is a better neighborhood for young people. Arlington has a nonsensical curlicue of cul-de-sacs, it sometimes lacks sidewalks, its buildings often hide behind parking lots, and its commerce is utterly dominated by chain stores. Even a Republican rapper thinks it’s so lame he wrote a song making fun of It.” <http://youtu.be/4T1RMuoQnKo>

The American dream is city living

TIME, April 25, 2014

Sam Frizell, <http://ti.me/1kb8F9M> •

“The latest housing numbers reflect an uptick in Americans abandoning their white-picket fences and two-car garages for a sky-high abode with a downtown view ... and a shorter walk to work.

“The high demand for city living has led to a wave of high-rise construction across the country, in cities such as New York and San Francisco. In Kansas City, Missouri, and in cities ranging from Minneapolis to Dallas, apartment buildings are rising above the skyline.

“The growth in multifamily residential construction isn’t purely aspirational, however. Many people are delaying buying a home out of necessity. After the easy money of the subprime mortgage market of the mid-2000s, banks have tightened their lending standards, making it much more difficult for homebuyers to purchase a property. The Urban Institute estimates that strict credit standards prevented between 300,000 and 1.2 million lenders from taking out mortgages in 2012 alone.

“Coupled with the uncertainty of the job market and the mountain of student loans recent graduates have to pay off, it makes sense that more people are choosing to rent instead of making the colossal investment of buying a home.

“According to the Nielsen Company, 62 percent of millennials prefer to live in mixed-use communities found in urban centers, closer to shops, restaurants, and the office. And as the number of apartment buildings under construction continues to rise, it appears the exodus to the cities won’t be slowing anytime soon.”

(U.S. continues on next page)

Mercedes is planning for a future of suburbs

Fast Company, May 12, 2014

Ariel Schwartz, <http://bit.ly/1k902QX> •

“Urbanists are cheering for a future full of cities, [but] Mercedes Benz is planning for a future of suburbs, at least in the U.S. ‘You’ll read in the media that the car is dead, Gen Y isn’t interested [in the car]. Part of our role in the company is to take conventional wisdom and dispute it,’ says Eric Larsen, the director of Mercedes-Benz’s society and technology research group, based in Sunnyvale. ‘The U.S. is a unique market, with the rise of mega-suburbs, not mega-cities. It’s good news for our company. The car is going to be the dominant form of transportation in the U.S. for the long term.’

“Larsen is quick to point out [that] suburbs are built for cars. [And] the suburbs of Sunbelt metropolitan areas like Austin, Houston, and Orlando continue to grow very fast.

“As George Masnick, a fellow at the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University, explained in a blog post [<http://bit.ly/1jB1gHl>], ‘During the next decade, some of the factors that have depressed housing turnover in the suburbs in recent years should run their course. New housing construction will be needed to accommodate adult population growth from aging echo boomers, and possibly the next wave of immigrants. This should largely take place outside of primary cities — where land is more readily available.’”

Different migrations drive growth in U.S. cities

The Atlantic CITYLAB, April 21, 2004

Richard Florida, <http://bit.ly/1kjEIY7> • US metropolitan area “growth is the result of two very different migrations — one coming from the location choices of Americans, the other shaped by new immigrants from outside the United States. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau for 2012 and 2013 [show] all large metros had a net inflow of immigrants. In several of the largest metros — New York, L.A., and Miami, especially — there was a net outflow of Americans to the rest of the country. Immigration is driving population growth in these places. Sunbelt metros like Houston, Dallas, and Phoenix, and knowledge hubs like Austin, Seattle, San Francisco, and D.C. are gaining much more from domestic migration.”

“Eleven large metros, nearly all in or near the Rustbelt, had a net outflow of migrants, including Chicago, Detroit, Memphis, Philadelphia, and St. Louis (although many saw their overall populations grow as birth rates outstripped death rates). The three largest metros lost Americans to the rest of the country: New York saw a net outflow of more than 100,000 from 2012 to 2013. Los Angeles and Chicago each saw a net outflow of roughly 50,000.”

“The biggest net gainers of domestic population were low-cost Sunbelt metros like Phoenix, San Antonio, Dallas, and Orlando; energy centers like Houston; knowledge and technology hubs like San Francisco, Austin, and Seattle; and Nashville, with its thriving music scene. The presence of San Francisco on this list, with a net influx of nearly 17,000 Americans, is especially surprising given its high costs of living.”

Ed. Note: The original article includes three national maps, and a graph showing net migration components for 10 cities.

Good planners needed more than ever

National APA Conference, April 27, 2014

S. Gail Goldberg, FAICP, <http://bit.ly/1g8Ttcg> • “Most of us entered the field in simpler times, when suburbs were the American dream — a maze of cul-de-sacs with repetitive houses. The two car garage was often the most prominent feature, and finding your way home was best guided by an open garage because recognizing your stuff was easier than recognizing your house. No one wanted to be in the cities anymore, so we brought office parks to the suburbs. Shopping malls erupted — a sea of parking surrounding an

island with all the same stores. ‘Anywhere America’ was born and it was alive and well everywhere. ... Basically, in the four decades of our careers, we have elevated the planning agenda from planning cul-de-sacs to saving the planet and reversing the health crisis in America. And we are rising to the challenge. Never have the issues been more important or more urgent. And never has there been a greater need for good planners.” —*Class speech, FAICP induction ceremony.*

(U.S. continues on next page)

Is participatory budgeting real democracy?

Next City, Forefront, April 28, 2014

Anna Clark, <http://bit.ly/1hJW9fM> • “Communities are adopting the process — about 1,200 of them globally, including nine city council districts in New York, the city of Vallejo, Calif., and three council districts in San Francisco.

“Participatory budgeting works differently for every city. In Porto Alegre, Brazil, where the process was created a generation ago, as many as 50,000 people vote on how to spend public money each year. More than \$700 million has been funneled through the process since its inception.

“Vallejo, Calif., embraced participatory budgeting in 2012 after emerging from bankruptcy. In its first PB vote in May 2013, 3,917 residents voted over the course of a week at 13 polling locations. That translated into four percent of the city’s eligible voters — a tiny number, but a much higher percentage than previous PB processes in Chicago and New York.

“But the 5th Ward in Hyde Park, a South Side neighborhood that’s home to the University of Chicago, dropped PB in December, citing low turnout in neighborhood assemblies and residents who felt the process was too much work to be worthwhile. ‘They said it was very time consuming, a lot of meetings, and the neighborhood groups they had were active enough to do it without all of the expenses associated with it,’ Alderman Leslie Hairston told the *Hyde Park Herald*. In 2013, its first year with participatory budgeting, the 5th Ward held a PB vote that saw only 100 ballots cast.”

Ed. Note: A subscription is required to read the complete article. APA members get a 15 percent discount using code APACA.

Battle looming in states over renewable energy

The Washington Post, April 25, 2014

Steven Mufson and **Tom Hamburger**, <http://wapo.st/1ITYxVb> • “Across the country, state legislators are debating proposals to roll back environmental rules, prodded by industry and advocacy groups eager to curtail regulations aimed at curbing greenhouse gases. The measures, introduced in about 18 states, lie at the heart of an effort to expand to the state level the battle over fossil fuel and renewable energy. The new rules would trim or abolish climate mandates, including those that require utilities to use solar and wind energy, as well as proposed Environmental Protection Agency rules that would reduce carbon emissions from power plants. But the campaign has run into a surprising growing political clout of renewable-energy interests, even in rock-ribbed Republican states.

“The multi-pronged conservative effort to roll back regulations is supported by a loose, well-funded confederation. The groups argue that existing government rules violate free-market principles and will ultimately drive up costs for consumers. In a few states, [only] nonbinding resolutions critical of the EPA power plant proposals have been approved. Three other states are weighing [model] legislation. Only one of the 18 state legislatures has approved a more substantive measure that would preempt the EPA’s power plant rules. That bill, in Kentucky, could backfire by giving up a chance for the state to design its own program and forcing it to accept a federal compliance program.” ■

It isn’t just sprawl. “The other reason traffic is so bad in Atlanta is because the urban area has grown so quickly. Compared with the Chicago metropolitan area, whose population has grown less than 6 percent per decade since 1970, the population of the Atlanta metropolitan area has quadrupled in the same time period. Infrastructure almost always lags in places that experience extremely fast population and economic growth.” —Robert Bruegmann, <http://politi.co/1nLZrri>

Cities, not countries, are the key to tomorrow's economies

Financial Times, March 28, 2014

Arif Naqvi, <http://on.ft.com/1kjsX3Q> • “Each passing week provides a million reasons to rethink the view that countries are the fundamental building blocks of civilization in the 21st century. That is the number of people who journey from country to city every week, exchanging rural for urban life with no going back.

“This shift means nearly half of the economic growth over the next decade will take place in just 400 cities in the world. It will create an urban consumer class of 4 billion people by 2025, up from 1 billion in 1990. Urbanization on a massive scale is here to stay.

“Urban centers have always anchored human activity, but cities matter more now than ever, especially in the global growth markets. Cities are more stable fixtures than countries in our geopolitical, economic, and cultural landscape. Rarely does a country achieve per capita income levels of \$10,000 annually until at least 60 per cent of its population is urban.

“According to the World Health Organization, more than half of the world's people now live in cities, and 70 per cent will do so in 2050. You cannot ignore these drivers of future economic activity. As investors acknowledge the vital role cities play in driving economic development, they will increasingly seek opportunities outside the developed world.”

Arif Naqvi is the founder and group chief executive of the Abraaj Group, a global investment firm.

Is Asian pollution stoking weird weather?

National Geographic, April 14, 2014

Increasing levels of air pollutants in Asia have drawn considerable attention. A just-released study using a multiscale-modeling framework found that atmospheric aerosols affect weather by modifying cloud and precipitation processes. These in turn are affected by Asian pollution outflows. —PNAS, <http://bit.ly/QGs9vK>

As reported by *National Geographic's* **Brian Clark Howard**, <http://bit.ly/QGr6Mr>, “Aerosol pollution from Asia is likely leading to stronger cyclones in the Pacific, more precipitation, and warming temperatures at the North Pole. Pollution from booming economies in the Far East is causing stronger storms and changing weather patterns over the Pacific Ocean, which in turn is changing weather in North America,” the scientists reported. “The scientists say pollution from Asia is likely leading to stronger cyclones in the mid-latitudes of the Pacific, more precipitation, and a faster movement of heat from the tropics toward the North Pole. As a result of these changes, ‘it’s almost certain that weather in the U.S. is changing.’”

“The main natural aerosols over the Pacific are sea salt tossed up by waves and dust blown off the land. Those natural particles are now increasingly outnumbered by human-made ones. The most significant of those are sulfates, which are emitted primarily by coal-fired power plants. In the atmosphere, such aerosols scatter and absorb sunlight, and thus have both cooling and warming effects on climate. But they also affect the formation of clouds and precipitation. The magnitude of that indirect effect on clouds is one of the biggest uncertainties hampering scientists’ ability to forecast climate change.”

Fields to forests: cheap way to tackle climate change

Science Daily, April 30, 2014

James J. Gilroy et al, <http://bit.ly/SNzkDL> • “Changing cattle fields to forests is a cheap way of tackling climate change and saving species threatened with extinction, a new study has found. Researchers from leading universities carried out a survey of carbon stocks, biodiversity, and economic values from one of the world's most threatened ecosystems, the western Andes of Colombia. The main use of land in communities is cattle farming, but the study found farmers could make the same or more money by allowing their land to naturally regenerate.

“Under carbon markets designed to stop global warming, they could get paid to change the use of their land from growing cows to ‘growing carbon’ — receiving around \$1.99 per ton of carbon dioxide the trees remove from the atmosphere. The move would also help boost the populations of many critically endangered species.

“There are limited financial resources available to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss, so there is an urgent need to simultaneously address both issues.”

(World continues on next page)

China bans some commercial logging

Mongabay.com, April 22, 2014

Morgan Erickson-Davis, <http://bit.ly/1kbj1ry>

- “Forestry authorities in China have stopped commercial logging in the nation’s largest forest area, marking an end to more than a half-century of intensive deforestation in the Hinggan (Khingan) mountain range. The shutdown was enacted to protect soil and water quality, which are significantly affected by forest loss in the extreme northeast portion of China. From 2000 to 2013 alone, more than half a million hectares (more than 1,930 square miles) were deforested in the region.

“The rapid forest loss in Hinggan runs counter to the official narrative that China has eliminated deforestation through law enforcement measures and reforestation programs. In reaction to the growing crisis in the Hinggan range, China’s government began enacting protections of the area more than a decade ago while still allowing commercial logging. However, a forestry development plan warned that if logging were not stopped completely, the Hinggan forests could entirely disappear.

“While many people are in favor of the ban, there are others whose livelihoods depend on the logging industry. A third of all Hinggan timber workers make only subsistence wages, and use wood to heat their houses during the frigid winters because they can’t afford to buy coal.”

China needs to change how it builds and runs cities

The Economist, April 19, 2014

James Miles, <http://econ.st/1mO9Y4T>

- Urban “growth has brought huge benefits, and problems. In the [last] three decades, China’s urban population has risen by more than 500 million. By 2030 [China’s cities] will contain 70 percent of China’s population.

“Much of what has happened is exciting. China’s urbanites whizz from city to city at 186 mph on a bullet-train network that did not exist six years ago. Yet ... the noxious smog that shrouds China’s cities is a ‘red-light warning against inefficient and blind development.’

“Two flaws in Chinese urbanization are causing strains. The first is economic. Officials grab agricultural land on the peripheries of urban areas and make money for themselves and their cities by selling to developers.

“The second flaw is social. China’s cities are largely made up of two classes: a property-owning middle class which enjoys new social freedoms, takes holidays in Europe, and spends like Westerners; and a migrant underclass which toils in factories and menial jobs but is denied public services because its household registration is in the countryside.

“There are two obvious steps to take. The first is to give farmers property rights and the ability to sell their land. The second is to open up decision-making. Residents have little say in how [cities] are planned, built, and run. If people had the right to elect their mayors and legislators, they would insist on planning controls to constrain development and improve the environment.”

The Goldilocks density

The Guardian, April 16, 2014

Lloyd Alter, <http://bit.ly/1nArCZR> • “In so-called hot cities — London, Toronto, New York — planners and politicians are letting a thousand towers bloom. In others — Seattle, Washington, San Francisco — battles are raging over height limits and urban density based on two premises: 1) that building all these towers will increase the supply of housing and therefore reduce its costs; 2) that increasing density is the green, sustainable thing to do and that towers are the best way to do it.

“There is no question that high urban densities are important, but the question is how high, and in what form. There is what I call the Goldilocks density: dense enough to support vibrant main streets with retail and services for local needs, but not too high that people can’t take the stairs in a

pinch. Dense enough to support bike and transit infrastructure, but not so dense to need subways and huge underground parking garages. Dense enough to build a sense of community, but not so dense as to have everyone slip into anonymity.

“At the Goldilocks density, construction is a lot cheaper and the buildings a lot more efficient. At the Goldilocks density, streets are a joy to walk; sun can penetrate to street level, and the ground floors are often filled with cafes that spill out onto the street, where one can sit without being blown away, as often happens around towers. Building to the Goldilocks density is also more resilient: it’s easier to get in and out of your flat when the power goes out when you live on the fourth floor than when you live on the 40th.” ■

and a panel discussion on how transit-oriented development could better benefit low income communities (with Dena Belzer). There was also a well-moderated discussion on adaption to climate change (including San Francisco's John Rahaim), and an entertaining panel on how millennials are reshaping American cities. My own session, called "Keeping the Comprehensive Plan Alive," went reasonably well, with an audience of about 100.

Other sessions were less successful, albeit for reasons such as terrible acoustics, PowerPoint slides with microscopic fonts, or rooms that were overcrowded or not crowded enough. Virtually every session included its share of planners behaving badly — sitting in the back of the room, on smart phones and tablets. However, even in those sessions, there was always at least one intrepid soul who sauntered up to the microphone at the end for the Q&A portion. The ensuing dialogue was often the most interesting part of each session.

The array of sessions offered was mind-boggling. I counted roughly 400 unique sessions in the program guide, plus 57 mobile workshops and dozens of social events and business meetings. The variety of session formats also was impressive. There were "deep dives" consisting of three-hour focused discussions on particular topics. There were "Division Discussions" hosted by the roughly 20 divisions of the APA but structured to appeal to broader audiences. There were multiple plenary sessions, many of which were scheduled at the unfortunate hour of 7:30 AM. There was a gala awards lunch, with video presentations (a special shout out to the City of Berkeley and the San Francisco MTA, both national awards winners). And of course, there were the traditional moderated panels — hundreds of them.

The National Conference has changed quite a bit in the last decade. The opening reception, which was always a highlight for me, has been sacrificed to the budget gods. I view this as unfortunate, as the reception was always a great opportunity to network, cut loose, and run into that long

lost friend from graduate school, now working in Florida or North Dakota. Meanwhile, the Conference Exhibitors Hall was almost unrecognizable. This was once the place where planning consultants from all corners of America showcased their creative talent and distributed colorful brochures. It is now almost entirely the domain of technology vendors, hawking new ways to engage the public, map a flood plain, or electronically organize a zoning code.

I realized on my fourth day that if I had any hope of seeing Atlanta, I would have to abandon the windowless walls of the Georgia Ballroom and head out on my own. All the form-based, sustainable, multi-modal panel discussions in the world were no substitute for a simple walk across the city. Following one of the tours in the Planners Guide, I walked north about three miles through the Midtown district and took the subway back. It was great to get outside and make my own observations about the city.

Reflecting on the value of the conference, I recall a singular incident. While waiting in the 30-minute line to collect my boxed lunch on Monday, I struck up a conversation with a friendly planner from Connecticut. His town was getting ready to do a Comprehensive Plan update. We had a great chat about land use categories, of all things. When we got to the front of the line, we traded business cards, shook hands, and went our separate ways. I mean, really, where else can that happen?

See you in Seattle.



Barry Miller, FAICP,
is a planning consultant
in Oakland. ■

From urban planner to food-truck entrepreneur. "San Jose native Ryan Sebastian has an urban planning degree from USC, but runs Moveable Feast, a "regular gathering of South Bay food trucks." Asked, "How did you get from urban planning to ice cream truck?" he replied: "I was always into what's being built in the city and was fascinated with the city itself. I went to Overfelt High School, and to a program at Stanford when I was in high school. I remember going through Palo Alto and thinking, "Why is this place so different from East San Jose?" How do you take something that is maybe neglected and make it a special place, a place that people like to be part of? I think [San Jose] is on an uneasy transition from suburb to city, and I hope it's my part to give it a good shove in the right direction." —As told to Sue McAllister, *San Jose Mercury News*, <http://bit.ly/Sn2Olc>

Making the Bay Area affordable

Next City, April 29, 2014

Stephen J. Smith, <http://bit.ly/1mbb8Li> • “With rents skyrocketing in San Francisco, affordable housing activists’ ire has turned to the region’s tech industry. Tech buses ... have been the most visible target, with regular protests in front of the stops.

“Tech companies — most notably, Twitter — haven’t helped by accepting millions in tax breaks, but the blame for San Francisco’s stratospheric housing costs lies not with giants like Google and Facebook or the smaller startups, but with Silicon Valley itself — the string of towns lined up along the Caltrain tracks down the San Francisco Peninsula, which have steadfastly refused to match torrid economic growth with anything resembling a commensurate amount of housing and office space.

“The whole of San Mateo County added a measly 10,455 houses and apartments over 10 years to its existing 2000 stock of 260,576 — barely a 4 percent growth rate. Though San Francisco certainly shouldn’t be let off the hook for not keeping up with housing demand, at least there the housing stock jumped by 8.8 percent from 2000 to 2010, according to the decennial censuses. The growth rate didn’t quite keep pace with national population (9.7 percent) or housing stock growth (13.6 percent), but certainly it beat the surrounding ’burbs. Tiny Palo Alto grew its number of homes by 8.3 percent — not enough, but not terrible. Mountain View, on the other hand, home of Google, added just 715 new houses and apartments, yielding a pitifully low 2.3 percent growth rate in the first decade of the century.

“The disparity in growth hints at an ugly tension in housing growth in Silicon Valley, and throughout the Bay Area in general: The places that are allowing construction are relatively poor places that are most likely to see gentrification because of it, while the already wealthy places with the highest demand have walled themselves off to growth.

“On the other hand, development is always harder where there are neighbors to complain, and especially rich neighbors, as would-be builders in Menlo Park are finding out. But if San Francisco and the rest of the region are ever to see housing prices come back to earth — or at least stall their dizzying climb — without the widespread displacement that new construction and its associated amenities bring to poorer neighborhoods, these are precisely the areas where development must occur.”

Cities are right to pay attention to Millennials

The Atlantic Cities, May 5, 2014

Anthony Flint, <http://bit.ly/SNAaAe> • “Two public opinion polls in April suggested the kinds of places Millennials like — Boston, New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Boulder, and Austin. The key characteristics seem to be walkability, good schools and parks, and the availability of multiple transportation options.

“The first survey, by The Rockefeller Foundation and Transportation for America, found that 54 percent of Millennials surveyed would consider moving to another city if it had more or better options for getting around, and 66 percent said access to high quality transportation is one of the top three criteria they would weigh when deciding where to live. Nearly half of those who owned a car said they would consider giving it up if they could count on public transportation options. Up to 86 percent said it was important for their city to offer opportunities to live and work without relying on a car.

“The second survey, by APA [conducted by Harris], compiled results of surveys of 1,040 Americans, roughly half Millennials, the other half baby boomers. The two groups want many of the same things: better transportation options, walkable communities, technology-enabled cities, and housing that would allow ‘aging in place.’ Forty-nine percent someday want to live in a walkable community. Over three-quarters noted the importance of affordable and convenient transportation options other than cars in deciding where to live and work.

“Forty-four percent of respondents were somewhat or extremely likely to move in the next five years. Top potential [metros included] San Diego, New York, Boston, Denver/Boulder, San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago, Los Angeles, Portland Ore., Washington, D.C., Austin, Phoenix, Charlotte, Atlanta, and Miami.” ■

“There is no such thing as affordable smart growth. Suburbs are the only way left to provide affordability when land values rise everywhere in the city.” —Comment on *Next City*, <http://bit.ly/1fykjjx>

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