

# NORTHERN NEWS



American Planning Association  
California Chapter  
Northern  
Making Great Communities Happen

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

July/August 2014

## Old meets new as mixed-use campus opens in Oakland

*Lyn Hikida*

Page 1



The Sunset District, San Francisco  
Photo: Hugh Graham, June 2014



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**JULY/AUGUST 2014**

## Old meets new as mixed-use campus opens in Oakland

By Lyn Hikida

Oakland's historic St. Joseph's complex was built in 1912 as a convalescent home for low-income seniors and was operated by Little Sisters of the Poor. In the late 1970s, the property was converted into commercial office space, and significant modifications were made to the interior with minimal regard for historic preservation. In 1984, the City of Oakland designated St. Joseph's a local historic landmark. Nonprofit BRIDGE Housing acquired the site in 2006 with the goal of creating a multi-generational affordable housing development.

The property is located at the edge of an area predominantly zoned commercial/industrial and bordered by medium-density housing. Restoring the site to residential use has helped alleviate land use conflicts between the residential and industrial edges in this area. It also continues the trend of converting underused and vacant infill sites to high-density residential uses, which create a safer environment with adequate lighting and enhanced street level activity after business hours.

In collaboration with architecture firm Van Meter Williams Pollack, BRIDGE's overall concept for the site design of the St. Joseph's campus was to create two distinct but integrated affordable housing developments for seniors and families, without any physical barriers marking the boundary of each development.

The first phase of the project — St. Joseph's Senior Apartments — converted the five-story historic main building into 84 apartments for low-income seniors and 3,200 square feet of commercial space. Construction of the \$37.8 million project was completed in 2011. On-site amenities include a spacious community room on the ground floor, sunny lobby areas with seating, and a senior garden. The lobby hallway features a brilliant mural painted by the Eastside Arts Alliance, a neighborhood arts and cultural organization. The rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the main building, which included seismic upgrades, complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties.

Directly adjacent to the senior property is the second phase, Terraza Palmera at St. Joseph's, which offers 62 one-, two-, and three-bedroom affordable rental apartments for families with annual incomes ranging from \$27,600 to \$55,200 for a four-person household (30 to 60 percent of Area Median Income). Fifty-eight of the units are in a new four-story podium building with a subterranean garage. An additional four units were built as adaptive reuses of the

historic laundry building and smokehouse. In the landscaped courtyard adjacent to the new building, the historic guardhouse was restored and retained as multipurpose community space.

*(continued on page 32)*



# WHAT'S INSIDE

**Old meets new as mixed-use campus opens in Oakland**  
*By Lyn Hikida*

Historic St. Joseph's complex adapted for affordable housing. [Page 1](#)

**Meet a local planner.**

*Siân Llewellyn, AICP*, interviews UCSF's Tammy Chan, senior campus planner, and Sharon Priest, AICP, education facilities planner. [Page 3](#)

**Time to get ready for AICP exam**

Tentative dates are August 30, September 20, October 11 and 25, and November 8. [Page 5](#)

**Who's where**

Jonathan Berlin, Jennifer Piozet, Seleta Reynolds, and Theresa Wallace. [Page 6](#)

**Our 2015 Chapter Conference logo**

Designed by Circlepoint's Amie Krager to showcase Oakland's skyline and roots. [Page 7](#)

**Board member wanted**

Northern Section Board seeks a Regional Activity Co-Coordinator (RAC) for APA in Monterey Bay area. [Page 7](#)

**Greening Silicon Valley roofs**

*By Lola Torney and Marco Arguelles*  
Green roofs for Samsung's new semiconductor headquarters and Facebook's new west campus. [Page 8](#)

**Is the cost of Sacramento's downtown makeover too high?**

*By Rachel Dovey, NEXT CITY*  
Luxury high rises displace low-income residents. [Page 9](#)

**CPF seeks donations to help planning students**

To donate an item, please fill out the form at <http://bit.ly/1qdquhr>. [Page 11](#)

**My Oakland**

*Erika J. Sawyer, AICP*, interviews Rosie Dudley — urban designer, Oakland resident, and artist. [Page 12](#)

**Further your career this summer!**

Stay up to date on new planning policies, laws, and practices at UC Davis Extension and earn AICP | CM credits. [Page 13](#)

**Northern Section's 2014 International Planning tour**

Five pages of photos from Central and Eastern Europe. [Page 14](#)

**Bulk and density controls go only so FAR**

*By John F. Livingstone, AICP*  
FAR doesn't guarantee sensitivity to surrounding neighborhoods and buildings. [Page 19](#)

**Plan-it Sustainably**

*By Charisma Acey, Ph.D., and Scott T. Edmondson, MAAUP*  
Testing APA's Sustainability Accreditation Criteria on 11 Bay Area cities. [Page 20](#)

**More fallout from Chicago floods of April 2013**

*By Gail Sullivan, Washington Post*  
Insurers sue municipalities for inaction in the face of known flooding risks. [Page 21](#)

**Norcal roundup** — *Assembled by Jennifer Piozet*

Large electric fleet added by Bay Area governments  
• VMT to replace LOS metric under CEQA • Plan Bay Area lawsuits • PA flood control stymied • Huge wins for Bay Area open space • Cloverdale drops Asti from expansion plans • Century 21 dome granted historical status • Do higher land costs = higher housing densities and prices? • Milpitas ruling may delay BART extension  
• Back to downtown for *Mercury News*. [Page 22](#)

**California** — *Assembled by Jennifer Piozet*

FRA moves CAHSR ahead • Cap-and-trade funds for HSR challenged • DOT okays HSR land acquisition along planned route • Law can't prohibit living in cars  
• No fracking in Santa Cruz County • Will Angelenos leave their cars? • It's now a crime to waste water in California. [Page 25](#)

**U.S.** — *Assembled by Jennifer Piozet*

Reinvent Miami-Dade infrastructure or lose *trillions*  
• Proposal to simplify parking signs • U.S. Military needs climate plan deadlines • U.S. rental crisis • Planners, check these 21 charts • D.C. bans plastic take-out containers • New life for Boston's Downtown Crossing • Arizona cities may face water shortage • Reno offers home for tech-start-ups. [Page 27](#)

**World** — *Assembled by Jennifer Piozet*

Beijing's population will eclipse Australia's • Transport planned around electronic tricycles • Will China act quickly on climate change? • Pacific garbage patch could be cleaned in 10 years • Germany sets solar power record. [Page 30](#)

**Board member directory and newsletter information**  
[Page 33](#) ■

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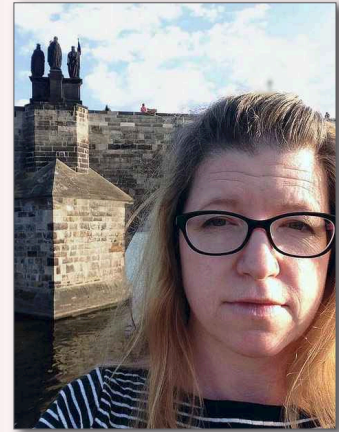
## Meet a local planner

By Siân Llewellyn, AICP

This month's *Meet a local planner* column interviews two planners who work for the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF):



**Tammy Chan**, Senior Planner,  
Camp Planning



**Sharon Priest, AICP**,  
Education Facilities Planner

**Tell us a little bit about yourself.** Where did you go to school, and tell us about your career to date.

**Tammy Chan:** I went to planning school in Tucson, worked for the USGS while I was in school, and shifted to the private sector after graduation. I consulted in Tucson and Southern California, mostly for the private sector on development projects and master plan developments. That evolved into the real estate consulting world. I knew I wanted to get back into planning, so when I moved to the Bay Area, I ended up at the City of San Francisco — launching my environmental planning/CEQA career. I was with the SF Planning Department for eight years, working through the public CEQA process for development projects and City Area Plans. A big part of that experience was getting to know the city code, how to get things accomplished through the code, and working cooperatively with the various city agencies and the development community. I then moved back to the private sector for a stint at EDAAW doing environmental consulting. I have now been at UCSF for three years.

**Sharon Priest:** I have planning degrees from the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign) and the University of Pennsylvania. I started out at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, where I worked on the disaster response teams in Chicago (Mississippi flooding, 1993) and Los Angeles (Northridge earthquake, 1994). I moved to San Francisco because it was an exciting place to be in the late 90s, but I didn't have a job initially, so I worked in real estate to start. I only had a little bit of experience in traditional planning when I began at SMWM (now Perkins + Will), but I

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Meet a local planner (continued from previous page)

worked my way up over seven years. Then I did a short stint at BMS Design Group, which is where I started my University of California planning work. After gaining UC experience on a project for UC San Diego, I moved to UCSF eight years ago. The UC system has a very specific set of rules, policies, and procedures for planning and funding, specific to their campuses. My role there is actually capital planning, which is UC-speak for the connection between physical and fiscal planning.

**Tell us about a recent project.**

**TC:** We just rolled out our Draft Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) in May. That was a huge effort over four years. The Environmental Impact Report will be out later this year, and following a 60-day public review, the documents will be submitted to the Board of Regents for consideration and approval. The LRDP governs physical growth of the institution over the next two decades, through 2035. Plans call for a new hospital addition at Parnassus Heights, a doubling of housing at our Mission Bay and Parnassus Heights sites, and completion of the next stages at Mission Bay developing modern research, teaching and clinical facilities, and new open space.

**SP:** The LRDP reflects UCSF's current mission and marks the university's 150th anniversary. We considered the potential revolutions in health, education, and science across all of our campus sites including Parnassus Heights, Mission Bay, Mount Zion, and Mission Center. The 10-year capital plan reflects the goals of the LRDP and develops a funding strategy for the projects that bring the plan to life. Planning for an institution is complicated, and our sites are embedded within dense urban communities; so while the details may be different, much of the planning theory remains the same. Our "public" includes both the University community and the greater citywide community.

**Do you see a difference between more traditional planning and the planning you are doing for an institution like UCSF?**

**SP:** UCSF is a research university focused on Health Sciences, and unlike other UC campuses, there are no undergraduate programs. Planning for research facilities can be different than planning for traditional didactic teaching facilities with different funding sources and performance criteria. Meetings with faculty are interesting because often the faculties are internationally renowned scientists. They require the same rigor in planning analysis that they expect from their own studies. In other words, they want to see evidence for a conclusion and won't respond as

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Meet a local planner (continued from previous page)

well to the touchy-feely stuff that we planners sometimes use to make a point. Here's an interesting observation — I didn't know, but two of the three people I spoke to about other non-planning work at UCSF were trained as planners. We are everywhere!

**TC:** Having been at UCSF for just three years, I compare the university institution to my time at the city of San Francisco. At both the city and at UCSF you get your own projects — things you follow through on and shepherd through the system. One of the benefits I see at UCSF is you get to see the whole process; whereas at the city, you are only the environmental planner, or the permit planner for the project, and you don't see the project from start to finish. It is also incredibly rewarding to work with the researchers and scientists at UCSF. We're getting a preview of the future of science and healthcare as well as potential areas of growth. That's hard to beat.

**What is your advice to planners starting out?**

**SP:** I would say keep your eyes open to new possibilities. I had no idea I would be here at UCSF when I was working on my masters in city planning at the University of Pennsylvania. Take time to do your own thing. I love to travel: I've just come back from Berlin and Prague with family. Traveling with my six-year old is much different from when I was just out of college!

**TC:** I agree. My career so far has shown me a wide variety of things planners can do. Planning touches on many aspects; it might take some time before you find your area of focus, and there can be many paths before you get there. I also agree that it's good to have interests outside of work; you can't plan in a bubble. One of my hobbies is hiking, and I love getting out there!

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

**Time to get ready for AICP exam**

The Fall 2014 AICP exam prep workshop will be held on Saturdays at San Jose State University. Tentative dates are August 30, September 20, October 11 and 25, and November 8.

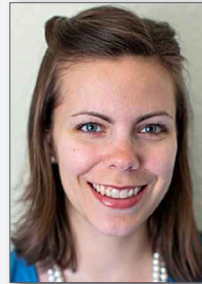
Guest lecturers returning from last year may include Russ Leavitt, Kimberly Brouseau, Al Savay, and Robert Pittman. Those interested in taking the course, studying effectively, and passing the exam to become an AICP member please contact Donald W. Bradley, Ph.D, at [Dr.DonBradley@comcast.net](mailto:Dr.DonBradley@comcast.net)



## Who's where



**Jonathan Berlin**, an Associate Environmental Planner at Rincon Consultants, has relocated to Rincon's Oakland office, where he serves as a lead analyst and project manager for trails and open space planning projects. Berlin also specializes in CEQA/NEPA review and noise impact studies. He holds a Master in Environmental Science and Management (MESM) from UC Santa Barbara and a BA in Journalism from the University of Maryland.



**Jennifer Piozet**, Associate Editor of APA California *Northern News*, is now a Planner II with the City of San Jose. She holds a Master of Urban Planning from San Jose State University and a BA in Art, also from SJSU. Piozet's past roles include Water Resources Planning Intern for the Alameda County Water District, and Public Programming Intern for SPUR San Jose.

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**Seleta Reynolds** is general manager of the Los Angeles Department of Transportation effective August 11. Reynolds' nomination by Mayor Eric Garcetti was unanimously approved by the Los Angeles City Council on July 1. Most recently, Reynolds was the Section Leader for San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's Livable Streets program. She holds a Bachelor of History from Brown University.



**Theresa Wallace** has been promoted to Associate in LSA's Berkeley office. She currently manages the *New Facilities EIR* for Children's Hospital and Research Center Oakland and the *1601 Mariposa Street Mixed-Use Project EIR* for Related California and the city of San Francisco. Wallace joined LSA in 2005. She has a BA in Environmental Studies from UC Santa Cruz. ■

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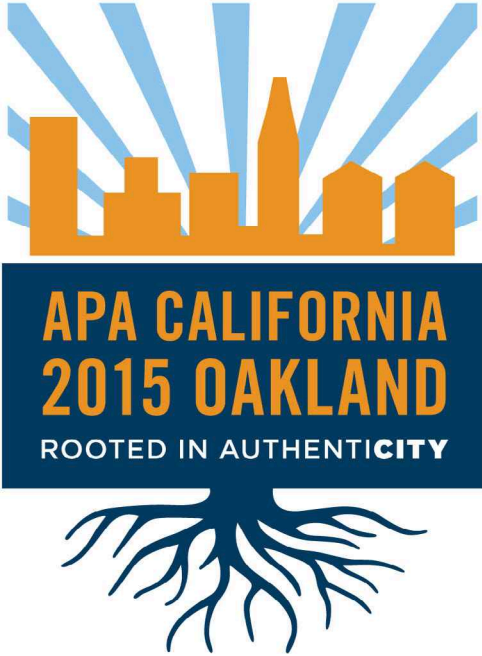


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## Our 2015 Chapter Conference logo



**APA CALIFORNIA**  
**2015 OAKLAND**  
 ROOTED IN AUTHENTICITY

APA Northern California will be hosting the state's 2015 planning conference in Oakland. The theme for the conference, *Rooted in AuthenticITY*, was developed with the active and enthusiastic participation of the conference Local Host Committee. During a subsequent logo competition held by the committee, 10 people submitted designs. The committee selected this logo by Amie Krager, a member of Circlepoint's creative team in Oakland. It reinforces the conference theme by showing the Oakland skyline while emphasizing the city's solid roots. The colors communicate a sense of pride, and rays symbolize the community's potential and growth.

## Board member wanted

Would you like to be more involved in APA and give back to your profession? Are you an APA member living or working in Monterey, San Benito, or Santa Cruz counties? Then you should look into the Monterey Bay Regional Activity Co-Coordinator (RAC) position, currently vacant. RAC directors are automatically members of and serve on the Section Board.

If you qualify and are interested, please contact Section Director Jeff Baker at [Jeff.Baker@dublin.ca.gov](mailto:Jeff.Baker@dublin.ca.gov). For detailed information on the RAC duties, see page 11, §4.7.18, of the Northern Section Bylaws, <http://bit.ly/1mVz1BI>



# Greening Silicon Valley roofs

By Lola Torney and Marco Arguelles

This past April, SPUR San Jose hosted a lunchtime forum facilitated by SPUR's Laura Tam. Presenters Scott Birnbaum and Heather Wiggins of NBBJ presented on Samsung's new headquarters in north San Jose, and Greg Sobotka of Gehry Partners and Rayna DeNiord of CMG Landscape Architecture spoke about the design of the new Facebook west campus in Menlo Park. Both new offices are incorporating green roof technology into their designs.

Many Bay Area buildings are converting their roofs to incorporate gardens. Green roofs can reduce heating and air conditioning needs, storm water runoff, and the "heat island" effect, as well as help improve air quality. Marco Arguelles, a Master's planning student at San Jose State University, devised the event to showcase how green roofs are being applied in Silicon Valley, and how tech companies are being more sustainable with their new campuses.

The forum showcased two different visions for green roofs.

Samsung's project is 10 stories high, with three levels of parks and open space incorporated into the building. The first level will be mostly open to the public with park benches and meandering pathways. The two other green levels (on the fourth and seventh floors) will feature many smaller, private workspaces, several meeting rooms, and open kitchens to invite employees to take a break or meet over coffee.

Facebook is building one massive park with various types of vegetation in the different sections of the roof that will cover the one-story building currently under construction southwest of Facebook's existing campus.

The Facebook team from CMG Landscape Architecture was inspired by musical notes, wind patterns, and dance. They designed a large, circular pathway around the roof with several meeting places or private work areas of different sizes that branch off of the main path. Each section of the roof will feature different types of plants and pathway materials. Part of the roof will slant downward into the floor below to allow for natural lighting, which would also increase energy efficiency.

Two major themes arose during the forum: the logistics for design, and the companies' rationale for incorporating green roofs into their designs.

**Logistics:** Both design teams had to calculate the large amount of weight each roof had to hold. Facebook had to figure out the logistics of getting fully-grown trees onto the roof. Both firms made sure to use native, drought-tolerant plants and smart water-saving technologies in order to facilitate water conservation.

**Rationale:** Each company decided to add green roofs, not just to reduce its carbon footprint, but also to compete for talent.

Adding green roofs was seen as a way to attract and retain talented tech employees by making the work experience more enjoyable.

While this forum focused on two major tech companies' efforts, it was easy to see the various ways to build or convert a building's roof (or several floors) into its own park. We're hoping to see different sectors (in addition to tech companies) begin to install or convert to green roofs!

*Laurel (Lola) Torney, a planning intern with the County of Santa Clara, is currently finishing her MUP studies at San Jose State University (SJSU). Marco Arguelles, a transportation intern for the City of Menlo Park, is a second year MUP student at SJSU. You can reach the authors at [lstorney@gmail.com](mailto:lstorney@gmail.com) and [marcoarguelles21@gmail.com](mailto:marcoarguelles21@gmail.com) ■*



Samsung Semiconductor Inc. Headquarters. Photo courtesy Samsung Semiconductor Inc.

# Is the cost of Sacramento's downtown makeover too high?

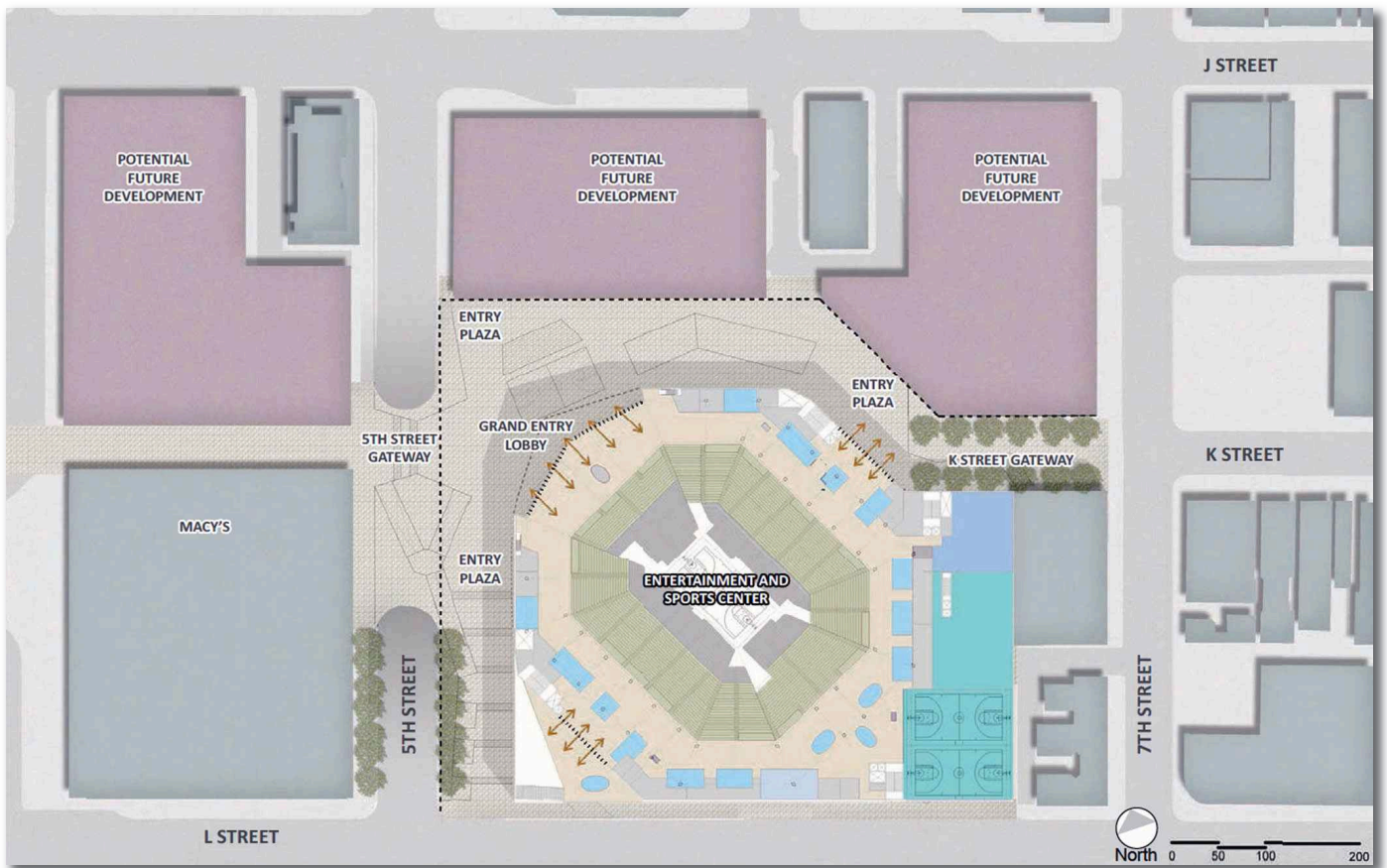
By Rachel Dovey, *NEXT CITY*

Many U.S. cities have glaring economic divides that present geographically, but in Sacramento, this inequality is characterized by two downtowns. There's the state capitol, a 9-to-5 employer of government officials and six-figure lobbyists marked by sleek mid-rises with tinted windows. It draws around 100,000 cars every day and empties via onramps every night. But Sacramento's other downtown is still occupied when the streetlights go on. Scattered among government offices are a collection of historic buildings with cracked windows and rusty fire escapes. Many of them, like the Marshall Hotel on 7th and L, house the city's poorest residents. At least they did. With affordable housing a growing national concern and downtown revivals a media darling, the northern California city is grappling with the promise of luxury apartment high-rises amid the displacement of low-income residents.

On June 27th, a settlement between Sacramento's state and city governments, their respective headquarters a half-mile apart, paved the way for redevelopment in the historic core. But as officials plan mixed-use projects and developers talk high-rises in the local paper, housing advocates are worried about that second downtown — the one that stands to be displaced.

Last [month's] settlement funneled \$1 million into Sacramento's coffers. Since Gov. Brown seized redevelopment funds in a controversial attempt to balance the California budget in 2011, lawsuits like this are winning some of the money back. The money will help fund an entire block of new building on K Street, including apartments and a concert hall.

This is only the latest in a string of proposed Sacramento makeovers. A six-square-block arena to



Conceptual Site Plan, Sacramento Entertainment and Sports Center and related development EIR, AECOM, April 2013

*(continued on next page)*

house the Sacramento Kings was approved earlier this year. And a 240-acre rail yard will become a mixed-use project once its soil is decontaminated. With California's stalled construction industry finally accelerating, the city newspaper recently ran a story examining sites of potential high-rises that could mark Sacramento's "becoming a major metropolis." Developers surveyed spoke of luxury units and "market-rate housing that [would attract] a population with a disposable income."

Meanwhile, the downtown zip code has one of the lowest median incomes in Sacramento according to Census Bureau numbers — \$29,000 compared to \$50,000 citywide. Twenty-eight percent of its residents are below the national poverty line compared to 20 percent across the city, and nearly all of them rent their homes.

A large portion (15 percent) of the city's below-market-rate housing is also concentrated centrally. But more is needed according to Darryl Rutherford with the Sacramento Housing Alliance. Rutherford points to the city's housing element, which calls for 8,411 more low-income units to be zoned. He also references a study

conducted by the California Housing Partnership Corporation that found a shortfall of more than 50,000 affordable homes for the county's bottom earners. With transit in place, service jobs in the capitol, and densities high enough to accommodate large subsidized developments, SHA wants to keep the area affordable for its current residents.

"The city can't just plan for higher-income households and then push low-income earners out to the fringe where housing is going to be less expensive," Rutherford says. "It has to be equitable to all income levels."

His argument cuts both ways. Along with environmental advocates, SHA recently filed a lawsuit against the city's arena project, stating that it doesn't adequately consider the area's current residents. An irate columnist for the *Sacramento Bee* lambasted the move.

"[T]o provide true diversity in housing in Sacramento's downtown core, what is needed is not more affordable housing," Marcos Breton wrote on June 29. "What is needed is more market-rate housing."

According to Tom Pace, the city's long-range planning manager, both are in demand.

"There's a need for more housing in the downtown in general of all kinds," he says. "It's the largest employment center in the region. Lots of people live in other parts of the region and commute in by car, which creates all kinds of problems with emissions, pollution, and traffic congestion."

The K Street project will include a mix of affordable and market-rate units, he says.

In California, regional governments tend to match job and housing growth in a way that is far from exact. In the Bay Area at least, the very figures that determine how much housing a city needs are often tempered by stakeholder input.

So it's difficult to say which is true about Sacramento's core. But amid fears and hopes of gentrification, the Marshall Hotel at least is a bleak example of displacement.

The brick building sits next to the future arena site. Until this year, it was a single-room occupancy (SRO) unit, meaning that it housed Sacramento's lowest earners, many of them formerly homeless, disabled, and mentally ill, according to SHA.

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All of them were given eviction notices in February. According to a CBS report, the owner plans to convert the Marshall into a high-end boutique hotel.

"The city has a no-net loss policy for SROs," says Pace. "Whenever those facilities are closed, a replacement is opened."

Pace says that more than 100 units at Mercy Housing on 7th and H Street were prepared for the hotel's closure. CBS also reported that many of the tenants were moving to Mercy.

But a call to Mercy Housing reveals that four months later, none of the Marshall tenants has moved in. Several applied, according to spokesperson Rick Sprague, but Mercy has a stricter background policy than the Marshall, and they were all denied because of criminal charges.

"Yesterday was the last day for those residents to move out," Rutherford says. Even though they've been given

stipends to fund first and last month's rent, he says, "only one out of 57 has found a comparable arrangement."

With the hotel's closure, a piece of that second downtown Sacramento disappears. Maybe it will be replaced. Or maybe the city will soon have dozens more homeless people sleeping in its central streets.

*Rachel Dovey is a Santa Rosa resident, a former Annenberg fellow, and a freelance writer. She covers energy, infrastructure, climate change, water, poverty, "and other hopeful/depressing things."*

*This article was originally published in Next City's "The Works" on July 3, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1xtmt8y>. Republished with permission. The Works is made possible with the support of the Surdna Foundation, <http://www.surdna.org> ■*

## CPF seeks donations to help planning students

The California Planning Foundation (CPF) is a non-profit, charitable corporation with the goal of furthering the professional practice of planning in California. We need your help to ensure that young people drawn to planning are able to fund their education. Last year, CPF awarded over 51 scholarships totaling more than \$50,000 to planning students throughout California. Our primary fundraising activity is the annual Frank Wein Scholarship Auction held at the APA California Conference. This year the auction will be held in Anaheim on Monday, September 15, 2014.

We are looking for anything to auction, such as:

- gift basket
- catered dinner
- meal in a restaurant
- weekend at your Tahoe cabin or beach house

- day of consulting services
- career counseling session
- family heirloom that it's time to pass on

We also need:

- planning books
- art work
- movie tickets
- bottles of wine

Every member of APA is a member of CPF, so please help!

To donate an item, please fill out the donation form: <http://bit.ly/1qdquhr> and send to Wendy Grant at (714) 335-5556 or [wgrant@placeworks.com](mailto:wgrant@placeworks.com); or contact Darcy at (510) 874-3110 or [darcy.kremin@urs.com](mailto:darcy.kremin@urs.com) ■

**Don't park your shared car on MY street!** "The SFMTA's endeavor to reserve on-street car parking spaces for car-share vehicles has yielded complaints from some car owners who, ironically, decry the 'privatization' of space currently used to store private cars. But the point some folks seem to be missing is this: No use of public street space is more 'private' than dedicated storage of private individuals' automobiles." —Aaron Bialick, <http://bit.ly/1qjBNVe>

# My Oakland

Erika J. Sawyer, AICP, interviews Rosie Dudley

**Rosie Dudley** has lived in various cities in the Bay Area for 20 years and has called Oakland home for the past 10. She is an urban design associate at PlaceWorks in Berkeley (formerly The Planning Center/DC&E) and is active in Oakland's artist community. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture from UC Berkeley and a Master in City Planning from MIT. When she is not working on urban design and planning projects, Rosie explores Oakland's trails, serves on the Board of the Arts and Craft Cooperative in Berkeley, and works on her own jewelry designs.



**What's your favorite neighborhood?** I love my neighborhood, Outer Rockridge, and I enjoy checking out others. One of my current favorites is KONO — Korea Town/Northgate, where my jewelry studio is located. It's the neighborhood between Telegraph and Uptown.

**As KONO makes a comeback, how does it keep its identity intact?** Oakland's eclectic mix provides an opportunity to celebrate each neighborhood's culture. In this case, the Uptown/KONO area is home to Auto Row; and instead of being displaced by the thriving arts scene, it is merging with artists' studios and galleries. Auto body shops are turning into galleries for First Friday; my studio is in a shop that sells vintage cars and has studio space for artists.

**What is it about Oakland that encourages this connection?** Affordability has a lot to do with it. However, if Oakland's cost of living continues to rise, these areas probably won't be accessible to artists or industrial uses.

**What surprises you most about Oakland?** Its negative reputation. It has so many wonderful neighborhoods with unique features, including natural and cultural amenities, beautiful architecture, and built form. It still surprises me that so many people don't take advantage of it. But with costs rising everywhere in the Bay Area, people are moving here and are excited about what Oakland has to offer.

**Where do you take out-of-town visitors?** Mountain View Cemetery is one of my favorites. It has beautiful mausoleums and views of the entire bay that provide a great sense of the relationship between the bay's cities. Lake Merritt is also a favorite: it's close to downtown, it's an active space, and always has so many types of people using it at all hours of the day.

**How has Oakland changed since you moved here 10 years ago?** It still feels like I recently moved here, because

Oakland is continuously changing. Things that started small, like the 'buy local' movement, are now really vibrant and providing a boost for Oakland. Companies like Oaklandish are now major employers who are committed to finding ways to give back to the community and to keep Oakland unique.

**What will Oakland look like in another five years?** There are many plans underway—including the Broadway Valdez Plan and the West Oakland Specific Plan — that will bring a mixture of housing and retail spaces to accommodate various community needs. There are plans being implemented to provide bike lanes to link neighborhoods and create greater connectivity and safety for bicyclists. There is real momentum to make Oakland a better place to walk and bike, thanks to the work by Bike East Bay and Walk Oakland Bike Oakland, among others.

It'll be exciting to see if businesses and new development along connector streets will take up vacant storefronts and parking lots, and provide the links between established neighborhoods like Broadway and Telegraph. Filling in the missing pieces will make it easier and more enjoyable to walk, bike, or take transit throughout the city.

*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. ■*

## Further your career this summer!

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

**Free Information Sessions:** Participants will receive \$75 off their first Land Use and Environmental Planning or GIS course.

**Land Use and Natural Resources Free Information Session:** Hear from veteran instructor Peter Detwiler and discuss curriculum, certificate requirements, and career opportunities for the Land Use and Environmental Planning Certificate.

**GIS Information Session at Bike Dog Brewery:** Join LUNR instructor and SACOG planner Raef Porter to learn about GIS at UC Davis Extension including the new Introduction to Geographic Information Systems course.

**Development Agreements, Public-Private Partnerships, and Redevelopment 2.0:** This course will cover public-private partnerships and the considerations impacting how cities, counties, and private developers can collaborate on matters involving economic development. *Instructors: William Abbott, Steven Rudolph, and Harriet Steiner.*  
**AICP | CM 6.0**

**Habitat Conservation Planning:** Gain an overview of state and federal endangered species laws and recommendations for best approaches to conservation planning. *Instructors: David Zippin and Brad Norton.* **AICP | CM 6.0**

**Overview of Environmental Statistics:** Designed for those who need to understand statistics but have not recently taken a statistics course, this refresher provides an overview of statistics relevant to environmental issues.

*Instructor: Stacey Hancock.* **AICP | CM 18.0**

**Using GIS to Manage, Analyze, and Promote Sustainability:** Explore opportunities to promote, implement, and manage sustainability projects through the use of GIS. Examine the ability of GIS to analyze climate and environmental trends and identify potential high risk areas. *Instructor: Robert Earle.*  
**AICP | CM 18.0**

**Wetlands Regulation and Mitigation:** Gain an overview of federal and state laws and regulations protecting wetlands and other bodies of water, with a special emphasis on Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. *Instructors: Megan Smith and Michael Vondergeest.* **AICP | CM 18.0**

**Writing for Planners, Engineers, and Policymakers:** Discover how to increase conciseness and clarity of technical documents by learning skills related to audience needs. Acquire practical skills that you can use immediately to prepare high-quality documents. *Instructor: Theresa Amen.*  
**AICP | CM 6.0**

For course details and to enroll, visit [www.extension.ucdavis.edu/land](http://www.extension.ucdavis.edu/land)

Find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/ucdelunr](http://www.facebook.com/ucdelunr) ■

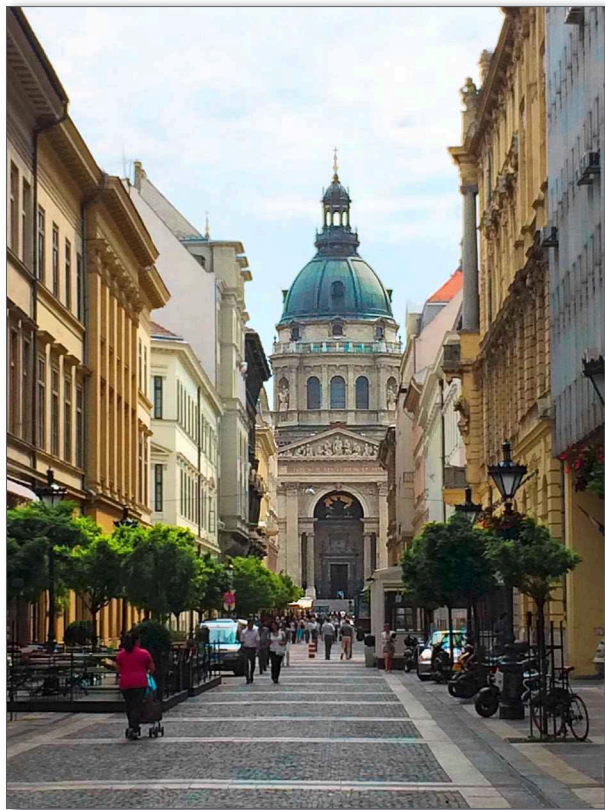
**Barcelona: smart city, smart avenue.** “Those elegant old Modernist lamp posts along Barcelona’s main shopping avenue are about to become communication towers in disguise. By late November, Paseo de Gracia will be fully equipped with sensors to measure noise levels, air quality, wind, pedestrian flow, water quality in the ornamental and drinking fountains, natural light, ground vibrations, and traffic flow. With all those data points and connectivity, the city will be able to remotely regulate and control the environment, ‘calm’ the traffic, reduce energy consumption, and bolster sustainability and efficiency.” —Susan Llewelyn Leach, <http://bit.ly/1mmCqoO>

# 2014 International Planning Tour

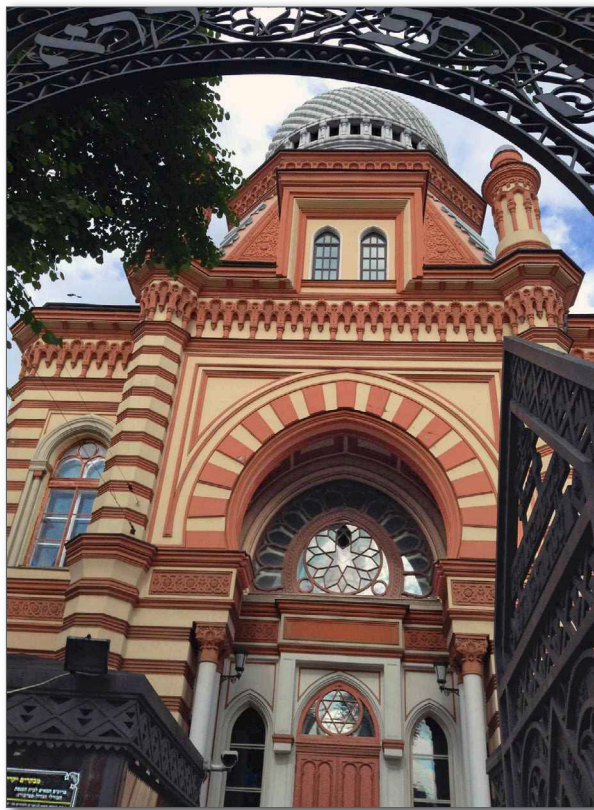
*By Hing Wong, AICP, and Alex Hinds*

June 30th concluded a memorable and successful three-week tour by Northern Section planners, colleagues, and others to Central and Eastern Europe. Of the 27 people on this fifth international planning tour, half took a pre-tour of Prague, Czech Republic. The planning tour began officially in Belgrade, Serbia, and continued to Budapest, Hungary; Krakow, Poland; Tallinn, Estonia; and St. Petersburg and Moscow, Russia. Our group met with planners, architects, economists, and others in each city we visited. Our hosts were extremely generous with their time, especially those who met us on the weekends.

Below is a tiny segment of the hundreds of photos taken on the tour. All of the photos are by Juan Borrelli, AICP, except for two from St. Petersburg. One is by Wendy Cosin, AICP, and our guide, Tatiana Timoshuk, took the group photo.

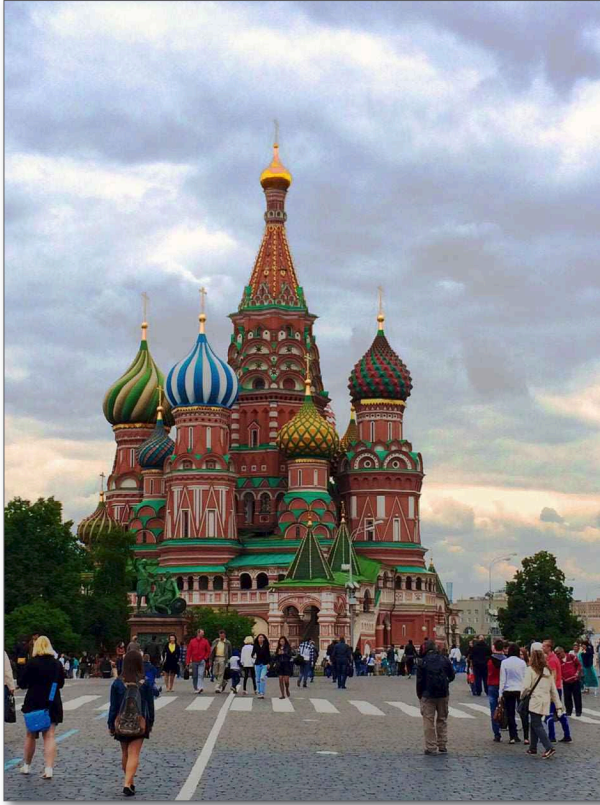


St. Stephen's Basilica, Budapest, is the third largest church in Hungary (1905).



The Grand Choral Synagogue, St. Petersburg, is the second largest in Europe (1893). Photo: Wendy Cosin, AICP.

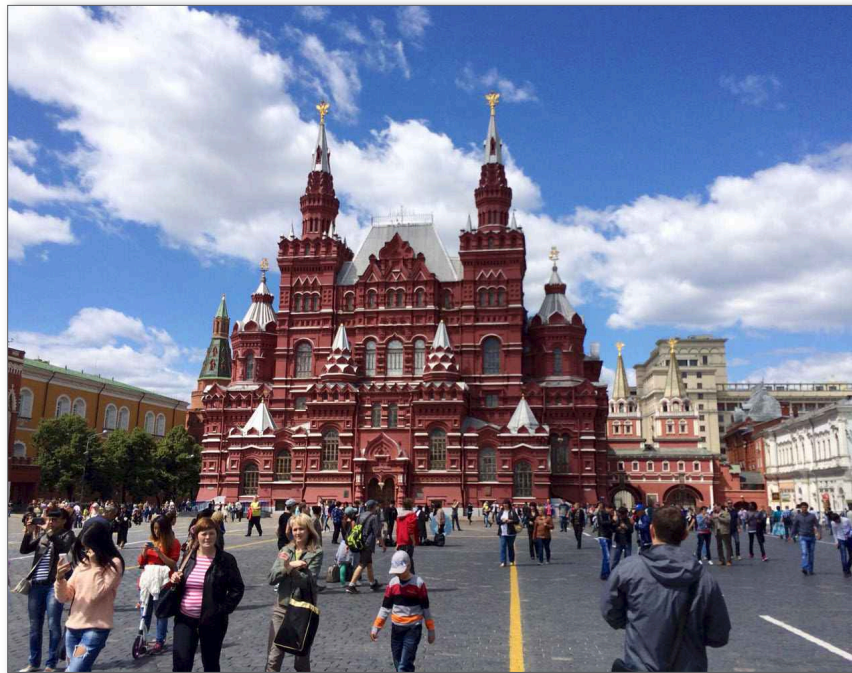
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St. Basil's Cathedral (1555–61), considered a masterpiece of Orthodox art, overlooks Moscow's Red Square.



St. Joseph's Church, Krakow (1905–09), may be the inspiration for Disneyland's Cinderella Castle.



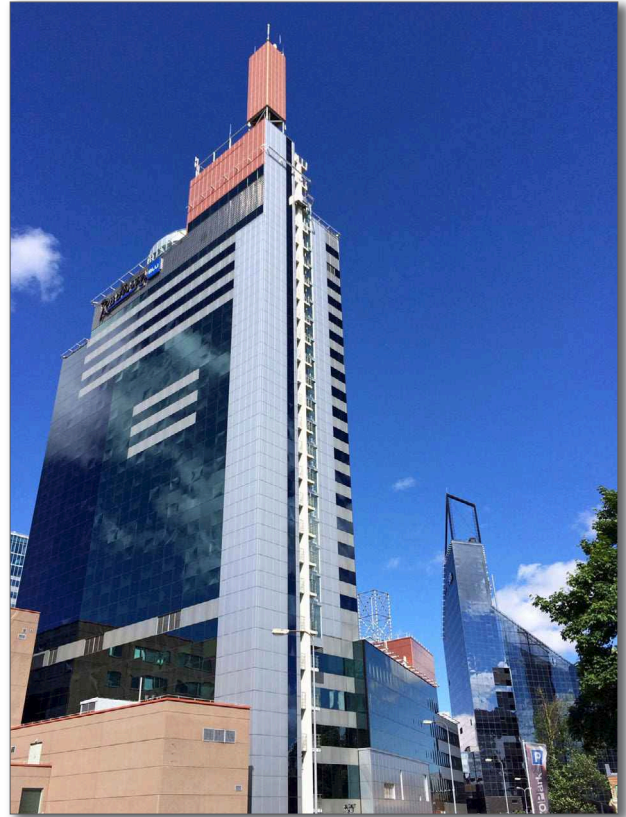
State Historical Museum, Red Square, Moscow (1872–94).

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Thirteenth century medieval Old Town Tallinn, Estonia, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



The Radisson Blu Hotel (2001) on R vala boulevard in the center of Tallinn, Estonia.



An open-air public market in Krakow, Poland, where you can buy vegetables that aren't white.

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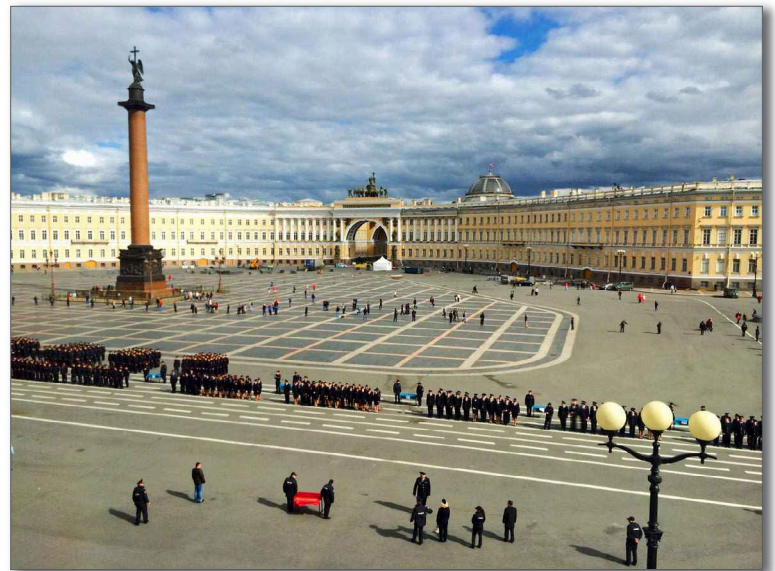
Thirteenth century buildings in the historic center of Prague (a World Heritage Site) as seen from Old Town Hall Tower (1338), 200 feet above the sidewalk cafes.



Umbrellas shelter a street-level cafe between buildings in Belgrade, Serbia.



Moskovsky Station (1844–51) is the oldest preserved railway station in St. Petersburg.



Palace Square, with the Alexander Column (1830–34), and backed by the General Staff building and arch (1819–29), is the central city square of St. Petersburg and of the former Russian Empire.

(continued on next page)



Tour participants at the Hermitage State Museum, St. Petersburg. Left to right (standing): Liza Reilly, Juan Borrelli, Bud Dougherty, Elaine Costello, Eileen Whitty, John Carson, Jim Kautz, Stu During, Lynette Hom, Hanson Hom, Roberta Lampert, Suzie Lampert, Jackie Yang, Peter Hartman, Miroo Desai, Alice Daly, Jim Miller, Hing Wong, and Jason Smart. Left to right (kneeling): Yoshi During, Paula Wiech, Wendy Cosin, Barbara Kautz, Carolyn Carson, Jean Lin, Eloisa Mendoza-Hinds, and Alex Hinds. Photo: Tatiana Timoshuk ■

**“Prague is getting kind of ugly.** Recent developments proposed for the city have caused officials to step in and make sure Prague isn’t beaten senseless with the ugly stick. A panel of 13 respected Czech architects will screen all major construction projects in Prague. Recent projects that should never have seen daylight include the Don Giovanni Hotel (photo: <http://bit.ly/1qjAFkF>), raising its turrets next to the city’s Jewish Cemetery; and the new Letňany Metro station (photo: <http://bit.ly/1qjAK7K>), whose tolerable aesthetics get marked down for their location among green fields.” —Feargus O’Sullivan, <http://bit.ly/1qjBk5D>

# FARs and height limits can't do everything

No one should expect them to guarantee good design

By John F. Livingstone, AICP

Many planners — myself included — keep floor area ratios (FARs) in their toolkits. Unfortunately, many members of the public (and perhaps a few planners) ascribe capabilities to FARs beyond the mere regulation of density. A recent news article reminded me that FARs, and bulk and density regulations in general, are of little or no use in assuring that a building or project will be well designed or sympathetic to its surroundings.

Height limits, number of stories, and Floor Area Ratio (F.A.R.) requirements have been around for a long time. They help control the bulk and size of a structure. Most cities have handouts explaining what counts and what doesn't count as floor area. Generally, FAR is the gross floor area permitted on a site divided by the total net area of the site, expressed in decimals to one or two places. FARs typically are applied on a parcel-by-parcel basis as opposed to an average FAR for an entire land use or zoning district. See <http://bit.ly/1jetirk>

Each city has its own definition of how height is measured, and its own rules for how many stories the structure can be. The goal of all these controls is to limit allowable density, which often serves as the major distinction between zoning districts. Ostensibly, at least in the public eye, these controls are meant to encourage good design that will fit in with the existing neighborhood; but do they?

Are height and setback requirements needed? Have FAR requirements outlived their usefulness? I believe that simpler is better, especially for discretionary projects that already undergo a detailed site plan and architectural review by an advisory or decision-making body.

Meeting the FAR or height requirements does not ensure good design. Even small structures that meet FAR requirements can be bulky and intrusive. A small shoebox addition over an existing single-family garage can be bulky if not properly designed or perhaps set back from the structure below. On the other hand, I have seen 7,000 square foot homes that you can drive by and not notice because they respect their surroundings.

At the same time, too many of these requirements can limit good design. Planned Development (P.D.) zoning is occasionally used to supplant height and bulk restrictions and allow the architect and developer to use their imaginations to come up with a better overall project, not just a project that meets the codes. The PD substitutes for standard density restrictions and allows the approving body to look at the project as a whole. For example, PD allows the planning

commission to spend time on the design and function of the building or project instead of trying to make variance findings for what may be a logical request that just doesn't meet the code.

And removing some of the normal requirements for discretionary projects could open up a more creative process, allowing the architect to design the building best suited for the lot. In addition, a good deal of staff time goes into policing the code: Does the attic space count? Could the crawl space be converted? Is it still an unenclosed structure if a three-foot wall is added under the roofline?

Then there's the matter of historic preservation or adaptive reuse. Many of the historic properties we treasure couldn't be built under current zoning laws. The size, height, or number of stories would never meet today's codes. Asking for a variance or exception (for example, to permit an enlargement in character with the original) is normally out of the question.

With today's technology, it is easier to visualize how a project will look. Color renderings of the proposed structure can be Photoshopped onto the existing landscape. Story poles can provide the exact location on the building site. There are even smartphone applications that let you view the project as you're standing in front of the site. Understanding what the project will look like on the street, and in relation to adjacent properties, is easily achieved. And 3D models can be printed out of plastic to allow a hands-on detailed review of the project.

Controlling the size of a project is a good thing, but it does little to promote good design. The desirable proportions of the size and height of a building cannot be mathematically determined without a context. Other tools are needed. As technology improves and becomes less expensive, new tools, for example, 3D virtual tours, will allow a closer review of projects than can be achieved from two-dimensional plans or architectural renderings. It is exciting to think how planning will change once today's technologies are fully implemented, let alone the technologies that will be developed in the near future. Wouldn't it be splendid if zoning codes keep pace with and improve alongside technology?

*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. You can reach him at [JohnFLivingstone@gmail.com](mailto:JohnFLivingstone@gmail.com) ■*

**NorCal planners, see what you're missing!** Miguel Angel Vazquez, AICP, alerted us to a short and excellent time-lapse video. Watch in full screen HD, with sound, for the best experience. "Above LA" (3:52) can be seen at <https://vimeo.com/97726387>

# Testing APA's Sustainability Accreditation Criteria on 11 Bay Area cities

Charisma Acey, Ph.D., and Scott T. Edmondson, MAAUP, AICP

During the spring of 2014, students in a UCB sustainability planning class found that the APA's new *Comprehensive Plan Standards for Sustaining Places* (Standards) could be a powerful tool for advancing municipal sustainability. Seeing value for practitioners, APA California Northern Section's Sustainability Committee convened an event to share the results with practicing planners by attending one of the three final project presentations and a half-hour discussion afterwards with UC Berkeley Professor Charisma Acey.

Students in Assistant Professor Acey's Department of City & Regional Planning's upper division class tested the APA Standards in a final project. They applied the Standards to 11 Bay Area cities' general plans, those of Berkeley, Dublin, Emeryville, Fremont, Mountain View, Oakland, Petaluma, Richmond, San Francisco, San Jose, and San Rafael. The students assessed the Standards' sustainability criteria and evaluation method. In addition, they tested consistency between team members' rating of the same criteria. (This latter statistic reveals whether the criteria are written in a way that allows for consistent interpretation.)

The students found that APA's Standards provided a solid basis for understanding sustainability principles and policy guidance. Students found the 11 Bay Area general plans performed well in areas of eco-efficiency, GHG reduction measures, and livable built environment; moderately in terms of a resilient economy and parks and open space; and weakly on interwoven equity, accountable implementation, and a healthy community. There was little policy basis for evaluating the criteria of "authentic implementation."

In addition, because the Standards were not used in creating the plans, there was often not an obvious relationship between plan structure and that of the Standards. Students felt that it would be better to integrate sustainability criteria throughout plans rather than embedding them in a separate section. With improvements, the student teams concluded that the Standards could be used for the two purposes for which the APA formulated them: (1) to incorporate sustainability into comprehensive plans as a powerful planning tool for advancing municipal

sustainability; and (2) to provide a formal APA "designation" of a general plan's sustainability akin to LEED-type rating systems for green buildings and neighborhoods.

The students' assessment revealed some aspects of the Standards that could be improved. First, the description of the Standards includes jargon that will be confusing to the public and professionals. Second, some of the criteria contain such a constellation of points that interpreting the meaning of the numerical ranking of each criterion is difficult: Is the ranking a blended assessment across all of the points of the criteria or an assessment of only one of the points?

Additionally, there was often wide variation between team members in scoring the same criteria, which raised questions about the rating method. Should plans be sent to external experts for evaluation? How important is local knowledge and how should it be incorporated? Is there a realistic possibility for ordinary citizens to participate? Finally, some students wondered if the framework was sufficiently aspirational, providing a good, but minimum definition of sustainability but lacking the full definition needed to develop an effective strategy.

The students' experience testing the APA's new *Comprehensive Plan Standards for Sustaining Places* validated that, with some refinement, the Standards could be a powerful tool for advancing municipal sustainability. In addition, the seven attending professional planners liked the event and supported future events that provide opportunities for professionals to benefit from and support planner education.

*This column is a contribution of the Sustainability Committee, and its blog page (<http://bit.ly/1n5WonO>) contains links to the students' presentations, along with additional information on APA's criteria and general planning for sustainability.*

*Charisma Acey, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of California, Berkeley. Scott T. Edmondson, MAAUP, AICP, is a founder and member of the Northern Section's Sustainability Committee, and a planner-economist at the SF Planning Department. ■*

# More fallout from Chicago floods of April 2013

## Were you stranded at O'Hare after the Chicago conference?

*Washington Post, May 22, 2014*

**Gail Sullivan**, <http://wapo.st/RXZFOR> • “On April 18, 2013, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn declared a state of emergency after an epic deluge left much of the Chicago area under water. ‘This is a new kind of storm associated with climate change,’ Tom LaPorte, spokesman for the Chicago Department of Water Management, told Medill Reports on day two of the April flood.

“Now a major insurance company is suing Chicago-area municipal governments saying they knew of the risks posed by climate change and should have been better prepared. The class-action lawsuits raise the question of who is liable for the costs of global warming. Filed by Farmers Insurance Co. on behalf of itself, other insurance companies, and customers whose property was damaged by the surge of storm water and sewage overflow, the lawsuits allege the governments of Chicago-area municipalities knew their drainage systems were inadequate and failed to take reasonable action to prevent flooding of insured properties.

“During the past 40 years, climate change in Cook County has caused rains to be of greater volume, greater intensity, and greater duration than pre-1970 rainfall history evidenced,’ a fact that local governments were well aware of, [the] suit alleges, citing a climate change action

plan adopted in 2008 that acknowledges the link between climate change and increased rainfall. The suits also say the localities knew their drainage systems weren’t up to snuff because the regional water management authority had published plans in 2011 detailing various defects. Knowing the risks, they argue, local governments should have increased their storm water storage capacity [and] were negligent in failing to take temporary measures in the days before the storm, such as deploying water-inflatable property protection systems to mitigate damage.

“These lawsuits are the first of their kind; expect to see more like them. The insurers are saying, ‘We’re in the business of covering unforeseen risks — things that are basically accidents — but we’re now at a point where climate change is a foreseeable risk.’

“Daniel Jasica of the State’s Attorney’s Office in Lake County, which is named in the Illinois state court suit, told Reuters that the localities will claim government immunity protects them from prosecution. ‘Even if a city is likely to win a lawsuit, it still is going to have to spend quite a bit in defending itself,’ Robert Verchick, who teaches environmental law at Loyola University in New Orleans, told NPR. ‘And it might just be better for everybody involved for cities to take climate change seriously.’”



**“We created over 2 million new rental units for low- and moderate-income people.** Ironically, the affordable-housing sector’s invisibility to the public stems largely from how successful we have been. We are a self-regulating industry consisting of public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit companies — including the nation’s largest financial institutions. Most of the units are so well built and attractive that [it’s hard] to tell them apart from some luxury apartment complexes. However, the superficial similarities of market-rate and affordable housing belie big differences in the populations they serve, and in the complexity of the financing tools used to keep the apartments permanently affordable.” — Fay Darmawi, <http://bit.ly/TP6jab>



## Norcal roundup

Assembled by Jennifer Piozet, associate editor

### Large electric fleet added to Bay Area governments

Bay Area Climate Collaborative, July 8, 2014

**Diana Chou**, <http://bit.ly/1qsDoE6> •

“Alameda County Board of Supervisors President Keith Carson, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the Bay Area Climate Collaborative (BACC), and 10 other public agencies today announced the rollout of 90 all-electric vehicles into the fleets of 10 Bay Area local governments — the largest government fleet deployment in the U.S. to date.

“The public agencies receiving vehicles are: Alameda County, Sonoma County, San Francisco, Concord, Santa Rosa, San Jose, Oakland, Fremont, the Marin Municipal Water District, and Sonoma County Water Agency. The Transportation Authority of Marin also participated with additional support for the Marin Municipal Water District.

“This deployment is one in a series that the BACC and its partners are facilitating to assist public agencies in incorporating electric vehicles (EVs) into their fleets. Today’s rollout of 90 all-electric vehicles will yield operational cost savings of more than \$500,000 and avoidance of 2 million pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> over five years. This supports the region’s efforts to establish the Bay Area as the ‘EV Capital of the U.S.’ and helps meet Governor Brown’s goal of 1.5 million EVs on California roads by 2025.”

### VMT to replace LOS metric under CEQA

The Atlantic: City Lab, July 8, 2014

**Eric Jaffe**, <http://bit.ly/1qGCFB1> • “San Francisco has been waiting for Van Ness BRT a long time. The original plan called for Van Ness to be up and running by late 2009. The latest timeline has BRT beginning operations in 2018 — a full decade and a half after the Prop K vote.

“The only area where it had an unavoidable negative [environmental] impact that could not be offset under CEQA was traffic. [Impacts are] determined using a car-friendly metric known as ‘level of service’ (LOS) that bases a project’s transportation performance on driver delay.

“California will soon reform traffic analysis under CEQA by replacing ‘level of service’ with another metric more in line with its environmental and urban mobility goals. Chris Ganson of the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research said OPR was planning to recommend ‘vehicle-miles traveled’ as the new ‘central metric’ under CEQA. He says VMT meets all the state’s major criteria for a traffic evaluator: fewer greenhouse gases, more multimodal networks and urban infill developments, a general boost to both the environment, and public health. Where LOS encouraged public projects to reduce or eliminate driver delay at city intersections, VMT would encourage them to reduce or eliminate driving at all.”

### Plan Bay Area lawsuits

Contra Costa Times, June 20, 2014

**Denis Cuff**, <http://bit.ly/1qCjRVb> •

“Three environmental and social justice groups said they have settled their lawsuit against a Bay Area regional growth and transportation plan aimed at clustering development near transit centers. The Sierra Club, Communities for a Better Environment, and Earthjustice argued in their lawsuit that Plan Bay Area is too weak in reducing air pollution, including greenhouse emissions.

“In agreeing to settle their state lawsuit, the groups said they secured a commitment from regional planning agencies to do more in the next plan in 2017 to explain pollution reductions from the regional plan. The settlement also calls for regional agencies to track and disclose progress in getting housing built in city and county priority development areas.

“In March, the Building Industry Association of the Bay Area dropped its lawsuit against the plan in exchange for a commitment that the agencies do more to plan for housing growth in the 2017 plan.”

For additional comments, see *Planetizen*, <http://bit.ly/1qCkBto>

(Norcal roundup continues on next page)

### PA flood control stymied

*Palo Alto Online*, June 20, 2014

**Gennady Sheyner**, <http://bit.ly/1mZO1QK> • “For more than a decade, officials from Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, and Menlo Park have been drawing up plans, scouring for funds, and performing environmental studies on a project that would finally bring flood protection to residents around the volatile San Francisquito Creek. Now, with money and designs in place, the three cities find themselves staring at an unexpected and formidable obstacle: a permitting process that has already pushed construction at least until next year and that has local officials seething about the bureaucratic mess they now find themselves in.

“The San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority, which includes elected officials from the three cities as well as representatives from the San Mateo Flood Control District and the Santa Clara Valley Water District, has been stuck in bureaucratic limbo since February, when it learned that its request for a permit had been denied by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Each time, the water board has requested new information, brought up fresh problems with the design, and ‘moved the goalposts,’ according to creek authority officials, who have been increasingly frustrated.

“Even if the water board were to issue a permit in the next few months — a time frame Executive Officer Bruce Wolfe said is very possible — construction will be limited to relocation of utilities and other projects ancillary to the channel. That’s because the presence of steelhead trout prohibits work in the channel after mid-October. The project entails widening the creek channel by rebuilding and modifying levees; removing sediment to create a new marsh plain; and building walls near flood-prone homes and businesses.”

### Huge wins for Bay Area Open Space

*Greenbelt Alliance*, June 4, 2014

**Jeremy Madsen**, <http://bit.ly/1IG6F9v> • “The City of Dublin has adopted an urban limit line, which will protect vital open space in Alameda County — such as Doolan Canyon — from sprawl development. [And] Measure AA — a \$300 million bond measure — will fund the preservation of and improvements to open space in San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties ... These two victories show strong support for safeguarding our natural landscapes among both the general public and elected officials throughout the Bay Area.

“At June 3rd’s Dublin City Council meeting, the urban limit line initiative — which designates where the city can and cannot grow — was unanimously approved by a count of 5-0. There was a huge outpouring of support for the initiative from Dublin residents and local environmental leaders.”

### Cloverdale drops Asti from its expansion plans

*The Press Democrat*, June 30, 2014

**Clark Mason**, <http://bit.ly/Wbgmsm>

• “Cloverdale’s plan to stretch its city boundaries south to take in the historic community of Asti has been dropped, victim to criticism that the move would induce growth and threaten agricultural lands. In the face of opposition from environmental groups and resistance from the government agency that approves annexations, the city agreed to limit its reach and exclude the former Italian Swiss Colony site approximately two miles from city limits. Critics pointed out the extension of sewer and water to Asti would be expensive and there would be pressure to extend the utilities to adjacent properties and unincorporated county-governed ‘islands’ in between.

“The most important thing is Cloverdale will be able to add some industrial land southeast of the city,’ City Councilman Joe Palla said. The 58 acres includes the Redwood Empire Saw Mill, former Lampson tractor store, and other parcels eyed for future light industrial use. The Sonoma County Local Agency Formation Commission, which approves annexations and a city’s ‘sphere of influence,’ tentatively agreed to the changes on June 4 [and later] approved Cloverdale’s sphere of influence — defined as its probable physical boundary and service area.”

(Norcal roundup *continues on next page*)



## Century 21 dome granted historical status

*Mercury News*, June 10, 2014

**Katie Nelson**, <http://bit.ly/UsRjX9> • “The show will go on for the iconic dome theater near Santana Row after the San Jose City Council voted to grant the building historic status despite pleas from several council members and developers to reconsider. The 7–4 vote in favor of the status came after dozens of community members pleaded with council members to save one of the oldest and most intact dome-style theaters that was remembered by many not only as a place of fond memories, but as a lasting image of midcentury futuristic architecture that has not been preserved anywhere else. The former Century 21 theater was built in 1964 and closed to the public in March.

“[However,] council members disagreed on whether to grant the building a historical status. ‘I don’t see the building as very old and I don’t see it as very historic,’ said Mayor Chuck Reed. Councilman Pierluigi Oliverio said the historical designation would be a mistake, given that the land the theater currently occupies could be very valuable for business and residential growth. ‘We don’t want to kill the golden goose,’ he said.”

## Higher land costs could mean higher housing densities and prices

*Mercury News*, July 12, 2014

**Pete Carey**, <http://bit.ly/1myYUYE> • “Confronted with a shortage of land to build on in the Bay Area, housing developers are getting caught up in the same kinds of bidding wars that have frustrated home buyers. Land costs have gone up at least 40-50 percent in the past two or three years, Stephen Smiley, a vice president of Meyers Research said, ranging now from \$3 to \$4 million an acre in San Jose, to \$5 million on the Peninsula, and \$3 million for East Bay sites near Silicon Valley’s booming job market.

“These land costs probably will translate into greater densities and more expensive housing when the new developments come to market, so buyers may not see much relief from the high prices that are being commanded by new and existing homes alike. With land so tight, developers are looking to the fringes of the Bay Area. Mountain House and Lathrop in San Joaquin County ‘are the two areas that are going to be able to supply lots,’ said Layne Marceau, Northern California president of Shea Homes.”

## BART extension potentially delayed by Milpitas ruling

*Mercury News*, July 6, 2014

**Mike Rosenberg**, <http://bit.ly/1kyGqmk> • “A key portion of the BART to Silicon Valley extension has been delayed by nearly a year, but it’s too soon to know if the timeline for the overall \$2.3 billion rail line will be pushed off track. The Valley Transportation Authority had planned to build a trench over the next eight months to prepare for future BART tracks under Dixon Landing Road just east of Interstate 880, on the northern edge of Milpitas. But that city has won its bid to allow a more gradual project lasting 18 months.

“The fight between the transit agency and the city arose after VTA proposed a new plan to close a small stretch of the main east-west Dixon Landing thoroughfare during construction. That plan angered local businesses and city officials who say traffic flow on the road is already very difficult. Last month the city of Milpitas denied VTA’s work permit request and told the agency to find a way to do the work while closing only part of the four-lane road, even if it means construction will take longer. In a last-ditch attempt to get the permit, VTA filed a claim in Santa Clara County Superior Court, but lost the case last week.”

## Mercury News headed (back) to downtown

*Mercury News*, June 16, 2014

**Scott Herhold**, <http://bit.ly/1scgAMQ> • “Last week, the newspaper announced it would move into new quarters on the 7th and 8th floors of a high-rise at 4 North Second Street, only a block or two from its birthplace. What we know as the Mercury News got its start in June 1851 as the San Jose Weekly Visitor, which was operated out of a shack at 55 W. Santa Clara St., about where the Chase Bank is located today. Sometime in September, without the presses that now operate from the East Bay, they are expected to move back.” ■

## FRA moves CAHSR ahead

U.S. Department of Transportation, June 27, 2014

**Federal Railroad Administration**, <http://1.usa.gov/URiVyR>

• “The U. S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today issued a Record of Decision (ROD) for the 114-mile Fresno to Bakersfield Section of the California High-Speed Train System. The ROD is the last step in the National Environmental Policy Act process and clears the way to break ground on the project.

“In its ROD, the FRA selects the preferred alternative outlined in its Final Environmental Impact Statement, which was issued earlier this year. The preferred alternative comprises the alignment alternative adjacent to the BNSF Railway bypasses of Corcoran, the Allensworth area, and the Bakersfield Hybrid alternative. The preferred alternative includes a Downtown Fresno Station, a Kings/Tulare regional station, and a downtown Bakersfield station.

“FRA selected this combination of route alignments because they are more compatible with the long-range development planning goals of the region, and will result in fewer potential impacts on wetlands and special-status species habitat. The alignment will also reduce displacements and result in fewer impacts to religious facilities when compared to the other alignment alternatives.”

## HSR cap-and-trade challenged

The Fresno Bee, June 23, 2014

**Tim Sheehan**, <http://bit.ly/1IR5N8j> • “A Bay Area group that is critical of using cap-and-trade money for California’s controversial high-speed rail project is suing the state Air Resources Board for including the proposed bullet train among measures to reduce greenhouse gases in the state. The lawsuit was filed in Fresno County Superior Court by Oakland attorney Stuart Flashman on behalf of Transportation Solutions Defense and Education Fund, or TRANSDEF. The San Rafael nonprofit weighs in on a range of transportation, land use, and air quality issues in the San Francisco Bay Area and California.

“TRANSDEF contends in the suit that instead of reducing greenhouse gases including carbon dioxide, cement production for construction of the rail line ‘would result in significant increases in ... emissions.’ The suit alleges that the Air Resources Board violated provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act and Assembly Bill 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act, when it approved high-speed rail among projects qualified for cap-and-trade money. The rail authority also faces a crop of six lawsuits in Sacramento County Superior Court stemming from its environmental certification and approval of the Fresno-Bakersfield segment of the statewide rail project [in May].”

## HSR gets DOT okay to buy land along planned route

U-T San Diego, June 27, 2014

**Juliet Williams**, <http://bit.ly/1t1U5rs> • “The U.S. Department of Transportation gave its approval in June for work to begin on the second leg of California’s proposed \$68 billion high-speed rail line, endorsing the state’s environmental review for the section running between Fresno and Bakersfield. The decision allows the state to begin acquiring land along the 114-mile route, although the state [at the time, was] still waiting for approval from the federal Surface Transportation Board before it can begin construction on this segment.

“All agencies have already signed off on the first leg, a 28-mile segment between Madera and Fresno. But the project has been slowed by legal hurdles, including a court ruling that has prevented the state from selling \$8.6 billion in bonds. State officials say they are spending federal money while that decision is appealed, which includes buying land and doing construction testing.

“Earlier this month, the state Legislature approved Gov. Jerry Brown’s plan to give high-speed rail \$250 million from the state’s pollution fees in the upcoming fiscal year. In the future, the project will receive a quarter of the program’s revenue as part of an effort to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions in the Central Valley.”

(California continues on next page)

### “Gentrification is a problem of poor planning.

Compton Mayor Aja Brown, who was elected in 2012, says with strategic planning, cities can reshape blighted areas without sacrificing the identity of a community or excluding long-time or poor residents. That’s what she’s working to do for Compton [CA].” — Maya Rhodan,

<http://ti.me/VBmvgT>

## Law can't prohibit living in cars

*The Los Angeles Times*, June 19, 2014

**Maura Dolan and Gale Holland**, <http://lat.ms/1lFxa50>

• “For the second time in two years, a federal appeals court has struck down a key enforcement tool in Los Angeles’ efforts to deal with burgeoning homelessness, declaring a ban on living in vehicles an invitation to discriminate against the poor.

“A three-judge panel of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals decided unanimously [June 19th] that a city ordinance prohibiting people from living in vehicles was unconstitutionally vague. Advocates for the homeless said [the] ruling would probably stem a rise in similar laws banning vehicle habitation, in California and elsewhere. They said at least two other California cities — El Cajon and Union City — had also adopted bans. The Palo Alto City Council voted in December to hold off enforcement of a car-camping ban that was to have taken effect in March. Tristia Bauman, senior attorney at the Washington, D.C.-based National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, said the ruling would affect any city in California with a vague ban similar to Los Angeles’.”

## No fracking in Santa Cruz County

*KQED Science*, May 20, 2014

**Peter Jon Schuler and Molly Samuel**,

<http://bit.ly/1sRldb9> • “Santa Cruz County has become the first county in California to impose a ‘permanent’ ban on fracking, as well as all other on-shore oil and gas development. [On May 20th] the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the pre-emptive move against hydraulic fracturing, a technology that uses water and chemicals to unlock oil and gas underground.

“Butte and Mendocino counties are considering similar moves. And Butte, San Benito, and Santa Barbara counties may all have fracking restrictions on the November ballot. A state bill that would ban fracking until there is more scientific study is in limbo, having been relegated to the Appropriations Committee suspense file [on May 19th]. The oil industry insists that fracking is safe and has made the United States less dependent on foreign energy.”

## But will Angelenos leave their cars?

*Southern California Public Radio*, May 21, 2014

**Kitty Felde**, <http://bit.ly/Ry1AIW> • “It’s official: LA is getting \$1.25 billion from the federal government to extend the Purple Line west to La Cienega. The grant from the Federal Transit Administration will fund nearly four miles of subway under Wilshire Blvd. That, plus \$856 million in low-interest federal loans, represents the single biggest federal transportation investment in the history of LA County. The project is projected to create 25,000 construction jobs.

“Transit construction is booming across LA County. By year’s end, there will be a record five rail lines under construction, funded in part by \$3.5 billion in federal grants and loans. The Purple Line is scheduled to reach La Cienega Blvd. by 2023. It won’t reach the VA until 2035. The project is projected to cost \$2.8 billion.”

## It’s now a crime to waste water in California

*Sacramento Bee*, July 15, 2014

**Matt Weiser**, <http://bit.ly/1pmQFxo> • “On July 15, amid evidence that existing conservation measures are not working, the State Water Resources Control Board took the unprecedented step of declaring certain types of water waste a criminal infraction similar to a speeding violation. Water use deemed excessive — such as allowing landscape watering to spill into streets, and hosing off sidewalks and driveways — can be subject to fines of \$500 per day.

“The temporary emergency rules require all municipal water agencies to ban the following uses of potable water, if they don’t already:

- Direct application of water to wash sidewalks and driveways.
- Landscape irrigation that causes runoff to streets and gutters.
- Washing a motor vehicle using a hose without a shut-off nozzle.
- Using drinkable water in a decorative fountain unless it recirculates the water.

“The measure requires water agencies to impose mandatory restrictions on outdoor watering, according to their existing regulations, if they have not already done so. For agencies that do not have such regulations on their books, the measure requires agencies to limit outdoor watering to two days per week.” ■

## Reinvent Miami-Dade infrastructure or lose trillions

*Broward/Palm Beach New Times*, July 1, 2014

**Fire Ant**, <http://bit.ly/1zceHle> • “Miami-Dade County’s Sea Level Rise Task Force has made public its final report and recommendations to county leaders. The Task Force was created by the County Commission in July 2013 to ‘review the relevant data and prior studies’ to provide a ‘comprehensive and realistic assessment of the likely and potential [future] impacts of sea level rise.’ The assessment is to help steer future changes to the county’s Comprehensive Development Master Plan, capital facilities planning, and budgeting so that the county can minimize its carbon footprint and — as sea level rise is baked in the cake — ‘ensure its resiliency.’

Among The Task Force’s six major recommendations: “Follow through on the County Commission’s May 6 resolution that requires all county infrastructure projects to ‘consider the potential impact of sea level rise during all project phases,’ and evaluate existing infrastructure in regard to sea level rise.” And: “In the face of skyrocketing insurance rates (‘the cruelest tax of all’), work with private insurance and reinsurance professionals and with other official bodies to ‘develop long-term risk management solutions.’”

## Check out this redesigned parking sign

*WIRED.com*, July 15, 2014

**Liz Stinson**, <http://wrd.cm/W8pH3O>

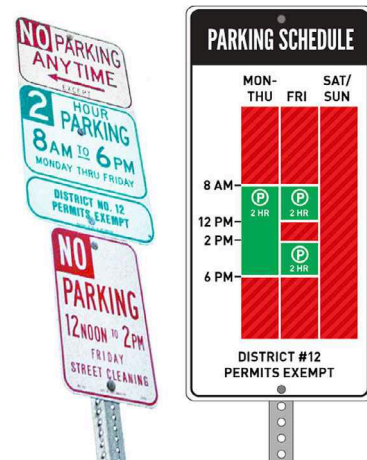
• “Of all the questionable communication tools our cities use, parking signs are easily among the worst offenders. There are arrows pointing every which way, ambiguous meter instructions, and permit requirements. A sign will tell you that you can park until 8 am; then right below [is] another reading you’ll be towed. It’s easy to imagine that most of these signs have never been vetted by actual drivers.”

“The downfall of most parking signs is that they have limited real estate to communicate what seem like unlimited conditions and restrictions. Instead of using a text-based design, Nikki Sylianteng translated all of the information into a visual explanation that answered two main questions: Can I park here? And for how long?”

For a nifty flow chart of the process she used, see <http://wrd.cm/1oFJoqv>

“Sylianteng has been going around Manhattan and Brooklyn hanging up rogue revamped parking signs. She’ll stick a laminated version right below the city-approved version and ask drivers to leave comments. In that way, Sylianteng’s design is still a ways away from being a reality, but so far, she’s gotten pretty good feedback. One person wrote: ‘This is awesome. The mayor should hire you.’”

Nikki Sylianteng’s project blog is at <http://toparkornottopark.com>



**Proposed sign would clarify multiple, confusing regulations.**  
Credit: Nikki Sylianteng

## U.S. Military needs climate plan deadlines

*Bloomberg*, June 17, 2014

**Dean Scott**, <http://bloom.bg/U8VNLn> • “The Defense Department has made strides in assessing the impact of rising sea level, declines in sea ice, and other climate-related impacts on its more than 7,500 installations around the world, but has yet to develop firm timetables for ensuring the work can prepare it for future adaptation efforts, the Government Accountability Office said in a June 30 report. The DOD should set firm ‘milestones’ for completing climate change vulnerability assessments of its installations and incorporate potential climate impacts in better prioritizing which military construction projects should get funding, the GAO said in the report, ‘Climate Change

Adaptation: DOD Can Improve Infrastructure Planning and Processes to Better Account for Potential Impacts.’

“In some cases, those impacts are already being felt at military installations, the GAO said. Increasing erosion from rising sea level has chipped away at some U.S. Air Force runways, affecting ‘overrun’ runway areas used in emergencies to slow planes either taking off or landing. President Obama formally launched the Quadrennial Energy Review in January, and the initial report, due in January 2015, will focus on climate and other related challenges to energy availability and infrastructure and review the ‘adequacy’ of current executive and legislative actions.” Edwards Air Force Base, California, was one of 15 locations visited by the GAO.

(U.S. continues on next page)

## U.S. rental crisis

*The Atlantic: City Lab*, June 30, 2014

**Richard Florida**, <http://bit.ly/VzSpKW> • “Ever since the economic crisis, America has been in the throes of a long-running Great Reset as it shifts gradually from homeownership toward renting. The number of ‘renter households’ increased by more than half a million in 2013 according to a recent analysis on the state of the housing market from Harvard’s Joint Center for Housing Studies.

“Even as more and more Americans want to rent, the market just hasn’t kept up. Sober Look pulled out some illuminating graphs from the FRED database — Federal Reserve Economic Data maintained by the St. Louis Fed. Four key charts from FRED [shown in the original article] paint the broad picture of why the shortage in rental units is the looming crisis Americans must face.

- “Growth in renter-occupied housing units from 2000 to the first quarter of 2014 is essentially a straight trend up, showing the growth in demand for renting.
- “Number of vacant housing units for rent in the U.S. over the same period. The number tracked upwards for the first decade of the century, but the decline has been precipitous since the end of 2009.
- “Sharp decline in the rental vacancy rate over the past five years. Though the vacancy rate is still well above long-term levels since the 1950s, its downward trajectory indicates growing demand in the face of constrained supply.
- “Increase in the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Consumer Price Index for ‘rent of shelter,’ 2000–2014.”

### What role for TOD in shared transport networks?

“The growing popularity of bike-share [and] services like Uber and Lyft make some planners nervous because they don’t have a fixed node associated with them.” How do these services relate to transit and to transit-oriented development, “and how do we continue to plan around or for them?”

—Gabe Klein, <http://bit.ly/VBIDbW>

## Planners, check out these 21 charts

*Vox.com*, June 18, 2014

**Danielle Kurtzleben**, <http://bit.ly/1osvwTh> • “The U.S. is a big, complicated place that has undergone some big changes over its 238 years, and even in the last few decades. Here are 21 charts that explain what life is like today in the U.S. — who we are, where we live, how we work, how we have fun, and how we relate to each other.” The subheadings below are each supported by text and a chart, although two charts seem to be missing.

### Who we are:

- We’re becoming more diverse.
- We’re getting older.
- We’re moving farther and farther west, plus a little south.
- We’re getting married later and later...sort of.
- Even while we delay marriage, we’re not delaying having kids.

### What we believe:

- We’re more polarized politically.
- We think of our country as a single, unitary nation. That wasn’t always the case.
- We’re growing less and less religious.

### Our economy:

- We’re getting more unequal.
- Educational gains have been steady and long-standing.
- Young females are far more educated than their male peers.
- Women’s rush to work has stalled.
- The gender wage gap has stopped shrinking.
- Fewer Americans are making stuff.
- We’re better workers than we used to be, but we’re not paid like it.
- We’re going to need more healthcare workers, and fast.
- We’re staying unemployed for an unusually, terribly long amount of time.

### How we live:

- Americans are eating more (mostly carbs and fats).
- We’re getting more and more overweight.
- We’re starting to drive less.
- And driving less is helping us become safer drivers.

(U.S. continues on next page)

## D.C. bans plastic take-out containers

*TakePart*, June 25, 2014

**Liz Dwyer**, <http://bit.ly/1mMmAZj> • “On June 24th, the D.C. Council voted to ban the use of single-use disposable containers made from Styrofoam in restaurants and cafés. Styrofoam is the brand name of polystyrene foam, a plastic material that’s not biodegradable. Unless it’s completely clean — no food or drink residue at all — recyclers won’t accept it. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the United States generated 32 million tons of plastic waste in 2012. Almost 14 million tons came from plastic containers and packaging, and nearly 7 million were nondurable goods like plates and cups.

“The EPA found that Americans chuck 25 billion (yes, billion) Styrofoam cups per year. That’s not even counting the to-go container in which your half-eaten burrito gets inserted so you can take it home. Because just 9 percent of plastic waste is recycled, 500 years from now every Styrofoam cup handed out at a doughnut shop this morning will still be sitting in a landfill.

“D.C.’s ban won’t take effect until Jan. 1, 2016.”

## New life for Boston’s Downtown Crossing

*The New York Times*, June 17, 2014

**Lisa Prevost**, <http://nyti.ms/1p1jqE2> • “Ever since the postwar demise of the venerable department stores that once distinguished Downtown Crossing as a shopping hub, the central section of this city has struggled to survive as a retail destination. But some \$4 billion in private investment over the last decade is finally stoking the long neglected district with both a new attitude and fresh appeal.

“Developers are rapidly reinventing Downtown Crossing as an upscale residential neighborhood filled with stores, restaurants, and cafes catering to students and young professionals. More than 1,000 new housing units, numerous restaurants, and several hotels have gradually remade sections of the district since 2000, but the project that promises to have the greatest impact is the \$120 million redevelopment of the iconic building that originally housed Filene’s department store and its popular bargain basement.

“Those lining up for downtown living, developers say, include professionals who work in the city’s flourishing medical, educational, and financial services fields; young tech workers who are increasingly moving their start-ups downtown; and foreign buyers, some of whom are looking to house their college-age children.”

## Arizona cities may face water shortage

*The New York Times*, June 17, 2014

**Michael Wines**, <http://nyti.ms/1p1ihfE> • “Arizona could be forced to cut water deliveries to its two largest cities unless states that tap the dwindling Colorado River find ways to reduce water consumption and deal with a crippling drought. Forecasts [are] that Lake Mead, a Colorado River reservoir that is the network’s sole water source, will fall [in July] to a level not seen since the lake was first filled in 1938. Two cities, Phoenix and Tucson, could replace the lost water, at least in the short term, by tapping groundwater supplies, lakes, and rivers. If they do not reduce consumption, the cuts could be necessary by as early as 2019, according to an analysis by the water project; and officials said that depending on drought conditions, the chances of water cutbacks by 2026 could be as high as 29 percent.

“States along the lower Colorado use much more water than flows into the lake in an average year, a deficit that upstream states shouldered for decades by opening their reservoir sluices to release more water. Tom McCann, the Central Arizona Project’s assistant general manager for operations, said the states needed to reduce Lake Mead drawdowns by at least 800,000 or 900,000 acre-feet of the 10.2 million taken each year.”

## Reno recasts itself as home for tech start-ups

*The New York Times*, July 6, 2014

**Dionne Searcey**, <http://nyti.ms/1mzgnjE> • “Reno, Nev., which is heavily dependent on the gambling industry, had a more severe downturn than other parts of the country. But as the area attracts new employers with its convenient location and low taxes, the economy is starting to recover. Reno is not far from one of the few lithium deposits in the country, it is relatively close to Fremont, Calif., where [Tesla] vehicles will be assembled, and its industrial park has tens of thousands of acres of land for the auto company’s new expansive factory.

“In Reno, where many workers traditionally have been employed in some aspect of the gambling industry, the work force is less educated than in more populous cities, economists said. Tesla, for instance, might have to recruit from elsewhere to find enough trained workers for its battery plant, should it decide to build here. For companies, the region’s chief draw is its lack of taxes. Reno is less than a two-day drive to anywhere in the West, an advantage for shipping companies. And there is no shortage of land ready for development.” ■

## Beijing's population will eclipse Australia's

*The Washington Post*, June 19, 2014

**Swati Sharma**, <http://wapo.st/1p1hKkF> • “More than 50 percent of China’s population lives in urban areas. Beijing has an estimated population of 21 million, almost 500,000 more than the city had last year. If the city keeps growing at this alarming rate, it will soon surpass Australia, [which] only has 1.5 million more residents than the capital of China.” (The article includes an eastern hemisphere map showing countries with populations lower than Beijing’s.)

## Transport planned entirely around electric tricycles

*Next City*, June 12, 2014

**Aurora Almendral**, <http://bit.ly/1o9kq2s> • “The 3.5 million tricycles in the Philippines — conventional motorbikes with metal passenger sidecars welded to their sides — are mostly ridden by adults and provide the bulk of public transportation. In March the Philippine government announced an \$11 million project that would put 100,000 electric tricycles on the streets of Manila and other provinces by 2017. The e-bikes would cut noise pollution and reduce the carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere by 260,000 tons per year. They would also reduce dependence on foreign fuel and cut operating costs for tricycle drivers by up to 60 percent.

“But the project has detractors, including environmentalists. Red Constantino, of the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities, says the program ‘sustains the prevailing chaos rather than helping rationalize transport in the country.’ Tricycles are single-serving public transport, inefficiently carrying one passenger from door to door. Money would be better spent supporting larger vehicles that can transport people en masse, like buses or the country’s iconic jeepneys.

“What’s more, the Philippines has some of the highest electricity-usage rates in Asia. An EV program could make the problem worse and distract from the fundamental challenge of creating stable sources of renewable energy. Alternatives, like Thailand’s *tuktuks*, some of which have switched to clean natural gas, [offer] a cheaper technology than electric engines. At most, electric tricycles are one piece of a longer climb to making Manila’s transportation infrastructure clean and sustainable.”

## Will China act quickly on climate change?

*The New York Times*, July 1, 2014

**Eduardo Porter**, <http://nyti.ms/1ovKaJq> • “In Beijing, [the] deputy director of China’s Advisory Committee on Climate Change told a conference that China would for the first time put ‘an absolute cap’ on its emissions.

“The most pressing issue is not whether the United States will wean itself from coal, or even how quickly the American economy can reduce its reliance on fossil fuels. The most pressing issue is to what extent and under which conditions China will participate in the global effort to combat climate change. Any hopes that American commitments to cut emissions will have a decisive impact on climate change rely on the assumption that China will reciprocate and deliver aggressive emission cuts of its own.

“Preventing a climate catastrophe requires China’s participation: The country accounts for over a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions. Over the next 20 years, China’s CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will grow by an amount roughly equal to the United States’ total emissions today. Even assuming that China’s population does not grow over the next 30 years, that the energy efficiency of its economy increases at a faster pace than most developed and developing countries, and that it manages to decarbonize its energy sources faster than anybody else, China would still be emitting a lot more carbon in 2040 than it does today.

“The crucial question remains how to meaningfully bring aboard countries like China or India. For China, the question remains whether it can simultaneously decarbonize and grow. If it cannot do both things at once, chances are it will choose the second.”

*(World continues on next page)*

**Jobs created by Foreign Direct Investment in the U.S. (Brookings).** “Majority-owned affiliates of foreign companies employ 5.6 million workers in the United States, accounting for 5.0 percent of total private employment,” and 89 percent of the jobs are in metro areas. Washington DC, Philadelphia, and San Jose are the top metro locations for the 121,800 jobs in foreign-owned establishments that focus on computer systems design and related services. For more information and to download the paper, go to <http://bit.ly/1m6cBxB>

## Pacific garbage patch could be cleaned in 10 years

*Elite Daily*, June 6, 2014

**Aaron Kaufman**, <http://elitedai.ly/1rStIHI> • “Millions of tons of plastic waste litter the world’s oceans, converging together in rotating currents called gyres and blanketing the water’s surface. On average, these gyres now hold six times more plastic than plankton by dry weight. Fortunately, 19-year-old Boyan Slat, founder and president of The Ocean Cleanup, claims to ‘have invented a method to clean up almost half of the great Pacific’s garbage patch in just 10 years, using currents to [his] advantage.’ Slat first became aware of the problem while diving in Greece, frustrated that he was ‘coming across more plastic bags than fish.’

“At least one million birds and another 100,000 marine mammals die each year from the plastic, and a number of species risk extinction due to the massive amounts of plastic circulating the oceans. Economically, marine debris costs an estimated \$1.27 billion annually in fishing and vessel damage on America’s Pacific coastal waters.”

“Check out Slat’s video explaining his solution for cleaning the world’s oceans,” <http://youtu.be/TTGqP8wjfiU>

## Germany sets solar power record

*IFL Science*, June 24, 2014

**Stephen Luntz**, <http://bit.ly/1q7pCtL> • “Germany set a new record: solar power providing 50.6 percent of its electricity in the middle of the day on Monday, June 9th. Solar production peaked that day at 23.1GW.” A gigawatt (GW) equals 1 billion watts. “Three days earlier it was 24.2GW between 1 and 2 pm, but on the 9th demand was down for a public holiday, allowing the breaking of the psychological 50 percent barrier.”

“[By] creating a level of demand that spurred mass manufacturing, Germany has played a large part in bringing the cost of solar panels down by 80 percent in five years, allowing other countries to follow in its footsteps for a fraction of the price, particularly those with more sunlight. Moreover, where the initial stages of the move to wind were driven by government subsidies, solar power in Germany can now compete with fossil fuels on price alone, and continues to expand, albeit at a slower rate than a few years ago.” ■

**How many farmers does it take to turn a tap?** “After largely ignoring a conservation law passed during the last drought, some of California’s largest agricultural water districts are facing a lawsuit that would force them to measure how much water farmers use. The state’s agricultural water districts are supposed to charge the farmers, at least in part, based on that use. But the state doesn’t actually know how many agricultural water districts are meeting the new requirements or even inching toward doing so, because more than 20 of them have failed to turn in a water management plan due more than 18 months ago.” —Katharine Mieszkowski, <http://bit.ly/1mmBL71>

**“We are warming the atmosphere too quickly.** The rain will soon fall at once or not at all. There will be only dryness or downpour, no more metronomic rains like the one that kept me awake the other night. Like the economy, the climate is expected to change in ways that only advance inequality: The wet regions of the world will get wetter; the dry regions of the world will get drier.” —Casey N. Cep, <http://bit.ly/1jWo78Q>





BRIDGE and the City of Oakland celebrated the grand opening of Terraza Palmera in June 2014, where new resident Faiza A. and her family appreciate “the opportunity to live in a clean, nice place.” They also enjoy Terraza Palmera’s community room facing a courtyard garden, sunny lobby areas with seating, and on-site laundry facilities. The excellent location and visibility of the development provides easy transportation access, connecting residents to employment opportunities and the Fruitvale retail and community centers nearby. And the location of a public elementary school adjacent to the property is a plus for families with young children.

Adding a substantially sized new building to the historic site presented a significant design challenge in striking a balance between responding sensitively to the historic context and designing a contemporary façade that stands on its own architecturally, without competing with the historic backdrop. In addition, it was a demanding task to convert the historic buildings to modern code-compliant residential use. That included seismic retrofitting, installing new building systems, and accommodating four residential units within the existing building envelope in conformance with required historic rehabilitation standards. An existing perimeter brick wall at the site along 12th Street was in very poor condition and had to be rebuilt rather than restored.

The senior garden faces the outdoor play area of Terraza Palmera, creating a larger, demographically diverse community space. In addition, a pedestrian walkway to 12th Street from the senior project through Terraza Palmera is accessible to both developments, promoting more pedestrian traffic and a connection to 12th Street (photo at left).

The St. Joseph’s campus is located in the heart of Oakland’s Fruitvale district. With more than 30 languages spoken in the neighborhood, this is one of the most ethnically diverse localities in the city. International Boulevard, the main thoroughfare, is bustling with activity throughout the day, with small grocers, fruit stands, taco trucks, and pedestrians shopping in a variety of stores. Its census tract has some of the lowest incomes and highest crime rates in Oakland.

In recent years, reinvestment in the Fruitvale neighborhood along International Boulevard has produced significant new housing opportunities that are helping to create a much safer community. The redevelopment of St. Joseph’s, one of Fruitvale’s most recognizable landmarks, has reinforced this trend. Together, St. Joseph’s Senior Apartments and Terraza Palmera create a vibrant intergenerational residential community and serve as a catalyst to address the ongoing housing crisis and growing need for affordable residences in Oakland.

The campus is a successful example of using a public-private partnership to leverage funding for preserving and converting a dilapidated historic landmark in a distressed neighborhood and adding housing density to an existing site. As an infill development, it is a good example of reusing existing underutilized sites to enhance neighborhood revitalization efforts. The historic complex has provided an opportunity to create high-density infill affordable housing in a well-served metropolitan area in proximity to mass transit. And the apartments are reserved for the most vulnerable members of the community: senior and working families who find it a challenge to find a well-managed, affordable place to call home in the high-priced Bay Area housing market. ■

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