

NORTHERN NEWS



American Planning Association
California Chapter
Northern
Making Great Communities Happen

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

NOVEMBER 2014

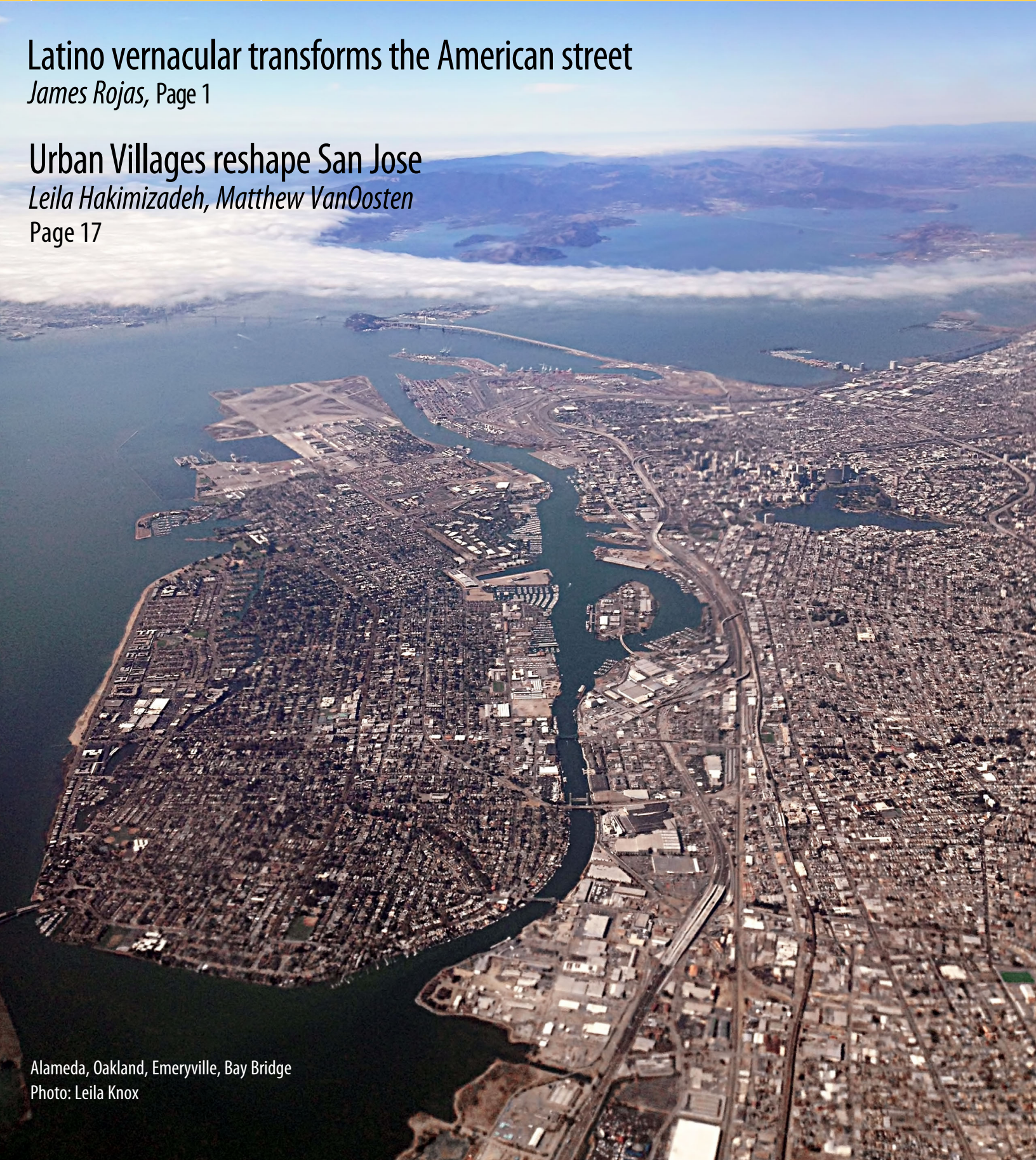
Latino vernacular transforms the American street

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Urban Villages reshape San Jose

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Alameda, Oakland, Emeryville, Bay Bridge
Photo: Leila Knox

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Latino vernacular

Latino spatial and cultural values transform the American single-family house and street

By James Rojas

The vast majority of America's single-family housing was built in the twentieth century with values and spatial requirements that met the social, cultural, design, and economic needs and dreams of America's working- and middle-classes. As great numbers of Latino immigrants move into those homes, they bring attitudes towards housing, land, and public space that often conflict with how the neighborhoods and houses were originally planned, zoned, designed, and constructed.

Latinos moving into single-family homes add their cultural living patterns to the American spatial forms to create "Latino vernacular." This vernacular offers cultural, economic, and environmental solutions to the residents' needs as they customize and personalize their homes. Every change Latinos make to their homes, no matter how small, has meaning and purpose, representing the struggles, triumphs, everyday habits, and beliefs of the new working class residents.

Latino vernacular synthesizes cultural styles that are neither "Spanish" (as the general public views it) nor Anglo-American. The beauty of the vernacular cannot be measured by any architectural standard but rather by life's experiences, expressions, and adaptations. The vernacular represents Latinos' adaptation to their environment.

Public vs. private; outdoor vs. indoor

Many Latinos come from the rural places of Mexico or Latin America where social, cultural and — to some extent — economic life revolves around the *zocalo* or plaza. The plaza becomes an extension of residents' home life. The dialogue between home and plaza — which is very apparent in the physical structures of Latin American settlements — manifests itself in the way Latinos redesign their single-family homes in the U.S.

Because of warm weather and Spanish urban design precedents, the traditional Mexican courtyard home is built to the street and designed with a "patio" or interior courtyard. The patio helps ventilate the interior of the home and floods it with light. With most rooms facing the patio, it becomes the physical focus of the home.

By contrast, the American house has a strong linear movement that begins at the front of the house and works its way back. American rooms are arranged beginning with the "public" (the living room) in front, to the private (the bedrooms) in back. In the Mexican house, the focus is on being either inside or outside, not in front or in back. Privacy is usually not an issue.

Front yard as plaza

The Latino household extends its presence to all four corners of the lot. Nowhere else in the Latino vernacular home is Mexican use of space so illuminated and celebrated than in the enclosed front yard or plaza. As Mexican immigrants settled into their new homes, the American front yards became a space for cultural identity.

The Mexican brings a new interpretation to the American front yard ("la yarda") because many homes in Mexico don't have them. Depending on the practical needs of the owners, the use and design of the front yards vary from elaborate courtyard gardens reminiscent of Mexico to working spaces. One Mexican resident said, "In Mexico I never had such a piece of land like this." *La yarda* thus reflects Mexican cultural values applied to American suburban form.

The personalization of *la yarda* by the residents, along with the enclosing fences, has greatly changed the appearance of the front yards and the street. In Latino neighborhoods, enclosed front yards are now so dominant that they

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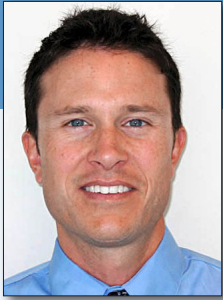
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Find JOBS and EVENTS CALENDAR at norcalapa.org



Director's note

By Jeff Baker

Uptown Oakland named one of the Great Places in America

As part of its “Great Places in America” program, the American Planning Association annually selects 10 neighborhoods in the nation that “add value to communities and foster economic growth and jobs.” And this year, one of those is Uptown. The district is generally between Grand Avenue on the north and 16th Street on the south, between Broadway on the east and I-980 on the west. It is distinguished through the dedication of its residents, a concentration of arts, culture, and entertainment venues, restaurants and bars, and well-preserved historic buildings — all close to and with easy access to transportation. Transit options are plentiful, including two BART stations, several bus lines, and free weekday shuttles. APA members will have the opportunity to explore Uptown during the 2015 APA California Conference October 3–6, as the main conference venue is just two blocks away.

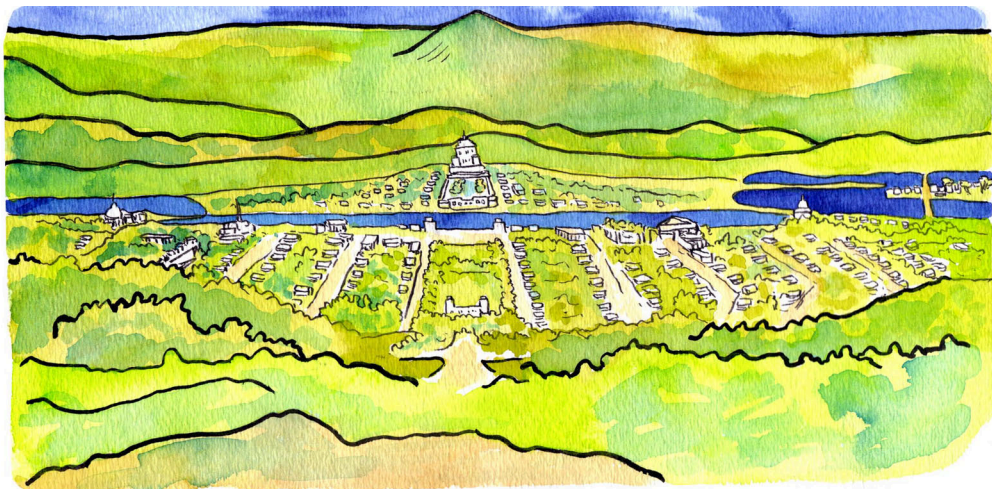
For more on the award, a photo, and external links, go to [page 7](#).

Holiday party

Mark your calendar and plan to attend the annual Northern Section holiday party. Always a crowd pleaser, the event provides a great opportunity to reconnect with your colleagues, meet new ones, and share your experiences over the past year. This year's party will be held on Friday, November 21 at 7 p.m. at Bluestem Brasserie, just off Market at 1 Yerba Buena Lane in San Francisco. Come by MUNI or walk two-tenths of a mile from Powell Street BART. And please consider donating items to be auctioned at the party. All proceeds go to the California Planning Foundation for student scholarships. To donate, please contact Darcy Kremin, CPF Liaison, at dkremin@pmcworld.com. See [page 8](#) for more information and to register for the event.

Northern Section elections

November is election season and that includes the Northern Section! You'll find election information and candidate statements for Director Elect and Administrative Director on [page 10](#). Be sure to cast your vote in November! ■



The Utopian city that wasn't. A beautifully illustrated true story of the architects who “made no little plans” for Canberra, the new capital city of Australia, 1912–1930. Credit: Eleri Harris, <http://bit.ly/1rpKCKE>

The display of calling cards from firms offering professional services appears in every issue of *Northern News*. Fees paid by the firms for this service help defray the costs of this newsletter.

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Meet a local planner

By Siân Llewellyn, AICP

Hing Wong, AICP, is Senior Regional Planner at the Association of Bay Area Governments, President-Elect of the California Chapter of APA, and one of the more active members in APA California's Northern Section.



Hing Wong, AICP, with Oakland's Director of Planning and Building, Rachel Flynn, and Mayor Jean Quan at APA's presentation of its Great Neighborhoods award to the Uptown District. Photo: Greg Linhares, City of Oakland.

Tell us a bit about yourself. How did you become interested in planning as a profession?

I've been in the East Bay since I was a teenager — mostly in Oakland. I was born in Fresno and lived in Vancouver BC for a while. I really know the Bay Area. I went to college at Cal Berkeley and studied urban geography and economics. I had been working in planning for a while before I went back and got my Master's in Urban Planning at San Jose State University.

My day job, the one that pays me, is Senior Regional Planner for the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). I've been with them since 1984, when I started out doing contract demographic work for them while I was in college. You could say I discovered the planning profession doing contract work for ABAG. I have enjoyed the work since the beginning. I've always been interested in the big picture — how do you make the community you live in a better place to live and work?

Do you have a favorite project?

At ABAG we see a large variety of projects, so choosing any one of them is tough, but since it is timely, I would have to say the San Francisco Bay Trail is one I am pleased to have been involved

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Meet a local planner (continued from previous page)

with. It was an amazing idea, sponsored by then state Senator Bill Lockyer in 1987. ABAG adopted the Bay Trail plan and launched the project in 1989, so this year is the 25th anniversary of the plan. (The Bay Trail has just won Northern Section and California Chapter awards. See *Northern News*, September 2014, "Around the Bay in 500 miles," <http://bit.ly/1vOmKIR>).

The Bay Trail is envisioned as an eventual 500-mile-long recreational corridor, with adjacent bayshore parks and protected natural habitats. The idea is you can hike or bike all the way around the San Francisco and San Pablo Bays. The trail will link the shoreline of all nine bay area counties and 47 of its cities. To date, 338 miles have been completed. That is an amazing regional feat; a truly big picture that started with a plan.

What is the most significant planning challenge facing planners today?

Planners seek to improve society and the environment; we tend to think progressively. Some of our major challenges stem from bumping up against those who are protective of the status quo. We need to hear all sides of the debate and remain diplomatic and open to different opinions. If we engage the silent majority who are satisfied with our planning efforts as well as those who are passionate and outspoken, and the hard-to-reach, then everyone can be at the table. It's a delicate balance — and a challenge — to move worthy projects through a clear and open public discourse.

What is most fulfilling about what you do?

Giving back to the profession has been very fulfilling and rejuvenating for me. I do it in several ways. I have been an adjunct professor at San Jose State for 15 years, teaching new generations of planners quantitative methods, public policy, and recently GIS. I really enjoy engaging with the students as well as keeping up with the strides in technology.

Of course, there is the APA work. I started out on the Northern Section Board in the late 1990s, served on the board for a dozen years, and since then I've been active at the Chapter level. Next year I take on the California Chapter presidency — a huge job, but one you don't take on alone. It's a four year term: You are president-elect for one year, then president for two years, and then past-president for the fourth year. I was elected in 2013, so I'm president-elect in 2014, serving under Brooke Peterson, who is currently the Chapter president.

I also mentor a number of planners through a Northern Section program, and have for over a decade been working with the California Planning Foundation, which raises money to fund planning student scholarships. CPF awards over 50K a year; it's a tremendous activity to be involved with.

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How 10 megacities grew over the past century.

“More than 7 billion people now live on the planet. About half live in urban areas, and ongoing migration into city centers has given rise to the megacity — a metropolitan area with 10 million people or more. Today the world has 28 megacities, according to the United Nations, and that figure is projected to increase.” This ESRI site, illustrated with photos and map GIFs, explores the historic growth of 10 of today’s largest cities. The site includes brief explanations for how each city bloated to its mega-size. <http://bit.ly/1vLdLSo>

Meet a local planner (continued from previous page)

What is your advice to planners starting out?

Planning can be very fulfilling yet grueling, and many good plans and ideas never see the light of day. Political realities dictate perseverance. A good way to encourage each other is to hang out with other planners at professional and social events. Our conferences and meetings are outstanding opportunities to network and recharge, a chance to learn from each other’s trials and triumphs. The California Chapter conference will be held in Oakland next October. I’m pleased it will be held here in a great city that was awarded the 2014 Great Places in America: Great Neighborhoods for the Uptown district.

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.

City street grids, visualized. “A new data visualization by Stephen Von Worley maps street layouts based on the cardinal orientation of each city’s grid pattern. Von Worley took metro-area grids from OpenStreetMap and used an algorithm to color every public street according to a tweaked version of the circular rainbow color gradient. Neat, orderly grids oriented north-south and east-west are marked in red, while streets that bend and wind in other directions are rendered in different colors according to how their orientation on the compass corresponds to the color wheel — one 90-degree change in street direction corresponds to one revolution around the color wheel (back to red). Streets skewed at 30 degrees appear bluish, for instance, while streets skewed at 60 degrees appear greenish.” <http://bit.ly/ZIOPzD>. Worley’s maps for U.S. and world metro areas can be seen at <http://bit.ly/ZIOTiX>



San Francisco peninsula, Redwood City to Mountain View. Created by Stephen Von Worley. Map data ©OpenStreetMap contributors.



Uptown Oakland bags national award

The American Planning Association has named Oakland's Uptown district one of the great neighborhoods in America. Uptown lies between Grand Avenue on the north and 16th Street on the south, and between Broadway on the east and I-980 on the west. Major commercial activity centers around San Pablo Avenue, Telegraph Avenue, and Broadway. Uptown is also — not coincidentally — home to one of the Bay Area's premier arts and entertainment districts.



Photo: Erik Balsley, AICP

In reporting on the award, local CBS affiliate KCBS observed that “The recognition may come as no surprise to residents who have seen Uptown’s dramatic shift over the last 15 years, thanks to underutilized lots and buildings transformed into a cluster of hip art galleries, restaurants, and businesses within a walkable neighborhood. . . . Uptown’s rebirth began with help from the former Oakland Redevelopment Agency, which created both public and private partnerships for the Uptown Area Mixed Use Project . . . which led to the renovation and reopening of the landmark Fox Theater in 2009.”

“During the mid to late 2000s, the Uptown Residential Project — part of former Mayor [now Governor] Jerry Brown’s [1997] ‘10K Housing Initiative’ to attract 10,000 new residents to the downtown Oakland area — served as a major catalyst for private investment and job creation,” notes the Award description. “The project design took advantage of its proximity to public transportation and created a transit oriented, pedestrian friendly neighborhood with a variety of housing. A 25,000-square-foot public park at the center of the project serves as a neighborhood focal point.”

“The neighborhood is distinguished,” continues the Award, “through the dedication of its residents, concentration of arts, culture, and entertainment venues, restaurants, bars, and well preserved historic buildings, all within proximity and with easy access to transportation. Transit options are plentiful, with two downtown Oakland BART stations, numerous AC Transit bus lines, free weekday shuttles, Greyhound bus stops, and proximity to all of the major freeways.”

For more on the Uptown award, see “2014 Great Places in America – Neighborhoods” (APA, October 1, 2014) at <http://bit.ly/1sXY900> and “Oakland’s Uptown District named among nation’s 10 great neighborhoods” (KCBS, October 1, 2014) <http://cbsloc.al/1n52yvo>. ■

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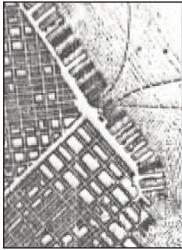
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Using CEQA to gain leverage. "So that's the crux of the problem: CEQA provides a way for anybody who wants anything out of a public agency to get some leverage over the situation – whether that's unions, environmentalists, businesses, developers, and even local governments themselves. And no matter how much all these folks say they want CEQA streamlined, they don't want anything to change that will cut into their leverage. Until that equation changes, you won't see much in the way of meaningful CEQA reform." —Bill Fulton, <http://bit.ly/ZPDoqD>

2014 Annual APA Holiday Party



Bluestem interior. Photo: Ryan Hughes, 2012.

More Bluestem photos at <http://on.fb.me/1yWJzHC>

The Holiday Season is fast approaching, and the APA Northern Section's holiday party has always been the place to eat great food and connect with planners from around the region. This year we're getting an early start. Come and celebrate with us at our annual party.

**November 21, 7–10 pm, at Bluestem Brasserie,
1 Yerba Buena Lane, San Francisco.**

The restaurant is located just across from architect Daniel Libeskind's Contemporary Jewish Museum on the pedestrian path that connects Market Street with Yerba Buena Gardens, and is just two-tenths of a mile east of the Powell Street BART Station.

Bluestem Brasserie features fresh, simply composed dishes and sustainably produced grass-fed beef. Tickets are available at <http://bit.ly/1rakC3N> at \$30 for APA members, \$35 for non-members (you should join!), and \$15 for students or unemployed.

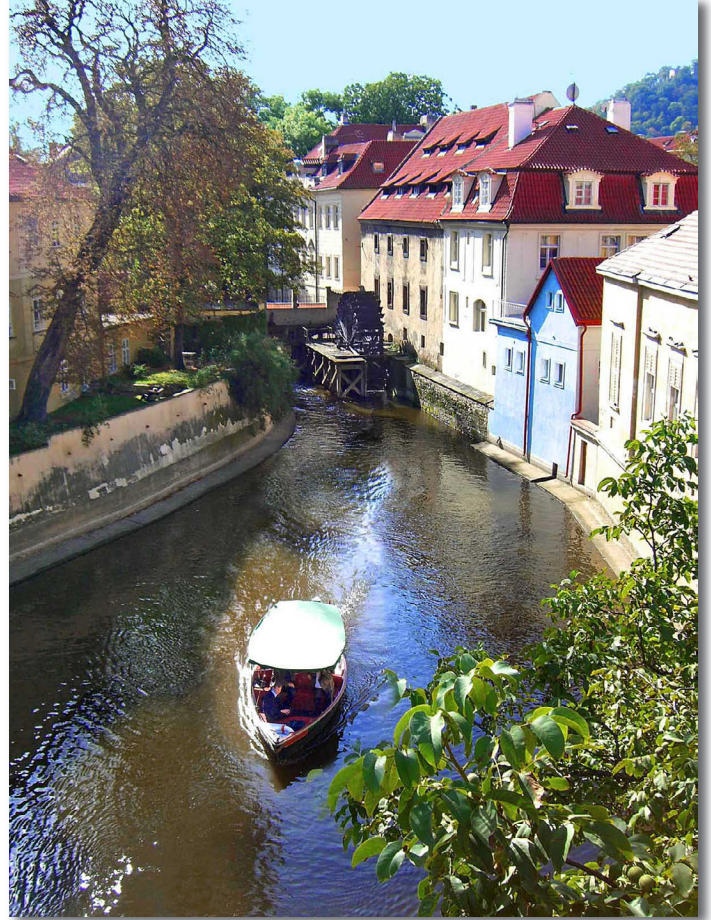
As always, we will have a drawing for the California Planning Foundation to benefit students who are pursuing planning degrees. Raffle tickets can also be purchased on the ticket page.

*We look forward to seeing you there
to celebrate all the upcoming holidays!*

Where in the world?



1. Photo by Justin Meek, AICP. (Answer on [page 14.](#))



2. Photo by Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP. (Answer on [page 14.](#))



3. Photo by Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP. (Answer on [page 14.](#))

Nominees for Section Board, APA California – Northern

The following are statements submitted by candidates for the open Northern Section Board-elected positions for two-year terms. Ballots will be available at www.norcalapa.org by **November 10**, and the election will close on **December 1**. The newly elected officers will take office at the January 2015 Board Retreat.

Erik Balsley, AICP, LEED AP B+C For the post of Director Elect

It is a privilege to be able to run for APA California – Northern Section Director Elect. I have served on the Section Board since July 2011, first as an Associate Newsletter Editor, then as Communications Director (July 2012 – December 2013), and now as a Co-Chair of the Conference Host Committee (CHC) for the 2015 APA California Conference.

In these roles, I redesigned the Section's bi-weekly eNews, increased the reach of the Section's social media outlets (including doubling the number of 'likes' on the Section's Facebook page), and have started to prepare for the 2015 conference. Each of the 2015 CHC meetings has attracted over 50 energetic individuals, and we are on our way towards making the conference a memorable and successful one.

As Section Director Elect, I will work closely with the Section Director to further improve communications with our members. With your feedback, we should be able to offer more opportunities to earn AICP CM credits, meet fellow planners, and advance our field. Additionally, as a co-chair of the 2015 APA California Conference, I have become more familiar with the State Chapter and its role in relation to the Section.

Over the past three years, I have been honored to work with the talented volunteers on the Section Board. I have learned a great deal from them and am continuing to do so. If given the honor to serve as Section Director Elect I will work to improve the responsiveness of the Board so that we are best able to handle and address the challenges and opportunities ahead of us in our chosen profession.

Stuart Bussian, AICP For the post of Administrative Director

As a resident of Oakland, I am passionate about the urban environment and the neighborhoods in which I live and work. And as a professional planner, I am committed to helping those who may not have a voice and/or opportunity to make real change in their neighborhood, community, and world. I offer an experienced and creative perspective to the Board in serving as Administrative Director.

My professional work experience as an urban planner and landscape architect spans 30 years including public and private employment sectors. I have worked in California since 1999, as a Senior Landscape Architect with the National Park Service (NPS), West Regional Office. Currently, I am with HNTB Corporation, a transportation focused engineering firm in Oakland. My educational background includes a graduate degree in Urban and Regional Planning (Florida Atlantic

University), and a bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture (University of Florida). I have professional registrations and licenses including AICP, Landscape Architect (CA), and LEED AP. My community volunteer work includes Friends of the Urban Forest, San Francisco; APA Northern Section Education Mentoring Program; and I am helping the Alameda County Transportation Authority Measure BB at the Bike East Bay headquarters.

I welcome the opportunity to serve the APA California Northern Section fellow planners and Board. And if elected, I pledge my dedication to the Board, the American Planning Association, and to my community. I will bring a creative and committed perspective to the APA California – Northern Section Board of Directors as Administrative Director. Thank you all for your consideration. ■

How California can kick fossil fuels by 2050

By Rachel Dovey, Next City

From Berkeley in the '60s to Silicon Valley today, California has long been known for its blissful utopians. Stanford professor Mark Jacobson's recent study — outlining how the state can become completely renewable by 2050 — could easily be dismissed as just another California dream. ["A roadmap for repowering California for all purposes with wind, water, and sunlight," <http://stanford.io/1vJ25i9>.] After all, with car-centric infrastructure, a lobby-powered Sacramento, and oceans of oil hidden deep in the Monterey Shale, the Golden State's nickname often seems far too literal.

But Jacobson says his vision isn't rose-tinted and that California can ditch fossil fuels — soon.

His confidence comes partly from the many benefits his team quantified. If California were to switch completely to a pastoral-sounding combination of wind, water, and sunlight (WWS) by the established end date, the state would gain roughly 220,000 more 40-year jobs than it would lose, avoid about 12,500 air pollution-related deaths each year, and save around \$103 billion annually in health costs.

"It will stabilize the energy market and create jobs," he says. "There's very little downside."

Jacobson has developed such plans for each state as part of The Solutions Project, <http://bit.ly/1vLay5c>. For California, his paper outlines a detailed roadmap forward.

The state could be powered by a combination of solar fields, decentralized panels on rooftops, carports, and garages, geothermal, and on- and offshore wind farms. Vehicles would be electrified and battery-powered, also sourcing from this renewable grid. In total, the structures to make this possible would take up about 0.9 percent of California's landmass. To keep a stable supply, a combination of about 55 percent solar, 35 percent wind, and the rest from geothermal, hydroelectric, and tidal sources is recommended.

The mix would serve an expanded population: according to the study, conventional power demand in the Golden State will increase "proportionately more in 2050 than in the U.S. as a whole because California's population is expected to grow by 35 percent between 2010 and 2050, whereas the U.S. population is expected to grow by 29.5 percent."

A system-wide overhaul would of course be expensive — but keeping the grid and streets as they are would also rack up the bills. In fact, the paper notes that factoring in external costs like air-pollution illnesses and deaths, along with the worldwide toll of increasingly catastrophic climate change, "WWS technologies cost less than conventional technologies today."

And that multiplies going forward.

A WWS grid in 2050 would be significantly cheaper because natural generators — unlike fossil fuels — are free. And manufacturing and project deployment costs are expected to drop due to economies of scale.

Compare that with U.S. estimates of severe storm and hurricane damage, real estate loss, energy sector, and water costs — \$271 billion a year in 2025, \$506 billion a year in 2050, \$961 billion a year in 2075, and \$1.9 trillion a year in 2100. Those figures come from a study by

(continued on next page)



Wind turbines, Solano County. Photo: Nancy Roberts

Frank Ackerman and Elizabeth Stanton, which, Jacobson's paper states, does not measure "increases in mortality and illness due to increased heat stress, influenza, malaria, and air pollution or increases in forest-fire incidence, and as a result, probably underestimates the true cost."

Making a complete switch is "the only thing we can do, it has to be done, and we really don't have a choice," Jacobson argues.

Mathematically he's right. But between climate deniers, Congress, and a slavish devotion to short-term GDP, U.S. politics still reflect a different reality — in which we do have a choice. We could also continue with business-as-usual energy policies, benefitting a few choice monopolies.

Which is why Jacobson chose to research each state's individual potential.

"It's more likely that something will actually happen in the states," he says. The U.S. is just "too large a scale."

But the old-guard policies of Washington also play out in California's capitol. Two organizations fighting to make renewable energy a reality in 2014 testify to legislative roadblocks.

Susan Glick is a spokesperson for the Alliance for Solar Choice, a national advocate for rooftop solar [<http://bit.ly/1vJ2dhC>].

"The main thing on our radar is preserving sustainable rooftop solar markets and net metering," she says, adding that investor owned utilities across the country lobby to undo policies geared toward such decentralization.

Take AB 327, supported by California's Big Three "brotherhood," PG&E, SDG&E and SCE, whose top-tier executives have a revolving door with regulators, assembly members, and the oil and gas industry. In its first incarnation, the bill sought to flatten rates, removing financial incentives to switch to alternatives like solar. (It was significantly amended in favor of solar advocates by the time it passed in 2013).

Bill Magavern, meanwhile, advocates for greener transportation with the Coalition for Clean Air [<http://bit.ly/1vJ2Is6>]. While subsidies are beginning to encourage plug-in and hybrid technology for personal cars, Magavern says the freight industry still has a long way to go. The coalition supported a bill [SB 1204] to fund new transport technology (trucks, buses, and off-road vehicles) from cap-and-trade revenues. And the hurdles are significant.

"In the capital we're going up against the oil industry and other powerful polluters," he says, as well as making friction with the trucking and distribution sectors and railroads, which "aren't as recalcitrant as the oil industry," but still "play politics in a big way."

Still, he says, public policy favors renewable energy.

"The people of California support continued progress," Magavern says. "There are a lot of promising technologies, organizations, and individuals trying to make a fossil-free future a reality."

Ed. Note: The Governor signed the bill supported by Coalition for Clean Air on September 21. It is **SB 1204** (Chapter 524, Statutes of 2014) <http://bit.ly/1vJ2Xn1>.

This article was originally published in Next City's "The Works" on October 6, 2014, <http://bit.ly/ZPDv10>. Republished with permission. The Works is made possible with the support of the Surdna Foundation, <http://www.surdna.org>.

Rachel Dovey is an award-winning freelance writer and former USC Annenberg fellow living in Santa Rosa. She writes about infrastructure, water, and climate change and has been published by *Bust*, *Wired*, *Paste*, *SF Weekly*, *the East Bay Express*, and the *North Bay Bohemian*. ■



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Who's where



Janine Bird is now an Assistant Planner for EMC Planning Group, Monterey. Bird's former roles include GIS technician for Timothy C. Best, CEG, and Lynx Technologies, biological science technician for the National Park Service, natural resources intern for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, earth science researcher and team lead for NASA DEVELOP Program, and GIS intern for the City of Fremont. She holds a Master of

Arts in Geography from San Jose State University and a Bachelor's in Psychology from St. Lawrence University at New York.



Ellen Clark, AICP, is now Planning Director for the Town of Moraga, where she previously was senior planner. Before coming to Moraga, Clark was principal planner and senior planner for the Town of Mammoth Lakes (2007–2013) and senior associate at Design, Community & Environment (2000–2007). She holds a B.A. in Geography from the University of Cambridge.



Shannon Fiala is now a Coastal Planner, Northern Central Coastal District Office, California Coastal Commission. Her past roles include resiliency best practices grant coordinator with the Urban Land Institute, Ocean Beach assistant program manager at SPUR, and graduate student assistant with San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board. She also serves as one of APA California Northern Section's

Young Planners Group co-coordinators. Fiala has masters degrees in City and Regional Planning and in Landscape Architecture in Environmental Planning from UC Berkeley, and a B.S. in Resource Ecology and Management from the University of Michigan.



Rob Holmlund, AICP, is now Community Development Director for the City of Eureka, which just initiated a general plan update. Holmlund was formerly a senior planner and project manager at GHD (formerly Winzler & Kelly) in Eureka. While at GHD, he specialized in project management, non-motorized transportation facility development, community planning, GIS, asset management, and environmental planning.

Holmlund holds master degrees in Environment and Community Planning from Humboldt State University and in Education from Salisbury University, Maryland.



Darcy Kremin, AICP, is now the Bay Area Environmental Practice Leader at PMC in Oakland. She will be expanding PMC's environmental work by providing CEQA, NEPA, and permitting compliance for Bay Area clients. Over the previous eight years, Kremin had been environmental planning manager at URS and senior project planner at Cardno ENTRIX. Kremin was APA California Northern Section Director, 2009–2010, is

Co-chair of the 2015 APA California conference, and is on the board of the California Planning Foundation. She holds an M.A. in Urban and Environmental Policy from Tufts and a B.A. in Geography/Environmental Studies and Political Science from UCLA.



Ben Noble has launched his own independent planning consulting practice, where he will focus on zoning work, including comprehensive zoning code updates, targeted zoning amendments, and form-based codes. Noble was previously an associate principal at PlaceWorks (formerly Design, Community & Environment), where he oversaw the company's zoning practice. He holds a Master in City and Regional Planning from

the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill) and a B.A. in History and Southeast Asian Studies from the University of Wisconsin (Madison).



Jason Su — a specialist in urban design and community development — is now Project Manager for the San Jose Downtown Association's property-based improvement district (PBID), working on public realm improvements in downtown San Jose. Su previously worked in project management with the San Francisco Public Works Streetscapes Division. His past work experience includes the City of Oakland, SPUR,

and Greenbelt Alliance. Su holds a Master of Urban Planning from San Jose State University and a Bachelor's in Business Economics and Sociology from the University of California, Irvine.



Lola Torney is now a Planner for Alta Planning + Design. Her previous roles include planning intern with the County of Santa Clara and graduate student intern with the City of San Jose. While earning her Master of Urban Planning at San Jose State University, she served as president of their Urban Planning Coalition. Torney also holds a B.S. in Environmental Policy Analysis and Planning from UC Davis. ■

Further your career this fall

Get a 10 percent discount on UC Davis Extension courses

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.

Aggie Sol – UC Davis Solar Decathlon Team: UC Davis is competing in the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Decathlon, which challenges collegiate teams across the United States to design, build, and operate solar-powered houses that are cost effective, energy-efficient, and attractive. To learn more about the project visit <http://bit.ly/1ruduOE>. To learn more about how you can participate contact Julia Lave Johnston, jljohnston@ucdavis.edu.

CEQA Update, Issues, and Trends: Learn recent developments and emerging trends, and exchange ideas about handling key issues in the environmental review process. Instructors: Ken Bogdan and James Moose. **AICP | CM 6.0**

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Land Use Planning for Non-Planners — An Introduction to Planning in California: Learn how to more effectively participate in planning processes and how to understand the impacts of the complex legal issues associated with both land use and environmental planning. Instructors: Vivian Kahn and Thomas Jacobson. **AICP | CM 28.0**

Practical Guide to Updating the General Plan: Learn how to budget a project, hire consulting assistance as necessary, and finish the project in an efficient, but comprehensive manner. Instructors: David Early and Richard Walter. **AICP | CM 6.0**

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

Answer to “Where in the world?” (Page 9)

- 1. Riverwalk, San Antonio, Texas, looking west.**
The bridge crossing is Presa Street. The (1929) 29-story Tower Life building downtown is on the National Register of Historic Places. A 2010 renovation replaced an obsolete television mast with a copper top-house and 100-foot tall flagpole to reflect the tower's original design. Photo: Justin Meek, AICP.
- 2. Prague, Czech Republic.** Čertovka canal and Kampa Island, looking south from the Charles Bridge.
Photo: Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP.
- 3. Tour boats ply the narrow river in Malacca, Malaysia.**
Photo: Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP.

Clean up your clichés. “Replace clichés with stimulating and stronger language to keep your reader’s attention so they don’t turn off and read something less tiresome or boring instead. To write in an interesting, engaging, and unique way doesn’t [require] using generic words and phrases which have lost their originality through overuse. To find alternatives for well-known sayings, phrases, and clichés, enter your phrase into <http://en.wiktionary.org>. Also, see <http://bit.ly/1w1XGsQ> to look up clichés and check [their] meanings and their origins. ‘At the end of the day,’ [when all things have been considered,] don’t let lazy and tired language affect your writing.” Read more, including a list of the top 200 clichés, at *Proof Edit Write*, <http://bit.ly/1nmdl1>

RFP forthcoming to share in \$2.9 million APA health planning grant

Grant funding strengthens the connection between Planning and Public Health

The American Planning Association (APA) is receiving year-one funding totaling \$2.9 million from a grant provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help communities improve overall health and prevent chronic disease. See <http://1.usa.gov/1rE8iww>

Seventy-five percent of the funding will support local and state coalitions working to advance public health through more innovative planning and partnerships. Remaining funds will be used to provide assistance and training for local planning and public health initiatives. The grants will support community efforts to increase opportunities for physical activity, improve access to nutritious food, decrease exposure to and consumption of tobacco, and increase access to health care.

The project will be implemented in partnership with the American Public Health Association (APHA, <http://www.apha.org/>) and represents a major new collaboration between planners and public health professionals. APA and APHA will soon announce a request for proposals from state and local coalitions interested in working within their communities to improve public health.

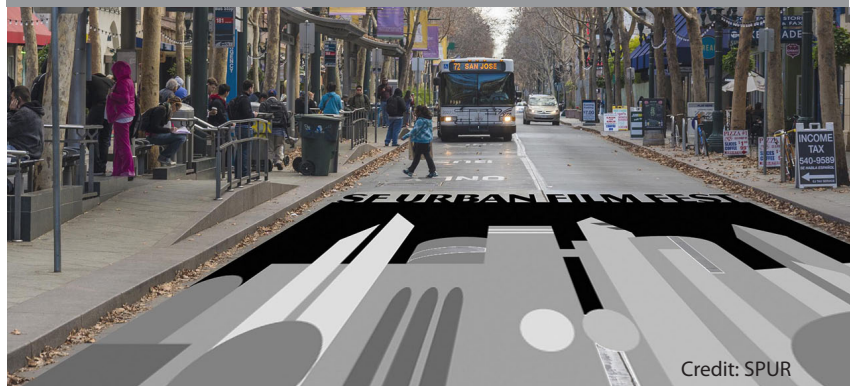
To receive information about the grant and the coming Request for Proposals, e-mail healthycommunities@planning.org

APA's Planning and Community Health Center is dedicated to integrating community health issues into local and regional planning practices by advancing research, outreach, education, and policy. See <http://bit.ly/1rE8zj2>

Source: APA Statement, September 25, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1qz55Zy> ■

SF Urban Film Fest opens November 6

Focus is on urban planning, civic engagement, and film



Stories abound daily of the many crises the Bay Area faces in housing, transportation, open space, public education, sea-level rise, natural disasters, and income inequality to name a few. The SF Urban Film Fest will be showing “good films that illuminate the need for civic engagement: films about painful urban histories, visionary planning, and passionate citizens making a difference for their neighborhood or city.” According to Phil Millenbah, one of the city planners organizing the event, “These urban planning stories have inspired the documentary filmmakers whose work we show at the Film Fest. We hope the stories will inspire the general public in turn.”

“It will take all of us, not just urban planners, to tackle these problems,” said planner Fay Darmawi, founder of the Film Fest. “We hope SF Urban Film Fest will ignite our collective imagination and our resolve to create a resilient, just, and beautiful city.”

The festival will run for four days, including filmmaker/urban planner panels and a Friday night party. On Thursday, Nov. 6, you can attend a 90-minute workshop, “Storytelling Bootcamp for Planners,” at 4:30 pm. It should be a kick!

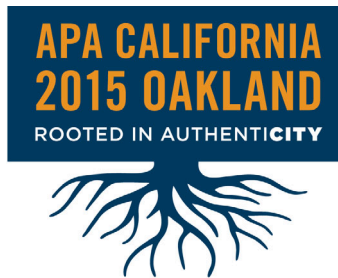
The SF Urban Film Fest runs November 6th to 9th at SPUR, 654 Mission Street, San Francisco. SF Urban Film Fest partners include SPUR, SF Bicycle Coalition, SFPUC, Walk San Francisco, and Bay Area Video Coalition. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit

www.sfurbanfilmfest.com ■

Where climate change has already come. “More than 17,000 properties in Norfolk, Virginia, amounting to 34 percent of the tax base, are in high-risk flood plains. New buyers have started to think twice about waterfront property. There are fears that climate-change awareness will scare away commerce and industry as well. Not coincidentally, Norfolk is now home to the nation’s first academic institution of adaptation science. Established last summer by Old Dominion University, the Mitigation and Adaptation Research Institute (MARI) represents a shift in climate thinking. The question is no longer just how we can stop or slow climate change — it’s how we can live with it.” —Henry Grabar, <http://bit.ly/1wLxbFU>



OAKLAND WANTS YOU!



A call for presenters, panelists, moderators, and guides to help shape the 2015 APA Conference

The 2015 APA California Chapter Conference will be held in downtown Oakland October 3–6. Initial session and mobile workshop guidelines are provided below. All proposals are due no later than February 6, 2015, at 11:59 pm PST.

Call for Mobile Workshops – Open November 10, 2014

We are seeking fun and informational mobile workshops. Each proposal should highlight and incorporate a recreational activity, unique food, cultural experience, or behind-the-scenes access to a San Francisco Bay Area destination.

Applicants will be primarily responsible for coordinating, organizing, and facilitating their mobile workshops; however, the Mobile Workshops Committee will assist with bus and transit transportation logistics. Mobile workshop destinations must either be within walking distance from the conference or reachable by charter bus, public transit, or bicycle. Please help make these workshops as ADA accessible as possible.

Whereas half-day tours are standard for mobile workshops, they may be as short as two hours or as long as eight. You can download the mobile workshop proposal form, and additional information, from the APA California Northern Section conference website, <http://bit.ly/1cYkfrp>. Email completed proposals to mobileworkshops2015@norcalapa.org. For questions, please contact Mika Miyasato, AICP, Mobile Workshops Committee Chair, at mika.miyasato@gmail.com or (510) 891-7138.

Call for Presentations – Open December 1, 2014

This year's conference will include a diverse range of 90-minute presentation formats including sessions, workshops, and design charrettes. New to this year's APA California Conference are hour-long salon sessions — dynamic, idea-generating, problem-solving conversations centered on hot-topic issues within the planning community.

Each session, irrespective of format, should relate to one of the following core conference tracks:

- **Roots and Foundations:** planning foundational issues, planning 101s, nuts and bolts
- **Rings and Form:** place making and design, planning history
- **Branches and Specializations:** planning specializations and ramifications
- **Green Canopy:** environmental planning, sustainability, green practices
- **Harvest and Diversity:** celebrating cultural diversity/richness and social change
- **Beyond Forests – Innovation Frontiers:** inspirations and innovations in planning

All presentation submittals must be made online via the APA California Chapter conference website, <http://bit.ly/1cYkfrp>. Email, fax, or mail submittals will not be accepted. For questions, please contact Juan Borrelli, AICP, Programs Committee Chair, at juan.borrelli@sanjoseca.gov.

Sponsorship Opportunities

We have multiple opportunities for you to support the conference. Please download the Conference Sponsorship/Exhibitor Opportunities information at <http://bit.ly/1CXxDmA>, or email Darcy Kremin, AICP, Conference Co-Chair at darcy2015@norcalapa.org for more information. ■

Urban Villages to reshape San Jose

By Leila Hakimzadeh and Matthew VanOosten

San Jose's Urban Village strategy represents the City's largest ever commitment to smart growth, quality urban design, and the development of more complete communities. The Association of Bay Area Governments expects San Jose to grow by 400,000 people over the next 25 years, a number greater than San Francisco and Oakland's growth combined. Over that same time, San Jose is planning for 470,000 new jobs.

Existing development has already reached San Jose's urban growth boundary. The city chose to focus new growth inward around transit and commercial centers — places that can accommodate a greater intensity of uses in a sustainable manner. These 71 areas are called Urban Villages and are spread across the city. Through them, the city hopes to bring jobs and urban amenities to more of San Jose's residents. The Urban Village Plans are thus an important and necessary step in the city's evolution.

At its core, the Urban Village strategy is employing land use changes and urban design interventions to combat decades of car-oriented development. San Jose rapidly developed after World War II, growing from about 100,000 people in 1950 to over 600,000 by 1980. Indeed, Anthony P. (Dutch) Hamann, the city manager from 1950 to 1969, made it his goal to transform San Jose into the Los Angeles of northern California. During his time as city manager, annexation increased the city's size from 17 square miles to 149.¹ Tract home developments, single-story commercial uses, and regional malls characterized this rapid development. In these car-dominated environments, Urban Villages will create neighborhood centers to which residents can safely and easily walk or bike.

Planning for job growth is another key aspect of the Urban Village Plans. Since the 1970s, San Jose has served as a bedroom community for nearby job centers like Cupertino, Mountain View, and Palo Alto. But the Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan, instituted in 2011, calls for "jobs first" and for Urban Villages to promote commercial uses beyond just ground floor retail. In this way, San Jose aims to shift the ratio of jobs-to-employed-residents from the current 0.8 to 1.3 over a 20-year period. This will help transform San Jose from a bedroom community to a city of great places where people will want to live and work.

SPUR program on Urban Villages, Nov. 6

SPUR San Jose and APA present Michael Brilliot, City of San Jose planner, in an update on the urban villages headed for approval and the areas coming up next. 12:30 pm. Free for APA and SPUR members; \$10 for non-members. More information at <http://bit.ly/1rabDzy>



Meridian at Midtown, a development under construction in the West San Carlos Urban Village. Source: Republic Urban Properties

The current real estate market favors residential construction over commercial construction. But when office commercial is built, many employers opt for insular office parks or campuses that offer the corporate culture and security they desire. These are predominantly auto-oriented developments with large surface parking lots. The many wide roads leading to the parking lots cut through the urban landscape, giving little thought to pedestrian and bicycle amenities or public spaces.

A growing number of tech companies and their workers are beginning to see value in higher densities and in placemaking, which aims to increase amenity and socialization. This is already playing out as a number of companies and their workers move north to dense and metropolitan San Francisco. As in San Francisco, great places are increasingly being recognized as keys to a city's success and to economic development. The Bay Area urban think tank SPUR stated in a recent report, "Silicon Valley, the most dynamic and innovative economic engine in the world, is not creating great places."² To remain viable and modern, Silicon Valley must do so. San Jose's Urban Villages offer an ideal solution to the problem.

(continued on next page)

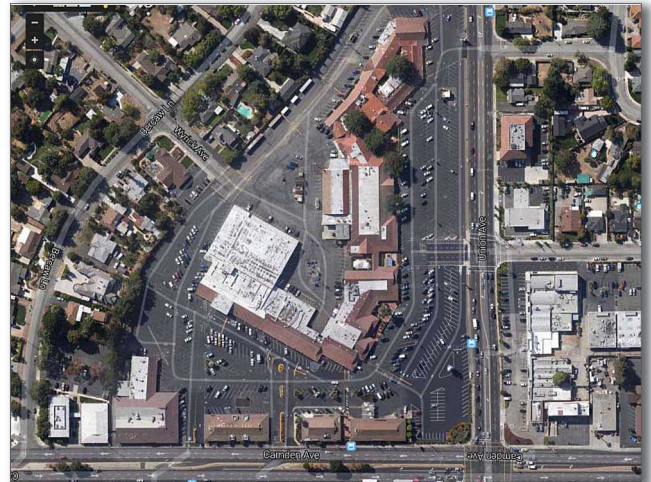
They call for development that:

- Mixes residential and employment activities,
- Establishes minimum densities to support transit use, bicycling, and walking,
- Promotes high-quality urban design,
- Engages local neighborhoods, and
- Encourages the redevelopment of underutilized properties with access to existing infrastructure.

The Urban Village strategy also meets San Jose’s environmental goals by coordinating land use and transportation plans and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled. The strategy plays an important role in helping the city conform to SB 375, the California State Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008, and to AB 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006.

Without redevelopment agencies, and facing declines in public funding, financing infrastructure and amenities is among the more critical challenges facing the implementation of Urban Villages. The City is pursuing an array of funding sources and financing mechanisms to implement the broad range of improvements proposed in the Urban Village Plans. Funds could come from multiple sources and several different financing tools, including impact fees, development agreements, assessment districts, and community benefits. A critical part of the ongoing Urban Village planning will be identifying which implementation tools or funding sources to use, and when.

San Jose’s Urban Villages will not blossom overnight. Their implementation will instead be driven largely by market demand. The plans offer a policy framework and path for future development. Over time, they will direct San Jose’s job and housing growth to walkable and bike-friendly areas with good access to public transit and other existing infrastructure and facilities. The Villages will be complete neighborhoods, thoughtfully designed, creating the “great places” San Jose wants and needs.



Cambrian Park Plaza Shopping Center. Source: Google Maps



Design study for Cambrian Park Plaza Shopping Center, courtesy of Wallace, Roberts & Todd. Aerial by Google.



Design for South Bascom Urban Village, courtesy MIG.

Silicon Valley is seeing significant changes in how and where people want to live, and where their jobs are located. Urban Villages will help reshape San Jose into a highly livable city, well suited for future job and housing growth — still mindful of cars, but with a focus on people.

The authors are members of the Urban Village Team, Planning Division, City of San Jose. You can reach them at Leila.hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov and Matthew.vanoosten@sanjoseca.gov

¹ Safford, Pat, “The legacy of Dutch Hamann plagues Cambrian residents, Annexation Background.” *Campbell Express* 59 (45). p. 1. (November 17, 2010). <http://bit.ly/10gNzVh>

² “Getting to Great Places: How Better Urban Design Can Strengthen San Jose’s Future,” *SPUR*, December 2013, p.4. <http://bit.ly/10gNLnx>



Norcal roundup

Assembled by Jennifer Piozet, associate editor

'A ton of bikes on Market Street'

Streetsblog SF, September 16, 2014

Aaron Bialick, <http://bit.ly/1yevSEA> • “San Franciscans may take it for granted, but the volume of bike traffic on Market Street resembles a Critical Mass ride more than a weekday rush hour. SF’s main thoroughfare regularly sees more than 3,000 people ride by the bike counter on weekdays at Market and Eighth Streets — and that’s just in one direction. It may still be a ways away from matching Copenhagen’s busiest streets, and it doesn’t have raised bike lanes yet, but it’s definitely one of the highest concentrations of bike commuters you can find in this country.”



Photo: Janice Li

Monterey Peninsula faces water politics

California Planning & Development Report, October 15, 2014

Larry Sokoloff, <http://bit.ly/1okZo7C> • “From many vantage points, the Monterey Peninsula looks idyllic. But it’s always been a mess when it comes to water politics. Throw in a long stalemate on solutions among the stakeholders, along with a disliked private water utility, administrative and judicial orders to cut back existing water supplies, no connections to state water — and a drought — and it’s hard to see a clear path out of this morass. Monterey Peninsula leaders say they’ve come up with three possible solutions in the past year: building a large desalination plant, increasing use of recycled wastewater, and using winter overflows from the Carmel River to recharge the nearby Seaside Basin. At the same time, the region already has to cut back its water usage to comply with another court ruling that requires it to replenish groundwater in the Seaside basin.

“The Monterey Peninsula Water Management District is currently backing two desalination proposals: one by Cal-Am one mile from the city of Marina, and another proposed by private developers in Moss Landing. The Marina plant would produce 7,000 to 9,000 acre-feet of water per year, which is slightly less than the cutbacks expected at the Carmel River by the start of 2017. Another proposed desalination plant near Moss Landing would rely on deeper water from the ocean that wouldn’t have the same impacts on fish and ocean life.

“Water conservation efforts have also led to reductions in use in recent years as well, with residents saving over 1,000 acre feet of water a year; and even more water conservation may be required of local residents.”

(Norcal roundup continues on next page)

Bay's wetlands welcome wildlife, protect against floods

PBS NEWSHOUR, October 9, 2014

Cat Wise, <http://to.pbs.org/1vVLF0m> • “Much of our reporting on climate change has focused on the impact it could have on people or on the environment in which they live. But one area that gets less attention is how climate change will affect wildlife. A major habitat restoration project in San Francisco Bay is trying to address that issue. Rachel Tertés of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service leads groups [that] trap in a restored tidal marsh to determine if an endangered species, found only in this area of the bay, is making a comeback. The endangered harvest salt marsh mouse [has] lost about 90 percent of its habitat due to human development along the bay, and now, according to Tertés, it faces a new threat: climate change.

“‘With climate change [and] sea level rise, as the tide increases, you have more water covering more plants, and less area for the mice to move up,’ reported Tertés.

“John Bourgeois of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project heads a multiagency collaboration to turn former industrial salt ponds back into thriving marshland habitat for wildlife and fish. The [private] ponds lined San Francisco Bay’s southern shores for more than 100 years. In 2003, the state, the federal government, and several private foundations acquired them for \$100 million, and turned them back into public lands. Since then, 3,500 acres, about 25 percent of the overall project, have been restored [and] quickly repopulated with wildlife. Native bird populations have doubled and fish are thriving. Leopard sharks and other predators have returned, a sign of a healthy ecosystem.

“While it may seem like a typical wetlands restoration — open up the levees and let Mother Nature do her thing — this project is charting new ground in restoration science. People will also benefit from new recreation opportunities and, most importantly, from increased flood protection.”

Marin now ‘suburban,’ no longer ‘metropolitan’

Marin IJ, September 30, 2014

Megan Hansen, <http://bit.ly/ZDb0bc>

• “Gov. Brown signed a bill September 30 that no longer requires Marin County to have the same high-density affordable housing as San Francisco. AB 1537 (Levine) lowers the required minimum density of future affordable housing developments in Marin, San Rafael, and Novato to 20 units per acre versus the 30-units-per-acre previously required by the state. The law takes effect Jan. 1, 2015, and will apply to one eight-year housing cycle from 2015 to 2023, after which it will be reviewed.”

The bill also applies the higher housing density requirements in place on June 30, 2014, within one-half mile of a Sonoma-Marina Area Rail Transit station. *Chapter 875, Statutes of 2014. Full text at <http://bit.ly/1tmbnxG>*

Self-driving cars head to Contra Costa County

Contra Costa Transportation Authority, October 1, 2014

Linsey Willis, <http://bit.ly/1wqIp4H> • “The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) and Mercedes-Benz Research & Development North America, Inc. (MBRDNA) announced a new agreement to partner with the City of Concord and the United States Navy to bring self-driving cars to Contra Costa. Under the agreement, CCTA and MBRDNA have licenses to test cutting edge transportation technology including traffic signals that ‘communicate’ with cars and connected and autonomous driving vehicles. With paved, city-like roadway grids, the Concord Naval Weapons Station is the ideal site for testing self-driving and connected vehicles and related applications in an urban-like environment.”



Concord Naval Weapons Station, 2006. Photo: Daniel Schwen via Wikimedia Commons, <http://bit.ly/1DrujT6>

(Norcal roundup continues on next page)

Postcards from SF; 'solopreneurs' in Santa Cruz

Los Angeles Times, September 27, 2014

<http://lat.ms/1wOrBTS> • Two Bay Area cities made CityLab's list of cities with helpful innovations.

In San Francisco, "The Neighborhood Postcard Project aims to connect residents from different parts of cities. We ask people from one neighborhood to write about where they live on the back of a postcard that we provide. The goal of the postcard project is to break down stereotypes and build community. The whole point of the project is that, if you give people from different backgrounds, cultures, and lifestyles the space to come together, they are likely to realize that they are much more similar than they are different." *Credit: Hunter Franks.*

In Santa Cruz, "We struggled in 2008 to attract companies to our community. The economy was in free-fall and companies were looking for incentives that were impossible to fund with a shrinking municipal budget. We needed to attract these freelancers, independent consultants, and teleworkers to our community to help keep our city's economy humming. Thus began a new strategy to support these 'solopreneurs' with policies and projects designed for a new economy, including founding our private, for-profit co-working company, NextSpace, which now has nine locations. Membership includes various kinds of work spaces, but the real value comes from the ability to connect and collaborate with fellow members from a wide variety of industries in nine locations." *Credit: Ryan Coonerty and Jeremy Neuner*

Costly parking goes unused

Streetsblog LA, October 17, 2014

Melanie Curry, <http://bit.ly/1t21jiF> • "Planners rely on the Institute of Transportation Engineer's (ITE) Parking Generation Manual ... to help them figure out how many parking spaces a project should include. But the ITE data has serious limitations, and building parking is expensive.

"A new tool, the GreenTRIP Parking Database, <http://database.greentrip.org/>, can help by providing better data on actual parking usage at multi-family housing units. The database, created by Oakland-based TransForm, tracks the number of parking spaces per unit, how much of that parking sits empty, what percentage of the building is affordable housing, whether residents pay for parking separately from their rent, what level of transit service is available nearby, whether residents are offered transit passes or carshare membership, what if any parking management exists on surrounding streets, and other data relevant to parking usage.

"The database allows users to search for and arrange information [to] their choosing. Across all 68 San Francisco Bay Area sites currently in the database, on average 31 percent of the spaces go unused, [a total of] 867,900 square feet of space that cost an estimated \$139 million to build."

SPUR to open Oakland office

San Francisco Business Times, October 6, 2014

Cory Weinberg, <http://bit.ly/1w2WR0D> • "The urban policy group SPUR will set up shop in Oakland for the first time in January, pledging to push for strategies that will help the city achieve 'inclusive growth.' The organization, formerly known as the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association, [recently] brought aboard Oakland director Robert Ogilvie to extend a reach that has included San Francisco for more than a century and San Jose for two-and-a-half years. Ogilvie, formerly the vice president of strategic engagement at Changelab Solutions, said SPUR is looking to make a positive impact on Oakland by bringing business and political leaders to the same table as 'the most sophisticated advocates in the country.' He added that the group would likely start with work focused on Oakland's downtown.

"SPUR Executive Director Gabriel Metcalf and Ogilvie stressed that SPUR would do plenty of 'listening' before taking specific policy stances. But they rattled off several areas of broad improvements that they thought Oakland would need:

1. "A larger city budget for basics like policing.
2. "A neighborhood-based, 'inclusive' strategy for development.
3. "A larger retail base that's 'authentic to Oakland' and that 'doesn't try to copy the suburbs or San Francisco.'
4. "A strategy for improving streets and sidewalks for pedestrian and cyclists." ■

Out of harm's way: Evacuation from tsunamis

USGS Menlo Park, September 16, 2014

<http://on.doi.gov/1AStn79> • “Scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey have developed a new mapping tool, the Pedestrian Evacuation Analyst, for use by researchers and emergency managers to estimate how long it would take for someone to travel on foot out of a tsunami-hazard zone. The GIS software extension, released this week, allows the user to create maps showing travel times out of hazard zones and to determine the number of people that may or may not have enough time to evacuate. The maps take into account the elevation changes and the different types of land cover that a person would encounter along the way.

“Maps of travel time can be used by emergency managers and community planners to identify where to focus evacuation training and tsunami education. The tool can also be used to examine the potential benefits of vertical evacuation structures, which are buildings or berms designed to provide a local high ground in low-lying areas of the hazard zone.

The software tool can be downloaded at <http://bit.ly/1u1ZuT3>. The complete users guide, ‘The pedestrian evacuation analyst — Geographic information systems software for modeling hazard evacuation potential,’ is available at <http://on.doi.gov/1u1Zoef>

California HSR looks to connect with Las Vegas train

Bloomberg Businessweek, October 3, 2014

By Alison Vekshin and James Nash, <http://buswk.co/1xnJtFp> • “A private train intended to whisk Southern Californians to Las Vegas casinos and resorts could boost the proposed government-owned high-speed rail connection between Los Angeles and San Francisco. A public partnership with private operators would help build segments of the system, Dan Richard, chairman of the California High-Speed Rail Authority, said in an interview.

“Authority officials want to cooperate with DesertXpress Enterprises LLC to make it happen. The company, operating as XpressWest, plans a 150-mph train that would connect Palmdale, about 70 miles north of Los Angeles, with Las Vegas. The Las Vegas company originally planned for its route to end in Victorville, about 50 miles east of Palmdale. It added a Victorville-to-Palmdale segment after the High-Speed Rail Authority routed its train through the city. The Las Vegas train would switch to public tracks in Palmdale.

“The private train would boost revenue for the high-speed project by attracting travelers bound for Las Vegas, and through access fees to use the high-speed tracks.

“An initial 130-mile segment [of the public high-speed rail] begins near Fresno, where demolition of buildings began [in September], and ends near Bakersfield, Richard said. The next leg is Burbank to Palmdale, and speed and safety upgrades to tracks have begun near San Francisco and Los Angeles. ‘And then private-sector dollars help to start to fill in gaps,’ Richard said.”

Google buys big in Redwood City

Silicon Valley Business Journal, October 3, 2014

Nathan Donato Weinstein, <http://bit.ly/1w2CPpt>

• “Even by the standards of Google’s relentless real-estate acquisition spree, this is big: six office buildings totaling nearly a million square feet.

“The purchase opens up another front in the search giant’s rapid Peninsula expansion after big deals in Palo Alto and Sunnyvale. And it provides a potential seaborne solution to increasingly grid-locked highways: Pacific Shores is spitting distance from the Port of Redwood City, where Google has been experimenting with commuter ferries as a way to reduce the demands on its extensive bus network.

“The deal would mark another sign of tech companies taking a shine to the north Peninsula. Suddenly, the middle maybe isn’t a bad place to be. Pacific Shores, built in the early 2000s, contains about 1.7 million square feet of office space, and new zoning approved about a year ago could allow up to 3 million square feet ‘if you can park it.



Pacific Shores Center, Redwood City. Credit Google Maps

“San Mateo County has about \$22 million in a sales-tax fund for ferry services in the county. A Redwood City terminal would cost about \$15 million. But the county doesn’t have ongoing operational funding,’ said Kevin Connolly, director of planning and development for the Water Emergency Transportation Authority, which administers the San Francisco Bay Ferry routes. ‘If they’re serious about doing it, we could do something, and there are lots of options,’ Connolly said. ‘We could be very creative about working this out.’”

(California continues on next page)

Developers can pay in-lieu fee for wetlands mitigation

Sacramento Business Journal, October 14, 2014

Ben van der Meer, <http://bit.ly/1wXRvUS> • “Developers have [another way to meet] their need to mitigate loss of wetlands, under a new option announced by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Rather than crafting a mitigation plan for approval, anyone needing a wetlands permit can pay an in-lieu fee and fulfill requirements for more than one agency. Under the program created by the nonprofit National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the fees would pay for mitigation projects on a greater scale because they’d be collected from more than one permit holder.

“A number of agencies, including the corps, National Marine Fisheries Services, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the State Water Resources Control Board, have signed off on the program. Mitigation paid for by the fee would still be done in the same service area where projects would affect wetlands. Because of its relative simplicity and speed, the in-lieu fee might be particularly attractive to smaller developers who don’t have the resources to develop a comprehensive mitigation plan.”

New financing tool for cities and counties

Gov. Brown on September 29 signed SB 628 (Beall, D-San Jose), giving California communities a powerful new financing tool. Eagerly anticipated in municipal government quarters, the bill “expresses Governor Brown’s longstanding goals for the existing but underused mechanism of Infrastructure Financing Districts” by allowing local agencies to establish an “enhanced infrastructure financing district” and, upon approval by 55 percent of the voters, issue bonds to finance public capital facilities or other specified projects of communitywide significance. *Chapter 785, Statutes of 2014*. The complete text of Govt. Code sections 53398.50 through 53398.88 is available at <http://bit.ly/1wWFE9Z>.

Housing California’s *Capitol Reporter* notes the new law “has some potential to increase housing production, but could also cause wide-spread displacement of lower-income residents and small businesses [as] the bill contains weaker provisions than redevelopment law to protect against economic and physical displacement.” <http://bit.ly/ZD5vJo>

Dry taps in Tulare County

The New York Times, October 2, 2014

Jennifer Medina, <http://nyti.ms/1CI3kCe> • “Dry taps and toilets. Nowhere is the [drought] situation as dire as in East Porterville in Tulare County where daily routines have been completely upended by the drying of wells and, in turn, the disappearance of tap water. The vast majority of residents here are Mexican immigrants, drawn to work in the agricultural fields. Many have spent lifetimes scraping together money to buy their own small slice of land, often with a mobile home on top. Hundreds of these homes are hooked to wells, solely controlled by [their] owners. Because the land is unincorporated, it is not part of a municipal water system, and connecting to one would be prohibitively expensive.

“The local high school now allows students to arrive early and shower there. Mothers who normally take pride in their cooking now rely on canned and fast food, because washing vegetables uses too much water.

“State officials say that at least 700 households have no access to running water, but they acknowledge that there could be hundreds more. Tulare County recently began aggressively tracking homes without running water, delivering bottles to hundreds of homes and offering applications for biweekly water deliveries, using private donations and money from a state grant. ‘We will give people water as long as we have it, but the truth is, we don’t really know how long that will be,’ said Andrew Lockman of the Tulare County Office of Emergency Services.”

Courts clear HSR to issue bonds

Los Angeles Daily News, October 15, 2014

Jessica Calefitti, <http://bit.ly/1piWonk> • “The California Supreme Court on October 15 refused to review a key case regarding funding for the bullet train, allowing construction to begin. Eleven months ago, a Sacramento Superior Court judge blocked the California High-Speed Rail Authority from selling \$8.6 billion in bonds that voters had approved, leaving almost all the project’s funding in limbo.

“So when the Sacramento-based 3rd District Court of Appeal ordered Judge Michael Kenny to vacate his decision, it was a huge victory for the rail authority and Gov. Jerry Brown. The Court of Appeal judges found the authority’s finance committee acted properly last year when it voted to approve the issuance of the bonds. The appellate decision will now stand. Jeff Morales, the rail authority’s CEO, said the nearly unanimous decision not to take up the case was a ‘strong statement’ that validates the authority’s work on the project.” ■

Inclusionary upzoning may be right for your community

Rooflines, October 10, 2014

Robert Hickey, <http://bit.ly/1w9XYww> • “Inclusionary housing policies, which ask developers to include affordable homes in otherwise market-rate properties, are a tool without peer in helping lower-income households access neighborhoods with good schools and healthier environments. And as more development turns toward walkable urban places, inclusionary housing policies help reserve land for lasting affordability in tight, gentrifying, or pre-gentrifying markets. But legal, political, and market barriers too often impede the adoption of inclusionary housing in many states.

“Housing policies tied to upzoning (i.e., “inclusionary upzoning”) are an important part of the story of inclusionary housing’s spread over the past seven years to a total of 27 states plus the District of Columbia. Inclusionary upzoning often works like this: when localities adopt new land use plans that allow taller height limits, greater development intensity, or new land uses such as housing in formerly industrial or commercial areas, they link new development options to requirements or incentives for lower-priced, income-targeted housing. In some localities, the principle is applied more broadly so that affordability requirements kick in whenever a developer seeks discretionary “zoning relief.”

“In either form, inclusionary upzoning can provide a helpful workaround in communities where inclusionary housing has run into legal barriers, such as Oregon, Washington, Texas, Colorado, and more recently California. Inclusionary upzoning offers transparent zoning benefits that can help soften inclusionary requirements and ensure that new housing development is still economically feasible.”

Cities continue growing

USA Today, October 7, 2014

Greg Toppo and **Paul Overberg**, <http://usat.ly/1w2nP8P>

• “Americans’ growing love affair with cities shows few signs of abating, with several large cities growing last year at several times the national rate, suggest new findings from the U.S. Census Bureau. Census data out October 9 show that in 2013 Americans kept moving to cities, favoring them over suburbs across the USA. In a few areas, the shift has resulted in unprecedented changes: San Jose, in the heart of California’s Silicon Valley, is poised to crack the

Public art at seven amazing bus stops

Next City, September 19, 2014

Rachel Dovey, <http://bit.ly/1uP8QiR> • “Creative bus stops make street-side waiting fun.” Dovey’s article describes and illustrates “a few stateside terminals that are also public art installations, making you want to join the fire hydrants and hang out on the curb.”



“Wavelength shelters, Scottsdale. Completed by Kevin Berry in 2006 for Scottsdale Public Art, these creative, claw-like wave shelters are both interesting to look at and functional; their heavy tops provide shade and their mesh sides let air flow through for hot Arizona days.” Source: ScottsdalePublicArt.org, <http://bit.ly/1uPdGg6>

million-resident milestone for the first time. It is the 10th-largest city, surpassing its neighbor San Francisco, as well as places like Austin, Indianapolis, and Jacksonville.”

The article includes a 2013 population table for U.S. cities with a population over 50,000, a map/graphic showing “Top gainers and losers among cities over 50,000,” and a table of the largest percentage “gains or losses since 2000 in the 15 largest cities.”

(U.S. continues on next page)

Farm-to-table doesn't work

CityLab, September 29, 2014

John Metcalfe, <http://bit.ly/YErCOT> • “Dan Barber is one of the nation’s most widely respected slow-food advocates: His Blue Hill restaurants in New York serve a cornucopia of goodies from nearby farms. [But] the chef [says] the farm-to-table movement ‘does not really work.’ Despite the rising popularity of locally sourced, small-grower ingredients, America lost nearly 100,000 farms in the last five years, according to the U.S. Census. And the mega-conglomerates that dominate the food industry are only growing more powerful, Barber said. ‘The top 1 percent of farms now account for almost half of the value of all farm sales.’ Current farm-to-table philosophy is inadequate because it doesn’t value the most basic component of delicious foods: crop rotation.

“Barber [continued that] it’s really the mid-level growers in America that need a boost. ‘As people who love good food, we fetishize the small and the artisanal. But we haven’t done enough to draw attention to the farms of the middle,’ he said. ‘They represent 40 percent of the produce being harvested, and they are in a unique position to transfer from commodity agriculture — that is, corn and soybeans, essentially — to more diversified crop rotations.’”

Where to live on a warming planet

The New York Times Science, September 22, 2014

Jennifer A. Kingson, <http://nyti.ms/1uRY0aC>

• “Scientists trying to predict the consequences of climate change see few havens from the storms, floods, and droughts that are sure to intensify over the coming decades. But some regions will fare much better than others. ‘The answer is the Pacific Northwest, especially west of the Cascades,’ said Ben Strauss, vice president for climate impacts at Climate Central. ‘The strip of coastal land running from Canada down to the Bay Area is probably the best,’ he added. ‘You see a lot less extreme heat; it’s the one place in the West where there’s no real expectation of major water stress, and while sea level will rise, the land rises steeply out of the ocean, so it’s a relatively small factor.’

“Clifford E. Mass, a professor of atmospheric science at the University of Washington, foresees that ‘climate change migrants’ will start heading to Seattle and to Portland, Ore., and surrounding areas. ‘Water is important, and we will have it,’ Professor Mass declared. ‘All in all, it’s a pretty benign situation for us — in fact, warming up just a little bit might be welcome around here.’ Already, he said, Washington State is gearing up to become the next Napa Valley as California’s wine country heats up and dries out.”

Place characteristics where college-educated Millennials live

Redfin Research Center, September 10, 2014

Nela Richardson, <http://bit.ly/1yz0kpk> • There are 300 ZIP codes in which 20 percent or more of the population is between the ages of 25 and 34 and has an associate degree or higher. That is according to a recent report from Redfin, which identified where large clusters of college-educated Millennials live and described the attributes of those communities.

According to Redfin chief economist Nela Richardson, “education is strongly linked to higher incomes and a greater probability of buying a home,” thus these Millennials are more likely to be future homebuyers. Richardson found that educated millennials are congregating in “urban environments close to where they work. Not surprisingly, these are also among the most expensive places to live” in the country.

Richardson identifies seven key attributes of these educated millennial ZIP codes:

- “Highly educated populations
- “Affluence
- “Racial diversity
- “More single households, roommates, and partners
- “Fewer families and more college students
- “More new neighbors
- “High home values”

“And even though educated millennials are earning good money, many are choosing a more flexible lifestyle rather than being tied down to a mortgage. The homeownership rate for millennials is 42 percent, compared with 65 percent for the total US population, according to Redfin’s tabulation of U.S. Census data.”

The article includes a table listing the top 20 Millennial zip codes, median income, and median sales price.

(U.S. continues on next page)

U.S. carbon emissions rise

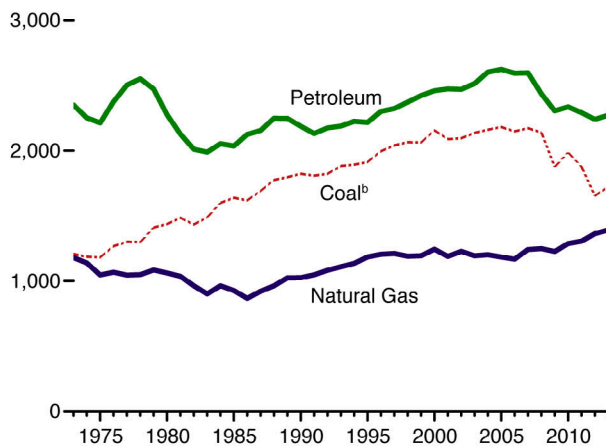
The Washington Post, September 26, 2014

Joby Warrick, <http://wapo.st/1pyIzjq> • “New government figures show pollution levels rising again after several years of gradual decline.” The Energy Department’s ‘Monthly energy review’ for September (<http://1.usa.gov/1pyIZ9w>) “shows American factories and power plants putting more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere during the first six months of 2014 compared with the same period in each of the past two years.”

“The figures confirm a reversal first seen in 2013, when the trend of steadily falling emissions abruptly halted. The higher emissions are primarily a reflection of a rebounding economy, as American businesses burned more gas and oil to meet higher demand.” ■

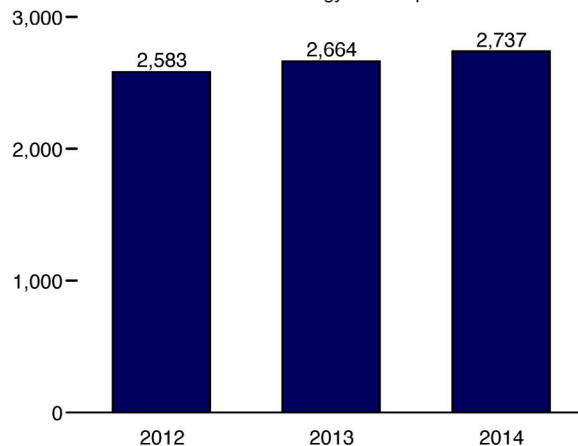
U.S. Carbon Dioxide Emissions from energy consumption by source (Million Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide)

By Major Source, 1973–2013



Total,^a January–June

^a Excludes emissions from biomass energy consumption.



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration / Monthly Energy Review, September 2014, page 158

“An urban alternative to Silicon Valley. The city’s interest, says John Rahaim, isn’t in replicating a tech campus in San Francisco, at least in the traditional meaning of the term. The perfect lab, hermetically sealed for industry secret-keeping, ‘doesn’t work very well for us from an urban design standpoint in the middle of the city,’ he says. What the city is after is a development that is more ‘organic.’ San Francisco, says Rahaim, is both instigating and capitalizing on, ‘essentially, Silicon Valley moving north.’ Worker, want to be in the city and companies want to give them the option.” —Nancy Scola, <http://bit.ly/1pDbYZI>

Mayors’ National Climate Action Agenda. “The problem is, the lack of true commitments and deadlines in documents like this [<http://bit.ly/1u2BnIY>] can have the effect of obscuring real, meaningful, ongoing efforts. ‘Establishing baselines and setting bold, measurable targets are very important. Increasingly in city halls, that which is measured is important, whether we like it or not,’ says Brent Toderian, who has witnessed such efforts from both the inside and outside, as Vancouver’s Chief Planner for six years and as the founder of TODERIAN UrbanWORKS consultancy, which he started in 2012. ‘But target setting shouldn’t be mistaken for action. It’s a way to measure if your actions are successful, so true success is in the action that actually changes things. Knowing what success looks like doesn’t mean you’ll achieve it.’” — Will Doig, <http://bit.ly/1u2Bfmt>

Venomous snakes, landmines, and leopard attacks can't stop this railroad

Next City, October 14, 2014

Will Doig, <http://bit.ly/1t1ZLFq> • “As American transit projects trundle along at the speed of rush-hour traffic, Sri Lankan workers, under threat of dismemberment, have rebuilt the central spine of their war-ravaged railway in a mere three years. The Colombo-Jaffna train, a 90-mile stretch of track colloquially known as the ‘Queen of Jaffna,’ began running again [October 13] for the first time in a quarter-century. Connecting the capital of Colombo with the economic hub of Jaffna, the resumption of service signals a new era for a country whose rail system was, until recently, decimated by civil war.

“The government got to work restoring the service with the help of 400 workers and \$800 million from India. The fact that work had to stop at night due to the danger of wild animal attacks makes the speed with which the line was rebuilt even more impressive. Workers braved bites from venomous snakes, leopard attacks, and unexploded land mines to reconstruct the track. When the first scheduled service rumbled down the rails, it was the first time many young Sri Lankans had ever seen a train.”

Are we through blaming the Google Bus?

Next City, October 14, 2014

Sandy Smith, <http://bit.ly/1t1Z66U> • “Toronto’s 504 King streetcar line is the busiest and most overcrowded in the city, carrying more than 50,000 riders every day, an increase of 10,000 since 2007. Residents of neighborhoods just outside the city center complain that they must often wait while several packed-to-the-gills streetcars pass by them before they can get on a car headed for Toronto’s financial district.

“So, in finest capitalist fashion sense a la the Bay Area’s Google bus and Boston’s Bridj, two young entrepreneurs have launched an express bus service to ferry residents of Liberty Village, a new housing development, to Union Station during peak hours. The [new, private] Liberty Village Express charges passengers \$5 for an assured ride into downtown Toronto, complete with complimentary Wi-Fi and coffee or tea. “Columnist Michael Gee, writing in *The Globe and Mail*, argues that Torontonians should not worry that Line Six, as this new service is also known, is the forerunner of a separate but unequal mass transit service for some Toronto residents. Rather, he says, this is a creative solution to a seemingly intractable problem, one that the Toronto Transit Commission has yet to solve.”

U.S. foreign aid planning must incorporate climate risks

The Baltimore Sun, October 6, 2014

Charles Cadwell and **Mark Goldberg**, <http://bsun.md/1sa2yvC> • “President Obama’s new executive order, ‘Climate-Resilient International Development,’ <http://1.usa.gov/1vQZNgw>, may prove to be a turning point for efforts to advance climate preparedness around the world and for U.S. foreign aid planning.

“Whatever your take is on climate change, it makes sense for governments to prepare for extreme weather events in order to minimize the severe and widespread harms they can cause. The executive order is a recognition that climate risks need to be incorporated into the plans of U.S. agencies that collectively provide more than \$30 billion of financial assistance to developing countries. Otherwise, the effectiveness of that assistance could be undermined by failures to take into account the potential impacts of climate change and extreme weather.

“The president’s order — [which] requires federal agencies to analyze and address climate risks as they frame their plans for economic assistance to other countries — marks a fundamental change in U.S. development planning. The very logic that calls for U.S. agencies to incorporate climate resilience into development planning also calls for a corresponding attention to climate preparedness by the nations receiving assistance.

“That means recipient governments need to have the resources to pursue climate preparedness as they shape and implement programs to improve the lives of their citizens and safeguard their societies. A sustained commitment to that model of development could make a big difference — for climate preparedness and for development.”

(World continues on next page)

U.S. among top populations exposed to sea level rise

Climate Central, September 23, 2014

<http://bit.ly/1pEtOXt> • “Every global shore touches the same ocean, and the ocean is rising. Climate Central has completed an analysis of worldwide exposure to sea level rise and coastal flooding.” The table below shows the number and percent of “people living on land that will be below sea level or chronic flood levels by the end of the century, assuming current emissions trends continue, and medium sensitivity of sea level to warming. But even these figures may be two to three times too low.” The United States is No. 11 on the list, although the percent of population exposed is low.

	Country	Population exposed	
		Number	Percent
1.	China	50,465,000	4%
2.	Vietnam	23,407,000	26%
3.	Japan	12,751,000	10%
4.	India	12,643,000	1%
5.	Bangladesh	10,230,000	7%
6.	Indonesia	10,157,000	4%
7.	Thailand	8,176,000	12%
8.	Netherlands	7,793,000	47%
9.	Philippines	6,205,000	7%
10.	Myanmar	4,742,000	9%
11.	United States	3,087,000	1%
12.	United Kingdom	2,574,000	4%
13.	Brazil	1,737,000	1%
14.	Germany	1,665,000	2%
15.	France	1,256,000	2%
16.	Malaysia	1,171,000	4%
17.	Taiwan	1,032,000	4%
18.	Korean Republic	1,028,000	2%
19.	Nigeria	848,000	1%
20.	Italy	842,000	1%

London: Too many houseboats, too little water, unsafe towpaths

The New York Times, September 26, 2014

Georgi Kantchev, <http://nyti.ms/1rDRILH> • London has 100 miles of canal (“nearly twice that of Amsterdam”) and “about 3,000 houseboats, twice the number as seven years ago. That growth is stretching the limits of the existing canal support system — including the provision of household water and waste disposal. A local London group studied the growing houseboat population [and] cited ‘an appalling lack of infrastructure, such as showers, toilets, recycling, even rubbish bins.’

“There are not enough permanent mooring sites available for rent. That means most boaters in London must now rely on ‘continuous cruising’ licenses, which allow staying at the same spot for no longer than two weeks. Although the boats are still cheaper than most other housing options in London, the initial houseboat investment is not inconsequential. A new vessel can cost more than £100,000, although a secondhand one can be had for about £20,000, depending on age and quality. (By regulation, a London houseboat can be no more than seven feet wide and 72 feet long.)

“With the growing number of houseboats, security has become a growing concern, because the dark and secluded towpaths make boats and boaters vulnerable. Break-ins are an increasingly common occurrence.” Slideshow, *Life on the Water*, at <http://nyti.ms/1rDRzrK> ■

Putting Rio’s favelas on the map. “Nearly 1.3 million of the favelas’ 1.5 million residents now have mobile phones, and almost half of them are online. Microsoft and Google have recently partnered with local groups to capitalize on that online engagement and map the communities’ sometimes-ramshackle infrastructure. The mapping projects have exciting implications for favela business owners. Maria Ribeiro, who owns a laundromat in the Rocinha favela, told the *Wall Street Journal* she’d like to use the mapping technology to ‘expand her reach.’” —Aarian Marshal, <http://bit.ly/1rrX0tz>

Latino spatial and cultural values transform the American single-family house and street

(continued from page 1)

have altered the general physical characteristics of the neighborhoods and the residents' behavior patterns. The continuous green, park-like setting that symbolized the American suburban front yard has been cut into individual slices in East Los Angeles. These "slices" readily allow for individuality and sociability and create diversity.



An enclosed front yard is an extension of the house. The porch appears to be an addition. Photo: James Rojas

In many middle-class American neighborhoods, the appearance of the front yard is the standard for acceptance. In Latino neighborhoods, acceptance is not based on appearance of the front yard but on physical and social contact with neighbors. In contrast with anonymous lawns, Latino front yards are personal vignettes of the owners' lives.

Fences as social catalyst

The visible expanse of lawn fronting American suburban houses is a symbol of ownership and privacy. It is also a psychological barrier that separates the private space of the home from the public space of the street. People do not walk on another person's front lawn unless they are invited to. While one can find fences in many front yards across America, the egalitarian front yard has led many to think of fences in terms of exclusion, seclusion, or security — barriers against the world. By contrast, in Latino neighborhoods and barrios, fences bring neighbors and pedestrians together. Front-yard fences have become cultural icons and places for social interaction.

While it's true that many Latino homeowners also build fences to protect their homes, keep neighbors pets off their



The front fence offers a place to chat. Photo: Jose Barrera

lawns, or keep their small children from running into the street, the Latino front-yard fence creates an edge where people tend to congregate — a comfortable point for social interaction between people in the front yard and on the sidewalk.

Shifting threshold

The threshold is a pivotal part of the home because it conveys social and cultural meaning. It also is a powerful device to regulate interaction by indicating whether the residence is open/accessible vs. closed/inaccessible.

A front-yard fence modifies the approach to the home and moves the threshold from the front door to the front gate. The enclosed front yard physically defines a barrier between the public and private spaces of the home and the street. Thus, the enclosed front yard of the Latino home acts as a large foyer and becomes an active part of the house. The sense of entry into the Latino home begins at the front gate at the sidewalk. This entry gate is often emphasized with an arch.

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Latino spatial and cultural values transform the American single-family house and street

(continued from previous page)

Visitors rarely cross the threshold of a home unless invited to do so. And inviting or not inviting someone to enter the home is a clear signal of the occupant's desire for more contact or less. One can design the threshold to visually keep visitors at bay, not inviting them to cross the threshold.



An elaborate wall plus fence establishes a new threshold and a defensible yard. Photo: James Rojas

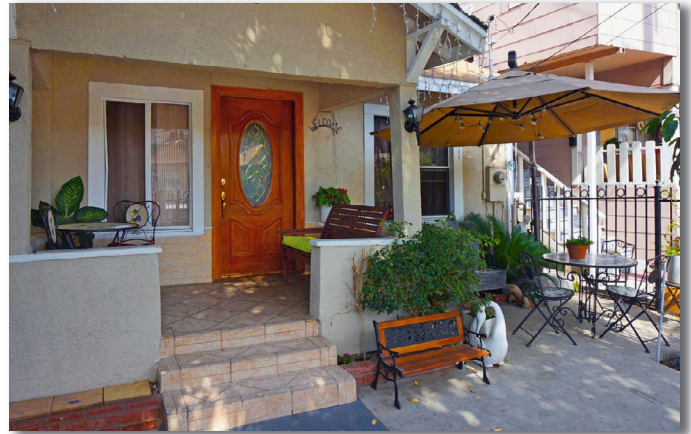
The entire, enclosed front yard becomes a large “defensible” threshold in Latino homes, which allows for more social interaction to take place there between the residents and pedestrians.

Collectively, the enclosed front yards in the neighborhoods change the scale of the suburban block and create an intimate atmosphere. As the fences along the street assign yard space to each home, the street becomes more urban in character, with each fence reflecting the personality of a resident on the street.

Front porches are important to Latinos

In most American homes, the use and importance of the front porch has declined. But for Latino homeowners and renters, the front porch is a critical, valued connection between outdoor-indoor space and public-private space. In Latin America, rooms such as the laundry room are not roofed or are located outside the enclosed house; so the use of outdoor space as part of the home is a common practice. Thus the use and desire for outside space via the front porch comes naturally to Latinos.

Latino front porches are used to check out what's happening on the street, to socialize with family and friends, for extra storage, as a place for toddlers to play, to sell services or things, and as celebratory spaces. Therefore porches are redesigned or enlarged to meet those needs.



The porch, with its Welcome sign, offers a place to watch or to visit. Photo: James Rojas

The porch is where seniors sit to watch the world go by, where teenagers wait for something to happen, where a mother sits to watch her children play in the front yard, where a man might meet his friends after work, or even a place where you give haircuts! These uses make the front porch an enduring space that adds to social activity on the street.

The front porch is also where Latinos become civic and bond with their neighbors. The front porch is usually the most prominent spatial element of the home — where the house puts its best face forward, a place of civic/religious pride.

The Latino vernacular transforms and sustains the street

Latino single-family houses “communicate” with each other by sharing a cultural understanding expressed through the built environment. The residents communicate with each other via the front yard. By building fences they bind together adjacent homes. By adding and enlarging front porches, they extend the household into the front yard. These physical changes allow and reinforce the social connections and the heavy use of the front yard. The entire street now functions as a “suburban” plaza where every resident can interact with the public from his or her front yard. Thus Latinos have transformed car-oriented suburban blocks to walkable and socially sustainable places.

James Rojas is a globetrotting planner who engages communities in the urban planning process through a unique visualization method using found objects. Rojas, who lives in Alhambra, California, is a member of the California Planning Roundtable and a founder and member of the Latino Urban Forum.

You can hear Mr. Rojas on this subject on October 29, 6–8 PM, at ABAG, 101 8th Street, Oakland, CM | 1.5 pending. You must register for the free event at <http://bit.ly/1tanou8> ■

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