

NORTHERN NEWS



American Planning Association
California Chapter
Northern
Making Great Communities Happen

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

MARCH 2015



My Oakland

Erika Sawyer, AICP, interviews

Elizabeth Greene, AICP

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Old Oakland Farmers' Market
Photo by Caroline Teng



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My Oakland *Erika J. Sawyer, AICP, interviews Elizabeth R. Greene, AICP*

Beth Greene was raised in Los Angeles and has spent the past 20 years in the Bay Area. One burning question she had as a child was whether her home across from Century City was in a city or a suburb — and thus a planner was born. She holds a master in urban planning from San Jose State and has worked as a planner for the city of San Leandro and Alameda County. Beth is currently a senior planner for the city of Berkeley, and appreciates the challenges that come with working in such an exciting community.

What brought you to Oakland? Jobs. When we were choosing where to live, people were encouraging us to live in the outlying areas and we couldn't figure out why, because Oakland was where things were happening.

How long have you lived here? I've lived in Oakland, in the same neighborhood, for 20 years.

What neighborhood do you call home?

The name is shifting around, but currently it's the Dimond Oakmore neighborhood. When we first moved here, it was Dimond. More people are now calling it Lower Oakmore. The name seems to refer to the shopping district surrounding Fruitvale and MacArthur, which has been coming up in the last 10 years.

What do you enjoy most about your neighborhood? We have an awesome creek — Sausal Creek runs through the neighborhood — and walking trails that connect to open space, which is a bonus for my kids, since they can get more and more adventurous. There's also a sense of community. The local market is an integral part of the neighborhood. It hosts a neighborhood bulletin board; on Election Day it's our voting place; and if there were an emergency you would probably head over there.

What surprises you most about Oakland? A couple of years ago, I realized the history and creativity in different places — from glass making and welding, to First Fridays



and the Oakland Museum, and now even Temescal's art scene. It's exciting to see companies built from an artist's standpoint instead of more of a business position.

What do you see as Oakland's strengths? The weather, the location, and the people who have so much pride in this place. People identify with their neighborhoods and have a sense of community.

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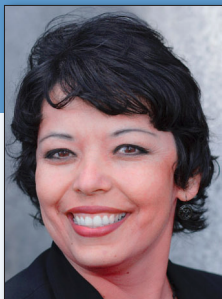
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Find JOBS and EVENTS CALENDAR at norcalapa.org



Director's note

By Andrea Ouse, AICP

Apparently, APA members statewide agree: We are “Rooted in AuthenticITY”! The deadline to submit proposals for sessions, salons, and mobile workshops for the 2015 APA California Chapter conference in downtown Oakland was February 6. I am thrilled to report that we received a *record number of proposals*: 319 sessions/salons and 49 mobile workshops. This significant interest in our conference is a great sign that we'll enjoy record attendance.

We intend to keep up the momentum, leading to an amazing conference. The Conference Host Committee (CHC) met on February 7 to continue working for the benefit of our members. All nine subcommittees remain busy with their respective duties. It's not too late for you to get involved: simply visit the CHC website for more information, <http://bit.ly/1cYkfrp>.

Your Northern Section Board held a very productive structured retreat with a full agenda on January 24 at the Berkeley offices of **MIG**. Many thanks to Advertising Director **Scott Davidson**, AICP, for hosting. While we had the opportunity to reconnect and enjoy the company of colleagues, it was a time to review the successes of the previous year and set our focus and priorities for 2015. I commend the Board for an excellent day of dialogue and strategic planning.

We started the day by welcoming our newly elected Board members: **Erik Balsley**, AICP, Director-Elect, and **Stuart Bussian**, AICP, Administrative Director. The Board also welcomed **Carmela Campbell**, AICP, as Awards Co-Director, joining **Florentina Craciun**, AICP, to form the Awards Program leadership for 2015; and **Stephen Velyvis**, as the Acting Legislative Director while **Alexandra Barnhill** is on leave. The Board also

appointed **Andrew Mogensen**, AICP, as Northern Section's East Bay Regional Activity Coordinator (RAC) Co-chair. We are still seeking nominees for the open Planning Commissioner representative; please contact me if you are interested.

In addition to reviewing and confirming our conference planning efforts, the Board developed actions to support the following broad focus areas for 2015:

- Membership
- Section board
- Communications and social media

Highlights include:

- Develop and implement a membership survey to assess member needs and opportunities.
- Continue the momentum generated by the Chapter conference and implement a Membership Drive in 2016.
- Continue building our online and social media presence, and refine internal board communications.
- Increase outreach efforts to student and emerging planners, as well as to “non-planner” organizations, to gauge interest and to promote the value of APA membership; and
- Streamline board meetings and create efficiencies through formation of subcommittees where necessary.

I am continually grateful for the remarkable energy, talent, and hard work of those engaged in Northern Section activities, and excited to be part of this team as we progress through 2015 with optimism and determination. ■

Solar surprise. “Tiburon is on its way to becoming the first Marin municipality to require solar installations on new homes. Tiburon's Town Council early in February voted to amend the town's zoning ordinance to mandate solar energy systems, with one more reading needed to make it official. The ordinance would take effect immediately if approved at the Feb. 18 Town Council meeting. No protests have been recorded against the regulations.” — Janis Mara, <http://bayareane.ws/1Mh2AtA>

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My Oakland (continued from page 1)

What do you feel is the biggest challenge facing the city?

It's difficult for the city to attract large businesses. To shop at a department store, you have to leave Oakland. On the other hand, Oakland has so many small businesses, and a lot of these aren't just your standard shoe store. We're lucky to have interesting and independent stores. Maybe we wouldn't have these shopping choices if we had a department store.

Gentrification is also a challenge. Every neighborhood is being asked, "Is there some way to improve the neighborhood without changing the character?" In my neighborhood, a local pizza restaurant opened in a storefront that had been vacant for almost 15 years. Two other businesses have also leased storefronts. This area is now a micro commercial district and has given the neighborhood a place to host gatherings, like soccer and basketball celebrations.

Do you have a favorite neighborhood outside of Dimond

Oakmore? Oakland's residential neighborhoods are all unique; you can tell that they were developed before 'cookie cutter' development. West Oakland has an amazing housing stock, and for shopping I like to visit College Avenue. For everyday things, I can walk in my neighborhood and get everything we need from stores ranging from regular supermarkets to specialty coffee shops.

What do you think surprises others about Oakland? The neighborhoods surprise people — their eyes open up. Open space is also easily accessible; Sausal Creek is right here and East Bay Regional Parks. Within five to 20 minutes you can get away and it feels as though you aren't anywhere close to the city.

Where do you take out-of-town visitors and why? Fairyland is amazing for out-of-town guests with children. It is based on nursery rhymes and is very quaint, with a magic key you can put into a box to hear nursery rhymes, small petting zoo animals, very small rides, and the lake setting. You may as well finish it off with Fenton's on Piedmont Avenue (www.fentonscreamery.com), which has been in Oakland for over 90 years.

Where do you think Oakland's going? It's going to continue to improve; people are excited about Oakland. Rents are rising at the highest rate compared to any place in the country, not just in California. There's a lot of interest in being here.

I'm also looking forward to Bus Rapid Transit along International Boulevard from downtown Oakland to the San Leandro BART station. It's a small segment, but if it's successful, it should encourage more of that type of transit development. As soon as people see how it works they might be encouraged to support it.

Interviewer **Erika J. Sawyer, AICP**, is a senior planner at Marstel-Day, Oakland. As the firm's Western Regional Manager, she oversees the Oakland and Oceanside offices and Marstel-Day's client work in Twentynine Palms. ■



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Despite shutdown threats, Seattle keeps gritting its way through tunnel project

By Josh Cohen, Next City

[In the last days of January], two Republican legislators in Washington State filed a bill attempting to kill the \$4.2 billion highway tunnel currently being dug under downtown Seattle. With the megaproject stalled for all of 2014 due to a now infamous failure of machinery, State Sens. Michael Baumgartner and Doug Eriksen didn't mince words.

Their bill opens, "The legislature finds that the state route number 99 Alaskan Way viaduct replacement project has failed. The legislature also finds that the project as it is currently designed cannot be justified financially and is not in the best interest of the public."

Though the bill is couched in good old-fashioned fiscal conservatism and will-of-the-peoplism — "the project has created great anxiety and frustration, and has lost the political support of the people of Seattle, its council, as well as the people of the state and its legislature" — it was likely just a swipe at tunnel devotees such as Governor Jay Inslee and other Democrats up for reelection next year.

Either way, it was short-lived. After the bill was introduced, legislators, Inslee, and Seattle Mayor Ed Murray circled the wagons and voiced their continued support for the project. The following day, Senate Transportation Committee Chair Curtis King, a Republican, killed the bill by declaring it would not get a committee hearing.

"While I understand my colleagues' concerns regarding the Seattle tunnel project, a bill to shut down a project of this size is not realistic," King said in a press statement.

But though the bill might've just been political posturing, Eriksen and Baumgartner are correct. The project IS failing and spectacularly so. That failure — and all the attending disillusionment and political machination — underscores ongoing debates that surround decision-making about infrastructure projects in cities from coast to coast.

For those unfamiliar with Bertha (the broken boring machine) and the Rte. 99 project, here's the shortest recap I can muster.

Washington State Rte. 99 is a highway running north-south through all of Seattle. In the heart of the city, 99 runs along an elevated, double-decker viaduct that separates the downtown core from the Puget Sound waterfront. A 2001 earthquake severely damaged that viaduct, and even \$14.5 million in repairs left the structure, according to researchers, "critically weakened."

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Despite shutdown threats, Seattle keeps gritting its way through tunnel project *(continued from previous page)*

In 2008, then-Gov. Christine Gregoire announced that she would tear down the viaduct by 2012. “I’m not going to fudge on [that timeline]. And if we don’t have some alternative by then, boy are we going to have a mess on our hands because it’s coming down.”

Washington’s DOT put forth three replacement options: rebuild the viaduct, replace it with a massive tunnel under downtown, or replace it with a four-lane surface street with transit improvements. With the blessing of the Seattle residents (sort of), WSDOT and construction contractors Seattle Tunnel Partners (STP) started moving full steam ahead to deliver the incredibly ambitious second option.

To pay the expected bill, \$3.1 billion would come from the state, \$937 million from Seattle and \$300 million from the Port of Seattle. The state legislature put the city on the hook for any cost overruns.

Most megaprojects have cost overruns and hit unforeseen snags, but this viaduct replacement tunnel was always particularly risky. The tunneling machine — named Bertha after former Seattle Mayor Bertha Knight Landes — is the largest in the world at 57 feet in diameter. The ground’s mix of soft in-fill dirt, rocks, and more is troublesome. Coupled with the fact that Bertha wasn’t built with the capability to go in reverse, there’s a good chance of getting stuck.

The machine ran as planned from July 2013 to December 2013, making it about 1,000 feet of its nearly two-mile journey. It halted when it struck a metal pipe and broke, and it hasn’t budged in over a year.

WSDOT and STP spent as much time arguing over who’s to blame as they have fixing the problem. On Friday, [January 30,] news arrived that STP has finished digging a 120-foot-deep pit to remove and repair Bertha’s blade. The rescue attempt may have created a crack along a downtown street, and the viaduct (which is still up more than two years after the former governor said it would come down) sank nearly half an inch in some spots.

So, here we are today with a stuck boring machine, nine-tenths of the tunnel yet to be dug, \$2 billion of a supposedly \$4.2 billion project already spent, and a political leadership that, at least publicly, still fully supports the project. Whether or not Baumgartner and Eriksen were sincere, there’s certainly merit to the arguments raised by their bill.

Cary Moon is a Seattle citizen activist and former director of the anti-tunnel People’s Waterfront Coalition. Like reporter Dominic Holden, she correctly predicted some of the tunnel’s risks back in 2010. She thinks the recent spate of problems is pushing elected officials to a tipping point.

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Who's where



Carmela Campbell, AICP, a planning manager for the city of Union City's Economic and Community Development Department, is now the Northern Section Awards Program Co-director. Her former roles include Planner III and I/II with the Santa Clara County Planning Office. Campbell holds a master in urban and regional planning with an emphasis in environmental planning from San Jose State University and a B.S. in conservation and resource studies from UC Berkeley.

Dionne Early is now management analyst for planning and community development, city of Half Moon Bay, having come to the post from a similar position with the city of East Palo Alto. Before that, Early was a sustainability planner for the city of Palo Alto. In addition to having served as adjunct professor, green building design, at San Jose State University, Early held a number of environmental and planning posts with the city of San Jose from 2004–2012. She holds a dual masters in architecture and urban planning from SUNY Buffalo and a B.A. in architecture from UC Berkeley.

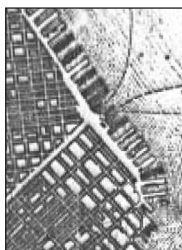


Karly Kaufman, a senior environmental planner at Rincon Consultants, recently relocated to Rincon's Oakland office. She is a lead analyst and project manager for CEQA/NEPA review projects and specializes in air quality and GHG impact studies. Kaufman holds a master of environmental science and management (specialization in energy and climate) from UC Santa Barbara and a B.S. in environmental science and policy from UC Davis. After graduating from Davis, Kaufman was a legislative assistant for the Union of Concerned Scientists, representing UCS on Capitol Hill and to federal agencies.



Stefanie Krantz has joined EMC Planning Group (Monterey) as an associate biologist. She was most recently a wildlife biologist at Garcia and Associates, Oakland. As a wildlife biologist/ornithologist, Krantz conducts focused special-status species surveys, construction monitoring, wetland delineation, and impact analysis in compliance with CEQA. She holds a master of science in resource ecology management from the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) and a bachelor of science in biology from McMurry University, Texas.

(continued on next page)



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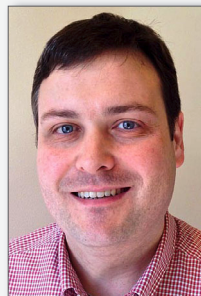
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Who's where (continued from previous page)



Andrew Mogensen, AICP, a principal planner for the city of Concord, is now the Northern Section's East Bay Regional Activity Co-chair. Previous experience includes Planner IV with Calaveras County, principal planner and associate planner with the city of La Quinta, and planner with the city of Kingman, Arizona. He holds an M.A. in geography (planning program) from Western Illinois University and a B.A. in geography from Valparaiso University.



Mark Sawicki has been appointed economic and workforce development director at the city of Oakland. He was most recently the community and economic development director for the city of Vallejo, and had been economic development and housing manager at the city of San Carlos for six years before that. Sawicki holds a master in public policy from UC Berkeley and a B.S. in finance from New York University. He also served as a member of the city of Berkeley's Housing Advisory Commission for four years, 2009–2013.



Stephen Velyvis, a partner at Burke, Williams, and Sorensen, is now the Northern Section's Acting Legislative Director. His former roles include senior counsel for Miller Starr Regalia, senior associate attorney for the Law Offices of Thomas N. Lippe, and staff attorney for the Environmental Defense Center. Velyvis holds a J.D. in environmental law from Vermont Law School and a B.A. in history and geography from Ohio University. ■

Correction

In *Northern News* for February, in the column "Meet a local planner" highlighting Stephen Avis, AICP, the correct name for the firm listed at the top of the article is **Planwest Partners**, not Planwest Planners.

Call for proposals nets huge response for Fall Conference

Northern Section's Conference Host Committee received "a record setting number of presentation and mobile workshop proposals" for the 2015 APA California Conference in Oakland, according to CHC co-chair Erik Balsley, AICP. "We received 319 presentation proposals and 50 mobile workshop proposals."

"Over the next few weeks, the Conference Host Committee will be reviewing and determining which sessions and workshops will become part of the conference," said Balsley. "As the numbers indicate, not all proposals will be accepted. We will have a slate of interesting and dynamic options for the conference, and expect to have a preliminary conference-at-a-glance ready by early May."

"Conference registration rates are already posted on the conference website (<http://bit.ly/1vepZBf>), and over the next few weeks we will post information on Conference hotels," said Balsley. "We are really excited by the level of interest expressed and hope to see you in Oakland, October 3–6." ■

Using humor to slow down drivers. "The city of Hayward has placed traffic signs along a downhill boulevard that read '35 — It's a speed limit, not a suggestion' and 'Heads up! Cross the street, then update Facebook.' Another sign warns: 'Downhill: Use eyes, brakes, brain.' City workers installed the offbeat traffic signs in January along Hayward Boulevard, which is known for cars zipping down from the hills. Authorities hope using humor will get people to do a double-take and be careful on the hill." <http://bit.ly/1MgW0Dh>

Plan-it sustainably

By Scott T. Edmondson, AICP

Living community patterns — bits and pieces of next-generation urban form?

On January 23rd at the Net Positive (Energy+Water) Conference in San Francisco (<http://bit.ly/1ycZGLQ>), the International Living Future Institute (ILFI, <http://bit.ly/MRlhDm>) released their recently completed *Living Community Patterns* (LCP, <http://bit.ly/1yd0b8F>) – *Exploratory Strategies for a Sustainable San Francisco*, a research report prepared in collaboration with the San Francisco Planning Department.

Planning teams can use this report to spur innovation to achieve ILFI's Living Community Challenge (LCC, <http://bit.ly/1yd0mRE>); or they can use both documents to explore the emerging practice of regenerative planning, design, and placemaking as a route to creating sustainable places, neighborhoods, and communities.

The collaboration between ILFI and the SF Planning Department under ILFI's Living City Grant Program arose from the 2011 Living City Competition, <http://bit.ly/1yd0IHn>. The research project used ILFI's regenerative framework of the LCC and inspiration from Christopher Alexander's "Patterns Language" to explore and develop key features of an ultimately sustainable or "living" place (neighborhood, community, and city).

Research included a preliminary carrying-capacity analysis of the city's energy, water, and food systems. The team conducted neighborhood charrettes in Noe Valley — focused on alley greening — and in Chinatown, focused on deep energy retrofits of public housing buildings.

You can download the PDF (<http://bit.ly/1yd645T>), explore its perspective on sustainable neighborhoods and communities, and contribute to its further development with comments to Brad.Liljequist@living-future.org. For the SF experience, contact Scott.Edmondson@sfgov.org.

Scott T. Edmondson, AICP, a planner with the San Francisco Planning Department, is founder, former co-director, and research lead of Northern Section's Sustainability Committee, and an APA Sustainability Champion, <http://bit.ly/1yd1hkQ>.

"Plan-it sustainably" is a service of the Sustainability Committee, <http://bit.ly/11XGsBj> ■

Where in the world?



Photo by Carline Au. (Answer on [page 12.](#))

Yes, Polk Street won a national bike 'award,' but "the already watered-down redesign of Polk Street, with a protected bike lane only on one segment, will begin construction in Spring 2016 — a full year behind schedule. Final approval of the project is [pending] a vote at the SFMTA Board of Directors in February or March. The delay only adds insult to injury after original plans for protected bike lanes along the vital north-south corridor were largely scuttled due to vociferous opposition from parking-obsessed merchants." — Aaron Bialick, <http://bit.ly/1JawzB2>

A new study of 18 metropolitan areas in the United States and Canada finds that many transportation plans focus largely on local environmental and congestion-reduction goals and fail to include meaningful measurements of social-equity objectives. The authors "observe that social equity goals and objectives are in many cases not translated into clearly specified objectives, and appropriate measures for assessing their achievement in a meaningful, disaggregated manner are often lacking. At the same time, there are good examples of social equity objectives and measures in several plans." A few cities — notably Boston, San Francisco, San Diego, and Chicago — have managed to build in clear, measurable indicators for achieving social-equity goals. <http://bit.ly/1yrMB7X>

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The implications of global warming and climate change on compliance with CEQA are evolving and becoming more important each year in California. Participate in an in-depth discussion of the implications of our evolving understanding of climate change and its practical effects on CEQA compliance. Instructors: Antero Rivasplata and Shannon Hatcher. **AICP | CM 6.0**

Complete Streets: From Adoption to Implementation.

In-class and field exercises will be used to define Complete Streets design practices and suggest methods for shifting agency procedures to use Complete Streets design. Instructor: Paul Zykofsky. **AICP | CM 6.0**

Introduction to UrbanFootprint. Learn how to use UrbanFootprint, the new generation of land use scenario creation and analysis tools. Instructors: Nathaniel Roth and Raef Porter. **AICP | CM 12.0**

LAFCO: Planning and Regulating the Boundaries and Service Areas of Cities and Special Districts in California.

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Land-secured Financing Current Topics and Practices.

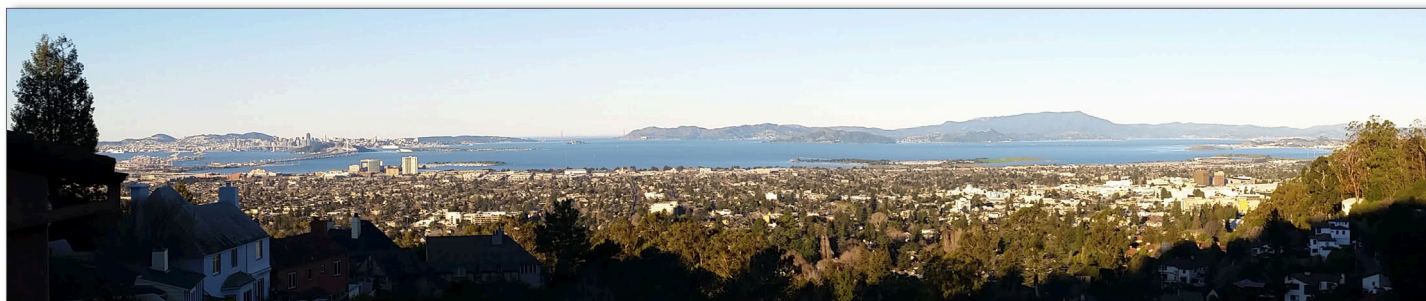
In this seminar offered by the California Debt and Investment Advisory Commission (CDIAC), learn about community facilities districts (CFDs) and assessment districts (ADs) which continue to provide public agencies resources to finance public facilities and services. For more information or to enroll, visit: <http://www.treasurer.ca.gov/cdiac/seminars.asp>

Project Planning for Permit Integration. Learn to integrate environmental permitting and consultation requirements for projects subject to CEQA and NEPA. Instructors: Antero Rivasplata and Megan Smith. **AICP | CM 6.0**

Thresholds of Significance in Environmental Planning.

Thresholds of significance are a proven method of streamlining the CEQA process. Learn about significance thresholds, the process for developing them, and success stories. Instructors: Antero Rivasplata and Maggie Townsley. **AICP | CM 6.0** ■

For course details and to enroll, visit www.extension.ucdavis.edu/land



San Francisco Bay from the East Bay Hills. Photo: Barry Miller, FAICP

Law and Ethics workshops offered in March

APA California–Northern is hosting a pair of Law and Ethics workshops on March 7, just before the end of the AICP|CM grace period.

The ethics session will review and discuss the 2014 AICP ‘ethics case of the year’ and host a discussion of the challenges faced in applying AICP’s *Principles to Which We Aspire* to some of the state’s major planning issues.

The law session will present an overview of the eight CEQA cases currently pending before the California Supreme Court. The Court taking on so many cases at once suggests that it may want to clarify a broad range of CEQA issues. For workshop time, place, and cost details, or to register for one or both workshops, see <http://bit.ly/1Cb5EiG> ■

Answer to “Where in the world?” (Page 10)

Bangkok. View of the Chao Phraya River from Wat Arun (Temple of Dawn, 1809–1851) on the west bank.

Photo: Carline Au.

Santa Cruz needs more affordable housing.

“Mayor Don Lane said the city needs to increase and diversify housing options to accommodate a variety of income levels and lifestyles, including building higher-density rental properties and small units while working on new ways to fund affordable units. A lot of factors affect the pressure for more housing, including a rebounding economy, a market increasingly out of reach for low- and middle-income earners, and the growing popularity of UC Santa Cruz. In the near term, he said the city is committed to considering changes in maximum building heights downtown to accommodate high-density plans.”

—J.M. Brown, <http://bit.ly/1Mh0V7b>

Call for nominations— Get recognized by the APA Northern CA Section!

Northern Section is officially opening a call for nominations for Section Awards. In previous years, several Northern Section winners went on to garner State Awards. Let’s keep up the tradition and recognize the best in planning.

The Section Awards Categories for 2015 are:

Project Awards

- Opportunity and Empowerment
- Comprehensive Plan – Large and Small Jurisdictions (2 awards)
- Implementation – Large and Small Jurisdictions (2 awards)
- Innovation in Green Community Planning
- Economic Planning and Development
- Transportation Planning
- Best Practices
- Grassroots Initiative
- Public Outreach
- Urban Design
- Communications Initiative
- Advancing Diversity and Social Change
- Planning Landmark
- Hard-won Victory

Awards for people, agencies, and firms

- Planning Advocate
- Planning Agency (public sector)
- Planning Firm (private sector)
- Emerging Planning and Design Firm
- Academic Award
- Planning Pioneer
- Distinguished Service
- Distinguished Contribution
- Section Activity
- Planning Emeritus Network (PEN)

Get all the details, rules, and applications at:

<http://norcalapa.org/programs/awards/>

The deadline for nominations is Thursday, March 5, 2015

Mark your calendars: Join our **annual Awards Gala dinner** to learn more about the best in Northern Section planning. It’s happening **Friday, May 16, 2015**, at *Scott’s Seafood, Jack London Square, Oakland*.

AICP|CM Credit is pending for this event.

For more information, please contact Awards Co-Directors Florentina Craciun at fcraciun@pmcworld or Carmela Campbell at CarmelaC@unioncity.org



Iowa is leading again with statewide rideshare program

A location-specific, priority-based system for park and ride facilities

By Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP

In 1959, I was chief of advance planning for the city of Des Moines. Part of my responsibility was to develop traffic simulation techniques for the Iowa Road Study — a statewide traffic model being developed under the leadership of traffic guru Alan M. Voorhees. Voorhees had presented “A General Theory of Traffic Movement” to the Institute of Traffic Engineers in 1955, but by 1959 he had recognized that mathematical models were inherently weak in dealing with small areas and would be most effective when needs are studied on a broad scale (*Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, May 1959, page 8). Iowa was the perfect place to test such a model, and the Iowa Road Study, if not the actual genesis, was the spur for the development and ever increasing use of traffic models in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s.

Now Iowa is leading again.

Molly Carpenter, writing in *Global Site Plans*, January 26, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1yVcgko>, reports:

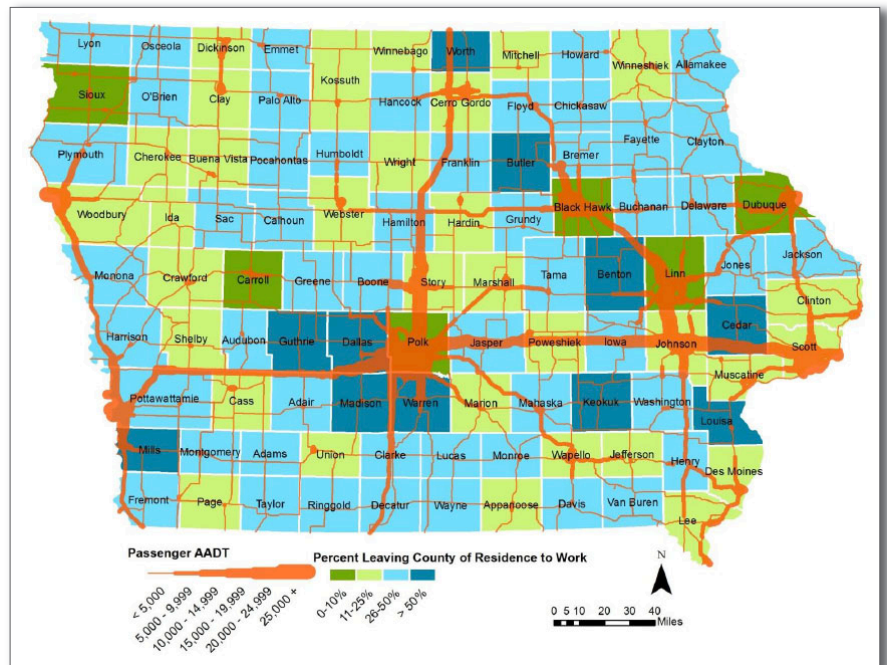
“The Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) is responding to the needs of the state’s commuters with a statewide rideshare system.

“The small towns in Iowa were once supported by agriculture. [As those] jobs dwindled, residents of the small farming communities [were forced] to commute to the urban areas to find work. While some chose to move closer to these job centers, others chose to remain in their towns in order to preserve their rural lifestyle. Approximately three-fourths of people living in an Iowa town with a population of less than 2,500 commute ... long distances to employment centers in urban areas.

“To address this issue, the state is developing regional transportation options for people who reside in small towns. The rideshare system would include park and ride facilities where commuters could leave their car and carpool or vanpool from there.”

“The primary objectives of the Iowa Park and Ride System are to maintain highway safety, encourage ride-sharing, support commuter transportation, and promote energy conservation.” (Iowa DOT)

According to the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, “the DOT will try to partner with local governments to develop the land for the park and rides. The preference is to leverage existing property rather than purchasing right of way to develop.” <http://bit.ly/1yVeccx>

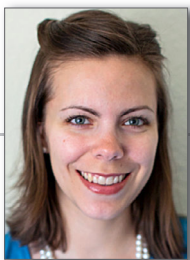


Commuting trends: Passenger average annual daily traffic (AADT) on primary highways, and percent of workforce leaving county of residence to work, 2010.

Source: Figure 2.5, Iowa Park and Ride System, 2014; Iowa DOT

In an email on February 9, Jennifer Roberts, Office of Systems Planning, Iowa Department of Transportation, stated that Iowa DOT has “initiated implementation and will be evaluating state right of way to determine sites for park and rides situated at or near our candidate locations. [Other siting] opportunities may present themselves through partnerships with local entities or businesses.”

To learn more, download the Iowa DOT report at <http://bit.ly/1KGAh4e> (PDF 5.8MB, Nov. 2014) ■



Norcal roundup

Assembled by Jennifer Piozet, associate editor

Santa Clara County seeks state funds for new jail tower

Mountain View Voice, February 11, 2015

Bay Cities News Service, <http://bit.ly/1Adavor> • “The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors approved a plan to ask the state to pay for a new tower and repair work at the county’s Main Jail to keep up with a spike in state prison inmates and those in need of mental health treatment.

“The county jail system has seen a larger population over the last three years since the state passed Assembly Bill 109, transferring prison inmates to county jails to reduce overcrowding. As a result there are not enough beds for high-security inmates to provide a safe environment inside, county officials said.

“The Main Jail South building on West Hedding Street in San Jose, built in the 1950s, should be replaced with a 480-cell tower to handle the influx of inmates, and the Main Jail North modified to make room for those with acute mental health needs, county Chief Operating Officer Gary Graves said.

“A consultant projected the price for the project at \$60 million to \$70 million; the maximum state grant available is \$80 million. The five-member board voted unanimously to spend \$950,000 toward designing the proposed new Main Jail South tower and remodeling of the Main Jail North and to begin the process of applying for construction funds with the state.”

Apple and First Solar to build solar farm in Monterey County

KSBW, Monterey, February 10, 2015

<http://bit.ly/1KN0mhY> • “The Monterey County Board of Supervisors has given final approval for the 2,900-acre California Flats Solar Project to be constructed on property owned by the Hearst Corporation in rural Monterey County. Apple will be the biggest single consumer of energy from the new solar farm, which will generate enough power for virtually all of Apple’s California operations, including its new campus in Cupertino. Apple CEO Tim Cook, announcing the project at a conference in San Francisco, said Apple is concerned about the threat of climate change. He noted that various forms of renewable energy already power the company’s computer centers. Construction is expected to begin in mid-2015 and to be completed by the end of 2016.”

3,000 SF homes at risk of foreclosure

The SF Examiner, February 9, 2015

Joshua Sabatini, <http://bit.ly/1znFkzK> • “Between 2008 and 2012, San Francisco tallied 3,827 foreclosures, and today, thousands of borrowers remain at risk of losing their homes. During the five-year period prior to the 2008 recession, there were just 605 foreclosures, while last year alone, there were 528, according to a new report that examined the impacts of the mortgage crisis. Although the local economy has turned around and unemployment has dwindled to 3.8 percent, city officials and community advocates continue to debate how to help those who are struggling to hold on to their homes.

“In San Francisco, 3,002 loans, or 2.4 percent of all loans with owner-occupied units, are underwater or near-underwater. Nearly half of these are in the south and southeastern working-class family neighborhoods.

“Supervisor John Avalos had proposed for the city to partner with Richmond to launch a program to use eminent domain to seize underwater properties and refinance them. But the Board of Supervisors refused to support the proposal, and the report recommends against eminent domain, citing risks to the city’s own borrowing costs.

“The report’s recommendations included developing a mortgage assistance program to help reduce borrowers’ principal loan amount, as well as an emergency assistance program to provide financial assistance for a homeowner who had an unexpected hardship and default, or is at risk of defaulting on a loan.”

(Norcal roundup continues on next page)

Safe Routes to School comes to Santa Cruz County

The Santa Cruz Sentinel, February 8, 2015

Samantha Clark, <http://bit.ly/1vzGOMQ> • “A slew of pedestrian safety upgrades and Safe Routes to School education programs are coming to schools in Santa Cruz County.

“The public works department recently received an \$829,000 grant project to install 37 speed radars this summer telling drivers how fast they’re driving and eight flashing lights at crosswalks. The grant comes from the state’s Active Transportation Program, a consolidation of federal and state biking and pedestrian efforts to streamline improvements.

“The County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency received a \$447,000 grant to expand the Safe Routes to School program to 10 schools by next fall. Meant to promote a culture of biking and walking, educational programs include teaching children safe practices for biking and being mindful of traffic.

“Older students hit the pavement and practice riding at school, and younger students receive walking safely training. The grant allows Safe Routes to School to focus on seven schools in Watsonville, where bike crash injuries more than doubled from 11 in 2010 to 23 in 2012, according to the latest available California Highway Patrol figures.”

Ukiah ranked No. 6 for best commute

The Ukiah Daily Journal, February 5, 2015

Adam Randall, <http://bit.ly/1914wao> • “Ukiah has been ranked No. 6 out of 40 California cities over 10,000 population for best commute times, according to a recent study. Obrella, a company that commissions such reports for insurance purposes, said Ukiahans have an average commute time of 17 minutes. An estimated 70 percent commute alone, while nearly 17 percent choose to carpool. Traffic data for the study comes from a 2013 survey by the U.S. Census.”

Other high-ranking short-commute cities in Northern Section include Eureka (No. 3 at 15.6 minutes), Arcata at 17.1, Monterey at 17.3, Fortuna at 20.2, Pacific Grove at 20.8, and Seaside at 21.9 minutes.

You can see the study results at <http://bit.ly/1DVAtdr>, including a list of the 40 worst commuter cities in California. Four of the worst five are in our area.

Wildlife refuge access hindered by quake

The Napa Valley Register, February 7, 2015

Barry Eberling, <http://bit.ly/1vzGkpO> • “Napa County’s small piece of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge includes an earthquake-damaged bridge that plays a big role in this sprawling world of birds, mudflats, wetlands, and water. The bridge is more than a premiere viewing platform. Heavy equipment needed for a planned Skaggs Island wetlands restoration project in a few years might use it to cross the slough. But this bridge in the remote, extreme southwest corner of Napa County is one more victim of the August 2014 South Napa earthquake. Refuge Manager Don Brubaker said it has perhaps a million dollars’ worth of damage. Engineers have told him to keep heavy equipment off of it.

“Napa County, already facing millions of dollars in earthquake repairs for its roads and bridges, just might be off the hook for the bridge. Four years ago, the refuge had problems with people driving on Skaggs Island Road to the bridge and dumping trash. In 2011, San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge obtained Skaggs Island. Also in 2011, the Napa County Board of Supervisors abandoned the county’s .35-mile stretch of Skaggs Island Road. After looking into the matter, Napa County Public Works Director Steven Lederer said Napa County doesn’t own the bridge.”

Four plans that shaped downtown Oakland’s first 100 years

The Urbanist (SPUR), February 3, 2015

Egon Terplan and **Magda Maaoui**, <http://bit.ly/1DzEmoh> • “Downtown Oakland began as a small town set in the midst of oak groves that grew along the eastern shore of the San Francisco Bay. The underlying urban form of downtown was established shortly after the town’s founding: a basic grid that begins at today’s Jack London Square and extends north.

“Downtown is where the city began. It is the place of greatest density and the focus of its transit network. So we decided to look at the planning history of its downtown, and to focus on decisions and plans that influenced the urban form and structure of downtown from the 1850s until just before WWII. The four plans discussed here each reflected the desires and concerns of their respective eras.”

(Norcal roundup continues on next page)

Trails to connect American Canyon to Vallejo

The Napa Valley Register, February 5, 2015

Noel Brinkerhoff, <http://bit.ly/170YrtO> • “The Solano Transportation Authority (STA) is examining potential routes for connecting American Canyon and Vallejo via both the Bay Trail and the Vine Trail. Segments of both trail systems run through American Canyon and portions of Vallejo, but large gaps exist between the two municipalities, preventing bicyclists and pedestrians from enjoying continuous travel along the trails. STA crafted possible extensions through north Vallejo that could connect Bay and Vine trails at a couple different locations in American Canyon.

“The new paths, if completed, would serve as a ‘key connection between two cities, two counties, and two major regional trail systems’ that would ‘help connect 390 miles of continuous bicycle and pedestrian paths, directly linking the communities of Vallejo, Benicia, Martinez, and Crockett to American Canyon, Napa, Los Carneros, Yountville, Oakville, Rutherford, St. Helena, and Calistoga, and to all the cities and counties on the Bay Trail system,’ the study says.”

Report highlights Silicon Valley’s uneven prosperity

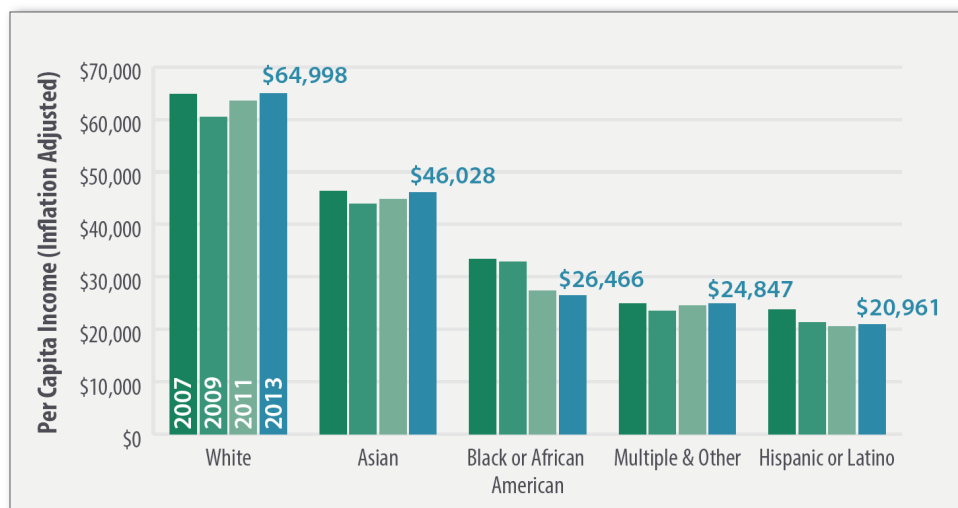
Palo Alto Weekly, February 3, 2015

Gennady Sheyner, <http://bit.ly/1zBhDYs> • “Fueled by a sizzling tech sector, strong population growth and low unemployment, the Silicon Valley economy has grown, rapidly since the doldrum days of the 2008 recession. So, however, have the income gaps between the region’s wealthiest and poorest residents, between its men and women, and between its white and black residents, according to an annual report released by Joint Venture Silicon Valley.

“The 2015 Silicon Valley Index (<http://bit.ly/1zBgUGB>) presents a largely positive picture about the regional economy, with San Francisco’s growing tech sector leading the charge. Yet the report also emphasizes the region’s rising

inequality, which pertains not just to different job sectors but also to genders and ethnicities. Black residents continue to lag behind other ethnic groups when it comes to income, and the gap between women and men also grew in 2013. The report also makes clear that the region’s overall growth can’t be attributed solely to tech. Just about every sector has added jobs.

“This growth, however, is far from egalitarian. According to the report, the gender inequality gap remains large and is getting worse, particularly in Silicon Valley. Men in Silicon Valley earn considerably more than their female peers and the gap is ‘getting larger over time,’ the Index states.” ■



Per capita income by race and ethnicity, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

Data Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

Analysis: Silicon Valley Institute for Regional Studies.

Hiking, swimming — there's an app for that

Parks Forward, January 30, 2015

Steven Maviglio, <http://bit.ly/1E2I9uI> • “Calling for a ‘fundamental transformation’ of the state’s 1.6 million acre park system, the Parks Forward Commission issued its final plan to ensure the long-term sustainability of California’s state parks. The Commission, an independent panel charged by the Governor and Legislature to review the future of the state’s 279-unit park system, lays out a vision for 2025 along with a two-year action plan, and details dozens of specific recommendations to modernize and expand access to the park system. One of the key recommendations in the 56-page report, available at <http://bit.ly/1E2FjWC>, is to expand park access for California’s underserved communities and urban populations and engage California’s younger generations.”

That includes “greater accessibility and enhanced visitor experiences through development of alternative lodging (such as newly designed cabins) and digital discovery tools (such as new smart phone apps for finding parks and online photo-maps of trails).”

Sarah Goodyear reports from CityLab, <http://bit.ly/1E2EtZP>, that “One step toward that goal has been launched: CaliParks.org is a web-based app designed to encourage exploration of and interaction with the entire state park system, as well as California’s national, regional and urban parks.”

“CaliParks allows users to filter their searches based on proximity and desired activity, making it easy to discover even lesser-known parks. It provides maps and links to official park websites. But its real innovation is that it draws in images from Flickr and Instagram on a daily basis, giving users a dynamic portrait not only of a park’s natural beauty, but also of the way it is used by visitors. The app also logs Twitter and Foursquare traffic relating to each park.”

Carson residents win fracking battle — for now

Food and Water Watch, February 6, 2015

Alex Nagy, <http://bit.ly/1E2AUmu> • “In a testament to the power of organized and tenacious people, residents of Carson, California, claimed victory over an oil giant. After a three-year battle, California Resources Corp., formerly Occidental Petroleum, pulled its proposal for 200 new frackable wells in the Los Angeles County community.

“When OXY swaggered into town in 2012, residents were no strangers to oil and gas industry greed and haste. Not too long before, they had discovered a buried Shell Oil Co. storage tanker underneath the Carousel Tract neighborhood, leaking benzene and other carcinogens into the soil.

“But the second-largest oil producer in the state, in the first face-to-face with residents, shrugged off the community’s concerns about public health and the environment and disclosed that the new wells would be fracked. Residents vowed to fight to keep OXY out of their town.

“In March 2014, residents won a temporary 45-day ban — approved unanimously by the City Council — on all oil and gas drilling. A later ban extension went down 2-2-1 after four buses showed up from Pasadena, Bakersfield, and beyond with shirts, buttons, stickers, and signs demanding “Jobs for Carson.” Men in suits handed out VISA gift cards. The council moved instead to update the city’s antiquated oil and gas code.

“In January, the company dropped its proposal in Carson. While residents can proudly claim victory, it’s clear that the fight isn’t over. When the price of oil goes back up, the industry will shuffle back to Carson.”

Now open — first San Diego bike share stations

KPBS, January 30, 2015

Claire Trageser, <http://bit.ly/1A46GSt> • “After more than a year of delays, San Diego’s first 20 bike share stations opened for business, and all 180 stations are expected to be operational in the next two months according to DecoBike, the Florida-based company that runs San Diego’s bike share program.

“The open stations are centered in the Gaslamp Quarter. Each station has 16 docks for bikes and eight bikes, so there’s room for people to return bikes. Work trucks will be used to move bikes during the day if one station gets full and another is left empty. The company is planning a mobile app that will tell riders which stations are open and have bikes.

“Bike share users can buy memberships for \$20 a month, with unlimited access to the bikes for 30 minutes or less. Keeping a bike for longer than 30 minutes incurs a charge of \$5 for every 30 minutes. A monthly membership at \$30 lets you keep the same bike for up to an hour without extra charges.

“Members are given a key pod to hold up to the bike dock to release the bike. Nonmembers pay for bikes at a kiosk using a credit card.

“The city’s partnership with DecoBike means the city does not pay for bike sharing. DecoBike will pay \$8 million for the bikes and stations and will give the city a portion of its profits — from \$1 million to \$2.6 million over 10 years.”

(California continues on next page)

West LA's VA campus to offer permanent housing

The Los Angeles Times, January 28, 2015

Gale Holland and **Martha Groves**, <http://lat.ms/1zp4hyp>

"The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced a legal settlement that will transform its sprawling West Los Angeles campus into a center of permanent housing for homeless veterans and curtail the controversial practice of leasing VA facilities to corporations and other non-government entities.

"Under the agreement, the VA will appoint by October a national homelessness expert to develop a master plan for how best to use the 387-acre property. Options could include renovating existing VA buildings and constructing new facilities for transitional housing and permanent housing with drug treatment, mental health counseling, and other supportive services.

"The government pledged to develop an 'exit strategy' for tenants that are leasing facilities for uses not directly related to veterans' care. Among those are UCLA's baseball stadium, the private Brentwood School's athletic complex, a hotel laundry, and storage for an entertainment studio's sets. Such 'enhanced sharing' agreements helped prompt a 2011 lawsuit that accused the VA of misusing the campus by leasing out swath's of land while veterans slept in the streets. As part of the settlement, the lawsuit will be dismissed. VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald said he had 'no question' that local and federal officials could achieve the goal of ending veteran homelessness in the county by year's end, as part of a national goal led by the Obama administration.

"The county has more than 4,200 homeless veterans."

California may replace gas tax with per-mile charge

The Mercury News, January 24, 2015

Paul Rogers, <http://bayareane.ws/1DiNQnU> • "More people are driving electric cars, gasoline cars are getting better mileage, and California's vehicles are causing less pollution. But as motorists buy less gasoline, state gas tax revenues that pay for roads have been falling for a decade, leading to more potholes and traffic jams.

"In a move that could solve the problem, state officials have begun to seriously study a plan to replace California's gas tax with a fee for each mile motorists drive. Governor Jerry Brown gave no specifics, but last fall he signed a law that set up a commission to study a 'road usage charge' and establish a pilot program by January 1, 2017.

"This year, Oregon is beginning a test program in which 5,000 volunteers will pay 1.5 cents per mile driven, and be refunded each month what they paid under the state's 30-cent gasoline tax. Colorado and Washington are studying similar pilot programs.

"Chairman Carl Guardino of the California Transportation Commission said he wants the new commission, formally called the California Road Charge Pilot Program Technical Advisory Committee, to explore every angle and receive wide public and media scrutiny.

"California has funded its state and local roads with a gas tax since 1923. But that state tax, now 36 cents a gallon, hasn't been increased since 1994 due to political opposition."

'High-Speed Rail: Coming (slowly) to a city near you'

CP&DR, January 7, 2015

Josh Stephens, <http://bit.ly/1yU3WDv> • "Anyone who has taken a Shinkansen, TGV, AVE, or any of China's 12,000 miles of HSR knows the wonders that await California if we get it done. Only a fraction of the system has been funded, but it's plain to see that the [recent Fresno] groundbreaking is meant to lend an air of inevitability to the project. The only thing more embarrassing than giving back \$10 billion in bond money and \$3.2 billion in federal money (if either was legally possible) would be to end up with \$13.2 billion of useless track. Supporters hope that the digging that began [in Fresno] will not cease until the shovels reach San Francisco and Los Angeles. It's the Golden Spike in reverse: start in the middle and work your way out.

"It's up to the High-Speed Rail Authority to bring trains to the cities, but cities decide what to do with the trains once they arrive in their centers. Imagine tens of millions of people annually spilling into and out of trains fresh from the far ends of the state. They'll need hotels and restaurants. Businesses will want offices nearby so their executives can speed to meetings up north or down south at a moment's notice. They'll want their public transit systems to distribute HSR passengers throughout the metro area — transit-oriented development on the largest imaginable scale.

"You can't not plan for high-speed rail. And yet... can HSR-related plans survive if the train never arrives?" ■

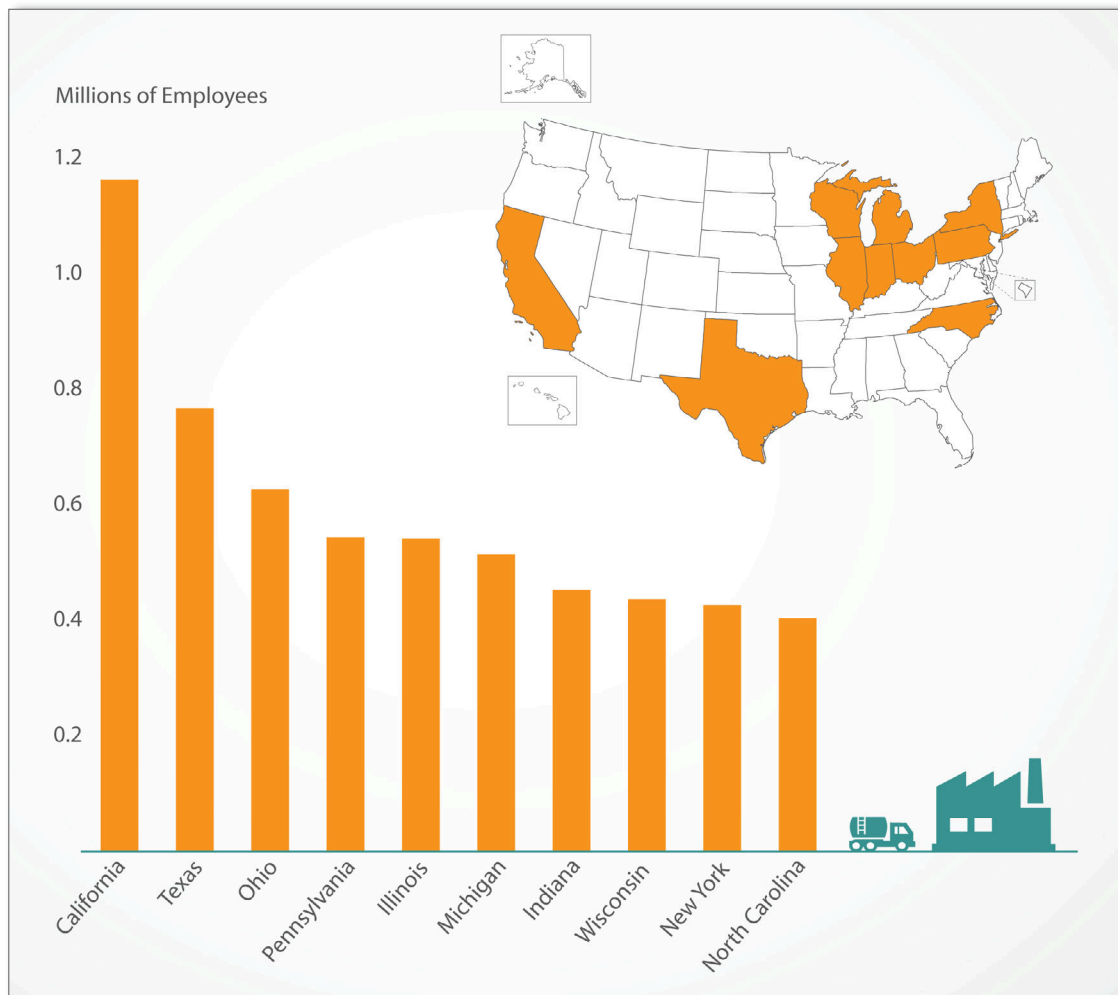
California leads U.S. in manufacturing employment for 2012

U.S. Census Bureau, January 27, 2015

<http://1.usa.gov/1yMcvBI> • “The Census Bureau released the first state and local level manufacturing statistics from its 2012 Economic Census at the state, metro area, and county levels, cities and towns, for more than 350 manufacturing industries. These data — the Geographic Area Series — cover more than 296,000 U.S. manufacturing establishments in every state and their localities.

“California had more manufacturing establishments (38,741) and employees (1.2 million) than any other state.

“Within the manufacturing sector in California, the computer and electronic product manufacturing subsector was the largest employer with 177,603 employees. Within this subsector, the radio and television broadcasting and wireless communications equipment manufacturing industry led employment with 28,153 employees. The petroleum and coal products manufacturing subsector reported the highest value of industry shipments of any manufacturing subsector in the state, up 17.0 percent from \$77.3 billion in 2007 to \$90.5 billion in 2012.”



States with the most manufacturing employees in 2012. Source: U.S. Census, 2012 Economic Census, Manufacturing, Geographic Area Series, January 27, 2015.

(U.S. continues on next page)

Apartment vacancy rates will remain low in 2015

GlobeSt.com, January 22, 2015

Kelsi Maree Borland, <http://bit.ly/1JesFa5> • “National apartment vacancy rates dipped to a low of 4.2 percent during 2014 according to the 2015 National Apartment Report released by Marcus & Millichap, and ended the year at 4.7 percent. These numbers far surpassed expectations for the year, leading researchers to conclude that demand for multifamily product is not leveling off anytime soon.

“During 2014, 238,000 new apartment units came online, the most in the last 14 years. The report anticipates that 210,000 new apartment units will come online in 2015, surpassing the demand for 186,000 units. Homeownership at the end of 2014 also dropped to record lows for the last 19-year period: 64.4 percent.

“San Francisco leads the national apartment index with sub-5 percent vacancies, above average job prospects, and rental growth. The city is up from its number two ranking last year, pushing New York to the number two spot. The Bay Area dominated the top rankings on the index, with San Jose ranking number three and Oakland ranking number four.”

New Orleans' new smoking ban

International New York Times, January 22, 2015

The Associated Press, <http://nyti.ms/1vzCKfl> • “To protect the health of musicians and other entertainers, the New Orleans City Council voted unanimously [January 22nd] to ban smoking in bars and gambling halls, even as the owners of those establishments said such a move would hurt business and tax revenue. New Orleans has been one of the last major American cities to allow people to smoke tobacco in bars. Smoking at indoor restaurants is no longer permitted.

“The ban, which was tweaked before being approved, is expected to take effect in about three months. Among the revisions, smokers will not be allowed within five feet of bar entrances, instead of the 25 feet first proposed. Smoking will be allowed in parks. Also exempt from the ban were cigar shops and hookah bars already in existence. Smoking will be allowed, too, at outside areas of bars, restaurants, and gambling halls.”

Millennials search for urban authenticity

The Christina Science Monitor, February 1, 2015

Stephanie Hanes, <http://bit.ly/1HF12d5> • “When Clara Gustafson, a recent graduate of Georgetown University, told her friends that she was moving to Baltimore, a lot of them thought she was crazy. But Ms. Gustafson had snagged a prestigious fellowship with a cybersecurity start-up in one of Baltimore’s downtown neighborhoods.

“Rather than being a pioneer, Gustafson quickly realized that she had moved to a city full of other young professionals. There is a vibrant bar and restaurant scene, social sports leagues, even a monthly bike ride in which participants dress in costume and ride through the city.

“While the traditional urban magnets for college graduates — San Francisco, New York, Boston, Seattle — still attract the largest number of degree-holding Millennials, the ‘hottest’ cities are elsewhere:

Cleveland, where 20-somethings are snapping up downtown apartments; **St. Louis**, which has seen a 138 percent increase in the percentage of educated 25-to-34-year-olds living in close-in urban neighborhoods between 2000 and 2012; and **Nashville**, which saw a 37 percent increase between 2007 and 2013 of people born between 1977 and 1992. In **Baltimore**, the number of degree-holding young people living in core urban neighborhoods increased by 92 percent between 2000 and 2010.

“These urban areas may not be traditional magnets for young people. But cities like Baltimore are, in many ways, the best places to look to understand both how the country’s long-beleaguered cities are changing, and how the Millennials are reshaping America’s urban landscape.”

(U.S. continues on next page)

“Wastewater pumping taints Central Valley drinking water.

As the historic drought continues, California water users in the Central Valley have had to resort to groundwater pumping to get the water that they need, causing land in the Central Valley to actually sink. Things just got a lot scarier, as the San Francisco Chronicle reported [Feb. 1] that oil companies have been pumping wastewater laden with bits of oil back into the ground due to bureaucratic errors in enforcement of bans against that pumping. The EPA is investigating whether the wastewater pumping has polluted groundwater, and it could seize control of the injection wells from California officials.”

—Matthew Hose, <http://bit.ly/1Mh0qKt>

See what your city will be like in 15 years

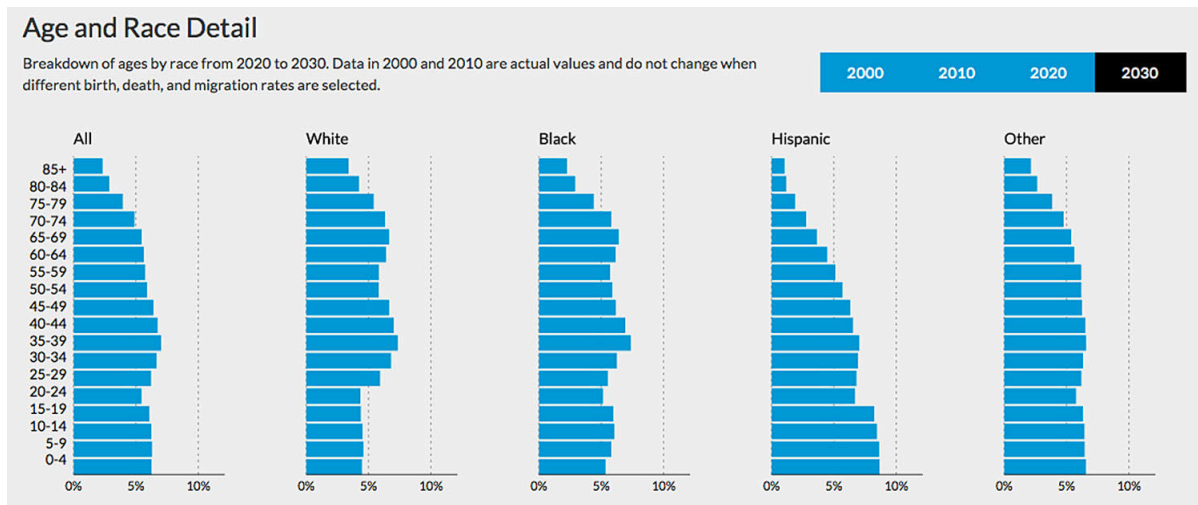
CityLab, January 21, 2015

Tanvi Misra, <http://bit.ly/15oowBd> • “Minority populations will surpass the aging, white majority [in the U.S.] by 2042. New births, immigration, and internal migration will reconfigure the populations of our cities, towns, and suburbs. The tectonic plates of America’s demographics are shifting, and now there’s an easy way to follow along.

“A new **interactive tool** developed by the Urban Institute (<http://urbn.is/15opi12>) predicts how these changes will play out locally by 2030. Using historical trends and census data, it allows users to adjust for rates of birth, death, and migration to forecast a range of scenarios

so urban planners, local leadership, and anyone else can track the effects of demographic trends in their region.

“The mapping tool gives a range of outcome so local governments can plan for what they know and account for what they don’t. ‘Considering the range of what-ifs, it only makes sense to have tools that allow us to see how those many possibilities might affect the population landscape of the United States,’ says Rolf Pendall, director of The Urban Institute’s Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center.”



Snapshot of age and race detail for San Francisco Bay commute area, 2030.

Whatchamacallit units under 400 sq. ft.

FastCoDesign, <http://bit.ly/1D47GVT> • “In response to demographic shifts, urban housing is getting smaller. Cities like Seattle, San Francisco, and Boston have adopted zoning changes to allow micro-housing.” A report by NYU’s Furman Center, <http://bit.ly/1D45gXb>, defines micro-units as “units that contain their own bathroom and a kitchen or kitchenette, but are significantly smaller than the standard studio in a given city.”

Last fall, the ULI published “The Macro View on Micro Units,” <http://on.uli.org/1D450Hy>. In part, it concludes “that smaller units tend to outperform conventional units; they tend to have higher occupancy and achieve significant rent premiums. But it is also clear from the research that micro units may not be the solution for every location.”

Commenting on the ULI findings, FastCoDesign reports, “In the U.S., tiny housing units haven’t achieved

widespread acceptance, and legislation allowing them in many cities has only recently passed. In case the trend is a passing fad, developers are hedging their bets. Many buildings are designed so that micro-housing units can be easily combined into one- or two- bedroom apartments if demand decreases.”

In any event, “They won’t be called ‘micro.’ According to the ULI report, ‘the term has begun to arouse negative connotations associated with higher density, overcrowding, and transient populations.’ A developer in Washington, D.C., for example, erected two buildings with micro-units that are marketed merely as budget-friendly apartments in great neighborhoods. There is no mention of their exact size on the company’s website.”

(U.S. continues on next page)

'Urban planning and design aren't optional'

Next City, January 21, 2015

<http://bit.ly/1zB0X5S> • *Next City* interviewed Stephanie Hacker, a senior planner at GRAEF, and adjunct professor at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. Among her responses, we found these particularly appropriate to the planning profession.

What are the hard parts about your job? "Working with other motivated people equates to having at least 10 people all fire idea shotguns in 10 different directions. We want to make a widespread, positive impact, yet have to continually respect that we have limited time. As we all know, making a tangible impact requires focus, attention, and a long-term commitment."

What makes a successful leader? "An internal compass, a pair of sizable ears, and the ability to act."

What's your BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal)? "To make a new typology of urban design and planning the frontrunner of our processes nationwide — ahead of sheer roadway building, ahead of real estate development, and ahead of policymaking. Urban design and planning aren't valued like architecture or engineering. The latter are seen as essential while the former are seen as 'optional' services. And by foregoing plans and designs, we pay for it over and over again. We don't acknowledge the importance of urban design and planning in this country. I plan to change that, little by little."

What career advice would you give an emerging urban leader? "Advocate early and often, but don't lose your ability to listen."

"Musings on child-friendly planning and urban design"

PlanPlaceBlog, January 20, 2015

Eric Feldman, <http://bit.ly/1zFjfl6> • "Field notes from walks with my daughter, and things she's taught me about city design."

"Exploring our urban neighborhood with my two-year-old daughter, I've found myself viewing the urban landscape anew through her eyes — specifically, from an elevation of 34 inches and with a renewed sense of wonder. The transition to parenthood over the past couple of years has not only transformed the routines and rhythms of daily life, but has forced me to reassess and revise many longstanding priorities, assumptions, and presumed understandings. Not exempt from this changing worldview has been the perspective from which I approach my work as an urban planner and how I think about cities and urban neighborhoods in general."

"Michael Chabon once reflected that 'childhood is a branch of cartography,' and each walk with my daughter confirms this theory."

"The grassy areas of the park transition in some areas to expanses of glorious dirt, where my daughter will happily sit on the ground to collect pebbles and rub the dirt in her hands."

"Playable urban spaces outside of the park and playground — both closer to home and integrated into the built environment — are a compelling goal worth exploring."

"If you design a place that works for kids (and seniors, for that matter), it will work well for everyone."

"Can a neighborhood provide a range of destinations and diverse experiences within a toddler's walking distance, without requiring access to an automobile?" ■

Water, water everywhere, but less and less to drink. "Greater Miami is a place where the idea of not having enough water seems completely bananas. But rising sea levels change things in unexpected ways, and seawater threatens to turn the drinking water salty. In some places, the ocean has already made good on that threat. And the problem is going to get worse. The more sea levels rise, the farther inland the saltwater comes, pushing into the porous limestone that's under all of South Florida."

—Dan Weissman, <http://bit.ly/1MgUxwO>. Photos, 0:23 video, 7:45 podcast.

China uses 3D printer to build apartment building

CityLab, January 29, 2015

Anne Quito, <http://bit.ly/18CoXKE> • “The Shanghai-based construction firm WinSun Decoration Design Engineering has unveiled a five-story apartment building made entirely with a giant 3D printer, and is calling it ‘the world’s tallest 3D-printed building.’ With a terra cotta brick-like exterior, the building is on display at the Suzhou Industrial Park, along with a 1,100-square-meter (11,840-square-foot) 3D-printed neoclassical mansion.

“The buildings were made with a patented ‘ink’ created from a mixture of recycled construction waste, coursed through a 150-meter long printer. This is the same technology that the company demonstrated last year when it printed 10 affordable single-story houses in 24 hours, a feat that captured the imagination of architects, humanitarian aid agencies, and governments looking for alternative housing solutions.

“According to the chief engineer of China Construction, Ma Rongquan, who inspected the buildings, both structures are in compliance with national standards, though he was quick to note that there were really no standards written yet for 3D-printed architecture.

WinSun is not the only company to embark on printing houses — nor does it make the most beautiful 3D buildings — but unlike some of the other companies in the field, its ambitions are global, and it seems to have had some success convincing investors of its scalability. At the press conference, WinSun CEO Ma Yi He announced the company’s plans to build 3D construction factories in more than 20 countries, including the U.S., Saudi Arabia, the U.A.E, Qatar, Morocco, and Tunisia. Its engineers are currently working on a printer that turns desert sand into building material.”

NOAA's hurricane hunters help battle California drought.

“California is the wrong side of the continent for hurricane hunters. Here, the pilots and crew are chasing after atmospheric rivers, conduits of moisture-rich air that extend from the equatorial Pacific and are the Golden State’s biggest annual source of water. In the midst of a historic drought, NOAA wants to understand how atmospheric rivers work. How much water vapor is this one carrying? How much will make it to the ground as rain or snow?” —Nick Stockton, <http://wrd.cm/1MgXmOD>

Istanbul to build Europe’s largest monorail network

CityLab, February 4, 2015

Feergus O’Sullivan, <http://bit.ly/16HVwW8> • “Istanbul has started the process of building the largest monorail network Europe has ever seen. Covering 29 miles and ultimately carrying 200,000 passengers a day, Turkey’s largest city will one day have a total of eight monorail lines, adding missing links to a still-developing transit system.

“The new network will largely stay beyond the fringes of Central Istanbul although it will include a link from Beyoğlu to Sisli and a connection to Istanbul’s second airport, Sabiha Gökçen. The other lines will be scattered around Istanbul’s outlying districts, acting as short capillaries feeding passengers into city metro and light rail systems that are themselves still partly under construction.

“But why build a monorail in the first place? Their elevated tracks make them more expensive than streetcars and less flexible than buses. Typically designed for lighter loads, they carry fewer passengers than a regular train, yet still block out the sky just as standard elevated tracks do. There are also extra engineering intricacies that come with a single rail.

“Exactly when the monorails will start operation is another question. There are no public deadlines as yet, and while Istanbul’s transit system is developing fast, it’s not growing nearly as fast as the city it serves.

“The monorail is nonetheless having an effect even at drawing board stage, causing a stir in the real estate sector, and sparking interest in sites all along the proposed routes.”

Photos: It’s all been done

Good Magazine, November 18, 2015

Adam Albright-Hanna, <http://bit.ly/1LIVfmb> • “From the online collection of invented words — The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows — comes this beautiful video explaining the concept of ‘vemödaalen,’ defined as the ‘frustration of photographing something amazing when thousands of identical photos already exist.’ By showing a collection of almost identical images taken by random strangers that you swore you took, one can’t help but feel just slightly less unique in the world. Thankfully, the narrator’s calm and gentle voice seems to suggest that everything’s going to be alright.” Video, 2:56, at <http://youtu.be/8ftDjebw8aA>

(World continues on next page)

Maps: The urbanist's guide to the world

The Guardian, January 29, 2015

Paddy Allen, Adam Dewar, and Nick Mead,

<http://bit.ly/1z1ekpM> • “Click on the interactive map to read our bloggers’ insider guides to their cities.” In North America we have Anchorage, Los Angeles, Edmonton, New Orleans, Chicago, and Toronto. In Central and South America explore Mexico City, Bogota, and Sao Paulo. Across the Atlantic, discover Tunis, Cairo, Accra, Lagos, and Johannesburg. In the Middle East and Asia, learn more about Tehran, Dubai, Mumbai, Dhaka, Seoul, Shanghai, and Manila. Travel south for Perth and Melbourne. Finish your journey in Europe with features on Glasgow, Cardiff, Bristol, Paris, Rome, Brussels, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Manchester, Helsinki, Stockholm, Athens, and Istanbul.

Architectural grand master speaks out on Chinese city planning and design

The New York Times, February 7, 2015

Ian Johnson, <http://nyti.ms/1FnhDOb> • “For 70 years, Wu Liangyong has ridden out the country’s political storms to establish himself as the most influential architect, urban planner, and éminence grise of China’s cities.

“Now 92, Mr. Wu has responded to the growing problems of China’s great cities by publishing a new master plan for the capital area, hoping to promote his longstanding idea of linking it with neighboring Tianjin and the smaller cities of Hebei Province. It is an idea he has pushed for 25 years, but it now has strong government backing after the Chinese president, Xi Jinping, endorsed it last year.

“Mr. Wu was one of the youngest members of a generation of Chinese intellectuals to be trained abroad before 1949. He studied at the Cranbrook Academy of Art (Bloomfield Hills) and helped found Tsinghua University’s architecture school with modern Chinese architect and urban planner, Liang Sicheng.

“Mr. Wu’s traditionalist view of architecture has been regaining sway. Despite state honors and his proximity to power, he is widely seen as a counterweight to Communist Party officials who wield almost unchecked power at the local level to redesign cities.

“When the Cultural Revolution ended, Mr. Wu said, Chinese officials rushed to embrace foreign models, sometimes without considering their suitability for an industrializing country with more than 1 billion inhabitants. Mistakes included promoting automobile ownership over public transportation, and building wide streets and huge buildings. Mr. Wu said his role made him feel personally responsible for problems in Chinese cities.”

Scotland bans fracking

BBC News, January 28, 2015

<http://bbc.in/15OXd3n> • “The Scottish government has announced a block on planned fracking operations, pending further inquiries. Ministers will carry out new work on the environmental and health implications of the controversial gas drilling technique. Full control over fracking is due to be devolved to Scotland after May’s general election. In the meantime, consent for unconventional oil and gas developments will be refused on planning grounds. The announcement by Scottish Energy Minister Fergus Ewing came a day after the boss of the Grangemouth chemical plant said the UK must embrace shale gas. Tom Crotty, from Ineos, said high energy prices were damaging the industrial sector.

“UKOOG, which represents the onshore oil and gas industry, said the sector would boost Scotland’s economy. But environmental group WWF Scotland said fracking, where gas is extracted from rock, should be ruled out completely. In the U.S., extensive use of the process has revolutionized the energy industry. But opponents have said it causes earthquakes, pollutes water supplies, and could lead to inappropriate development in the countryside.

“Labour’s Lewis Macdonald said his party had outlined a list of conditions in the UK parliament which would need to be met before fracking could take place, many of which fell under Scotland’s responsibility. The UK government has agreed to tighten the restrictions on where the process can take place, with an outright ban on the activity in national parks, sites of special interest, and areas of national beauty.” ■

Slim down those climate reports! “The top UN climate science body should slim down its reports to have more impact and curb the mounting workload. That was the message countries sent to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) ahead of a key meeting on its future in late February. The IPCC’s scientific reviews ‘should become more concise with an enhanced focus on policy relevant topics,’ said Germany, with a page limit set at the outset. Japan suggested focusing on fewer topics, to allow for deeper analysis, while the US called for less theoretical information.” —Megan Darby, <http://bit.ly/1MgWzgA>

"We're two-thirds of the way towards people admitting it's not working, but we're not there yet," Moon says. "Definitive news that the viaduct's not safe to continue using or definitive news from WSDOT or STP that they can't fix the machine might do it. Right now there's a vacuum of leadership in terms of what to do about the big problems."

But she is confident that should more problems arise, politicians will need a plan B.

STP should know within a few months whether or not they can fix the problem and resume tunneling. If they can, they've got about 8,000 feet left to tunnel, mostly underneath historic buildings in one of Seattle's oldest neighborhoods where rescue will be even more difficult should it get stuck again. In other words, some of the riskiest tunneling is yet to come in this already risky project. In the meantime, there is still no

public plan B from city or state leaders.

"The public's very frustrated. They see a disaster happening in slow motion. And they see leadership not stepping up to admit there's a big problem and identify a way out of it," says Moon.

Perhaps other cities will look to Bertha and the Big Dig and other megaprojects that run over budget and reconsider plans to be the biggest and boldest. Or they'll just convince themselves that they'll be lucky, and move forward full steam ahead.

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Josh Cohen is a freelance writer and editor of *The Bicycle Story*. His work has also appeared in *Crosscut*, *Pacific Standard*, *The Magazine* and *Grist*.



Transbay lawsuit fizzles. "After months of saber rattling, property owners in the Transbay neighborhood did not follow through on threats to sue the city over a new Mello-Roos tax district that is a key part of the plan to develop the \$2.6 billion transit center at First and Mission streets. The property owners objected to the way the tax was structured and the fact that it skyrocketed from the time it was first proposed in 2012 — from \$3.33 a square foot to \$5.11 a square foot because of rising property values in the neighborhood. The lawsuit would have jeopardized phase one of the Transbay Transit Center construction, as well as the possible extension of Caltrain from Fourth and King streets to downtown." —John King, <http://bit.ly/1MgZeH2>

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