

NORTHERN NEWS



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APRIL 2015

The Devil's Slide Trail

How a state highway became a scenic paradise

By Jonathan Berlin

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Lincoln Avenue, Willow Glen, San Jose
Photo: Jonathan Schuppert, AICP



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California has several trails to hell: the Devil's Backbone Trail in the San Gabriel Mountains (precipitous falls to either side), the Devils Kitchen Trail in Lassen Volcanic National Park (boiling and hissing mud pots), and the Devil's Slide Trail (treacherous landslides).

The last trail, which hugs a spectacular rocky coastline south of Pacifica in San Mateo County, is a recent addition to this list. Since its grand opening on an abandoned stretch of State Route (Highway) 1 in March 2014, the 1.3-mile Devil's Slide Trail has already become the most popular destination managed by the San Mateo County Parks Department.

Visitor counts show that an average of 1,100 people come to the trail per day, which amounts to more than 400,000 people per year. This level of interest greatly exceeds the County's early expectations of more than 60,000 people per year. Sam Herzberg, a senior planner at the Parks Department, believes that as awareness of the Devil's Slide Trail grows, it "might become a national or international attraction."

This success story in-the-making did not, however, come easily. It depended on a controversial re-routing of Highway 1 that involved decades of political strife among planners, engineers, and activists.

Bedeviling the engineers

Since the late 19th century, engineers have waged war against the Devil's Slide formation. The first County road was abandoned in 1914, due to rock falls, and replaced with a winding bypass route to the east over San Pedro Mountain. In 1906, the Ocean Shore Railroad between San Francisco and Santa Cruz was under construction when the Great San Francisco Earthquake caused the Devil's Slide section to plunge into the ocean. Following in the shadow of these



1953 slide. Credit: Caltrans.

doomed routes, Highway 1 opened between Pacifica and Half Moon Bay in 1937.

Landslides at the Devil's Slide have resulted in road closures every decade since, some lasting months at a time. In the worst instance, a landslide during heavy winter rains in January 1995, the roadbed dropped about 30 feet, says Herzberg, and Highway 1 remained closed for 159 days.

(continued on next page)

To stabilize the roadway, engineers installed “a 50-foot-long metal girder holding up the road” and bolted a steel net to the slope above to catch detached rocks.

Despite these repairs, the highway remained vulnerable to shifting rocks. The landslide-prone area extends from an elevation of about 900 feet down to at least sea level at the coastline, with a width of about 4,000 feet, according to a guidebook published by the National Association of Geoscience Teachers in 2001. Given the long-term instability of this area, Caltrans considered its repairs to be stop-gap measures until a bypass route for Highway 1 was selected and built.

Political struggle over bypass routes

As early as 1958, the California Division of Highways determined that the Devil's Slide should be abandoned and began studying alternate routes. The California Highway Commission approved a six-lane overland bypass route in 1960 that would have required extensive grading on Montara Mountain. Between 1969 and 1972, Caltrans acquired 55 percent of the right-of-way needed to build the adopted bypass.

However, a coalition of environmental advocacy groups sued Caltrans in 1972 for not preparing an Environmental Impact Statement, as required by the recently enacted National Environmental Policy Act for federally led or funded projects. This lawsuit halted the construction contract for the bypass and directed Caltrans to study environmental impacts.

An overland bypass remained the preferred alignment until the catastrophic landslide of 1995 motivated the County Board of Supervisors to set up an independent panel of technical experts to identify the best alignment. Although the panel recommended building a pair of tunnels through San Pedro Mountain, the Board decided in favor of an overland route.

But San Mateo County citizens took matters into their own hands and approved Measure T in November 1996 to amend the County's Local Coastal Program to select the tunnels as the preferred bypass. The initiative also required that a separate trail for pedestrians and bicyclists be provided outside the tunnels.

Birth of the trail

Through the tunnels' permitting process under the California Coastal Act, the County agreed to assume responsibility for the Devil's Slide Trail. As a condition of approval of the Coastal Development Permit to build the tunnels, approved in May 2004, the County would accept the deed to the old roadway and improve it for non-motorized transportation. The permit also required

that Caltrans build parking lots at the future northern and southern trailheads, says Herzberg.

The County's commitment to building the Devil's Slide Trail was effectively an unfunded mandate. By the time that the Board of Supervisors approved \$2 million for this purpose in the County's 2012–2013 budget, almost a decade later, Herzberg notes that a whole new set of Supervisors had been elected and the expense had to be justified.

Once the tunnels opened in March 2013, the Parks Department used this funding to coat the abandoned roadbed with a polymer to smooth out the surface for bicyclists, to re-stripe it for two six-foot-wide bike lanes and an eight-to-12-foot pedestrian path, and to erect signs and fencing. Two scenic overlooks also were constructed, with benches and coin-operated telescopes.

“I think they did a fantastic job with the benches and lookout points,” says Anthony Ricarte, a resident of Pacifica, who walked the trail on February 15 with Monika Hanson and his two-year-old daughter, Sophia. To improve the aesthetics of the trail, the Parks Department painted three-foot-high concrete barriers known as K-rail in a tan earth tone that approximates exposed bedrock. The inner K-rail serves as a barrier to protect the trail from small falling rocks, says Carla Schoof, a community programs specialist with the Parks Department.

Structural improvements dating to the 1995 landslide remain visible. To Monika Hanson, a first-time visitor from Walnut Creek, old elements such as the series of giant bolts supporting the rock face at Devil's Slide, serve as points of historic interest.



K-rails and bolts. Photo: Andrew Boone, Streetsblog SF.

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2015 APA Northern Section Awards Gala

Awards will be presented to the winners of Northern Section's 2015 APA Awards and California Planning Foundation student scholarships. Join us Friday, May 15, 6:30–9:30 p.m. at Scott's Seafood, Oakland. [Page 9](#)

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Now sponsored by UCCONNECT with new emphasis on economic competitiveness in transportation. [Page 11](#)

Where in the world?

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Spring 2015 UC Davis Extension courses

APA California members receive AICP/CM credits and a 10 percent discount on most Land Use and Natural Resources courses at UC Davis Extension. [Page 12](#)

Northern Section at California Energy Summit

Northern Section is now a 'supporting organization' for the upcoming Third Annual California Energy Summit, May 11–13 in San Francisco. Future developments in energy and power generation will occur more frequently within or near populated areas, increasing the opportunities and the need for planning.

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SJSU wins 2015 APA Planning Student Organization Award

SJSU's Urban Planning Coalition will be honored at the 2015 APA National Conference in Seattle for its October 2014 Fall Symposium: Boomers and Millennials. [Page 13](#)

Sacramento gentrification is getting the streetcar boost

Rachel Dovey, Next City

As California's capital paves the political landscape for a streetcar — an attempt to both spur and piggyback on new development — city leaders have some decisions to make.

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Norcal roundup

Assembled by Jennifer Piozet, associate editor

Google offers affordable housing • Oakland mayor: Build needed SF housing in Oakland • Sea Ranch at 50: How the best-laid plans go awry. • LinkedIn's plans for Mountain View • End of the line for Silicon Valley BRT? • Oakland hires city's first-ever transportation policy director • Bay Area bike lane progress in Sunnyvale and Alameda • Milpitas maintains vision for vibrant BART station area • Merchants win on Polk Street bike plan. [Page 18](#)

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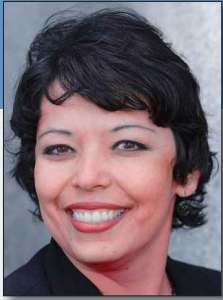
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Board member directory and newsletter information

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Find JOBS and EVENTS CALENDAR at norcalapa.org



Director's note

By Andrea Ouse, AICP

It's springtime in the Northern Section! While many consider spring a season of rejuvenation and rebirth, I consider this spring a season of continued activity that is "Rooted in AuthenticiTY." Activity in our stalwart Conference Host Committee finds the *Programs subcommittee* busy reviewing session and mobile workshop proposals for the 2015 Chapter Conference. Our *Sponsorship group* is stepping up its outreach, the *Diversity subcommittee* is planning a phenomenal Diversity Summit, and our *Hospitality group* is fine-tuning efforts to ensure the conference is not only educational but also fun. All of the subcommittees are diligently working to create an event to inspire planners throughout the state. If you'd like to check out the buzzing sound of planners getting it done, come to the next CHC meeting at MetroCenter, 101 8th Street, Oakland, on April 4th.

We also have a number of notable activities coming up, unrelated to the conference.

- On May 16th, our latest and always fantastically successful Awards Gala will be held at Scott's Seafood at Jack London Square in Oakland from 6:30–9:30 pm. The event showcases the very best of the amazing planning work our section produces, and the celebratory venue provides ample networking opportunities. Join us! Tickets are available now at <http://bit.ly/1Msr9Rs>.
- On April 9th from 5:30–6:30 pm, Northern Section is partnering with the Association of Environmental Professionals (AEP) on "How Important Are

Communications?" This presentation and panel discussion will cover collaborative approaches to planning and effective client-consultant communications. I'll be joining a panel of planning theorists, consultants, and agency staff to discuss the topic and to engage in an informal dialogue with attendees. The event will be hosted by PlaceWorks in Berkeley: <http://linkd.in/1Dbolsk>.

- On April 11th from 3–5 pm, connect with other members and enjoy a wonderful and informative walking tour of Uptown Oakland, one of America's hippest neighborhoods — and acknowledged by APA national as one of the *Great Places in America*. This is an important fundraiser for the California Planning Foundation scholarship fund. Supporting future planners while strolling through a district in transition is a combination tough to beat. The one-mile walk begins at the Laurel Bookstore at 1423 Broadway and will conclude with wine tasting and locally sourced treats. Get out there and enjoy the springtime spirit! Learn more about it at <http://bit.ly/1Fcf0jy>.

At any time, you can check out the Northern Section website for a list of current and upcoming activities, plus comprehensive information on the APA California Chapter conference in October, right here: <http://bit.ly/LtpX2X>.

Enjoy the beauty of springtime! ■

Biggest challenge to business in Bay Area is cost of living. "City centers across the U.S. are experiencing a renaissance, as Millennials desire urban living. Office rents and housing prices in San Francisco are making it difficult for businesses to grow and for young families to purchase homes. A number of lower cost cities possess fantastic urban neighborhoods and a large stock of historic buildings waiting to be restored to past glory. San Francisco will always be at the top of the economic ladder in the US, but its growth may be muted by its prohibitive costs." —Jim Osburn, as told to Natalie Dolce, <http://bit.ly/1BeZVvT>

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Who's where



Veronica Flores is now a Planner II with the City and County of San Francisco where she had been a junior management assistant. Prior to San Francisco, Flores was community builder with the Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County and volunteer coordinator for GLOW (<http://bit.ly/1Bi7n9C>). She also served as San Jose State University's Urban Planning Coalition representative to APA California-Northern. She holds a master in urban planning from San

Jose State University and a B.A. in sociology (minor in city and regional planning) from UC Berkeley.



Thalia Leng, AICP, Northern Section's Mentorship Director, is now a transportation planner with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA). She previously was a transportation planner with HNTB (Oakland). Before that, Leng was an urban designer/planner with FXFOWLE (New York). Her first post-graduate position was with DC&E Planning, Berkeley (now Placeworks).

She holds a master in city planning from the University of Pennsylvania and a B.A. in architecture from UC Berkeley.



Amit Price Patel, who has been associate architect + urban designer at David Baker Architects for the past 10 years, has been promoted to principal. Price Patel is also vice president of Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility (since August 2011). He holds a master of architecture and master of city planning from UC Berkeley and a B.A. in architecture from Washington University, St. Louis. ■

39 commonly misused words and how to use them correctly.
Worth a look. —Jeff Haden / Inc., <http://ti.me/1M7Zh4X>



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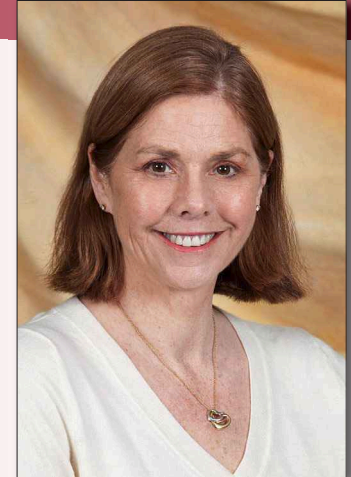
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Meet a local planner

By Siân Llewellyn, AICP



Victoria Walker, Director of Community and Economic Development, City of Concord, California, talks about her beginnings in planning and her career progression.

Tell us how you came to planning.

My father was a traditional banker in Watsonville and served on the planning commission. He greatly valued the work and suggested a planning major when I started at UC Davis. The variety of classes appealed to me, and the internships opportunities were good as the university was so close to Sacramento. I started the curriculum that quarter and enjoyed the diversity of subjects. My first internship was for the California State Lands Commission in Sacramento; once I started, I knew it was for me. I continued to work for State Lands during the summers as well. I graduated from Davis with B.A. in environmental planning and management.

About five years into my planning career I was working for the City of Salinas. I was asked to evaluate building design as part of the design review process. While I felt well prepared to review traditional planning policy issues and CEQA concerns, I felt unqualified to evaluate architectural design. I decided that a master's degree in architecture would be a good compliment to my undergraduate degree in planning. I enrolled in the three-year Master of Architecture program at UC Berkeley, and graduated with an emphasis in urban design. While in the program, I worked in a terrific architectural firm, but upon graduation I decided I missed planning and came back into public sector.

The thing about planning is it is always interesting; you get to learn such a wide variety of things. It was like that in college and continues to be like that today, so many years into my career. Just last week, I learned about the storage requirements for caviar to support a new business moving into Concord — in what other profession would you learn such things? Every day I learn something new.

What were the turning points in your career?

One turning point that most planners face is, should I focus on the technical side or move into supervision and administration? After practicing city planning for a number of years, I knew I wanted to advance to a supervisory position. I suppose it's the same in consulting as in the public sector — there comes a point for a

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Meet a local planner (continued from previous page)

change in career focus. You go from being the technical planning expert to being the technical planning expert *plus* a supervisor to other planners. You also may have more of an impact on public policy. I found I enjoyed building a team and growing the staff.

Another major turning point occurred when I became the director of a newly reorganized department in Concord in 2011. Post-recession, Concord was facing a shrinking budget. That led the City to rethink its organization and consolidate into one department all the divisions that deal with building and development. The Concord Department of Community and Economic Development now includes building, planning, engineering, transportation, economic development, and housing.

As a department head, you are no longer just managing professionals in your area of expertise. You're now responsible for professionals in many other fields and rely on them to be the subject matter experts. This can be a real change for planners. Having confidence and trust in the division managers and building a strong department leadership team has been extremely gratifying. I learned so much in the last three years. My co-workers make it fun and challenging to come to work every day.

Tell us about a favorite project.

Right now, it's the reuse of the former Concord Naval Weapons Station. The inland area of the base is about 5,000 acres, of which 2,715 acres will be preserved as open space. Most of the open space will be conveyed to the East Bay Regional Parks District and the remainder will be conveyed over time to the City, starting with 1,400 acres in 2016. This is an incredible opportunity for the city and the region. We get to create a sustainable and state of the art community with up to 12,300 housing units with great amenities, as much as 6 million square feet of commercial, plus all the infrastructure required to support it. The first phase will begin adjacent to the North Concord BART station, and at least 25 percent of the housing on the base is required to be affordable to lower income residents.

Since the Concord Reuse Project Area Plan was adopted in early 2012, negotiations have continued with the Navy on conveyance of land. The Navy has published an EIS that is currently out for review. We are now working on getting the master developer on board who will be the City's partner for the next 40 years in fulfilling the community's vision for the site. The city council will make the final selection this summer.

Next steps are to create a Specific Plan for the first development phase, including zoning and entitlements, and all the preparation and planning needed to get infrastructure on site. Having an opportunity to work on this project is one of the reasons I wanted to join the City.

(continued on next page)

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- HISTORIC PRESERVATION
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Meet a local planner (continued from previous page)

What advice would you give to planners starting out?

We planners love planning so much, but we should also consider the separate skills and other responsibilities that come with different positions. Become a great communicator in public speaking, presentations, and writing. Technical planning skills are fundamental, but as your career progresses, you can take on other roles. Organizational leadership and mentoring, budgeting, and administration are just a few of the skills you'll need if you decide to move into other aspects of public service.

I've been very lucky to have lived in California my whole life, and I've called the East Bay my home for over 25 years. I guess you can say I have a lot invested in this area. Planning has given me a great opportunity to give back to the area I call home. Newly minted planners have the same opportunity to make a real difference in their communities.

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. ■

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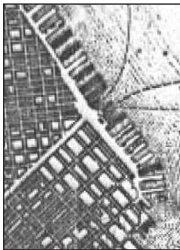
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You need how much income? "A buyer who puts 20 percent down would need to earn a salary of \$48,604 to afford the median-priced home in America. But that total varies a lot from city to city. Pittsburgh, Cleveland, St. Louis, and Cincinnati rank as the most affordable metros in which to buy a new home — HSH.com estimates that you can buy the median home while making less than \$34,000 — while New York, Los Angeles, and San Diego are at the high end, requiring salaries of nearly \$90,000 or more. But the most expensive city by far is San Francisco, where HSH estimates you would need to make \$142,448 to buy the median home in the area." —Ana Swanson, <http://wapo.st/1NFpwUb>

"Not that Google's new campus isn't going to turn out wonderfully. I'm not smart enough to understand [it]. I think they're going to build giant postmodern Glass Circus Tents that look like partially-deflated Buckminster Fuller domes. [These] greenhouses will have an innovative shading system, which ... will work perfectly and be easy to maintain. Inside the tents will be "Furniture," Giant Buildings Inhabited By People. The Furniture will all be very lightweight because it will not require foundations or structural materials. To make the Furniture easy to move around, they will be jumbles of irregular floorplates stacked wildly on top of one another in a casual, rumpled, thrown-together manner possibly inspired by Hugh Grant's Hair." —Brad Rogers, <http://bit.ly/1BFSFs0>



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Vacancy and homeownership rates by state, 2014. The three states with the lowest homeownership rates in the U.S. in 2014 were New York (52.9 percent), California (54.2 percent), and Nevada (56.0 percent). Not surprisingly, California's homeowner vacancy rate is also among the country's lowest, at 1.1 percent. Only North Dakota had a lower rate (0.9 percent), most likely attributable to the oil boom. California's rental vacancy rate was 4.5 percent. Oregon and Washington were in the same ballpark at 4.1 and 4.9 percent respectively. Arkansas and Alabama had the highest rental vacancy rates at 14.7 and 14.0 percent respectively. —Maps and table by Josh Miller, <http://bit.ly/1M80xVH>

Plan-it sustainably

By Scott T. Edmondson, AICP, and Josh Hohn, AICP

Planning for low-carbon communities

Making meaningful progress towards California's climate mitigation goal — reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 — is one of the front-line sustainability challenges facing planners. This reduction is the minimum required globally to stay within a safe trajectory of global warming and, hopefully, climate re-stabilization. Meeting this challenge requires planning for — and producing — low-carbon communities and economies by 2050.

UC Berkeley researchers released a report last year whose title reflects its key finding: *Suburban sprawl cancels carbon-footprint savings of dense urban cores* (<http://bit.ly/1Amaick>). The study uses local census, weather, and other data — 37 variables in total — to approximate greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the energy, transportation, food, goods, and services consumed by U.S. households, so-called household carbon footprints. The study shows that transportation and house size remain a community's highest contributing factors to GHG emissions because fossil fuels are presently our primary source of energy. Thus, even a “smart growth,” dense, new-urbanist community will increase a region's GHG emissions if people have to drive to work, for shopping, etc.

Building on the study, Chris Jones of UC Berkeley's Renewable and Appropriate Energy Laboratory and David Burch of Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), discussed their ongoing work at a SPUR-SF evening forum on February 24th. The forum addressed the planning and behavioral changes required to produce low-carbon communities. Their research suggests that responding effectively to climate change will require a more nuanced, place-based approach.

In addition, David Burch and his BAAQMD colleagues are compiling a new, neighborhood-scale Bay Area GHG emissions inventory. The inclusion of consumption-related GHGs in the inventory (emissions

from production of goods elsewhere that are consumed locally) will create a more accurate estimate of the region's true carbon footprint and a benchmark for local low-carbon community planning.

The BAAQMD is also collaborating with UC Berkeley's Renewable and Appropriate Energy Laboratory to identify the role of smart planning tools and place-based solutions in meeting California's 2050 GHG emission reduction goals. Solutions would vary by community, as already shown by the lab's Cool California City Challenge.

The BAAQMD and UC Berkeley collaboration are conducting a Yolo County case study that is developing short- and medium-term strategies applicable to any community. Short-term behavioral strategies include campaigns to encourage purchase of electric vehicles and residential solar energy systems, home weatherization, and energy savings assistance programs. Medium-term planning strategies include creating incentives for residential size and location efficiency, completely phasing out natural gas as an energy source for residences, and transitioning to renewable power, including for transportation.

It's a challenging task for any community to reduce GHG emissions to 80 percent of 1990 levels by 2050.

Is your community on track? What would it take to meet the 80 percent target?

Watch this space. We'll be reviewing some possibilities in upcoming columns.

The panel was moderated by Josh Hohn, AICP, Lead, APA Northern Section's Energy Working Group (<http://bit.ly/1C3AH4t>), and supported by Dave Javid, AICP, co-director of the Section's Sustainability Committee. Scott T. Edmondson, AICP, is founder, former co-director, and research lead of the Northern Section's Sustainability Committee, and an APA Sustainability Champion, <http://bit.ly/1yd1hkQ>. “Plan-it sustainably” is a service of the Sustainability Committee, <http://bit.ly/11XGsBj>. ■

It's the paperwork. “I have had clients tell me that they have sold multimillion dollar companies with less paperwork than it takes to buy a house. Right now, cities across the country and around the world are changing their existing laws and codes so that Uber can operate legally. Will real estate be the next business in line for legal and cultural changes?” — Wendy McPherson, <http://bit.ly/1AZmlS3>

ACCESS magazine available; shifts focus

Beginning with the latest, Fall 2014 issue, the APA Award winning magazine ACCESS “will be sponsored by the new University of California Center on Economic Competitiveness in Transportation (UCCONNECT), which succeeds UCTC as the University Transportation Center for Region 9 of the US Department of Transportation. The transition may bring modest changes in the magazine’s focus to reflect UCCONNECT’s emphasis on economic competitiveness in transportation. Perhaps the future will also see greater efforts to report on research in California’s neighboring states. But whatever changes

may come, the high standard of readability that has become the hallmark of ACCESS will remain.”

“ACCESS is dedicated to the vital last step in transportation research: making information accessible to a broad audience. By connecting scholars with transportation planners and elected officials, ACCESS aims to catapult academic research into public debate and translate knowledge into action.” The Fall 2014 issue is online at <http://www.accessmagazine.org/>; PDF at <http://bit.ly/1Fr7qiQ>. ■

Where in the world?



Photo by Veronica Flores. (Answer on [page 13](#).)

Plan for Success — Take a course from UC Davis Extension this Spring

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**.*

Advanced NEPA Roundtable — Solutions for Addressing Challenging Issues: This intensive roundtable session will feature leading NEPA experts discussing some of the most challenging and complex issues facing practitioners today. Instructors: Ron Bass, Michael Smith, and Nicholas Yost. **AICP | CM 5.0**

Advancing Your Career as an Environmental Planning Professional: This workshop provides an overview of knowledge and skills important to a successful career in various fields of environmental planning in both the public and private sectors. Instructors: Paul Cylinder and Sydney Coatsworth. **AICP | CM 6.0**

Community Involvement and Communication in Planning: Understand the theoretical background and the hands-on practice of involving stakeholders in urban planning and design decisions and natural resources policy. Instructor: Jeff Loux. **AICP | CM 20.0**

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**

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>

Updating Transportation Analysis in CEQA — How to Effectively Implement SB 743: This course will discuss the changes to the CEQA Guidelines for analyzing transportation impacts that focus on the use of vehicle miles traveled (“VMT”) as a measure of transportation impact, rather than level of service (“LOS”). Instructors: Chris Ganson, Christopher Calfee, and Ron Milam. **AICP | CM 6.0**

Urban Planning and Design Studio: Receive hands-on practice in professional urban planning and design skills in a studio/lecture format. Instructors: Matthew Burris and Matthew Raimi. **AICP | CM 28.0** ■

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

Confusing gentrification and displacement. “*Governing Magazine* (February 2015, <http://bit.ly/1BDkimL>) succeeds only in making the tortured debate over gentrification even more contentious and unclear. *Governing* has impressive maps and data — but maps and data are only as sound as the assumptions they are built on. The assumptions — that gentrification can be accurately measured solely by looking at changes in house prices and education levels in relatively poor city neighborhoods — are flat out wrong, if we are concerned, as *Governing* tells us we should be, about the displacement of the poor. There’s precious little evidence that there has been, in the aggregate, any displacement of the poor from the neighborhoods *Governing* flags as ‘gentrifying.’ If there were displacement, you’d expect the number of poor people in these neighborhoods to be declining. In fact, nationally, there are more poor people living in the neighborhoods that they identify as ‘gentrifying’ in 2013 than there were in 2000.” — Joe Cortright (*City Commentary*, Feb. 6), <http://bit.ly/1Dvjcd3>

Northern Section is 'supporting organization' for California Energy Summit

Attendance fee discounts available to APA members

The Planners Working Group on Energy and the Built Environment, Northern Section's Energy Initiative, has arranged for APA California-Northern to function as a "supporting organization" for the upcoming 3rd Annual California Energy Summit, May 11–13 in San Francisco, <http://bit.ly/1EHvJdP>. Members of the working group will be among summit attendees. APA members who attend will receive 10 percent off the normal registration fee.

The working group's efforts are premised on the assumption that future developments in energy and power generation will occur more frequently within or near populated areas, increasing the opportunities and the need for planning. (See <http://bit.ly/1E4lrDv>.) This year's California Energy Summit affirms this assumption. Sessions include discussions on California's latest efforts to integrate renewable generation and energy storage into its electricity system — whether or not we're on the cusp of a next-generation, more distributed power grid; and the role of Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs) in California.

If you have questions or need instructions for discounted registration, please contact Josh Hohn at jnhohn@gmail.com ■

Answer to "Where in the world?" (Page 11)

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. Looking south from Federation Square. The blue building is Melbourne's tallest: Eureka Tower, 975 feet, 2006.

Photo: Veronica Flores.

SJSU wins 2015 APA Planning Student Organization Award

The American Planning Association's Student Representatives Council has conferred its Outstanding Planning Student Organization (PSO) Awards for 2015 on two student organizations: Cornell University's *Design Connect* and San Jose State University's *Urban Planning Coalition*. The winners will be recognized at the 2015 APA National Planning Conference in Seattle.

SJSU's Urban Planning Coalition (UPC) won for its October 18, 2014, Fall Symposium: Boomers and Millennials. The December 2014/January 2015 issue of *Northern News* carried highlights of the symposium in an article by Melissa Ruhl, <http://bit.ly/1GWGSat>.

The Symposium is one of the UPC's richest traditions, providing a full-day conference and open forum for students and professionals to engage in a current planning topic together. The symposiums bring together students, alumni, and professionals to discuss a planning topic critical for the success of future communities.

Design Connect and the *Urban Planning Coalition* will each receive \$1,125 contributed by PSO's sponsoring APA divisions to further the schools' PSO activities. ■



Keynote speaker John Rahaim, San Francisco director of planning.

Sacramento gentrification is getting the streetcar boost

By Rachel Dovey, Next City



Where will the streetcar go? Source, Downtown/Riverfront Streetcar Project, <http://bit.ly/1FUJ54Q>

With cranes dominating skylines nationwide, redevelopment and displacement are often portrayed as the yin and yang of city makeovers — one a dark but inevitable counterpart to the other. But gentrification, as Susie Cagle wrote for Next City last year, is not necessarily “an act of nature.” Usually, it’s the culmination of policy and investment choices. With that in mind, as California’s capital paves the political landscape for a streetcar — an attempt to both spur and piggyback on new development — city leaders have some decisions to make.

To realize what’s at stake, you need to understand the city’s geography, which I wrote about last year. (See *Northern News*, July/August 2014, <http://bit.ly/1FUFeoA>.)

Sacramento’s downtown, occupied from 9 to 5 by state workers, was the after-hours home to some of the city’s lowest earners — mostly renters — when census data was collected last. But according to long-range planner Tom Pace (with whom I spoke for that 2014 article), many state workers still commute in from the suburbs, meaning that the central core needs more housing of all kinds. Through an arena, several

mixed-use projects, and an intermodal transportation facility, city leaders want to fill the area with walkable development. The streetcar, which will get a \$30 million boost from property owners along its proposed line, is part of that vision.

“We’re attempting to attract a lot more housing into the central city,” says Sacramento principal planner Fedolia “Sparky” Harris. Streetcars, after all, are magnets for development, fostering the kind of transit-oriented density that builders, and their funders, tend to like.

But Darryl Rutherford, executive director of the Sacramento Housing Alliance, wonders about the residents who already live near proposed redevelopment sites.

“In the gentrification process, it’s usually the lower-income residents who are most affected,” he says, adding that the advocacy organization supports the city’s efforts toward infill and transit-oriented development.

“The challenge is minimizing displacement,” he says. “Even though we’re really excited about this, we don’t see enough protections put in place.”

(continued on next page)

The Old Motor Inn in West Sacramento was the subject of February headlines (<http://bit.ly/1FUEf7I>) because it will be demolished for development. (Part of a pilot project to transition homeless people into more permanent housing, it was only envisioned as temporary.) As of Feb. 19th, 30 housing vouchers had been handed out.

But evictions and closures aren't the region's only issues. Though only property owners, and not renters, will be asked to help pay for the new streetcar (if another vote goes through), some of those costs could trickle down. According to the *Sacramento Bee* (<http://bit.ly/1FUE0cW>), developer David Taylor will pay about \$56,000 annually over 30 years, but he believes he'll be able to "charge higher rents at his building because of its proximity to the streetcar line."

According to Harris, the city won't allow low-income housing to be eliminated without accounting for displaced residents. A new Mercy Housing development at 7th and H is one example along the proposed line that will remain affordable. And the federal Small Starts grant, through which Sacramento hopes to receive part of its funding, does take such issues into consideration, asking for a calculation of existing affordable housing stock close to the proposed project.

Rutherford, however, worries about the fact that — statewide — no law mandates that any affordable housing be built as part of the city's new boom. In 2009, a ruling overturned a longstanding law that, previously, had done just that. And with cranes going up, he's already watching gentrification take hold.

"As the area redevelops you can see it becoming more skewed," he says.

"Our concern is the amount of public resources that are being put into these types of projects," he adds, speaking of redevelopment generally. "We're concerned that it's just going to handcuff other projects."



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

This article was originally published in Next City's "The Works" on February 25, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1FUGvvN>. Republished with permission.

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The hollow promise of the self-driving car. "A self-driving car promises to give you back time while it reinforces the need for the infrastructure that took that time from you in the first place. The function of the car remains the same: It physically separates us from our communities, from one another. To rely on autonomous personal vehicles as the future of transit is to ignore what cars have already done to our communities and ourselves." —Susie Cagle, <http://bit.ly/1MraW0Q>

Scenic views

But visitors most appreciate the opportunity to enjoy scenic views of the coastline and exposed bedrock.

Jeffrey Chang, a South Bay resident and founder of a high-tech start-up, remembers when the Devil's Slide was open for motorists. "Sometimes we'd stop on the side of the road illegally, just to enjoy the view," he laughs.

After taking his 13-year-old son Andrew to a soccer tournament in Pacifica this February, Chang was excited to find the route open as a trail. Chang brought his entire family to walk the trail, including Andrew, still wearing soccer cleats, and his parents visiting from Taiwan. An avid hiker who has explored Yosemite, Mount Diablo, and other parks, Chang says that the view here is "one of the best" and reminds him of the rocky northeastern coast of Taiwan.



The pow! view. Mount Tamalpais floats in the distance above San Pedro Point. Photo: Jonathan Berlin.



The Chang family. Photo: Jonathan Berlin.

"It's the *pow* of the view," agrees Wendy Antipa, from San Francisco. On a clear day, her husband Greg notes, it is possible to see the Farallon Islands, about 25 miles off the coast, and Point Reyes to the north.

The Antipas were visiting the Devil's Slide Trail "to size up the site for a geology walk" for the Retirement Association at San Francisco State University. The southern end of the trail features exposed granite from Montara Mountain, while road cuts at the northern end reveal rough sedimentary layers of shale and sandstone.

Trail ambassadors

Because the Parks Department anticipated high use of the Devil's Slide Trail – if not 400,000 people per year – and lacked staffing to fully serve the completed trail, it created a Trail Ambassadors program. To date, 50 members of the public have registered as Ambassadors, receiving training in radio use, the history of the trail, and environmental features. In the field, they report trail conditions, answer visitor questions, and communicate with park rangers, says Schoof.

Ambassadors are present on the trail on all weekends, some weekday mornings, and "when there's a really good sunset," says Schoof. One benefit of this program is the skills and knowledge base that local citizens bring, including expertise on native plants and birds.

(continued on next page)

Challenges

As a consequence of its popularity, parking at the Devil's Slide Trail can get competitive. About 40 parking spaces exist at the northern and southern trailheads combined.

Immediately after the trail opened, the parking lots filled and visitors resorted to parking on Highway 1, where California Highway Patrol officers ticketed them, says Herzberg. Anthony Ricarte adds that "the parking is kind of a nightmare" on weekends.

To improve parking capacity, the Parks Department is working with the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the California Department of Parks and Recreation. This partnership may lead to shared parking nearby, with a shuttle running to the Devil's Slide Trail, says Herzberg. Currently, a free weekend shuttle runs from Pacifica to the trail, and SamTrans Route 17 stops at the trailhead, but Herzberg says that there is a lack of awareness about these transit options.

The trail's lifespan also depends on the stability of the Devil's Slide. Heavy equipment operated by the

Parks Department can clear minor rockslides from the trail. But in the event of a catastrophic landslide, if the trail "goes off into the ocean, it's just gone," says Schoof. The Parks Department does not foresee restoring the trail in that case. Herzberg hopes that the trail will last longer than it would have as a motorized route because of the lighter impact of non-motorized users.

In the meantime, the project has underscored the popularity of trails as a means to provide access to valued landscapes and open spaces. And the Devil's Slide Trail has become an active interpretive site informing Californians about coastal geology and our storied state highway system.

*Author **Jonathan Berlin** is an associate environmental planner at Rincon Consultants, where he serves as a lead analyst and project manager for trails and open space planning projects. Berlin also specializes in CEQA/NEPA review and noise impact studies. He holds a master in environmental science and management (MESM) from UC Santa Barbara and a BA in journalism from the University of Maryland. You can reach him at jberlin@rinconconsultants.com ■*

Google's proposal for North Bayshore. In a stunning 10-minute video published on February 27, Google vice president of real estate Dave Radcliffe and architects Thomas Heatherwick and Bjarke Ingels discuss their proposed master plan for Google's new campus in Mountain View. The proposal "focuses on creating space for people, nature, and ideas to thrive." — <http://youtu.be/z3v4rlG8kQA>





Norcal roundup

Assembled by Jennifer Piozet, associate editor

Google offers affordable housing

Next City, March 5, 2015

Marielle Mondon, <http://bit.ly/1Fr08M8> • “Google has recently made a notable move regarding affordable housing. The Internet search company is proposing a community benefits package valued at \$200 million attached to its new business campus in Mountain View. The community benefits line items include new green space, a bike-pedestrian path, scholarship funds for high-school students — and building affordable housing units. Up to 400 housing units, targeted toward low-income and median-income households, could be built in the area, depending on how much building allotment Google is granted.

The Silicon Valley Business Journal’s Nathan Donato-Weinstein (<http://bit.ly/1Fr1q9M>) reports, “As part of its public benefits package, Google would build the affordable units on a site it owns at 800 E. Middlefield Road. How many units depends on how much building allotment the city would grant the company. The company says it will develop 150 housing units at the site should the city grant it 1.5 million square feet of net-new office space in North Bayshore. For every 10,000 square feet of net new development above that level, Google will develop an additional unit of housing at the site.

Donato-Weinstein continues, “Silicon Valley’s lack of housing near employment centers pushes more commuters onto already-clogged highways, a problem CEOs and clerical workers alike cite as a drag on productivity. Unaffordable housing pushes more workers to the fringes of the region, and a lack of public transit exacerbates the problem by putting more cars on the roads.”

Google’s housing proposal — while tied to — should not be confused with the plans for the firm’s new headquarters. Those can be seen at <http://bit.ly/1BIOIIG>.

Oakland mayor: Build needed SF housing in Oakland

San Francisco Chronicle, February 19, 2015

Chip Johnson, <http://bit.ly/1JsWKqf> • “What if San Francisco housing developers could fulfill their affordable housing requirements by building housing in Oakland for San Francisco residents who qualify for below-market-rate housing?”

“Finding regional solutions to the housing problem is an idea that has generated discussions between planners and sparked interest from the Association of Bay Area Governments, an agency that advocates for regional solutions to a wide range of public services and needs.

“The loss of redevelopment funding, and environmental constraints and regulatory requirements, have slowed the affordable housing process, said Tomiquia Moss, chief of staff to Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf.

“The large cities are trying to be thoughtful about regional collaboration, and it’s not just San Jose, San Francisco, and Oakland,” she said. “We need to work together to come up with creative ideas to address challenges all cities are facing.”

“A spokeswoman for San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee, said Lee is committed to building 30,000 housing units in San Francisco in the next five years and has set his sights on making one-third of them affordable. He is also generally willing to explore regional housing partnerships, she said.

“Unfortunately, affordable in San Francisco still translates into about \$500,000 for a two- or three-bedroom house in Hunters Point, the city’s old shipyard district.”

(Norcal roundup *continues on next page*)

Sea Ranch at 50: How the best-laid plans of men go awry. “Time eroded the original concept of a tight coastal community surrounded by open space. Time, and then regulation, affected cash flow. Negative cash flow makes decisions — after a while, all of the decisions. Today there’s ample evidence that when we insert ourselves in nature we alter nature for the worst.” —Christine Kreyling, *Planning*, pp. 32-37, <http://bit.ly/1MrbW5b>

LinkedIn's plans for Mountain View

Silicon Valley Business Journal, February 27, 2015

Nathan Donato-Weinstein, <http://bit.ly/1GgZj8C> • “LinkedIn has submitted plans to the city of Mountain View for a new mixed-use campus on 24 acres at North Shoreline Boulevard and Highway 101. Featuring six office buildings — three with ground-floor retail — as well as a new luxury gym and theater, the concept represents a major milestone for the No. 1 social network for business people.

“But the proposal sets up a conflict for city officials. Development capacity is limited in the North Bayshore district to 2.5 million square feet, and Google’s plans submitted the same day request all of that capacity. LinkedIn is requesting roughly 1.6 million square feet, and the math won’t allow both companies to expand to the full extent of their wishes. And that doesn’t count other plans submitted by other property owners in the area.

“To access the additional building rights, LinkedIn is proposing a series of ‘community benefits’ valued at more than \$40 million, according to the proposal. They include a pedestrian and bike bridge across Highway 101 at Shoreline, local transportation improvements to alleviate congestion, and smaller, but significant efforts such as renovating the Mountain View Public Library.

“With the proposal, LinkedIn becomes the latest Silicon Valley tech company to move past the sequestered office park. All of the retail amenities and plaza areas would be open to the public. That is a break from the traditional office-park ethos, where office use and public spaces are segregated.”

End of the line for Silicon Valley BRT?

KQED, February 26, 2015

Bryan Goebel, <http://bit.ly/1E1sVXH> • “[Bus rapid transit] is becoming popular in cities all over the world and is set to debut in San Jose, Oakland, and San Francisco over the next few years. Buses have their own dedicated lanes, traffic signal priority, low floors for easy boarding, prepaid ticketing, and Wi-Fi.

“The Valley Transportation Authority would like to build such a system along El Camino Real, Silicon Valley’s busiest bus corridor, to better serve its thousands of daily riders and attract newcomers who will be part of a projected population boom.

“There’s just one problem. None of the cities along the corridor, other than San Jose, have embraced it over fears it will make traffic worse.

“Palo Alto [and Sunnyvale are] backing a mixed-flow proposal that falls short of true BRT. VTA officials fear the mixed-flow proposal will put the project’s federal funding at risk because it won’t be competitive.

“Most of the opposition is being organized by car dealerships along El Camino [fearing traffic congestion]. But VTA officials studied the potential traffic impact at more than 80 El Camino intersections and concluded it would not worsen traffic.

“‘The kind of carmageddon that folks fear might happen hasn’t manifested with these projects,’ says Chris Lepe of TransForm. ‘Why? Because you have a mode shift. When people see the bus traveling faster than cars, they say ‘Hey, maybe I should jump on that.’

“Ultimately, says Lepe, it’s a question of political will whether Silicon Valley elected officials get behind BRT.”

Oakland hires city's first-ever transportation policy director

East Bay Express, March 4, 2015

Sam Levin, <http://bit.ly/1G49uxq> • “Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf has hired the city’s first-ever transportation policy director. Advocates hope the position will help the city prioritize biking, walking, and public transit in new developments and street redesigns. Matt Nichols, formerly principal transportation planner for the city of Berkeley, recently started in Schaaf’s administration as policy director for transportation and infrastructure. I spoke with Nichols [March 3rd] about his goals for the new position, opportunities for Oakland to rethink how it uses streets, and lessons he learned from 13 years in Berkeley.

“Nichols said it was critical that his position was specifically a policy-oriented one. ‘A lot of times transportation and infrastructure in cities doesn’t have the strongest, coherent policy direction. ... Basically, it’s an operations and maintenance kind of game. And often cities are short on operations and maintenance funds. And we’re dealing with crumbling streets and crumbling storm drains.’ By having a policy director, cities can approach street projects in a more comprehensive manner, he said. That means integrating planning for cyclists and pedestrians into ongoing infrastructure planning, for example.” *Hat tip to James Castañeda, AICP.*

(Norcal roundup continues on next page)

Bay Area bike lane progress

Streetsblog SF, February 17–18, 2015

In Sunnyvale (<http://bit.ly/1Fr3IWD>), Andrew Boone reports that the city’s “first bike lanes on El Camino Real are six feet wide, striped along the curb with no protection from traffic, running for half a mile near the city’s downtown. Sunnyvale chose to replace car parking with bike lanes on this section of El Camino only after a study ensured that the parking was barely used. This despite a 2008 city policy for allocation of street space that states, ‘safe accommodation for all transport modes takes priority over non-transport uses,’ and parking ‘shall not be considered a transport use.’ According to the city, only one of the roughly 134 parking spaces on El Camino’s curbs was used at peak hours on average, and city staff counted 3,337 spaces in the seven parking lots along the street.

In Alameda (<http://bit.ly/1Fr5fvR>), Aaron Bialick says the city “has laid down its second parking-protected bikeway along Shoreline Drive. It’s one of only a handful of parking-protected bikeways in the Bay Area, and the first to be installed since SF’s John F. Kennedy Drive in Golden Gate Park was striped in 2012. The Shoreline project uses paint and concrete islands, with a car parking lane between the bikeway and the motor traffic lanes. A buffer zone allows for room to safely open car doors.

“Alameda is moving ahead with more protected bike lanes, using both two-way and one-way designs; and the city has launched community planning processes to redesign Clement Avenue and to convert a defunct railway into a crosstown protected biking and walking path.”

Milpitas maintains vision for vibrant BART station area

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, March 2, 2015

Cody Kraatz, <http://bit.ly/1DZYXAS> • “Last year, the city of Milpitas opposed developer Integral Communities’ request to turn the transit-oriented District at Milpitas project near the Milpitas BART station into an auto-centric development. With the city staff and planning commission standing firm on density and mixed-use requirements for the area, clear ground rules are established for the development community, and the city maintains its commitment to generate sufficient ridership for Santa Clara County’s investment in building the BART Silicon Valley Extension.

“In 2010, Integral Communities was approved for a development of 1,300 housing units and 75,000 square feet of retail/office space within two mixed-use and six residential buildings. In 2012, the developer reduced the residential segment to 1,155 housing units (with a portion turned into low-density townhomes), and increased the retail/office component to 85,000 sq. ft.

“In 2014, Integral Communities asked to alter the project by separating the residential and commercial uses, and further reducing building sizes. The revised project would have contained 826 housing units (of which 108 would be townhomes) within residential-only buildings, plus a 57,000-square-foot commercial/retail building — significantly below the density and mix of uses in the Transit Area Specific Plan.

“Integral Communities has withdrawn its proposal to downsize the project, meaning the site could still be developed at the higher densities previously envisioned.”

Merchants win on Polk Street bike plan

Streetsblog SF, March 4, 2015

Aaron Bialick, <http://bit.ly/1G4cpp1> • “The SFMTA Board of Directors has voted to approve a watered-down plan to redesign Polk Street with a protected bike lane along one side of the street for 10 of 20 blocks.

“The board rebuffed efforts to preserve the possibility of adding protected bike lanes along the upper half of the corridor before the project is constructed. Instead, the board required that staff report on the impacts of the redesign a year after it’s completed, when they will consider extending protected bike lanes in a follow-up project.

“The decision came after a four-hour hearing, where hundreds of people spoke. Roughly half called for a bolder project that puts safety first, and the rest — many of them merchants — opposed the project in order to preserve car parking.

“Under the approved plan, 92 percent of on-street parking spaces within a block of Polk will remain, as will 70 percent of parking on Polk.

“Eighty-five percent of people on Polk arrive without a car. And those who drive to Polk rarely find a parking spot in front of their destination, since Polk’s parking meters don’t have SFPark.

“SFMTA Board member Joel Ramos told Streetsblog he thinks the clout of merchants on Polk led to a more ‘incremental, comfortable’ approach than the city’s stated commitments to Vision Zero and increased bicycling would call for. The improvements ‘are a lot,’ he said, and ‘ultimately, we’ll be able to learn whether it was enough or not.’”

People for Bikes had named Polk Street’s protected bike lane “best in U.S.” last year (see <http://bit.ly/1G4dQ71>). ■

California drivers boost HSR funding

CityLab, March 5, 2015

Eric Jaffe, <http://bit.ly/1BQg00H> • “The California high-speed rail project got a big funding cushion last summer when the state set aside 25 percent of cap-and-trade revenue for the bullet train between Los Angeles and San Francisco. Cap-and-trade revenue itself got a big boost after the new year, with fuel suppliers now required to pay for carbon emissions. Previously, only large industrial firms had to buy carbon cap-and-trade credits. Gas distributors joined the party after January 1, and the result was \$969 million in cap-and-trade revenue at the quarterly auction in February — reportedly the largest total to date.

“When the state’s Legislative Analyst’s Office crunched the cap-and-trade numbers [late in February], they were roughly twice as high as the LAO’s most conservative 2014–16 revenue scenario. If correct, the state stands to bring in \$3.7 billion over 2014–16. And with its 25 percent cut, high-speed rail stands to get a \$925 million windfall.

“As expected, gas suppliers seem to have passed [the cap-and-trade] charge onto drivers. UC-Berkeley economist Severin Borenstein calculated the amount at ‘about 10 cents per gallon of gas,’ hardly a game-changer for California drivers. But the revenue is a game-changer for high-speed rail, as the authority notes in its March public update. And the cap-and-trade program indicates a willingness to pay at least part of the hidden social cost of driving.”

Curbside fruits and veggies in LA

KPCC, Southern California Public Radio, March 4, 2015

Adrian Florido, <http://bit.ly/1A3vyV6> • “The L.A. City Council has voted to allow Angelenos to plant fruits and vegetables in their parkways — that strip of city-owned land between the sidewalk and the street — without a permit. Until now, planting anything other than grass or certain shrubs on that strip required a \$400 permit, and homeowners were often fined for not complying. Fruit trees will still require a permit. But the ordinance approved March 4th says people can replace shrubs or grass with edible plants like fruits and vegetables, as long as they follow the city’s guidelines for landscaping parkways.

“The problem is, updated guidelines aren’t ready yet. City staff still has to include rules for edible plants, like how far they must be from the curb and how tall they can grow. Those guidelines must then be approved by the city council.

“Councilman Bernard Parks asked staff to pay special attention to how planting fruit and vegetables in parkways might affect sidewalk access for drivers, pedestrians, and people with disabilities.

“The rule change is the culmination of years of advocacy by community groups. They have been pushing the city to make it easier for residents — especially in poorer, crowded neighborhoods — to grow their own food.”

Mayor Eric Garcetti was expected to approve the ordinance.

(California continues on next page)



A Little Free Library in Albany, Calif.
Photo: Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP

Little Free Libraries, but maybe not for long. “A subset of Americans is determined to regulate every last aspect of community life. Due to selection bias, they are over-represented among local politicians and bureaucrats. And so they have power, despite their small-mindedness, inflexibility, and lack of common sense so extreme that they’ve taken to cracking down on Little Free Libraries, of all things. The power to require permits is the power to prevent something from ever existing. This lovely movement would’ve never begun or spread if everyone who wanted to build a Little Free Library recognized a need to apply and pay for a permit. Instead they did good and asked permission never.” — Conor Friedersdorf, <http://theatlntc/1AZlqRq>

Split decision on oil measures

California Planning & Development Report, March 4, 2015

William Fulton, <http://bit.ly/1Kub2Y4> “Local voters in California gave oil a split decision on March 3rd. Voters in La Habra Heights shot down an anti-fracking ballot measure, while voters in Hermosa Beach rejected a ballot measure that would have permitted E&B Natural Resources to construct 34 onshore wells in the city.

“The La Habra Heights (Measure A) initiative, which lost by 60 percent to 40 percent, would have prohibited new oil drilling, halted reactivation of old wells, and specifically prohibited fracking. It was placed on the ballot in large part to block Matrix Oil’s plan to drill on an 18-acre site owned by Southern California Gas Company. Californians for Energy Independence, a pro-oil PAC, spent \$400,000 to defeat the measure in the city of 5,300 residents.

“Meanwhile, in Hermosa Beach, E&B had proposed amending the general plan and approving a development agreement for the drilling of 34 wells. But the measure went down by 79 percent to 21 percent. Almost 5,000 voters turned out — a large number for a spring election run by the city, not the county elections office, in a city of 19,000 people.”

Earlier, KPCC Radio’s Molly Peterson said “La Habra Heights won’t be the last word on local control in California, no matter the outcome. Another, similar measure over oil will hit the ballot in Butte County next year.” See <http://bit.ly/1KuaAZG>.

Major League baseball club ‘named after terrified pedestrians’

CityLab, February 19, 2015

Eric Jaffe, <http://bit.ly/1ahPygN> • “You probably know the Dodgers used to play in Brooklyn, even if you weren’t around when the team moved in 1958. But what you might not know is that the team’s full name was once ‘Trolley Dodgers,’ or that dodging trolleys was a matter of life and death for 19th-century Brooklynites.

“Joseph P. Sullivan, writing about the ‘terror of the trolley’ in the *Journal of Urban Technology*, notes that Brooklyn residents ‘often failed to look up before crossing a street’ when streetcars were pulled by horses, since the animals would move out of the way. But when the mode went electric, people found themselves dodging trolleys at every turn, and too often ‘the result was slaughter’: eight people killed in Brooklyn in 1892, then 51 in 1893, then 34 in 1894.

“If nothing else, this history serves as a reminder that city streets belonged to pedestrians (back then they were just called people) long before they were given over to new transport technologies like trolleys and ultimately, with far more deadly consequences, automobiles. For the record, Los Angeles hopes to get a new downtown streetcar of its own soon. The reported cost is roughly \$270 million — or only slightly more than the \$262.6 million 2015 Dodger payroll.”

Will HSR bring sprawl to Central Valley?

Los Angeles Times, February 24, 2015

Ralph Vartabedian, <http://lat.ms/1ahJbKr> • “Gov. Jerry Brown says the bullet train will help concentrate expected growth in existing population centers of the Central Valley, sparing farm fields. [But] whether the project can contain sprawl is uncertain, according to land-use experts and Central Valley elected leaders.

“Smart-growth proponents say high-speed rail stations could become magnets for investments in downtown areas. But they stress that preventing sprawl depends almost entirely on city and county planning policies. ‘There are a lot of variables that will determine the outcome,’ said Michael Woo, dean of Cal Poly Pomona’s college of environmental design and chairman of Smart Growth America, a national advocacy group. ‘The technology of high-speed rail doesn’t have much to do with it.’

“The bullet train would connect Fresno to Silicon Valley by a one-hour train ride, and Bakersfield to Los Angeles in about the same amount of time, making both farming centers potential bedroom communities for the state’s urban mega-centers. Homebuyers priced out of coastal California could find the Central Valley more affordable and more attractive.

“California agriculture hit record annual production of \$45 billion in 2013, making it one of the state’s biggest industries. Protecting that economic asset against potential threats may not be easy. Low land costs in the Central Valley make it ideal for future residential growth. [But] ‘Land is not a constraint in Central Valley farming,’ said Roberta Cook, an agricultural economist at UC Davis. ‘What drives how much we produce in fruits and vegetables is consumer demand, not land availability.’ ■

'We're over-hyping America's urban comeback'

The Week, March 5, 2015

Jacob Anbinder, <http://bit.ly/1BQfgDU> • “For all the hype about America’s urban comeback, it’s clear that the comeback isn’t happening everywhere. It’s a complicated equation that determines where job growth occurs. And much of it remains unsolved. A February 2015 study on job growth in major metropolitan areas (<http://bit.ly/1zdAfdM>) poses a troubling question: Are we so enamored with the idea of the ‘urban comeback’ that we’re actively ignoring evidence to the contrary?”

“The report, from the think tank City Observatory, examines the geography of job growth in 41 U.S. urban areas between 2002 and 2011. It concludes that after years of dominant ‘peripheral’ job growth, a shift occurred in 2007 that saw the bulk of new employment move back toward urban ‘cores’ — the area within three miles of a city’s central business district.

“But a closer look at the data shows that the trend is actually much less widespread than we’d like to believe.

“Yes, on *average*, the United States moved away from the suburbanization of jobs during the recession years. But 20 of the 41 cities in the study saw peripheral job growth that was equal to or greater than core growth even during the recession, in defiance of the national trend. The fact remains that in terms of where people work, much of the country is significantly more suburban than even 15 years ago. And in many places, the recession did nothing to change this trend. If the City Observatory report shows us anything, it’s that understanding these trends is best done on a city-by-city basis.”

Las Vegas change is a tough act

The New York Times, March 4, 2015

Brittany Bronson, <http://nyti.ms/17R7RYC> • “A chronic question in Las Vegas is how to make our city more livable.

“Most of the outsiders moving to Vegas — some 50,000 a year — are drawn to the new homes and polished shopping centers of the suburbs or, more recently, the budding urban community in our old downtown, funded by Tony Hsieh, the billionaire chief executive of Zappos.

“For the Downtown Project (<http://bit.ly/17Rao5f>), increasing livability has meant luring restaurateurs, entrepreneurs, and tech companies. Once known for residential hotels and empty storefronts, downtown now showcases gluten-free restaurants, second-story bars, and coffee shops. Few Las Vegans would deny that it has aesthetically improved. Downtown’s small businesses, street art, and fashionable patrons were a breath of fresh air.

“[But] crucial things, like racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity that drive true urban life are absent from many of the cities advertised as America’s finest, and this same consequence of livability is playing out in downtown Las Vegas. Wealthier business owners and upper-middle-class families have moved into the downtown and benefited from the revitalization as low-income residents are pushed away.

“Our conversations of how to improve our communities will always come at the expense of the poor if livability means transforming the places where people already live into places where more wealthy people want to.”

Who is pricing middle-income workers out of New York and San Francisco?

GlobeSt.com, January 29, 2015

Nina J. Gruen, <http://bit.ly/17OxPww> • “Two sources fuel demand for higher priced new multifamily rentals and condos in New York and San Francisco: Highly skilled workers attracted to the startups and fast growth companies, and overseas investors who want to park their wealth in U.S. real estate.

“Many of these skilled Millennials, whose earnings enable them to pay the escalating housing costs, strongly prefer to live in high amenity/high energy locations like New York and San Francisco. The steep escalations in rent and condo prices have also been driving some of the prior residents into nearby cities like Brooklyn and Oakland. Even with starting salaries of \$100,000+, it becomes a stretch with the prices for new condos in desirable

locations like the Mission and Mid-Market averaging \$2,000 per square foot.

“There is an increasing percentage of foreigners parking their money in gateway cities like Vancouver, London, New York, and San Francisco. Some use these units as pied-a-terres or to house their children as they go to school or work in these gateway cities. This trend is likely to escalate with China’s recent change in policy to permit their citizens to make unlimited out of country real estate investments. Foreigners currently purchase approximately 9 percent of new units in San Francisco.

“Not so very long ago, Japan was the biggest foreign investor in U.S. real estate.”

(U.S. continues on next page)

City centers: Where the jobs are

The Upshot, The New York Times, February 23, 2015

Claire Cain Miller, <http://nyti.ms/1zdybCk> • “At the beginning of the 20th century, people lived and worked in high-density areas and walked where they needed to go. By the 1950s, most lived in suburbs and commuted to work in cities. In the decades that followed, employers decamped to the suburbs, too. By 1996, only 16 percent of metro area jobs were within a three-mile radius of downtowns.

“In recent years, employment in city centers has grown and employment in the surrounding suburban areas has shrunk, a striking change from the years before, according to a report published February 23rd by City Observatory, <http://bit.ly/1zdAfdM>. Some cities — especially big ones hemmed in by water, like New York and San Francisco — have held onto a large share of employment near the city center. But now, urban job growth is increasing more quickly in those cities than before. And in other cities — Chicago, New Orleans, Orlando, Charlotte, Milwaukee — employment is growing in the urban core and declining in the suburbs.

“The jobs in the heart of cities tend to be highly skilled and high-paying ones, in industries like finance and tech. Working-class jobs, like retail or construction, are more likely to be suburban. So with the recent growth of downtown jobs, the risk is that cities will continue to become havens for the wealthy and inaccessible to the middle and working classes.”

The article includes a ranked chart of “Average annual employment growth [rates] from 2007 to 2011,” city center vs. suburb. (Source: Joe Cortright, City Observatory.)

Planning of the people, by the people

Smithsonian Institution, February 24, 2015

Sojin Kim, <http://bit.ly/1MfX8Ek> • “James Rojas is an urban planner, community activist, and artist. He holds a degree in city planning and architecture studies from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he wrote his thesis, *The Enacted Environment: The Creation of Place by Mexican and Mexican Americans in East Los Angeles* (1991).

“Formerly a planner at the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Rojas now focuses full time on model-building workshops that involve participants in exploring community history, storytelling, land use, and vernacular culture. Over the years, he has facilitated over 400 of these, collaborating with artists, teachers, curators, architects, and urban planners in activities presented on sidewalks, in vacant lots, at museums and art galleries, as well as in a horse stable and a laundromat.”

Rojas said his mission is “to raise people’s awareness of the built environment and how it impacts their experience of place. He finds the model-building activity to be particularly effective in engaging youth, women, and immigrants — people who have felt they had no voice or a role in how their environments are shaped.”

Rojas is a member of the California Planning Roundtable, and has written for *Northern News*. To read those articles, go to <http://bit.ly/1MfXNG3> (San Francisco’s street wars, Nov. 2013) and <http://bit.ly/1MfY2AS> (Latino vernacular, Nov. 2014).

The Oklahoma earthquakes

NPR, February 16, 2015

Frank Morris, <http://n.pr/1aKTuHc> • “Austin Holland, the state seismologist, says that Oklahoma used to have, on average, one or two perceptible earthquakes a year. Now the state is averaging two or three a day. There were more magnitude 3 or greater tremors here last year than anywhere else in the continental United States, and the unprecedented spike in earthquakes has intensified.

“Holland suspects that modern oil production techniques are triggering the jump in quakes. A few years back, companies figured out how to drill sideways through layers of shale, then break, or frack, the rock, releasing a torrent of oil. The combination of fracking and horizontal drilling sparked a massive oil boom here, but the technique produces much more water than oil — tens of billions of gallons of very salty, toxic water. The only economical way to dispose of it, Holland says, is to force it deep into the earth.

“Dea Mandevill, city manager of Medford, Okla., says the earthquakes are worth all the benefits the oil boom has brought: a new park, police cars, construction equipment, and ambulances. Holland says injecting water near faults can deliver just enough lubricating pressure to set them in motion. It’s called ‘induced seismicity.’

“But Kim Hatfield of the Oklahoma Independent Petroleum Association says he’s not convinced there’s a connection. He says oil companies have been pumping brine down wastewater injection wells for decades. More than 3,200 of the wells dot the state. Still, evidence linking injection wells to earthquakes is building. And though oil industry wields enormous clout in Oklahoma, the agency regulating it is ramping up.” ■

Cable cars? In Jerusalem?

CityLab, March 5, 2015

Aarian Marshall, <http://bit.ly/1G4jmqW>

“Jerusalem authorities are close to unveiling their plan for an ambitious cable car project that could transport 6,000 people an hour across the Old City. Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat first announced the cable car plan in the spring of 2013, but the city has just hired a contractor to complete a feasibility study.

“The \$31 million project has an important target audience: The growing hordes of tourists who are flocking to the holy city in record numbers. Israel drew nearly 3 million tourists in 2013, 75 percent of whom visited Jerusalem. Planners also argue the project will relieve foot traffic on the crowded and narrow streets of the Old City, and reduce vehicular traffic by 30 percent for private cars and 50 percent for buses.

“As with most things in Jerusalem, someone *very strongly disagrees*. The project would require the construction of enormous pillars to support the cars, and some of these would stand (perhaps disrespectfully) close to holy sites. (A plan to run the cable car through a corner of the Temple Mount has already been axed.)



Russian Orthodox Church of Mary Magdalene, Mount of Olives, Jerusalem.

Photo and montage by Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP.

“Then there are the more philosophical objections. ‘It’s like opening a skating rink in the Vatican to increase the number of pilgrims,’ said Daniel Seidemann, director of the development watchdog organization Terrestrial Jerusalem.”

Dar es Salaam will soon be Africa’s fastest-growing urban center

CityLab, February 25, 2015

Sam Sturgis, <http://bit.ly/1FUNh4D> • Dar es Salaam has sprawled dramatically, [primarily] due to the expansion of informal housing. And with the population projected to grow by tens of millions in coming decades, some anticipate far more informal housing. Yet, large-scale informal growth in the developing world doesn’t always translate to hardship.

“Existing and emerging megacities are big, and growing fast, which can make them seem chaotic and crushing to the Western eye. But big is not always bad. According to the World Bank’s lead economist for Tanzania, residents of Dar es Salaam are generally more well-off than rural residents.

Dar es Salaam has a poverty rate of only 4.1 percent, compared to 33.3 percent in rural Tanzania.

“Even in terms of urban planning, the future megacity seems to be getting its act together. More than 16 miles of commuter train lines running in and out of downtown opened in 2012; and by the end of this year, a \$150 million Bus Rapid Transit network is expected to be up and running. Both projects have the potential to rapidly reduce traffic congestion. But, most importantly, they show a city that realizes it’s finally coming to the fore. And Dar es Salaam seems poised to make the most of it.”

(World continues on next page)

Ancient and modern cities aren't so different

Science Daily, February 20, 2015

From materials provided by Santa Fe Institute,

<http://bit.ly/1LGQw1C> • “Despite notable differences in appearance and governance, ancient human settlements function in much the same way as modern cities, according to new findings by researchers at the Santa Fe Institute and the University of Colorado Boulder.

“Research has shown that as modern cities grow in population, so do their efficiencies and productivity. A city’s population outpaces its development of urban infrastructure, for example, and its production of goods and services outpaces its population. These patterns exhibit a surprising degree of mathematical regularity and predictability, a phenomenon called ‘urban scaling.’

“But has this always been the case?

“The research team examined archaeological data from what is now Mexico City and nearby regions. In the 1960s — before Mexico City’s population exploded — surveyors examined all its ancient settlements, spanning 2000 years and four cultural eras in pre-contact Mesoamerica.

“Using this data, the research team analyzed the dimensions of hundreds of ancient temples and thousands of ancient houses to estimate populations and densities, size, and construction rates of monuments and buildings, and intensity of site use.

“Their results indicate that the bigger the ancient settlement, the more productive it was. ‘What we found is that the fundamental drivers of robust socioeconomic patterns in modern cities precede ... capitalism, industrialization, and democracy. Our results suggest that the general ingredients of productivity and population density in human societies run much deeper and have everything to do with the challenges and opportunities of organizing human social networks.’”

Kids in India map slums, spark urban planning changes

CityLab, February 19, 2015

Sam Sturgis, <http://bit.ly/1DFOJm> • “Every kid likes to draw. But in India, young people living in slums are using their sketching skills to spur urban change. As part of a broader civic campaign centered on ‘child clubs,’ groups of children are creating detailed ‘social maps’ of their marginalized neighborhoods to voice their concerns about public space.

“Teams of young mappers and adult facilitators spend roughly 45 days traversing their slums. They learn the shape of their neighborhood, how streets interconnect (or don’t) and the density of homes there. This information becomes the map’s skeleton. Then they fill in the specifics. They stake out what’s needed — where underserved public areas could become play spaces, where trash bins could be added where they regularly see litter. After their ideal neighborhood is drawn and detailed onto the map, club leaders present the work to local officials.

“No one likes being told how to do their job, especially by children. Won’t urban-planning officials go on the defensive? Those involved contend the government has been responsive to the children’s maps. Children in one neighborhood felt unsafe going the dimly lit route to the nighttime schooling popular in India. The ward official is actively working to improving lighting.

“Regardless of whether these child maps lead to more equitable urban development or not, a young Indian generation is coming to the fore with a keen awareness of disparity — and eager to correct it.”

Vancouver adapting to rising sea

The Guardian, February 23, 2015

Jim Hall, <http://bit.ly/1EE25Gu> • “Relatively low-lying coastal cities such as Vancouver are starting to realise that the window of opportunity to act in defence against climate change is closing. Vancouver has boomed in recent decades: the past 30 years have seen the city’s population increase by a third to 600,000. For a country as vast as Canada the city is densely populated, with about 13,500 people per square mile. Additionally, many of the most densely populated parts are either coastal or situated at the mouth of the Fraser River — an area particularly susceptible to flooding due to heavy rain-fall and snow melt.

“While the city authorities are keen to keep Vancouver’s back from against the wall, they also want to make sure that

its anti-flooding adaptation projects suit Vancouver’s geography and complement the social make up of the city. The city has done well to update its flood maps and raise the minimum construction elevation for new buildings by 1.1 metres, but the scheme is in its infancy and still at risk of stalling.

“The city’s officials recognise the challenge will be integrating flood protection into Vancouver’s urban fabric, in a way that improves quality of life rather than impeding it. This is a big undertaking, with lots of work to follow including dyking, raising land above sea level, and ensuring flood resilient construction. Rising sea levels and raging storms spare no second thoughts for electoral cycles and political whims.” ■

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