

NORTHERN NEWS



American Planning Association
California Chapter
Northern
Making Great Communities Happen

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

FEBRUARY 2015

Why do we love City Planning?

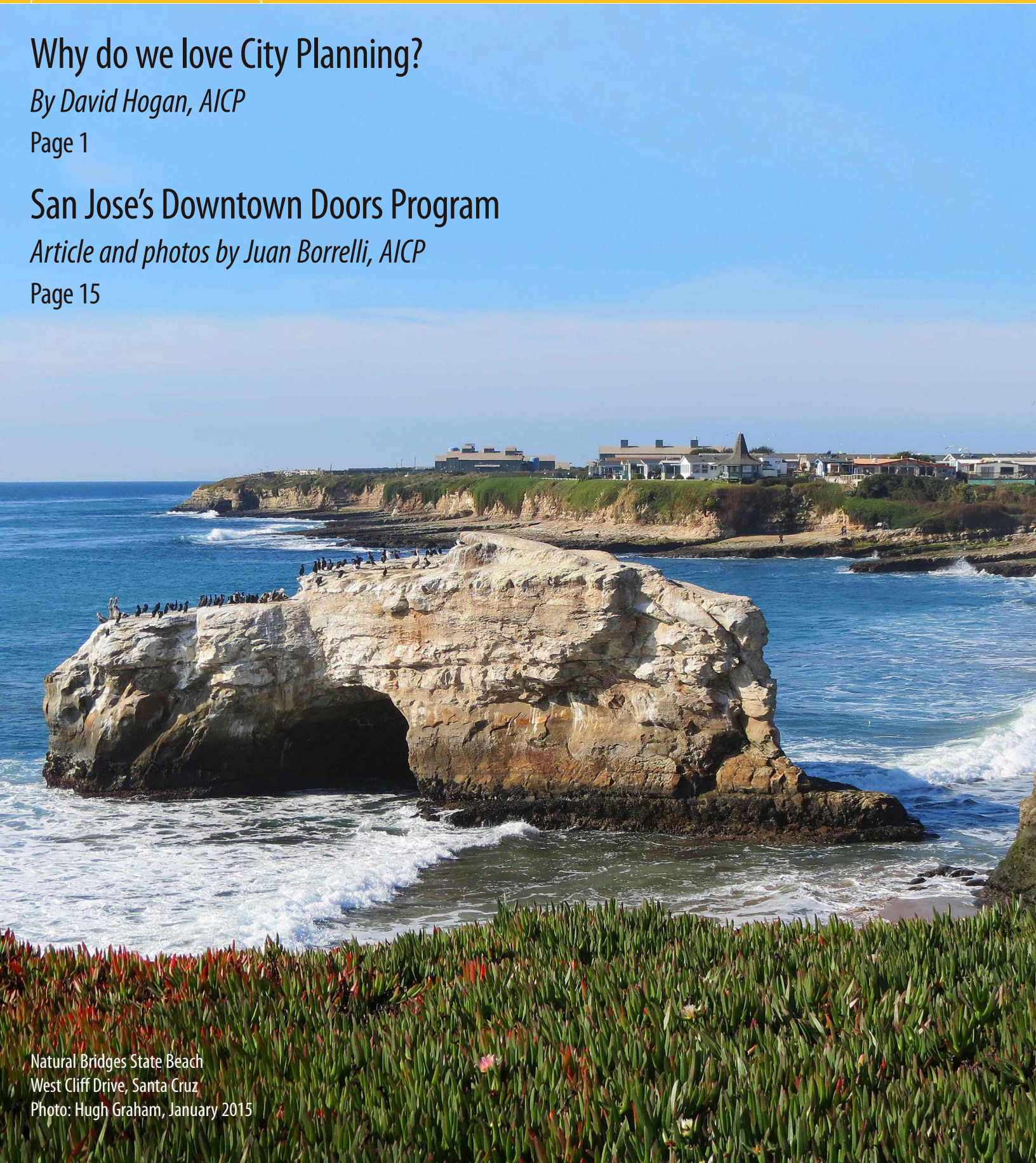
By David Hogan, AICP

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San Jose's Downtown Doors Program

Article and photos by Juan Borrelli, AICP

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Natural Bridges State Beach
West Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz
Photo: Hugh Graham, January 2015



NORTHERN NEWS

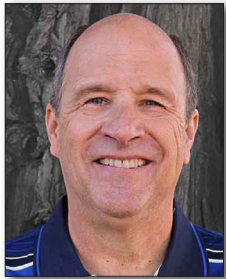


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Why do we love City Planning?



By David Hogan, AICP

After having a great time at the 2014 State Conference in Anaheim, we wanted to share with you who won the iPad Mini raffle. The original raffle idea came from Geoff Bradley, principal at M-Group,

and Clarissa Caruso, and asked conference attendees to answer the question “Why do I love City Planning?” From a total of 112 entries, a member of the Disney team randomly drew the winning answer on September 15, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. Our lucky winner was Will Chen, a code enforcement officer with the city of Seal Beach, Orange County. Will has been with Seal Beach for over two years, and enjoys the challenging professional environment of working with community members to preserve the quality of the city’s built environment. Congratulations Will!

Thanks to all of you who entered the raffle and told us why you love our profession. Our raffle seemed to spark great interest among attendees, and as a result we collected many great reasons to love city planning. Here are some of our favorite answers:

- “The diversity of the job tasks and the ability to see the change/impact in the environment — long range and short term!”
- “I ♥ City Planning because it brings communities together and provides the opportunity to design public spaces that keep people and natural environment in mind.”
- “I grew up in the suburbs. There has to be something better.”
- “[City planning is] the only discipline where the primary responsibility is getting the other disciplines talking!”

- “The crazy and lovely residents and issues we get to interact with and about (and I mean this in the best way).”
- “It helps people.”
- “The environmental aspects, specifically planning a city to be sustainable and healthy. Active transportation (bike, pedestrian, transit) is a must.”
- “I love working with people to develop their property and find solutions to their problems.”
- “I ♥ City Planning because it enables me to provide a voice for those without one in my hometown.”
- “Making places in which I want to spend time.”
- “I love county planning for the huge variety of issues — housing, resources, agriculture ... everything you can think of.”
- “I love making a great place for people to live [in]. I love being a part of an organization that is so committed to creating and maintaining a home for 85,000+ people!”
- “Planners can be valuable partners in promoting community health.”
- “Love city planning because you can use your creativity and ‘out of the box’ ideas and get to see a finished project that not only benefits the community but also improves the quality of life.”

See you all at the 2015 State Conference in Oakland, October 3–6!

David Hogan has over 30 years of experience in the environmental and city planning fields and is a principal planner with the M-Group. He is currently providing contract staff services to several jurisdictions in the San Francisco Bay Area. ■

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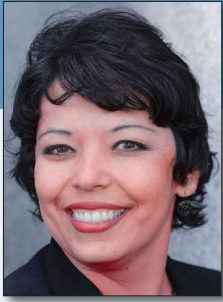
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Board member directory and newsletter information

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Find JOBS and EVENTS CALENDAR at norcalapa.org



Director's note

By Andrea Ouse, AICP

Happy New Year! I am thrilled to serve as the Northern Section Director for the next two years. Our section, with the largest membership in the state, has built a reputation of providing high-quality professional development and networking opportunities for our members. Having served on the board for many years — first as the Holiday Party Chair, then as the San Francisco/Peninsula RAC chair, then as the Awards Co-Chair for seven years and Director-Elect for the past two years — I have observed the board evolve in size, purpose, outreach, and visibility. As the incoming Director, I look forward to leading the board in promoting a professional organization that continues to be responsive to our members and supportive of the professional needs of our diverse membership.

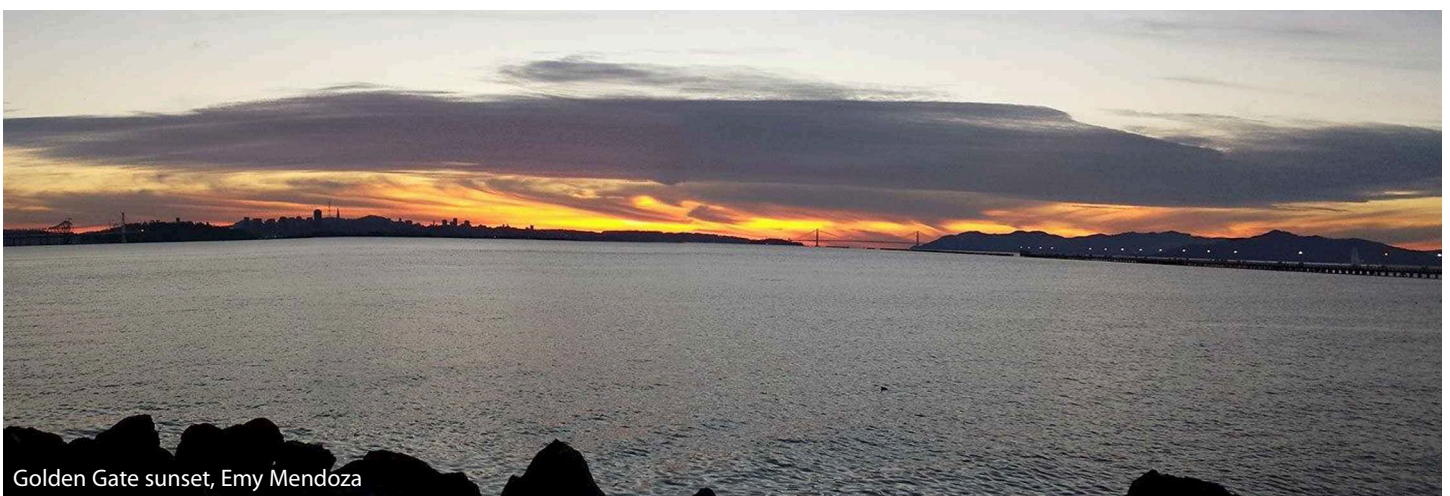
Our board comprises fellow planners who freely dedicate their time to publish the highly-regarded and nationally-recognized *Northern News*, to maintain a website, to coordinate and provide professional development opportunities, to recognize the best planning efforts through the Awards Program, to organize social events through the RACs, the Young Planners Group (YPG), and the universities, to reach out to youth through diversity efforts, and to successfully accomplish the many other responsibilities necessary to effectively run an APA section. The energy level, can-do attitude, and past achievements of board members are impressive. We will carry out our commitment to professional and student development while

continuing to emphasize fun networking events such as our annual awards gala and holiday party.

Outgoing Section Director Jeff Baker has done a phenomenal job leading the board the past two years, and has represented Northern Section well on the California Chapter board. Jeff demonstrated considerable vision and established a high standard to follow. His continuing service to the section and board as Immediate Past Director will be much appreciated. Additionally, I look forward to working with Director-Elect Erik Balsley, AICP, and Administrative Director Stuart Bussian, AICP, as well as APA California's newly elected President, Hing Wong, AICP.

I write this as we finalize plans for our annual board retreat on January 24, where we will set goals and priorities for 2015 and adopt our annual section budget.

This year promises to be an extraordinarily busy and productive one for Northern Section. As the APA California Chapter conference host section this year, we have the opportunity to show at least 1,500 planners the advanced planning and technology efforts that are so widespread in our section. I am challenging members to join us in participating in the conference, October 3–6, 2015, in downtown Oakland. For more information, check out our conference page at <http://bit.ly/1cYkfrp>. Let's show everyone that Northern Section and Oakland are "Rooted in AuthenticITY"! ■



Golden Gate sunset, Emy Mendoza

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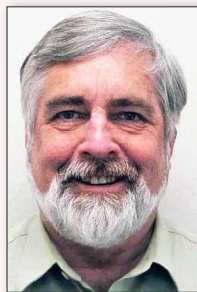
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Meet a local planner

By Siân Llewellyn, AICP



Stephen Avis, AICP, is a contract planner with Planwest Planners. He serves on the board of the APA California – Northern as the Redwood Coast Regional Activity Coordinator.

Tell us how you got your start in planning.

Growing up on the San Francisco Peninsula, I always knew about the beauty of the North

Bay and the Redwood Coast but didn't really experience it until I moved here full-time in 1995. I left Palo Alto for Calistoga in support of my wife's career as a cookbook author and cookery instructor. It was our first move out of the Peninsula and we considered it far from the megalopolis that is the bay area.

During my first months in Calistoga, I saw an article in the local paper saying that a fast food chain was being considered in the historic town. I had an opinion about the matter so I went to see the mayor. She said something like, "If you feel passionately about this, perhaps you should be on the planning commission." I said yes, and that's how my planning career started.

I had an undergraduate degree in recreation and parks administration but had spent most of my career working with co-ops, non-profits, and community colleges. My planning commission work was so interesting I decided to study city planning. Happily, Sonoma State University was right there, so in the autumn of 1998, at the age of 50, I enrolled in the planning program. It was a great experience. It was wonderful being back in school as an older student. (In my class of 30, only three of us were considered older students.)

After I graduated in 2000, my wife and I felt that even Calistoga was becoming too much of a big city, so we moved further north to Humboldt County, to a little hamlet in the lost coast area called Honeydew. We lived there full-time for about three years but that felt too remote. Following nine years in Eureka where I could find work, we moved to Ferndale, where we are today. It's a town that seems to collect planners because it has all the things we like. It is walkable, has a viable post office, small local businesses, and a moderate climate. Perfect, really.

I started working at the Humboldt County building department as a way to get in the door to planning. When the city of Fortuna needed another planner I jumped at the opportunity to apply and luckily started working there in 2004. I was with the city of Fortuna until 2014. I recently joined Planwest Planners in Arcata as a contract planner. My first assignment is to provide city planning services for the city of Ferndale — the community I now call home.

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

Tell us about a favorite project.

There are two that I'm really proud of. Fortuna hired me because the city needed to create a modern general plan. The previous plan was 30 years old and based on a timber economy that no longer existed. Basically, we had to start from scratch. After five years of work, the plan was adopted in 2010. I'm happy to say that it has been in place for four years and provides a blueprint for development and growth. I think the plan strikes a good balance between the realities of contemporary Fortuna and the desire to remain what Fortuna used to be.

A smaller project I'm equally proud of is the master plan for a crosstown bike trail that, when constructed, will connect the Eel River in town to the Headwater's Forest Reserve. There will be 2.5 miles of trail within the city. The city is working diligently on securing easements and engaging local property owners. The trail will meander alongside a creek and take advantage of the wonderful environment that Fortuna has to offer. I cannot wait to see the first construction within the next five years. More funding is needed, but we were thrilled to have the master plan completed.

What do you find most fulfilling about your job?

I've just left my city planning job at Fortuna to work on a consulting basis. So what I find fulfilling will undoubtedly change over the next months. At Fortuna my job encompassed both current and future planning. While the current planning portion was interesting — that's the nuts and bolts that keeps a city moving — it was the future planning I really enjoyed: the research into projections and considering the future. It is exciting to look into the future and plan for where the city will be in a decade or 25 or 100 years. What's better than planning?

What is the most significant planning challenge facing your city today?

We all have to do more with less these days. I maintain that planning needs to keep a broad perspective while acknowledging that other more focused departments can bring a lot to the table. Working collectively with all the departments of the jurisdiction you work for (police, engineering, fire, community development, etc.) and leveraging what they have to offer can have a significant impact on the plans you and the citizens have for your city. If you just keep your planning blinder on, you miss what all the other departments are doing, and then you miss a big opportunity to collaborate to reach the collective goals of the community. If the challenge is doing more with less, then surely the answer is collaboration.

(continued on next page)

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Meet a local planner (continued from previous page)

What is your advice to planners starting out?

It is very important to be a good listener. Really listening to what the public is saying can be a challenge. Let them know you hear and understand what they are saying. I find that if you listen and follow up with questions that show you have heard and understood their issues, public participation can have a real impact on required planning documents. It is really important to make an effort to engage; don't just respond with canned statements. Staff recommendations may not always support their desired positions, but actively engaging your citizens will help plans strike the balance.

Stay true to planning principles while remaining flexible. Remember that planning is about achieving a balance between the past and the future. As my mentor Kirk Gothier says, planning is about people, not just about rules.

And, finally, try not to become too cynical!

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. ■

Letters

I always look forward to receiving *Northern News*. It is one of the niftiest publications to visit my email inbox.

H. Pike Oliver
Seattle

Just wanted to thank you and your team for all your hard work on *Northern News* this past year. It is a very professional publication that I look forward to reading. Best wishes for 2015.

Lynn Goldberg, AICP
City of Calistoga

Move over, cars. If you missed it, this year-old 4:50 video from Streetfilms shows how several New York City streets and squares that once favored motor vehicles and traffic have changed over the past decade to make way for people, places, and bikes. <http://vimeo.com/83173191>

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How much Public Space does a city need?

By Greg Scruggs, republished with permission

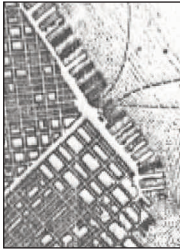
How much of Manhattan is dedicated to public space? For starters, there's Central Park, but the island's oasis is only 1.3 square miles, 5.6 percent of the borough's land area. You might remember those swaths of green way uptown, like Highbridge Park and Inwood Hill Park (the only natural forest left in Manhattan), but together they're just another one-half square mile, accounting for a mere 2.1 percent. Add in all the well-worn parks from Marcus Garvey to Bryant, the slivers of open space along the rivers, privately-owned public spaces like Occupy's Zuccotti Park, newfangled innovations like the High Line, and Janette Sadik-Khan's pedestrian plazas. Maybe 15 percent at best?

Guess again. When we think about public space, we picture parks and greenways, but overlook the largest single public space asset in any city's rolls: streets. Include the pavement New Yorkers traverse every day in your public space calculation, and the city's most prosperous borough hits the magic proportion: 49 percent.

Magic, at least, according to the researchers at UN-Habitat's Global Urban Observatories Unit, who last year released the report, "Streets as Public Spaces and Drivers of Urban Prosperity." (UN-Habitat, 2013, 168 pp. ISBN 978-92-1-132590-4. A PDF can be downloaded at <http://bit.ly/14Hq0Ht>.) They argue that asphalt, hardscaped streets should be counted as public space right alongside our leafy parks and landscaped plazas. Together, they should make up 45 to 50 percent of a city's land area, with 30 to 35 percent of the area occupied by streets and 15 to 20 percent open space. "If less than 30 percent of the land of the city is dedicated to the street pattern, it's a huge error," UN-Habitat Executive Director Dr. Joan Clos says. "If you have less, you will have big congestion problems."

The problems go beyond traffic snarls, according to the UN researchers, who found a correlation between expansive street grids and prosperity. Manhattan, with 36 percent of its area dedicated to streets and a booming economy, has the largest street grid in the world thanks to an 1811 plan that prioritized a reliable street pattern. Toronto, Barcelona — where Clos served as Mayor — and London, all economically vibrant cities, aren't far behind, while younger and poorer U.S. cities like Phoenix and Los Angeles hit the sub-30 percent danger zone. It's not incidental that Phoenix and L.A. — both car-oriented places that developed with a more suburban form than older cities — have a smaller percentage of their area dedicated to public streets. In these cities and in their suburban peers, large lots and open spaces collude to create a very small overall percentage allocated to streets.

(continued on next page)



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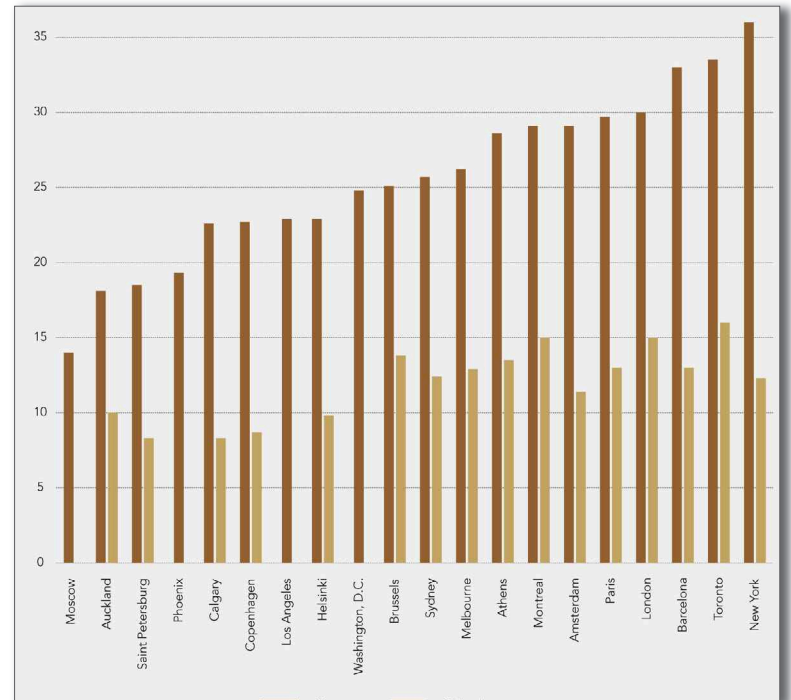
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How much Public Space does a city need?

(continued from previous page)

“In general, the American city has a good pattern of street allocation,” says Clos. “This is not so in suburbia.”



Land area dedicated to streets in North America, Europe, and Oceania cities. Source: UN-Habitat (2013), *Streets as Public Spaces and Drivers of Urban Prosperity*, Figure 3.1, page 51.

Among cities in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, the cities with the most area dedicated to streets leaders are Hong Kong, with 34 percent, and Tokyo, with 29 percent. Both are economic powerhouses. At the bottom of the street-area rankings, all with under 10 percent: Bangui, Central African Republic; Yerevan, Armenia; and Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Clos argues that these cities look more like the Phoenixes of the world than the Manhattans and Barcelonas.

“The pattern of sprawl and suburbanization is very frequent in the expansion cities of Latin America, Asia, and Africa. The street pattern tends to be less than 10 to 15 percent. This kind of pattern cannot support the future evolution of urbanization,” says Clos. “These parts of the city tend to resist very badly when you want to increase the compactness or density because there is not enough street.”

In the fast-urbanizing global south where new cities are rising out of the ether, a functional street grid can easily fall casualty to a hot real estate market that offers a tidy profit on the centrally located parcels. Take street crossings, for instance, which can be threatened

(continued on [page 28](#))

Who's where



Scott T. Edmondson, AICP, was selected by the APA Sustainable Communities Division as one of 10 sustainability champions in the Division's sustainability leadership pilot program launched last summer. The champions form a national network to advance the sustainability planning dialogue, act as subject area experts and resources for fellow planners, and advise their APA chapters on sustainability initiatives. Edmondson is the founder and former co-director of Northern Section's Sustainability Committee. He holds an M.A. in architecture and urban planning (UCLA) and a B.A. in development studies, environment, and sustainability (UC Berkeley), and works at the San Francisco Planning Department.



Erwin Ordoñez, AICP, who most recently was acting advanced planning manager, Town of Los Gatos, has just been hired as community development director for the city of Saratoga. He previously was Morgan Hill's housing manager, a senior housing planner for the city of Santa Clara, associate planner for the city of Sunnyvale and also served four years on the City of San Jose Housing/Community Development Advisory Commission. Ordoñez holds a B.A. in urban studies and planning (architecture/design emphasis) from UC San Diego and is a certified Economic Development Finance Professional. ■

Where in the world?



Photo by Aliza Knox. (Answer on [page 13.](#))

APA Seattle — What's new for 2015

APA has introduced new features and events to make the National Planning Conference more robust, relevant, cost-effective, and convenient this year. Look for:

Masters Series

The conference will offer deep and challenging content presented by true leaders in the planning profession. Masters Series events will include Deep Dive sessions, the Planning Management and Planning Leadership institutes, Transportation Day, Law Day, and the Ethics Symposium, plus selected sessions, training workshops, and facilitated discussions.

Tech Zone

With Microsoft, Amazon, and Google right there, Seattle is the ideal place to roll out a Tech Zone in APA's Planning Expo. See a display of emerging technologies. Bring your challenges to a hackathon and let local developers brainstorm answers. Participate in an attendee-driven UnConference focused on innovations in technology. And cheer the winners of a mobile-app competition for emerging professionals.

First-timer mixer

Join the Saturday cocktail hour for first-time conference goers to meet peers and connect.

Four-day schedule

The full National Planning Conference is now packed into four days.

Coffee!

This is Seattle. There's a coffee shop everywhere you turn. Take a walk between sessions and take in the city, or hop on the Link Light Rail system and explore.

Click here to get started: <http://bit.ly/1xQ2QeF>



Alaskan Way, Seattle. Photo: H. Pike Oliver

Chinese government building affordable housing in U.S. Executives from one of China's largest state-owned property developers broke ground in December on a mixed-income housing project in the hipster haven of brownstone Brooklyn. Greenland Holdings Group's US expansion into affordable housing in Brooklyn, 298 apartments in an 18-story building in Prospect Heights, is part of a larger 15-tower apartment project in Atlantic Yards, adjacent to the Barclays Center. Half of the 298 units are supposed to be for families that make as low as 40 percent of the median income for the area — about \$33,560 for a family of four. The company is also building a \$1 billion complex for hotels, apartments and luxury condos in downtown Los Angeles. —Lily Kuo, <http://bit.ly/1ylOrEO>

Film locations increase tourism

By John F. Livingstone, AICP

An easy way to increase tourism in your community is to create a tourist destination.

When I was in charge of economic development, I would look for anything that could increase pedestrian traffic in the downtown area. Research showed a series of murals, farmers markets, or tree lights could all have a positive impact on a downtown. And it doesn't have to be elaborate.

I remember when the colorful eBay sign was located at the business park entrance on Hamilton Avenue in San Jose. Often large groups of people would stand in front of the sign taking pictures. It was a tourist destination without even trying. All you would need to add is a place to buy souvenirs and eat.

Just this December, the *Mercury News* ran an article (<http://bit.ly/1Cc8h5A>) on how the Santa Barbara wine country is taking advantage of the film "Sideways," 10 years after it first ran. They have movie screening nights with wine tasting, special "Sideways" dinners, and even tours of the "Sideways" sights.

That's right, the films don't have to be new. In Germany, I saw busloads of tourists taking the "Sound of Music Tour," a movie first shown in 1965. Recently in Phuket, Thailand, I took the one-hour boat ride to see James Bond Island. This was the scene where the 1974 movie, "The Man with the Golden Gun," was filmed. The simple wood sign marking the spot has been a great investment for the local economy.



Classic karsts at the Ao Phang-Nga Marine National Park in Thailand. Photo by author.

A small retail area selling James Bond T-shirts and other souvenirs is located at the dock where you board the 100-passenger boats that take you out to the island (where you transfer to a smaller boat to go ashore).

In Hawaii, the series "Hawaii Five-0" is being marketed everywhere. Even the rent-a-car dealers are prospering from it by renting hot new Chevrolet Camaros like the one used in the show.

The Charlotte, North Carolina airport boasts a hallway featuring movie posters of all the movies filmed there, including the "Hunger Games." Oakland was also one of the several locations used to shoot the film. The Bay Area

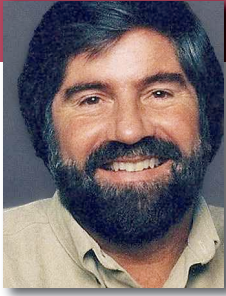
could take advantage of the movies filmed here to create more tourist destinations. "Terminator 5" has Bay Area scenes and is scheduled for release in June. Terminator tours anyone? Or Mobile Workshops this fall? ■



John Livingstone at James Bond Island, Thailand.

A homecoming

By Steve Matarazzo



Last year, I retired as a city manager to become an urban planner again. I was welcomed back,

first from the city of Pacific Grove, truly a great American home town, serving as an interim planning director, and then both professionally and spiritually, at the American Planning Association conference in Anaheim. There, I reconnected with many of the colleagues I accumulated over the past 40 years during tenures in two county planning departments and five cities.

There I was, sleeping at Disneyland, the land of believing that anything can happen, when I fell into a dream. There was Charles Abrams telling me that eminent domain can be a useful planning tool; then Daniel Burnham chimed in, asking me if neoclassical architecture was still in vogue (check out the photo); then the conversation was interrupted by Edmund Bacon asking me how I liked his son's (Kevin Bacon) acting ability; and, finally, I heard from Jane Jacobs telling me to forget all that crap I learned in planning school and instead concentrate on creating pedestrian action along major streets.

When I woke up in Frontier Tower and then transported myself to the conference opening reception, my homecoming became complete. After a major absence from attending APA conferences, I reconnected with



The new Taylor Farms neoclassical building in downtown Salinas — almost completed, and just beautiful. Photo courtesy Belli Architectural Group, Salinas.

dozens of old friends, listened to Beach Boys music (Let's do it again!), and had the feast of my life! Thank you to all my colleagues at the American Planning Association, and to city and county officials throughout California; it's been an E-ticket ride so far!

Steve Matarazzo retired as city manager of Sand City this past March. He previously held planning positions in Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties, Sand City, Woodside, Carpinteria, Morgan Hill, and Pacific Grove. Steve holds a bachelor's degree in environmental studies from UC Santa Barbara and a master's degree in urban and regional planning from San Jose State. He is currently a senior consultant with Pacific Municipal Consultants. ■

Collapse of ancient capitals speaks to today. "Tikal, Angkor, and Anuradhapura all went into decline relatively soon after attaining their prime. They were very different cities in their geography, environment, and social and political functioning. But all had operational similarities: extensive land clearance, sprawling low-density settlement patterns, massive infrastructure — all of which are attributes of modern cities. The extended infrastructure of Angkor and Tikal proved vulnerable to a changing climate, something else that may be upon us. Events like the flooding of New Orleans have resonances with Angkor: Both cities had developed a fantastic method of managing water. But if the impact that comes is outside the parameters of the system, you're in trouble."

—Srinath Perur, <http://bit.ly/1FXDcIG>

Take a course from UC Davis Extension this winter!

APA Members: 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. *If you are registering online please use code: **APA2015**.*

Annual Land Use Law Review and Update: Discuss recent developments in California law affecting land use, planning, and environmental compliance. Experts provide succinct and practical analysis on recent case law and legislative and administrative changes. Instructors: William Abbott, Cecily Talbert Barclay, and Matthew Gray. **AICP | CM 6.0**

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

Effective Communication: An Introduction to Sharing Technical and Scientific Information: Participants will learn how to assess their own communication skills, develop plans for targeted improvements, and employ effective techniques used by successful communicators. Instructor: Kandace Knudson. **AICP | CM 10.0**

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

LAFCO: Planning and Regulating the Boundaries and Service Areas of Cities and Special Districts in California: Receive an overview of statutes and procedures for creating and modifying the organization of cities and special districts in California. Instructors: Paul Novak and Robert Braitman. **AICP | CM 6.0**

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

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

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

Answer to "Where in the world?" (Page 9)

Doha, Qatar, viewed from the Museum of Islamic Art (I. M. Pei).

Photo: Aliza Knox.

"Emergency response slowed by traffic. Firefighters were hampered from reaching an East Palo Alto home because of heavy traffic on Monday evening [Jan. 12] when a fire broke out. The delays are concerning for local chiefs. In Palo Alto, responders are delayed by up to 30 seconds each time they go out during morning and evening commutes, and 30 percent of the runs take place during those hours. 'Palo Alto is a tale of two cities. During the day, the population is 150,000 to 175,000 people, but the department is built to handle 85,000 — the 65,000 in Palo Alto and 20,000 at Stanford. To meet the daytime population, we would need 10 to 12 stations. We have six,' said Palo Alto Fire Chief Eric Nickel." —Sue Dremann and Bay City News Service, <http://bit.ly/1u78dzk>

Call for entries, ABAG's Growing Smarter Together Awards

**Applications due
February 10 by 5 pm**

The Association of Bay Area Governments' *Growing Smarter Together* Awards Program showcases local planning and development that advances sustainable or 'focused' growth in the Bay Area.

Does your city, town, or county have a program or project — or an elected official who has taken actions — that demonstrate a significant commitment to

- advancing sustainable or 'focused' growth principles or
- achieving the regional planning goal of developing sustainable communities?

Then go to <http://bit.ly/1xBr3DL> for more information and to submit applications online. Applications also can be mailed to P.O. Box 2050, Oakland, CA 94604, or delivered to ABAG, 101 Eighth Street, Oakland.

Questions? Contact Leahz@abag.ca.gov or (510) 464-7995 or Halimaha@abag.ca.gov or (510) 464-7986.

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

Northern Section is officially opening a call for nominations for Section Awards. In previous years, several Northern Section winners went on to garner State Awards.

Let's keep up the tradition and recognize the best in planning.

The Section Awards Categories for 2015 are:

Project Awards

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

Awards for people, agencies, and firms

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

Get all the details, rules, and applications at:

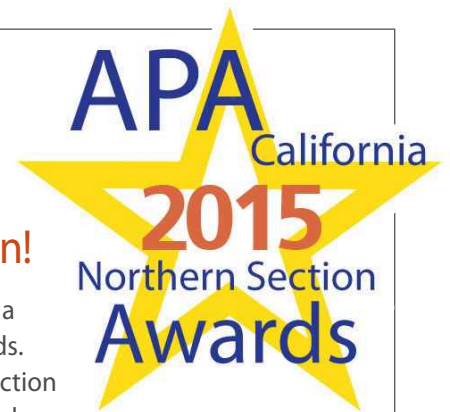
<http://norcalapa.org/programs/awards/>

The deadline for nominations is Thursday, March 5, 2015

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

AICP | CM Credit is pending for this event.

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



San Jose's Downtown Doors Program

Student artists beautify the public realm

Article and photos by Juan Borrelli, AICP

Downtown Doors is a youth public art program that selects juried artwork by high school and middle school students, then enlarges and places the art on often-ignored utility and service doors. The doors selected for the installations are along sidewalks that face major streets, plazas, paseos, and other highly visible pedestrian corridors in downtown San José. The installations transform often-tagged and vandalized stairwell, service, and electrical room doors — and the downtown streetscape — with creative, colorful, thought provoking, and engaging public art for passersby to enjoy.

The San José Downtown Foundation, a nonprofit volunteer organization whose mission is to advance a vibrant downtown by fostering cultural awareness and community participation through art and beautification, created the program in 2003. The Foundation envisioned the program as an urban strategy to enhance downtown's image, enliven its public realm and streetscapes, and help curb graffiti tagging and vandalism.

The program also has a strong educational and social component. It provides young, aspiring artists with experience and valuable life lessons as they participate in an art

competition with real-life exposure. The program builds self-esteem and character and provides an outlet for creativity for young artists who might otherwise turn to less productive or non-community contributing forms of self-expression. In essence, this public art program compels student artists, their families, and teachers — and passersby who experience the student artwork — to take note of their surroundings, and ultimately, to take an active interest in improving their community. The program also helps to supplement diminishing funding for middle and secondary school art programs by providing a cash award and other prizes to each school and artist at an unveiling reception held annually in June.



The Hero Within, Neni Silva



Out-doorsy, Hannah Verdonk



Mother Nature, Yajaira Acosta

(continued on next page)

The selected artwork is scanned and reproduced as large-scale vinyl decals that are applied to utility and service doors. QR codes have been added to some of the art to increase viewer engagement and interactive experience. Scanning the code with a smartphone accesses videos in which the students describe the concept or inspiration for the artwork, and what it has meant personally to have artwork selected for a highly noticeable and successful public art program.

Since inception, 189 artworks have been selected and exhibited from more than 1,100 pieces submitted. The program has grown to 91 host sites throughout the downtown, more than 23 participating schools, and more than 160 submissions received annually. New in 2014, five submissions were selected for exhibition by students from international schools in some of San José's Sister Cities, including Dublin, Ireland; Okayama, Japan; Pune, India; San José, Costa Rica; and Tainan, Taiwan. To date, the program has distributed a total of more than \$60,000 to all the exhibited student artists and their schools' art departments.

In addition to expanding host building sites and program sponsors, adding new student artwork, and distributing additional funding to school art programs each year, the San José Downtown Foundation is investigating new ways to further increase the visibility and viewer engagement experience of the Downtown Doors installations. Ideas being explored include improving nighttime lighting around the

doors, adding glow-in-dark paint to existing installations, engaging the artists to design and expand their artwork beyond the doors and onto surrounding wall areas and door niches, and creating other video and/or audio engagement components and installations.

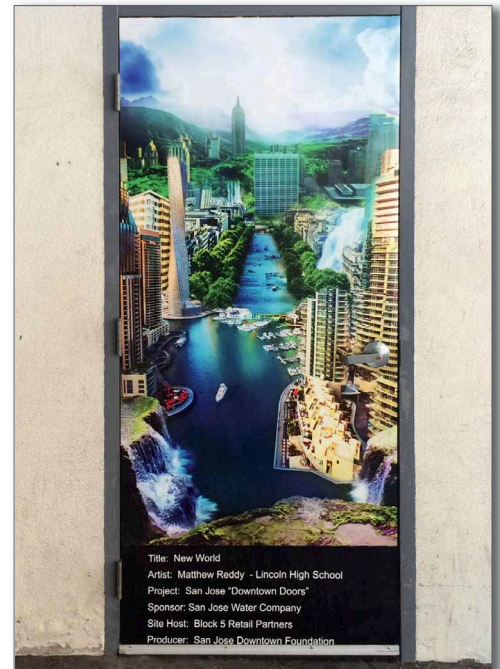
A map of all 91 Downtown Doors art installations on exhibit in San José is available at <http://bit.ly/1KEusXJ>.



Pop Art, Mari Minjoe

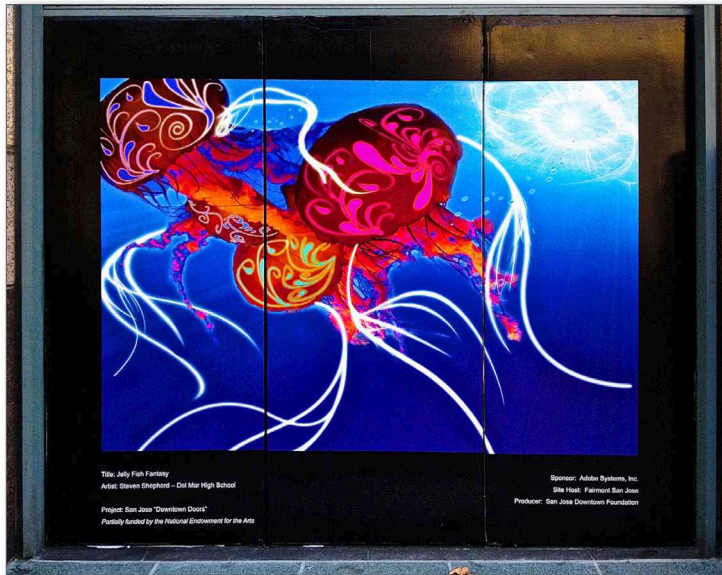


Birth of a Scent, Elaine Kim



New World, Matthew Reddy

(continued on next page)



Jellyfish Fantasy, Steven Shepherd



Caught, Valerie Ayala



Elder, Jessica Graef



Sunflowers, Anna Trihn

Juan Borrelli, AICP is an artist and public art advocate. He works for the City of San José as its development services small business ally. He also serves as vice president of the California Planning Foundation, as section historian for APA California – Northern Section, and is on the board of trustees for the San José Downtown Foundation. For more information on the San José Downtown Doors Program, go to <http://bit.ly/1KEuAGJ> or email Juan at juan.borrelli@sanjoseca.gov ■





Norcal roundup

Assembled by Jennifer Piozet, associate editor

10 years of parklets: a brief history

The New York Times Business Day, January 10, 2015

Claire Martin, <http://nyti.ms/1IJ3BWL> • “About 51 parklets have sprung up across San Francisco since 2010. At least 72 more have materialized in places like Philadelphia, New Orleans, Seattle, Chicago, Mexico City, and Auckland. This year, the Los Angeles metro area will welcome four of them.”

How and where did it start?

“The idea for parklets began in 2005, when Rebar, a San Francisco arts collective, wanted to apply their artistic flair to small fragments of real estate. They were also interested in challenging ‘the boundaries of the short-term lease offered by a metered parking space,’ says John Bela, a Rebar co-founder.

“They started an experiment. They found an empty parking space, rolled out a patch of grass turf, and set up a park bench and a potted tree. They put up a sign that read, ‘If you’d like to enjoy this little park, please put some coins in the meter.’

“Mr. Bela and the others saw a pedestrian wander into the spot, put money in the meter, and sit on a bench. Soon another sauntered in, and the two struck up a conversation. Just like that, the exercise was a success. Without much effort or expense, the parking spot had been transformed into a mini-park.

“The experiment expanded into a daylong, international Park(ing) Day. Then, in 2010, Rebar was commissioned to create a semipermanent version of one of the parks, and the parklet was born.”

A need for regional thinking

San Francisco Chronicle, December 28, 2014

Opinion, <http://bit.ly/1BxC1LN> • “Costly housing and inadequate transit are concerns that occupy Bay Area residents nearly every day. ... These shortcomings can’t be isolated to the big-city center. They’re regional concerns, taking in dozens of communities. It’s time ... for serious improvements that move beyond the normal boundaries and levels of planning.

“An emphasis on commuter lines that reach deep into the areas surrounding city centers is one element. Another is regional government that oversees and enforces policies on a broad scale.

“The Bay Area has all the elements of these solutions in place [with] BART, Caltrain, [and a] semblance of regional government structure in three agencies — the Association of Bay Area Governments, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and Bay Conservation and Development Commission.

“It’s time to take these ingredients to the next level. ... Plan Bay Area, adopted [in 2013] by regional planning groups, tries to bring development in line with a state law, SB375, a largely unbinding measure designed to curb sprawl and lessen pollution. [But] forceful steps are needed to knit together the Bay Area. ... Regional planning has never been more needed.”

Apple spaceship and barn will coexist

Mercury News, December 27, 2014

Julia Love, <http://bit.ly/1xXK8Bp> • “Underscoring that Apple Campus 2 is at once one of Silicon Valley’s wildest sketches of the future and a portal to its past, the company has set aside a place for the Glendenning Barn. Constructed in 1916 with planks of redwood, the barn would withstand the decline of local agriculture, the rise of big tech, and Apple’s earth movers.

“When finished, the 175-acre site off Wolfe and Homestead roads in Cupertino will be transformed from 80 percent asphalt and concrete to 80 percent greenery and open space.

“To protect the structure during construction, Apple carefully dismembered the barn, numbering it piece by piece — every plank, nail, and crossbeam — so it can be rebuilt just as it was, says Donna Austin, president of the Cupertino Historical Society. The company has even stockpiled redwood salvaged from an old grove in case any damaged planks need to be replaced. Under Apple’s care, it will be a working barn for the first time in decades, storing sports equipment and the landscaping supplies the company will need for the thousands of trees that will shade the campus.”

(Norcal roundup continues on next page)

Google's new bus is for the people

Mercury News, January 10, 2015

Matt O'Brien, <http://bit.ly/1DLr1Kc> • “The electric-powered Mountain View Community Shuttle is Google’s gift to a hometown still grappling with the weight of being the corporate hub for a global Internet giant. The two-year pilot program also helps the company sustain its do-gooder image amid rising anxiety over the Bay Area’s real estate prices and economic inequality, both frequently blamed on the meteoric incomes of tech workers.

“The Google-funded fleet of four 16-seat buses quietly began following an hour-long loop through Mountain View’s residential and commercial neighborhoods early in January, picking up curious seniors and other passengers beckoned by drivers offering a free ride. The new bus makes 30 stops, passing the library, shopping malls, senior and teen community centers, parks, residential neighborhoods, the Caltrain and VTA station, and the city’s downtown commercial district on Castro Street. It has bicycle racks, Wi-Fi connectivity, a wheelchair lift, and space for two wheelchairs.

“Google declined to say how much the service costs. The pilot will run for at least two years, with an option to continue for a third year or longer. Along with its community shuttle, Google helped to launch another free shuttle Jan. 12 — this one to get commuters out of their cars on their way to tech campuses in the North Bayshore district. Google and six other companies, including Intuit, LinkedIn, and Samsung, are splitting the costs of running the new MVGo buses, run by the corporate-funded Mountain View Transportation Management Association.”

After court fights, Pleasanton adopts Housing Element

Pleasanton Weekly, January 8, 2015

Jeb Bing, <http://bit.ly/11BYIEh> • “The city’s failure to reach an agreement during the 2007–2014 cycle of the state’s Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), plus a housing cap approved by voters in 1996, led Urban Habitat to seek a court order for compliance. The city’s unsuccessful and costly court fights with Urban Habitat and a Superior Court judge in 2012 might not have happened had the city complied with the Housing Element requirement ahead of time.

“With both the state and a court ruling threatening to strip the city of zoning powers, city leaders spent nearly two years and held hundreds of hours in community meetings, public hearings, and staff discussions to fulfill the RHNA requirements before the deadline Dec. 31.

“By then, the City Council had rezoned 70 acres for high-density residential development on nine separate sites in various parts of Pleasanton for apartment-style units to accommodate the requirements in State Housing laws. The rezoning allowed for high-density developments of 30 units per acre. Two of those developments are currently underway.

“Last year, the City Council approved a new Growth Management ordinance that limits the number of residential housing permits to 235 units annually. Those numbers can be bunched to allow developers the option of building more units one year, but the excess must be subtracted going forward to keep to a 235-unit average through 2023.”

For deeper background, see *Northern News*’ lead article, October 2009, <http://bit.ly/11BZVWE>.

(Norcal roundup continues on next page)

Walk this way. “People 65 and older make up 13 percent of the population but account for a disproportionate number of pedestrian deaths (20 percent in 2012), and sustain more severe injuries in nonfatal accidents. Drivers share the blame with cyclists, designers of streets, and pedestrians themselves. ... An acquaintance of my vintage feels safer crossing in the middle of the block, where she can see cars coming from all directions, including those turning at the corner.” —Jane E. Brody, <http://nyti.ms/1u5y00n>

New wetland in Solano County

SF Gate, January 6, 2015

Steve Rubenstein, <http://bit.ly/1tWxfGX> • “One hundred ducks flew into their new paradise in Solano County January 6th. The ducks were the latest residents of Cullinan Ranch, a former hay farm along the San Pablo Bay that was restored to a wetland when a yellow power shovel knocked over the last piece of an earthen dam that had held back the waters of Dutchman Slough and the nearby Napa River for more than a century.

“The impatient ducks, who settled into the new 1,200-acre wetlands before they were fully wet, seemed happy right away. The Cullinan Ranch wetland is a small piece of a federal project to restore 100,000 acres of public bay land over the next 20 years, from the former farmlands of the North Bay to the former salt ponds near San Jose. Biologists call tidal marshes the foundation of a healthy estuary. They control floodwaters, catch pollutants, and nurture small shellfish and worms that form the base of the food chain. And they can help hold back rising seas expected from global warming.

“The levee breach on January 6th brought water to a brand-new fishing pier and kayak ramp a mile west that had been high and dry, waiting impatiently for the big day. Other parts of the project include levees to prevent the new wetlands from flooding Highway 37, new bike and hiking trails, and a handful of informative signs about wetland biology.”

Khosla attorneys: Amend Martins Beach ruling

Mercury News, December 22, 2014

Aaron Kinney, <http://bit.ly/1vt0Ja4> • “Vinod Khosla’s attorneys [want] a new trial in the legal fight over the public’s ability to visit secluded Martins Beach. In a memo to San Mateo County Superior Court Judge Barbara Mallach, lawyers for the tech tycoon say new developments since [the 2014] trial, particularly the passage of a law aimed at restoring access to the beach, require her to amend her ruling or toss it aside and start over.

“The bill by Peninsula state Sen. Jerry Hill, SB 968, conflicts with Mallach’s ruling in the area of compensation, the attorneys argue. The law, signed by Gov. Jerry Brown in September, requires the State Lands Commission to negotiate access with Khosla and possibly acquire a right-of-way, or easement, that would allow the public to get to the beach from Highway 1. Mallach simply ordered Khosla to reopen the gate to allow vehicle access, subject to certain time restrictions and with the understanding he could charge a small parking fee.

“The divergent approaches create a conflict between the legislative and judicial branches of government, which amounts to ‘a violation of the separate powers doctrine,’ Khosla’s attorneys say. Judge Mallach has not set a date to consider the defendant’s motion for a new trial.” ■

Form-based code, no PUD. “The Beaufort County [SC] Council adopted a new form-based code in December. The new code drew some opposition because it did not include planned unit developments, which numerous developers have used for flexibility around county zoning rules. The lone dissenting council member said planned unit developments have been critical to development in southern Beaufort County, especially Bluffton, where several gated communities and commercial developments can be found along every critical highway artery. Supporters of the code said the new rules render planned unit developments obsolete, and offer a process that allows developers to negotiate zoning exceptions with county staff.” —Scott Thomson, <http://bit.ly/1E1aQse>. Bluffton is 23 miles northeast of Savannah, GA, and 8 miles west of Hilton Head Island. Hat tip to Dan Parolek.

California HSR awards second large contract

The Fresno Bee, January 13, 2015

Tim Sheehan, <http://bit.ly/1DGsiVL> • “The California High-Speed Rail Authority board awarded a \$1.36 billion contract for the design and construction of its second segment of rail line in the central San Joaquin Valley, a 65-mile stretch from American Avenue south of Fresno to the Tulare-Kern county line.

“This is the second of four major construction contracts in the San Joaquin Valley to build what is planned as the ‘backbone’ of a 520-mile route to connect San Francisco and Los Angeles with electric passenger trains traveling at up to 220 mph. The first contract of about \$1 billion, for a 29-mile section of the route between Fresno and Madera, was awarded in mid-2013.

“Under draft terms of the contract negotiations, the rail agency has until late July to finalize a deal and give the contracting team a green light to start working — finishing up design and engineering work and then building the 65-mile segment — without any escalation in price. Once the contractor has a notice to proceed, the team has up to four years to complete the work.

“The project will include 36 street over- or underpasses, elevated viaducts, and bridges, in Fresno, Kings, and Tulare counties. The authority will pay each of the losing bidders a \$2 million stipend in exchange for ownership of the designs in their bids, so their innovations can be incorporated in future efforts, CEO Jeff Morales said.”

California farmers may trade with Cuba

The Fresno Bee, January 10, 2015

Robert Rodriguez, <http://bit.ly/1xY8J7Y> • “As the push to lift the U.S. economic embargo against Cuba gains renewed attention, many San Joaquin Valley farm industries stand to benefit from easing trade restrictions. While Cuba is a relatively small country in population (11.2 million people), it has a major appetite for imported food. Cuba imports about 80 percent of its food, with much of it coming from countries other than the United States.

“Valley farmers — including world leaders in producing raisins, grapes, and tree nuts — are in a good position to take advantage of an open-door trade policy with Cuba. Although the U.S. has been able to export food products to Cuba since 2000, it has come with restrictions that many companies say put the U.S. at a competitive disadvantage.

“That could begin to change under the president’s new rules and a lobbying effort by a coalition of 25 food companies and farm groups that is calling for Congress to end the embargo. In the short run, California and Valley farmers may find an opportunity in supplying Cuba’s burgeoning tourism industry. Hotels and restaurants that cater to the tourist trade could be increasing their purchases of fresh fruits and vegetables, dry fruit, and nuts for baked goods.”

Bakersfield’s HSR litigation settled

Los Angeles Times, December 19, 2014

Ralph Vartabedian, <http://lat.ms/1A3bpTv> • “Bakersfield settled an environmental lawsuit against the bullet train project [Dec. 19th], winning a concession by the state to consider a new rail route into the city’s downtown.

“The city — along with Kern County; Shafter, Calif.; a hospital; a church and a developer — objected to the original route and other conditions that were certified by the California High-Speed Rail Authority in its federal and state environmental documents. The Bakersfield section of the high-speed rail project affected dozens of businesses, a major medical center, and the city’s main high school campus.

“Under the settlement, the city and the state will examine a new route that travels through the northern section of Bakersfield, arriving at a downtown station a few miles from the existing Amtrak station. The rail authority said the settlement ‘demonstrates the commitment between both parties to work together.’

“The settlement was not related to a key decision by the federal Surface Transportation Board [a] week [earlier] that exempted the project from compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act.”

(California continues on next page)

Countywide Metro's regional bike share plans 2016 start in downtown LA

Streetsblog LA, January 8, 2015, January 8, 2015

Joe Linton, <http://bit.ly/146RjtD> • “Metro is moving forward with its regional bike share system, expected to debut in downtown Los Angeles in about a year. Metro released its bike share Request for Proposals in December 2014, with bids due January 27. A bike share contract is to be awarded by June, with full implementation of a 1,000-bike system in downtown LA nine months later. Metro’s RFP is for an initial two-year contract, with possible extensions up to seven years and expansions to nearly 4,000 bikes in expanded service areas. In July 2014, Metro’s board allocated \$3.8 million from ExpressLanes toll revenue for downtown LA bike share capital.

“Metro will own the system, brand it, and manage it via contractors, but the system will be located in host cities, which Metro will require to share costs. Initial capital costs are split 50/50 between Metro and the host cities. Operations and maintenance will be split, with 65 percent paid by the host city and 35 percent by Metro. The funding is already in place for the initial two-year downtown LA pilot. The split funding process could complicate later expansion to other municipalities.

“Metro anticipates full downtown implementation by Spring/Summer 2016. If bike share goes well downtown, the Metro board can choose to extend the contract. Metro is a countywide authority, and hence under some pressure to make sure their systems go beyond LA city boundaries. Pasadena is slated for the initial system expansion area, possibly in late 2017, pending Metro board approval.”

Uneven water conservation falls short of governor's goal

The Mercury News, January 6, 2015

Paul Rogers, <http://bit.ly/14IqLij> • “After two months of declining conservation, Californians are doing better at saving water, but remain short of a goal set by Gov. Brown last January. Statewide, residents cut water use by 9.8 percent in November, compared with November 2013. That’s an improvement from October, when the reduction was only 6.8 percent. And it compares with the 11.5 percent savings in August, and 10.2 percent in September.

“Last January, in declaring a drought emergency, the governor asked Californians to voluntarily cut their water use by 20 percent. Many parts of the state are at or near that goal now. But huge regional differences remain. Residents of the South Coast region — essentially Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange and Riverside counties — cut water use by only 3.2 percent in November, while the Bay Area and Sacramento reduced water use by 18 percent and 25 percent, respectively.

“State water board officials said that temperature differences and the fact that Northern California received a small amount of rain in November while Southern California received next to none are responsible for some of the differences. But the chasm between conservation in the North and South mirrored every other month since June when the survey of 400 water agencies and cities began.

“Jeff Kightlinger, general manager of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, noted that Southern California has expanded local water supplies with new reservoirs, desalination, and water recycling since the last big drought from 1987 to 1992. And despite adding 5 million residents since then, overall water demand is 20 percent less, he noted.” ■

Data planners can use. Uber announced January 13 (<http://bit.ly/1E191vy>) that it will “begin sharing certain ride data with the city of Boston to help tackle city planning issues such as urban growth, traffic congestion, and public transport expansion. The data will be stripped of any identifiable information, including individuals’ names and addresses. Instead, Uber will share ZIP Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA) data for where the trip started and ended. ZCTA is a slightly broader metric than ZIPs, with roughly 32,000 (versus 42,000) covering the entire country. Also shared will be the distance traveled in miles, the time and date the trip began, and the duration in seconds.” —Aaron Souppouris, <http://engt.co/1E19DkD>

Brownstone façades adjoining Whitney Museum saved

The New York Times, December 23, 2014

Ronda Kaysen, <http://nyti.ms/1HEczUJ> • “For nearly half a century, the Whitney Museum’s Marcel Breuer building has dominated Madison Avenue and 75th Street. The Whitney closed in October, but the Brutalist style Breuer building, which opened in 1966, will reopen in March 2016 as a satellite location for the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

“Six 19th-century brownstones [adjacent] are being converted to condos and retailing. Known as the Whitney brownstones, the six were built in the 1870s in the Italianate and Greek Revival styles. ‘They’re very workaday classic New York brownstones,’ said Tara Kelly, the executive director of Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts. ‘But their significance rises to a higher level because of their proximity to the Breuer.’



Madison Avenue, 74th to 75th. Rendering: Neoscape. Source: 33east74.com

When Daniel E. Straus, a health care magnate, bought the brownstones and a townhouse from the Whitney for \$95 million in 2010, the block’s future was not entirely settled. The Whitney had already decided to leave the Upper East Side, but it had not found a tenant for the Breuer building. The brownstones have been gutted, leaving only the façades, to make way for 10 luxury condos at 33 East 74th Street and 17,300 square feet of retail space at 935 Madison Avenue.

“Some preservationists have raised concerns, [saying that] in preserving only the façades, the essence and character of the historic buildings have been lost.”

House passes Keystone pipeline bill

BBC, January 9, 2015

<http://bbc.in/157TqyG> • “The U.S. House has passed a bill approving the construction of the controversial Keystone XL pipeline. The Senate was expected to pass a similar bill, which President Barack Obama said he would veto. Earlier, a court in Nebraska dismissed a case that would have stalled construction of the pipeline.

“The project has been one of the most contentious issues between President Obama and Republicans. It is a 1,179-mile extension of an existing pipeline that would bring additional oil from the tar sands of Alberta, Canada, to refining facilities near the Gulf of Mexico. The bill is controversial because the tar sand oil that the pipeline will transport is said to be more polluting than other types of oil. But an official environmental review released last year raised no major environmental objections to the pipeline’s construction.

“Many Republicans and some trade unions support the bill because they say it will generate jobs. Because the pipeline would cross an international border, the state department has to grant a permit for its construction. But in voting, Congressional Republicans set the stage to bypass this review process and allow construction to begin immediately.

“The Obama administration had opposed the bill because it ‘prevents the thorough consideration of complex issues that could bear on U.S. national interests,’ and because of ‘uncertainty due to ongoing litigation in Nebraska.’ The bill failed to garner the two-thirds majority in the House that it would need to override a presidential veto. The Senate would likely be unable to override a veto as well.”

(U.S. continues on next page)

Fracking caused Ohio earthquakes

The New York Times, January 7, 2015

Michael Wines, <http://nyti.ms/1xVXqPt> • “Not long after two mild earthquakes outside Youngstown, Ohio, last March, geologists decided that hydraulic fracturing operations at new oil-and-gas wells in the area had set off the tremors. Now a detailed study has concluded that the earthquakes were not isolated events, but merely the largest of scores of quakes that rattled the area around the wells for more than a week.

“The study, published in *The Bulletin of the Seismological Society of America*, indicates that hydraulic fracturing (fracking) built up subterranean pressures that repeatedly caused slippage in an existing fault as close as a half-mile beneath the wells.

“The number and intensity of fracking-related quakes have risen as the practice has boomed. In Oklahoma, quakes have increased sharply in recent years, including a magnitude 5.7 tremor in 2011. Both state and federal experts have said fracking is contributing to the increase there, not only because of the fracking itself, but also because of the proliferation of related wells into which fracking waste is injected. Those injection wells receive much more waste, and are filled under high pressure more often, than oil or gas wells, and the sheer volume of pressurized liquids has widened cracks in faults, raising the chances of slippage and earthquakes.

“Ohio authorities halted fracking at seven wells on March 10 after the two biggest quakes there, measured at magnitudes 2.8 and 3, were felt in Poland Township, about 10 miles south of Youngstown on the Pennsylvania border.”

Gentrification in 19th-century Manhattan

CityLab, December 16, 2014

Sarah Goodyear, comments (<http://bit.ly/16EbUY4>) on historian Catherine McNur’s *Taming Manhattan: Environmental Battles in the Antebellum City*, Harvard University Press, <http://bit.ly/1wY4oQj> • “Back in 19th-century Manhattan, urban livestock were perceived as a threat to the image and future of the nation’s largest city. For Manhattan to become the center of a nation’s wealth and high culture, the dirty work of agriculture and food production had to be pushed out and made invisible — along with the lower-class people who made their living from animals and their by-products. The fight against [frequent] epidemics of cholera and other sanitation-related illnesses became entangled in a web of class, ethnic, and racial prejudices.

“Class pervaded every aspect of the drive to create a great American city on once-rural Manhattan. Its parks and public spaces were, in large part, funded by fees paid by the wealthy. While Central Park was envisioned as a retreat for poor and rich alike, its creation was fraught with class and racial fallout. The homes of many poor immigrants [and] African-Americans were seized through eminent domain to create a manufactured pastoral landscape [in Central Park], with its bucolic Sheep Meadow and Dairy.

“Many of the underlying conflicts [still] resonate strongly in New York, where deepening economic inequality is fraying the ideal of a prosperous city that can be shared by all its residents, where the real estate market is constantly displacing the less wealthy, and fast-food workers struggle to hang on [at] the fringes of the outer boroughs.”

UPDATE: Remaking Downtown Las Vegas

Northern News has twice covered billionaire Tony Hsieh’s ambitious plans to revamp Las Vegas’ original downtown — in our December 2012/January 2013 issue, page 25, <http://bit.ly/157VPcE>; and our May 2013 issue, page 14, <http://bit.ly/157WcUB>. It’s a fascinating story and challenge. Here are some excerpts from a recent NPR story by Elise Hu, January 15, 2015.

“Fifteen minutes north of the iconic Vegas Strip is the economically depressed downtown Las Vegas, a much-forgotten part of town. It’s also an area of tremendous change in recent years, since it’s the heart of tech billionaire Tony Hsieh’s ambitious Downtown Project — an effort that’s part urban revitalization, part social experiment.

“Three years in, it’s not going as quickly as he expected. The area is distinct from the Strip, and Hsieh’s development is keeping it that way — geared towards locals and a sense of community.

“Hsieh says he’s giving the project two more years to break even, which was the original plan. As the years have passed, however, the project has faced its share of difficulties. It laid off 30 staff members in September. Its lead spokesman quit this week. Those close to the original downtown vision have criticized Hsieh’s leadership.

“A revitalizing urban core, built on tens of millions of dollars and a lot of hope. Is this temporary? Is it permanent? For now, it’s a little bit of both.” Read more or listen to the story (7:49) at <http://n.pr/1yoIeJl>.

Polk Street protected bike lane named best in US

Next City, December 22, 2014

Sarah Goodyear, <http://bit.ly/1zXLeMW> • “Advocacy group People For Bikes has released their list of the top 10 best new [protected] bike lanes in the country — lanes where there is some kind of physical barrier between the people on bikes and the people in cars.”

“The lanes on the list use a variety of strategies to achieve separation from car traffic. Some are separated from motor vehicles by parked cars; some by plastic bollards; one, in Seattle, by water-filled blue plastic buffers. Some are two-way on one-way streets.

“Almost none of them, sadly, are very long. The Honolulu lane runs for two miles, but many of the rest are more like a quarter mile or just a few blocks at best.

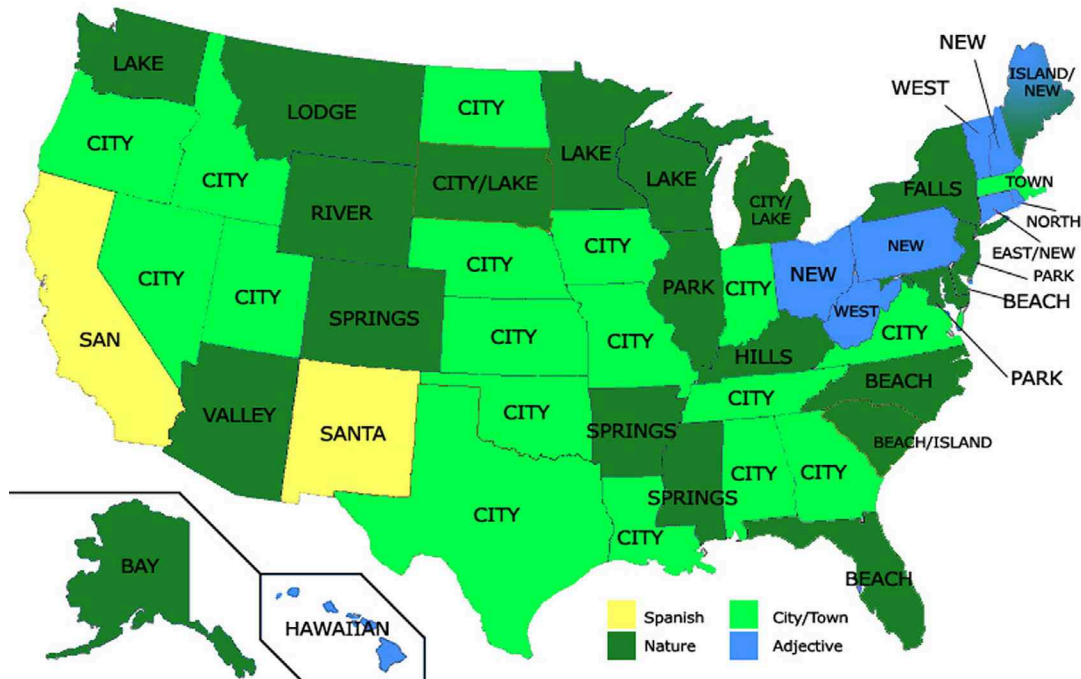
“This is the way things go with protected bike infrastructure in the United States: It is usually implemented piecemeal, with many of the projects billed as pilots or

experimental in order to overcome resistance from members of the community concerned about interference with car traffic or parking.”

First on the list is Polk Street, San Francisco. Notes People For Bikes, “The Polk Street bike lane is barely a third of a mile long, one block from City Hall. The lanes are painted green on each side of a one-way street, and separated by curbs and a planter adorned with local cacti. We expect this demo to prove that greatness is contagious.”

“For all of its successes,” wrote Joe Fitzgerald Rodriguez in the *SF Examiner*, “the Polk Street bike lane is exemplary of San Francisco’s extraordinarily long approval processes. The bike lane was in various phases of planning for 15 years.”

For more, see ‘America’s 10 best new bike lanes of 2014,’ <http://bit.ly/1zXMbVp>. ■



Most common words in incorporated place names by state.

Source: imgur.com/gallery/USEHW1h

Olympic stadiums: Where's the planning and long-term vision?

The New York Times, January 4, 2015

Robin Pogrebin and Amy Qin,

<http://nyti.ms/1rV4FEp> • “For nearly a year, the criticism of Pritzker-winning architect Zaha Hadid’s design for Tokyo’s Olympic stadium for the 2020 Summer Games has been full-throated as oversized and overpriced. Beyond the merits of her design, the debate illustrates how Olympic stadiums — structures in which countries invest nothing less than their national identities — engender more passion than almost any other buildings.

“Sometimes, a country appears to get it right, as in Beijing’s National Stadium for the 2008 Olympics. [But] Montreal’s stadium for the 1976 Olympics left the city with more than \$2 billion in debt that took 30 years to repay, earning the arena a nickname change from the Big O to the Big Owe.

“Other Olympic stadiums have provoked similarly strong reactions. ‘Stadiums always seem to be in this odd category of potential national symbol for a very short period of time and then potential white elephants,’ said Thomas Hanrahan, dean of the School of Architecture at the Pratt Institute. ‘That has nothing to do with the architectural design; that’s the nature of the discussion in Tokyo — it has to do with planning and the long-term vision.’”



Design for 2020 stadium, Zaha Hadid Architects.

Image courtesy Japan Sports Council, <http://bit.ly/1w9gkes>

Second LRT line for Australia's largest city

Next City, December 23, 2014

Sandy Smith, <http://bit.ly/1HDOMnV> • Sydney is about to embark on a major addition to its light-rail system, currently a single line. The International Railway Journal (<http://bit.ly/1HDPkdw>) reports that the New South Wales state government has awarded a contract to a consortium that will design, build, operate, and maintain the Sydney CBD and South East Light Rail line. The Altrac Light Rail consortium (previously called Connecting Sydney) will also be responsible for financing the (\$1.72 billion U.S.) project.

“The 12-km line will run from Circular Quay on Sydney Harbour through the Sydney central business district via George Street to Central Station, where it will connect with the existing Inner West Light Rail line. From Central, the new line will run south and east through Surry Hills, Moore Park, Kensington, and Kingsford to a terminus in Randwick. Major facilities along the line include Sydney Cricket Ground, Sydney Football Stadium, Randwick Race Course, the University of New South Wales, and Prince of Wales Hospital.

“Construction is to begin soon after Anzac Day 2015 (April 25th), with opening set for 2019. The contract also calls for Altrac to assume operation of the Inner West Light Rail line in mid-2015.”

Hamburg to cover autobahn with green space

FastCoExist.com, January 8, 2015

Adele Peters, <http://bit.ly/1KAOLVU> • “When the A7 highway was built in Hamburg, Germany, it sliced the city in half. Now a few divided neighborhoods are to be stitched back together, as the city begins construction on three new parks that will fully cover parts of the autobahn.

“The highway is the longest in Germany and one of the busiest. As traffic worsened, the city realized it had to find a way to keep the noise in the area low enough to meet national laws for noise pollution. Since simple walls wouldn’t be enough, they decided to turn sections of the road into covered tunnels. The design can reduce noise in surrounding neighborhoods to almost nothing.

“Each new cover will stretch over a small length of highway and create a new park, with open meadows, woods, bike paths, community gardens, and tree-lined squares. In total, the roofs will cover over two miles and create over 60 acres of new green space.

“The project will also [provide] room for a quickly growing population [in] more than 2,000 new homes, since people will suddenly be willing to live next to the highway.

“The new parks will make it easier to walk or bike across town — and will eventually link up with the city’s ‘green network’ of urban parks connected by trails.

“Construction is beginning this year on the first two autobahn covers, and the project will be completed in 2022.”

(World continues on next page)

Tree-shaped wind turbines for Paris?

Gizmag, December 2, 2014

Nick Lavers, <http://bit.ly/1w9fdLD> • “Generally speaking, the peculiar appearance of wind turbines coupled with the fact they perform better when up high and out in the open sees them banished to uninhabited countryside, or even out to sea. But a French entrepreneur believes that sculpting them in the form of an artificial tree could lead to wider adoption in urban centers, making use of low winds that circulate around buildings and streets.



Image: NewWind, <http://bit.ly/1w9g1JS>

“The Wind Tree is the brainchild of Jérôme Michaud-Larivière, who founded the French company New Wind to bring it to market. His team is set to install a Wind Tree prototype at the Place de la Concorde in Paris in March 2015, a demonstration it says will raise awareness around renewable energy in the city.

“With 72 artificial leaves serving as micro-turbines spinning on a vertical axis, the Wind Tree is designed to harness more gentle winds. The developers say this can extend to breezes blowing as slowly as two meters per second, making the turbine useful across more than 280 days of the year. Its power output is calculated at 3.1 kW.

“The steel tree is 36 feet tall and 26 feet in diameter. If it does eventually make it to market, the Wind Tree will be priced at \$36,500.”

Could “urban metabolism” beat “sustainability”?

Next City, December 23, 2014

Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow, <http://bit.ly/13Zwbq3>

• “Certain precincts of academia are abuzz about ‘urban metabolism.’ But what exactly does it mean? Mikhail Chester, an Arizona State University professor, says ‘The gist is that a city is like an organism — it takes in resources and spits out waste.’

“The concept has drifted in and out of style since 1965. One factor behind the recent resurgence is the increasing availability of data. But how is the notion different from sustainability, efficiency, or ecological footprints? To some extent, looking at urban metabolism offers a way of assessing all of those other outcomes. Chris Kennedy, a professor at the University of Toronto, [considers] it ‘part of the strategic tool-kit’ [that] allows us to understand cities in a ‘more holistic, more comprehensive way.’

“Generally speaking, a city with low metabolism consumes relatively little and produces relatively little waste. For instance, Kennedy compared Greater Toronto with Hong Kong. He found that Toronto had much higher energy consumption for transportation and higher per capita water use, [but] had better recycling and wastewater treatment systems.

“Ultimately, cities, like organisms, have needs and produce waste. We want to try to manage those processes in a sensitive, informed way, just as we want to be prudent about what we put into our bodies. The analogy isn’t perfect — cities are not, of course, exactly like living creatures. But it is evocative. And in the competition for buzzword status, that counts for a lot.” ■

by the sale of land adjacent to busy roads. UN researchers advocate keeping enough land public to ensure construction of at least 80 crossings per square kilometer in fast-growing cities. “Any less and you are certainly going to be in a collapsed city,” Clos says. “Those are not prescriptions, but the consequence of studying the street pattern of the world and correlating it with the congestion in many different matters.”

The report cites Nairobi — where four people were killed recently when a six-story building on a densely populated block collapsed — as a specific example of a city without an adequate street grid. There, the number of intersections per square kilometer barely reaches 40, and many streets lack sidewalks.

But numbers don’t tell the whole story. Cities still must be conscious of how they use the precious square feet. After all, there is a big difference between St. Petersburg, Russia and Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, even though they have the same scant 15 percent of area dedicated to streets.

Clos pointed to perennial pedestrian charmers like his native Barcelona, Vienna, Amsterdam, San Francisco, and Budapest as cities that gave their streets enough breathing room and also made sure to design them to support a thriving economy. Even if the Greek economy has fallen on hard

times, when Athens was made the capital in 1832, a street plan laid out over the 7,000-year-old city helped transform it from a sleepy city of ancient ruins to a metropolis befitting modern Greece.

Laying out the streets, however, is only half the battle. Especially in the automobile era, it’s vital to make sure they serve more than just car traffic and provide a dynamic streetscape for all users. “It is not just the amount of public space, but its quality of potential use, the process through which it is created and owned, and its governance,” says Ethan Kent, vice president of Project for Public Spaces.

Ultimately, it’s not only about how much a city has by way of streets, but also what a city — and its residents — do with them.



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Use a pen. “I use a computer for email and searches but not for design. I walk around the office giving out pens and saying, ‘Try that, you might like it.’ You should conceive and sketch first. Architects get seduced by wild shapes designed on a computer and build these things whether they work or not in the environment. That’s the danger of computers: There’s a facility about them that allows you to do charming, seductive things that have no deeper meaning.” —Moshe Safdie, *The New York Times Sunday Review*, <http://nyti.ms/1skKgJe>

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