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Planning for the 2015 APA California Conference

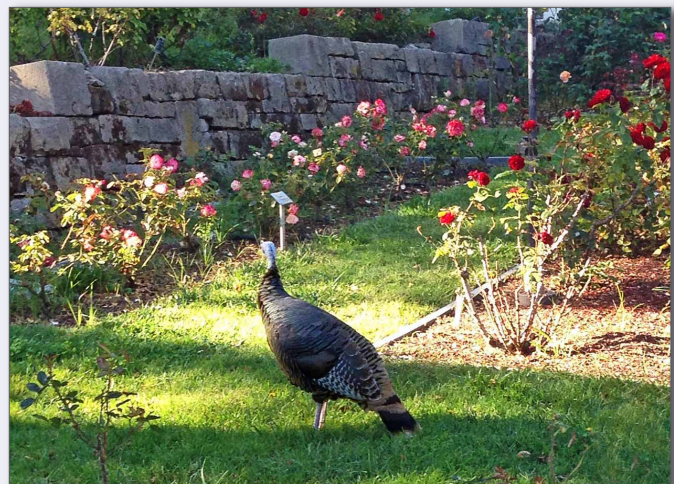
By Erik S. Balsley, AICP

When asked about her childhood in Oakland, Gertrude Stein famously said, "There is no there there." For many, Oakland is nothing more than this quote. For others, it is "occupy" protests, crime, and home to an influx of residents priced out of San Francisco.

Members of the Local Host Committee for the 2015 APA California Conference find these media narratives simplistic: they overlook the places, people, and experiences that have made Oakland the dynamic place where many of us live and work. From now until the 2015 conference, we will be presenting unique and lesser known aspects of our Oakland and other east bay cities here in *Northern News* and on the Section website.

It is worth noting that Gertrude Stein's abbreviated quote was in reference to her return to Oakland 30 years after she left, upon seeing that the farm that had been her childhood home had been developed for housing. Rather than nostalgia for an old Oakland no longer recognizable, we see the city as it is today: an edgy, innovative, historic, vibrant, multi-cultural hub undergoing a renaissance.

More than 40 people attended the Local Host Committee's first meeting September 14th. In the coming months, we will be interviewing some of our committee members about why they chose to live in Oakland, their neighborhoods, and how the city is changing. Their stories will be presented in a new column, "My Oakland/East Bay," to highlight the sometimes hidden and often surprising secrets of the area.



For example, as a new Oakland resident, I decided to explore my neighborhood further and stumbled into the Morcom Municipal Rose Garden. There among redwood trees and the still blooming roses, I saw — out of the corner of my eye — a wild turkey strutting among the rose bushes. Not at all what I expected to see a block away from the Safeway. The east bay is not your typical urban environment, and we look forward to telling you more about it.

The next meeting of the local host committee will be on Saturday, November 16, 2013, from 10 AM–Noon at the URS Office, 1333 Broadway, Oakland. Please join in and help us plan an outstanding conference! ■

More photos of the eastern span

Last month, *Northern News* asked for “high-resolution photos of or from the new eastern span of the Bay Bridge. The very best one will make the cover of the November issue.” The winning photo by **James Pan** appears on the cover of the magazine edition. Six runner-up photos are published here. *None of these seven photos may be republished without the express written consent of the photographers.*

Oakland’s Mike Rivera writes: I walked the trail to and along the eastern span the second week it was open, and I must say, it is cool.

- You can walk in areas that were only open to Caltrans, the Port of Oakland, and utility companies.
- You see mostly industrial remnants and facilities that cannot be seen by the public except from the new trail.
- You see freeways, isolated industrial buildings, creeks, marshlands, railroads, and the bay — an amazing backyard junk heaven.

The new trail should have been wider to accommodate the hundreds (or thousands in the months and years to come) of walkers, runners, bicyclists, families with kids, and tourists. Caltrans added water fountains and landscaping, lights, and fencing that make the trail look better, but it’s not a walk through the redwoods. Once you get close to the span, the views are outstanding — nothing I have ever seen before from this viewpoint.

There is a police presence — you see them along the way and hiding behind buildings — but that’s good. Safety will become an issue as more people use the trail. It is close to the bridge’s roadway, and someone (or groups of protesters) could easily interrupt traffic by jumping the low divider fence. Meanwhile, I am looking forward to walking the trail to Yerba Buena Island when it reaches there in 2015.



Looking southwest at the abandoned cantilever span.

Photo © Jonah Chiarenza, AICP



Looking southeast from Treasure Island toward Oakland.

Photo © Doug Donaldson

More photos of the eastern span (continued from previous page)



New tower and cables, seen from the roadway. Photo © James Pan



Looking northwest toward Treasure Island. Photo © James Pan



Looking southwest at the old and new eastern spans. Photo © Jonah Chiarenza, AICP



Above the existing western (suspension) span at night, looking southwest to San Francisco. Photo © James Pan ■

New “zero-parking” Berkeley development. Garden Village is a proposed downtown Berkeley apartment development based on eliminating the need for individual car parking. Approved 7–1 by the Berkeley Zoning Adjustments Board on October 10, the five-story apartment building planned for 2201 Dwight Way (at Fulton) will have 77 units and only four to 10 parking spaces for shared vehicles. The project was seen as having no detrimental impacts on surrounding properties. The parking waiver was granted as a concession under State density bonus law. In addition, the building complex will have a rooftop farm — allowed by a recent zoning amendment that made farming and sale of “non-processed edibles” a use by-right in residential districts.

For a summary of the transportation benefits that tenants will receive, see Ann Cheng’s write-up at <http://bit.ly/19QI1mB>



Proposed Garden Village, Berkeley. Image: discovergardenvillage.com

Urban planning surprises in eastern Australia

By John F. Livingstone, AICP

Since I had never been to Australia, I decided to take a land tour across the eastern side of the country. The goal of the trip was to relax, enjoy some surfing and diving at the Great Barrier Reef, pet a kangaroo, and enjoy some of the city tourist attractions.

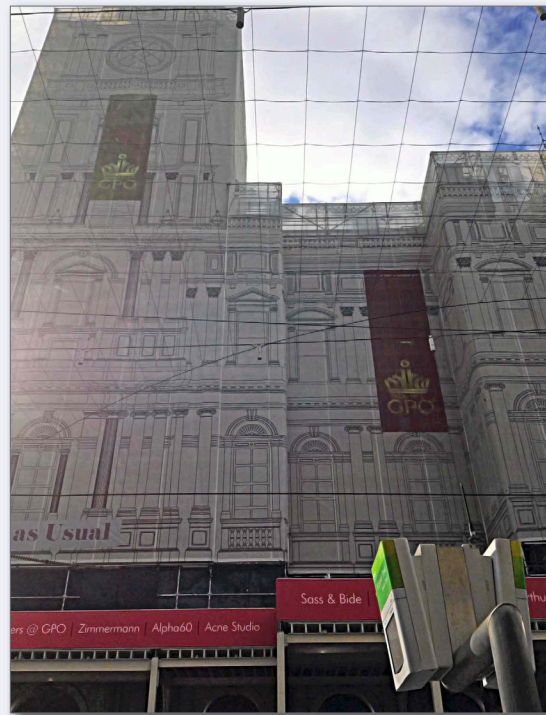
When I first arrived in each city, I tried to arrange for a city tour bus ride to help familiarize myself with the city. This turned out to be a very easy task. There were free foldout tourist maps on the light posts and large “i” signs for tourist information around the city. Large 5,000-square-foot information centers were located in all of the main tourist areas. I was quickly greeted upon entering the center and was able to immediately sign up for a tour.



Information center, Darling Harbour, Sydney

Once on the bus tour, I was amazed at the education level and professionalism of the tour guides. My tour guide explained that most of the guides had a four-year college degree in tourism and it was considered a very good job. Interestingly, the tours were loaded with planning topics. If I didn't know better, I could have been on a city bus tour at a national planning conference. The tour guides discussed census data, immigration, architecture, history, zoning, and transportation issues.

One of my favorite tours was in Melbourne. The bus tour guide was extremely proud of the fact that all of the streets were planned at 100 feet wide. This made it easy to accommodate the trolley, light rail, bus, and metro systems. The tour guides were quick to point out the historic buildings that had been preserved and integrated into the downtown streetscapes. I noticed that one historic structure that was being remodeled had a tarp over the façade of the building — to protect pedestrians from the work site — that was designed to represent the building's façade behind.



Renovation of historic building, Melbourne

Overall, I was thoroughly impressed with the cities in Australia. I toured five cities in two weeks. One thing I noticed was the lack of graffiti. My tour guide explained that the cities allowed graffiti in specific areas. These were mostly alleys in nice areas downtown. The colorful alleys created a tourist attraction that I and everyone else tried to photograph. I thought this was a creative solution to an otherwise costly problem.

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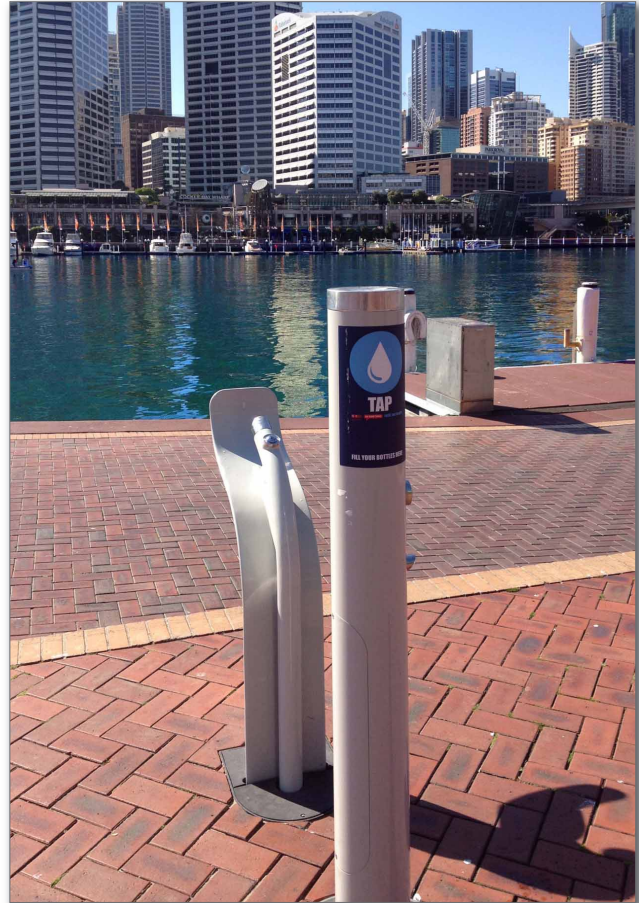
Permitted graffiti in public alley, downtown Melbourne

In addition, the larger cities had signs painted on the ground reminding tourists to “look right” when crossing the street. In Cairns, I saw a large public swimming pool that was integrated into the landscaping of the main promenade and not surrounded by a fence.



Cairns Australia, gateway to the Great Barrier Reef

I have no idea how they accomplish this without constantly getting sued for accidents. I also noticed water bottle refilling stations along the city walkways.



Bottle refill station, Darling Harbour, Sydney

Overall, I loved my tour of Australia, and while I hadn't come looking for planning ideas, I couldn't avoid running into them at every turn.

John F. Livingstone, AICP, is a planning consultant in San Jose. He worked in city government positions for 20 years, most recently as community development director for Saratoga, where he served for 10 years. John is also a retired United States Coast Guard Reserve Lieutenant. You can reach him at JohnFLivingstone@yahoo.com

Climate risk assessment. “If the United States were run like a business, its board of directors would fire its financial advisers for failing to disclose the significant and material risks associated with unmitigated climate change.”—Michael Bloomberg, Hank Paulson, and Tom Steyer, <http://wapo.st/15Lw5Sd>. Also see “Insurers are concerned; governments should be, too,” in “Other top stories,” page 26.



Norcal roundup

Assembled by Jennifer Piozet, associate editor

America's top places to live? Bay Area cities <http://bit.ly/18IASZo>

"What makes a city livable for everyone? We searched the nation and partnered with Richard Florida's Prosperity Institute to run the numbers to create our inaugural list of the Best Places to Live." (Matt Carmichael, "Eight Bay Area cities listed as America's top places to live," *Livability*, 2013.) For cities with 2010 populations between 20,000 to 350,000, eight Northern California cities — Palo Alto, Berkeley, Santa Clara, Santa Rosa, Fremont, Sunnyvale, San Rafael, and Hayward — were listed as 'America's Top 100 Places to Live in 2014.' Cities were ranked by their access, affordability, available choices, and utilization.

Ashes, ashes, Pier 70 might fall down <http://bit.ly/19m3dz0>

"Upon further review, it's going to be way more expensive than expected to convert the crumbling brick industrial buildings of San Francisco's Pier 70 into a modern mix of offices, studios, tech work spaces, light industrial uses, and restaurants. The developers took a closer look at the various abandoned buildings and realized just how tough it was going to be to keep them from tumbling down. In July, a city committee tentatively agreed to advance Orton Development — which last year got the go-ahead to do the rehab project at the historic old ship-building site — as much as \$26 million from a 1992 bond that included money for seismic retrofit of unreinforced masonry buildings. Repayment, with interest, will be over 20 years. However, the Port Commission's agreement with Orton calls for the developer to receive all the revenue from the site until it recovers the money it put into the project." —Jeremy Wildermuth, "Price tag rising for rehabbing crumbling buildings at Pier 70," *SF Gate*, October 9, 2013.

How we adapt to climate change <http://bit.ly/18BC4cE>

"Individuals and communities are finding creative ways to adapt to hotter summers, stronger storms, bigger wildfires, rising sea levels, and more. People are planting more trees, thinking carefully about coastal development, and anticipating the future of California's wineries. In Napa Valley, local vintners formed a climate task force in 2006 to meticulously track temperature changes and develop strategies to manipulate microclimates in the vineyards. They installed weather stations in the vineyards, sifted through farmers'

harvest logs from past decades, and are even testing solar-powered sensors on their vines to monitor plant hydration day by day. What they have found, so far, is a much slower progression in temperatures in Napa Valley than has been measured elsewhere, allowing growers to put scientists' projections into context and gauge when it might be time to start switching cultivars. They're doing their homework, in other words, and providing a standout example of what it takes to stay ahead of existential threats." —Svati Kirsten Narula, "The many small ways Americans are adapting to climate change," *The Atlantic*, September 19, 2013.

Labor of love <http://bit.ly/18DS0ZB>

"Kevin Brogan first came to Ukiah as a teenager in the 1980s when he left New York and headed west. Brogan owns nearly the whole block bounded by Perkins, State, Church, and School streets, which includes both the Marks Building that houses the brewery, and the Feibush Building, formerly the home of the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company. Brogan also owns the McKinley Building a block south, as well as the art gallery across the street. 'I think seven buildings in all, six historic,' he said, explaining that he enjoys restoring historic buildings and doing much of the work himself. 'It's a labor of love. I like to get my hands dirty.' Brogan said he tries to keep, and showcase, as many of the original elements in each building as he can, an effort that local historian Judy Pruden appreciates." —Justine Frederiksen, "Restoring Ukiah's history: New York native is reviving the city's past, one building at a time," *Daily Journal News*, October 5, 2013.



Marks Building, 1889.

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Gateway cities have most expensive office rents <http://bit.ly/HbkReX>

A “recent study of 40 office markets across the United States reveals the list of most expensive streets for office space in 2013, a follow-up to the study’s launch in 2011. You might be surprised to learn the country’s most expensive street for office space is in a San Francisco suburb. Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park, remains number 1 on the list with average rents reaching almost \$111 per square foot. Ranked second is Fifth Avenue, Midtown Manhattan, at \$102. University Avenue, Palo Alto, is third at \$95. No. 6 is California Street, San Francisco, at \$62.10 per sq. ft.” —“Bicoastal cities top list of most expensive streets for office rents,” *Jones Lang LaSalle News Release*, September 30, 2013.

Facebook provides affordable housing in Menlo Park <http://bit.ly/18J6tnx>

“Facebook will subsidize 15 units in an upscale 400-unit apartment complex in Menlo Park so they can be rented at affordable rates, according to city officials. In doing so, the social media giant will comply with the city’s affordable housing law as Facebook proceeds with the development of a second campus near its headquarters at Bayfront Expressway and Willow Road. Menlo Park requires commercial developers to contribute to its affordable housing stock because ‘they create jobs and a demand for housing,’ City Attorney Bill McClure said. The 15 units will be priced for households with incomes that do not exceed 80 percent of San Mateo County’s median income, adjusted for family size. The affordable housing includes two studio units, eight one-bedroom units, and five two-bedroom units.” —Bonnie Eslinger, “Facebook to subsidize 15 low-rent units in upscale Menlo Park apartment complex,” *San Jose Mercury News*, October 1, 2013.

Bargain million-dollar homes <http://bit.ly/19a5VmZ>

“The continuing influx of well-heeled homebuyers from Asia has Bay Area real estate firms competing for a lucrative and growing slice of the region’s residential market. With its good schools and a Silicon Valley address, Palo Alto has become a point of interest for many mainland Chinese shopping for a second home or planning to move to the area, Palo Alto real estate broker Ken de Leon said. De Leon has sold at least 20 homes to buyers from China in the past year, usually in the \$1.5 million to \$2.5 million range. Roughly half are buying as an investment, a third are buying because of the area’s highly rated schools, and one-fifth are buying second homes. ‘Compared to Asian prices, Palo Alto is considered pretty dirt cheap,’ said Kenny Weng Kong Lo, general

manager of Intero Real Estate Services’ Hong Kong office. When they come to the US, said Minhua Jin, an agent with Intero’s Silicon Valley office, ‘they are comparing square footage cost here to Chinese living space and it’s still quite low. They feel like for the money they are spending they get much more here,’ Jin said.” —Pete Carey, “Asian buyers scoop up ‘bargain’ million-dollar Bay Area homes,” *San Jose Mercury News*, September 27, 2013.

Napa Pipe project halted due to affordable housing <http://bit.ly/15Z2FL3>

“The Napa County Board of Supervisors has approved an agreement with the city of Napa over the Napa Pipe project, and rejected including in the agreement a housing program favored by Supervisor Mark Luce. At Luce’s behest, the board voted Sept. 24 to send the agreement back to the city so it could include the county’s workforce proximity housing program for the project’s moderate-income housing. [But] adding the workforce proximity program would have required a new vote from the City Council, thus potentially reopening negotiations that had taken months to complete. The city, county, and Napa Redevelopment Partners will now shift their focus to other agreements that need to be locked into place before the project can break ground. The project also must go to the Napa County Local Agency Formation Commission to extend the city’s sphere of influence to cover the Napa Pipe site, which could happen as early as November. City voters will be asked to annex it at the November 2014 election. Construction could begin in 2015.” —Peter Jensen, “County signs off on Napa Pipe pact with city,” *Napa Valley Register*, October 8, 2013.

New rules for downtown Santa Cruz <http://bit.ly/18ZBLTe>

“The Santa Cruz City Council [has adopted] new rules restricting artists, musicians, petitioners, and smokers downtown, saying overcrowded sidewalk displays and second-hand smoke pose safety hazards. Performers and advocates for the homeless and free-speech fought the measure supported by the Downtown Association merchants’ group to decrease the display space and increase the distance between each display, as well as [on] doors, benches, corners, and other street features. Display blankets, cited by city staff as a tripping hazard, are also banned. On a unanimous vote, the council also approved an extension of a Pacific Avenue smoking ban to side streets in either direction from Water Street to Laurel Street. Staff said smokers are routinely warned before police issue citations for multiple offenses.” —J.M. Brown, “Santa Cruz council finalizes downtown display, smoking restrictions,” *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, September 24, 2013.

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Parklets: for the people, by the people

<http://bit.ly/1a6Q23N>

"The parklet concept originated in San Francisco in 2005, and the first formal parklets in the US were established there five years later. As of January, 38 parklets had been installed throughout San Francisco, and cities from Long Beach to New York have implemented them as well. Early research on San Francisco shows that parklets seem to increase civic activity on the blocks where installed, and the average number of people on the block at any given time also seems to increase. However, when it comes to disincentivizing car use, the parklet process often falls short. For parklets to truly transform cities, they have to be implemented in concert with other measures, including the elimination of parking spaces, the widening of sidewalks, and the improvement of public transportation systems. In general, parklets are funded entirely by the community — a funding model that needs to be reassessed." —Camille Koué, "The unrealized potential of parklets," *TheCityFix*, September 19, 2013.

New kid on the block

<http://bit.ly/19XDz0d>

"The scale and scope of the Graton Resort and Casino came into sharp focus October 2nd when its doors were thrown open to the media for the first time in advance of the facility's planned opening November 5th. 'What you see is \$825 million worth of work,' said Greg Sarris, chairman of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, which owns the casino. Central to the scene is

the field of 3,000 slot machines stretching almost as far as can be seen and interspersed with poker and blackjack tables and ATMs. Sarris said the casino will employ 2,000 full-time employees and 200 to 300 part-time workers. All would get retirement, health, and medical benefits, he said." —Jeremy Hay, "Graton Resort and Casino unveiled before Nov. 5 opening," *The Press Democrat*, October 2, 2013.

Census data, poverty, and median income, Lake County

<http://bit.ly/16iPOV1>

"New numbers from the US Census Bureau show that many Lake County residents continue to struggle with poverty and low median incomes. The county's 2012 population estimate is 63,983, compared to 64,323 in 2011 and 64,771 in 2010. Between 2011 and 2012, the county's median income dropped from \$35,991 to \$33,219. In 2011, 13 percent of households had incomes below \$15,000 a year [compared to] 26 percent of households in 2012. In both 2011 and 2012, 3 percent of county residents had incomes greater than \$150,000. Last year, 46 percent of the county's population 16 and over were employed, with 44 percent not in the labor force, compared to 48 percent employed and 42 percent not in the workforce in 2011. In 2011, 18 percent of the county's 35,000 housing units were vacant, climbing to a 26-percent vacancy rate in 2012." —Elizabeth Larson, "Latest Census data shows drop in median income, rise in poverty across county," *Lake County News*, September 22, 2013.

Who's where



Justin S. Fried, AICP

was recently selected as a Detroit Revitalization Fellow and has joined Jefferson East, Inc., as Corridor Revitalization Director. He previously worked as a regional planner at ABAG (2008–2012) and the City of San Jose (2006–2008). He holds a Master of Science in Community and Regional

Planning from the University of Texas at Austin and a BA in International Relations and Mathematics from Brown University.



Mark Sawicki has been appointed Community and Economic Development Director for the City of Vallejo. He had been Economic Development and Housing Manager at the City of San Carlos for six years. He holds a Master's in Public Policy from UC Berkeley and a BS in Finance from New York University. Sawicki has

served as a member of the City of Berkeley's Housing Advisory Commission for the past four years. ■

Towers of wood

The New York Times, September 24, 2013

Henry Fountain, <http://nyti.ms/18WjyWE>

“Constructing tall buildings largely with wood as an environmentally friendlier alternative to steel and concrete has received a boost from Chicago-based Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. [The firm] has developed a structural system that uses columns and thick slabs laminated from smaller pieces of wood. A report this May showed how the system could be used to build a 42-story residential tower with a lower carbon footprint than a conventional structure. With the SOM system, about 70 percent of the structural material is wood; most of the rest, including the foundation, is concrete. See *Timber Tower Research Project*, May 6, 2013, <http://bit.ly/14EMiWE>

“Wood high-rises could help solve the growing worldwide problem of providing adequate housing to billions of people while also addressing climate change. Production of steel and concrete produces significant amounts of carbon dioxide, while wood holds the carbon from CO₂ removed from the atmosphere through photosynthesis. Few modern tall wooden buildings have been built around the world. Constructing more and taller towers will require changes in building [and fire] codes — most of which limit wood structures to four stories or fewer — and construction methods.”

Portland Loo for Seattle’s Pioneer Square must wait

Puget Sound Business Journal, September 19, 2013

Marc Stiles,

<http://bit.ly/16cZ0PI>

“A Seattle City Council committee on September 17 backed a proposal to build a 130-foot-tall office and apartment building in the city’s Pioneer Square district — 30 feet taller than what would normally be allowed. The developer, Seattle-based Urban Visions, would have to buy and install a public restroom in order to build that high. But Urban Visions CEO Greg Smith [decided] he’d be better off building a shorter, all-office building. Smith said he’d make more money with the shorter office building because it would be much simpler than developing a building with apartments and commercial space. And he wouldn’t have to spend an estimated \$250,000 to buy and install the loo. The city of Portland, Ore., developed the loo in question. Made up of a simple flush toilet, these loos are less costly than high-tech toilets that Seattle bought a decade ago for \$1 million each. Those became havens for criminal activity, and Seattle ended up selling them for \$2,500 each.”



The Portland Loo.

Photo: City of Portland, Oregon.

Designing cities for women

The Atlantic Cities, September 16, 2013

Clare Foran, <http://bit.ly/196Tom2> • In a 1999 study, officials in Vienna, Austria, found that “Women used the city’s network of sidewalks, bus routes, subway lines, and streetcars more frequently [than men] and for a myriad reasons [including] splitting their time between work and family commitments like taking care of children and elderly parents. Recognizing this, city planners began ‘gender mainstreaming’ to improve pedestrian mobility and access to public transit [as a first step to give] men and women equal access to city resources. So far, it’s working. Before a project gets under-

way, data is collected to determine how different groups of people use public space.

“Planners risk reinforcing stereotypes in attempting to characterize how men and women use city space [and] they are opting for the label ‘Fair Shared City’ instead of gender mainstreaming. [Whatever it’s called,] mainstreaming has left its mark. What began as a [study of] how men and women use city space differently, has become a way of changing the structure and fabric of the city so that different groups of people can coexist. Now it’s about bringing people into spaces where they [once] felt they had no right to be.”

(Other top stories continues on next page)

Singapore's planning challenges

The New York Times, Sept 25, 2013

Calvin Yang, <http://nyti.ms/15uiAAM>

“With projections for 1.5 million more people in the next 15 years, Singapore’s options are as limited as its space. So Singapore is considering building underground to create an extensive, interconnected city, with shopping malls, transportation hubs, public spaces, pedestrian links, and cycling lanes. Height restrictions imposed on areas around air bases and airports have prevented developers from building taller projects. And there is a limit to how much land can be reclaimed from the ocean — so far it accounts for a fifth of Singapore’s space, but it is vulnerable to rising sea levels caused by climate change.

“The squeeze has led to the closing of several old estates and military camps to make way for residential and industrial developments. Now Singapore is going further, beginning work on a huge underground oil bunker. When completed, it will free about 150 acres of land. Another project is the Underground Science City, with 40 interconnected



Boat Quay, Singapore. Photo: Chensiyuan via Wikimedia Commons.

caverns for data centers and research and development labs for the biomedical and life sciences industries. The science center, with an estimated 50 acres to be 30 stories below a science park in western Singapore, would house as many as 4,200 scientists and researchers.”

EPA to expand Federal Clean Water Act jurisdiction

Perkins Coie Update, September 24, 2013

<http://bit.ly/18XkABX> • “The prolonged controversy over the Clean Water Act’s reach may be coming to a dramatic head. On September 17, the Environmental Protection Agency announced the release of a draft scientific report finding that all of the nation’s streams and most of its wetlands are physically, chemically, and biologically interconnected with navigable waters, such as rivers and lakes.

“The draft report, *Connectivity of Streams and Wetlands to Downstream Waters: A Review and Synthesis of the Scientific Evidence*, <http://1.usa.gov/19Cs110>, is intended to provide the scientific basis for upcoming regulations defining the key term ‘waters of the United States’ under the Clean Water

Act. EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers have jointly submitted the proposed regulations, which have yet to be made public, to the Office of Management and Budget for interagency review.

“It is widely anticipated that the regulations will seek a dramatic expansion of federal permitting authority under the Act, which has been significantly curtailed by recent Supreme Court decisions. As a result, the draft report will surely trigger intense scrutiny and debate over the proper boundaries of Clean Water Act jurisdiction. Comments on the draft report are due by November 6, 2013.”

(Other top stories continues on next page)

Opinions okay, but no factoids “Simply put, I do my best to keep errors of fact off the letters page; when one does run, a correction is published. Saying ‘there’s no sign humans have caused climate change’ is not stating an opinion, it’s asserting a factual inaccuracy. —Paul Thornton, *The Los Angeles Times*’ letters editor, <http://lat.ms/GLLfMg>

Insurers are concerned; governments should be, too

Swiss Re Group, <http://bit.ly/1br1HhC> • “The world’s sprawling cities are centers of economic activity and growth. But when a natural disaster hits a densely populated area, the effects can be catastrophic. A new Swiss Re study (September 2013) looks at the human and economic risks faced by urban communities around the globe.

“For the first time in human history, more people live in cities than in rural areas. Many of these metropolitan areas are threatened by floods, storms, earthquakes, and other natural hazards. As people continue to move to the cities and businesses invest locally, more lives and assets concentrate in disaster-prone areas. Strengthening the resilience of these communities is therefore becoming a matter of urgency.

“*Mind the risk: A global ranking of cities under threat from natural disasters* (PDF, 5.1 MB,) is both a conversation starter and a call for action. The report provides a global risk index comparing the human and economic exposure of 616 cities around the world. Together, these are home to 1.7 billion people and produce a combined GDP of \$35 trillion, half of the world’s total economic output. Amsterdam-Rotterdam, Los Angeles, and New York all feature in the top 10 cities with the highest loss potential.”

“*Mind the risk* is a basis for local decision-makers, the insurance industry, and the broader public to promote dialogue on both fronts and work towards making cities truly resilient.”

The Swiss Re Group is a leading wholesale provider of reinsurance, insurance, and other insurance-based forms of risk transfer. It celebrated its 150th anniversary this year.

Water footprints. “It takes 22.8 gallons of water to produce, package, and ship a single egg. A pound of beef requires 183 gallons. By contrast, strawberries come in at 3.6 gallons per cup, and it takes only 1.3 gallons of water to produce a tomato. Perhaps people would think more about water if it were priced differently.”—Cornelia Dean, reviewing “Taking on Water,” by Wendy J. Pabich, <http://nyti.ms/19vf3si>

Lake Tahoe development procedures will change

Los Angeles Times, September 15 and October 12, 2013

Julie Cart, <http://lat.ms/19W4PxS> • “California and Nevada have long harbored competing visions of how best to prosper from Lake Tahoe’s stunning natural beauty while preserving the lake’s deep-azure color and remarkable clarity. Even the dispute [that ended on October 12 with Governor Brown signing SB 630] was contentious.”

The Tahoe Regional Planning Compact is a bilateral agreement between the States of Nevada and California to regulate development in the Lake Tahoe basin. An agreement between and jointly announced by the Governors of both States on May 14, 2013, and covering implementation of the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact, is to be codified in legislation in Nevada and California. Among other things, SB 630 declares that the State of Nevada has agreed to repeal its 2011 statutory provisions requiring its withdrawal from the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact and proposing a change in the voting structure of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency was created more than four decades ago to oversee development at Lake Tahoe. Congress ratified the compact between the two states in 1969.

“Passage of SB 630 ended years of hard bargaining over future development in the region. A revised plan will allow higher density and taller structures. [Under SB 630,] height restrictions on the foreshore remain in place to protect views, and higher density can occur only in already identified town centers. [Also] under the bill, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency must now consider the economic impact of its decisions.”

The Sierra Club asserted in the *Yodeler* on August 9 that SB 630 would “set a precedent of making new, additional development surrounding the lake equal in priority to protecting Tahoe’s environment. And California would cave in to Nevada’s demand to shift most land-use planning authority from TRPA to the counties bordering the lake.” theyodeler.org/?p=8076

The text of SB 630 (Chapter 762, Statutes of 2013) is available at <http://bit.ly/15vB2OU>

(Other top stories continues on next page)

Human influence on climate clear, UN panel endorses ceiling on global emissions

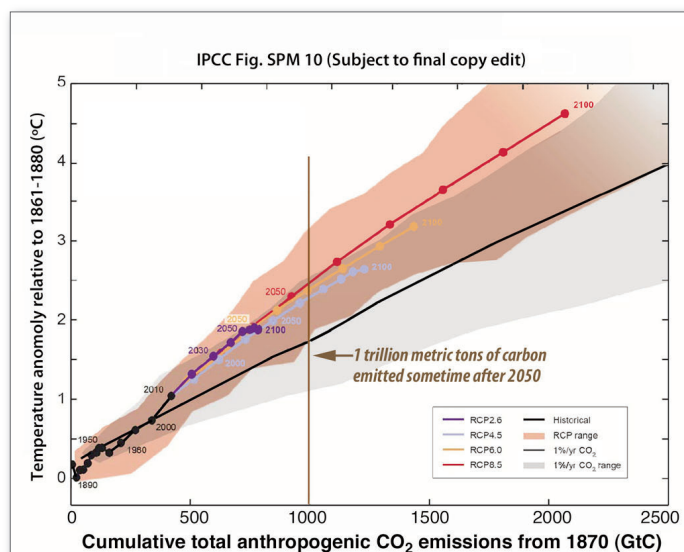
The following was assembled from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Bloomberg News*, and the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*.

Justin Gillis, <http://nyti.ms/15XMKjI> and <http://nyti.ms/1hxx74e> • Daryl Fears, <http://wapo.st/1gfaELu>

• Jim Efstathiou Jr., <http://bloom.bg/1dny1Rp> • IPCC, <http://bit.ly/1aunktE>

That the planet is warming at an accelerated pace is not at doubt — the past three decades have been the hottest since 1850 — and that humans are causing it can be asserted with 95 percent certainty. That's what the world's top climate scientists said as they "formally embraced an upper limit on greenhouse gases." If planetary warming is to be kept below 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit (2 degrees Celsius) above the level of preindustrial times, then "no more than one trillion metric tons of carbon can be burned and the resulting gases released into the atmosphere." Otherwise the planet faces irreversible climatic changes. Carbon concentrations in the atmosphere have increased 40 percent since then, and carbon, methane, and nitrous oxide are at levels unprecedented in at least 800,000 years.

Released on September 27, the Fifth Assessment Report (AR 5) was prepared by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, an international group of scientists appointed by the UN. The IPCC comprises 800 scientists from around the globe, including workers at agencies such as NASA. The scientists arrived at their conclusions by drawing on more than 9,000 publications. They considered more than 54,000 comments from about 1,050 people in 52 nations. In this report (their fifth since 1990), the scientists warn that the trillion ton target is likely to be exceeded in a matter of decades unless steps are taken soon to reduce emissions. It is a "virtual certainty" (a probability of 99 to 100 percent) that climate changes already under way are likely to accelerate, and that human activity is the main cause. "If emissions continue at a rapid pace, sea level rise by the end of the 21st century could be as much as three feet." The report discarded "a string of published papers suggesting a worst-case rise closer to five feet."



Source: IPCC WGI AR5, page SPM-36, 27 September 2013.

"The scientists had wanted to specify a carbon budget that gave the best chance of keeping temperatures at the 3.6 degree target or below. The original budget is in there. But the adopted language gives countries the possibility of a much larger carbon pie, if they are willing to tolerate a greater risk of exceeding the temperature target. It remains to be seen if the carbon cap will become a major negotiating point when climate diplomats convene for their next big meeting this November in Warsaw. At the very least, the scientists have created a new yardstick by which any future foot-dragging on climate can be measured."

Monsanto will profit from climate change

Mother Jones, October 9, 2013

Maggie Severns, <http://bit.ly/1bYzqg5> • "Global warming could mean big business for Monsanto, which [is] purchasing the climate change-oriented startup Climate Corporation for \$930 million. Agriculture, which uses roughly 40 percent of the world's land, will be deeply affected by climate change. Here are five ways Monsanto has been gearing up to sell its wares to farmers adapting to the change.

1. **Data to help farmers grow crops in a changing climate.** Climate Corporation sells detailed weather and soil information to farmers.

2. **Insurance for when it's too hot, cold, dry, wet, or otherwise extreme outside.** Climate Corporation sells both federally subsidized crop insurance and supplemental plans that pay out additional benefits when crops go awry.
3. **Drought-resistant corn.** Monsanto explains that 'climate changes will require agriculture to be more resilient.'
4. The company is piloting genetically modified **cotton that needs less water to grow.**
5. **Crops for biofuel.** Whether ethanol is a 'green' fuel is debatable. But since 1993, Monsanto has sold high-yield, highly fermentable corn seed specifically designed to be made into ethanol." ■

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