

NORTHERN NEWS



American Planning Association
California Chapter
Northern
Making Great Communities Happen

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

MAY 2015

My Oakland

Erika Sawyer, AICP,
interviews Meera Velu

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San Francisco from Alcatraz
Photo by Leila Knox



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My Oakland

*Erika J. Sawyer, AICP, interviews Meera Velu
Seventh in a series of interviews of local planners and
residents in advance of the 2015 APA California Planning
Conference in Oakland, Oct. 3–6.*

Meera Velu was raised in Fremont. She proudly chose to remain a Bay Area citizen, moving north and eventually settling in Oakland. She earned her master's in urban and environmental planning and policy from Tufts University and has worked in various planning capacities throughout the Bay Area. She is currently a researcher at Marstel-Day, excited to continue learning about Oakland communities and supporting their growth.

How long have you lived here?
I've lived in the East Bay almost all my life — from Fremont to Berkeley and Oakland — and have been living in Oakland on and off for five years. The first time I visited Oakland was as a freshman at Berkeley. I took the 18 AC Transit to visit Koreana Plaza at 24th and Telegraph. I remember thinking that the neighborhood was kind of deserted at the time, but it had Korean restaurants and karaoke, which were big attractions for me. Then I found Art Murmur, the Vulcan Studios, and other artists' spaces and kept coming back to Oakland.

What brought you back to Oakland to live?
Diversity. Oakland has people of all social and economic backgrounds and there is a place for anyone here. You can always find your group, which is something that I didn't experience while living in other parts of the U.S.



What neighborhood do you call home?
Temescal. My neighborhood is sometimes called the "Jewel box," which refers to the old street names. My street used to be Pearl, and nearby streets were Gold, Silver, and Diamond. Currently, only Ruby, Opal, and Emerald Streets

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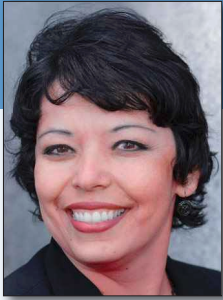
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Find JOBS and EVENTS CALENDAR at norcalapa.org



Director's note

By Andrea Ouse, AICP

We are busy. As I look toward the summer months and the quickly approaching midpoint of 2015, I continue to view the year with excitement and optimism. Our Section leadership is working diligently to maximize the benefits of APA membership through professional development and networking opportunities. One of my favorite events of the year is our annual Section Awards Gala, to be held at Scott's Seafood Grill & Bar on May 15th at 6:30 pm. This is a great opportunity to celebrate the best and brightest in Northern Section planning in 2014. The venue, located at 2 Broadway, Jack London Square, Oakland, has been a popular location for the awards ceremony and will provide attendees with a sneak peek at an area of Oakland that will host many events and activities during the APA California Chapter conference this fall. Tickets for the May Gala are available at <http://bit.ly/1Msr9Rs>.

Speaking of the conference, the Conference Host Committee met on April 4th to continue preparing for the big event, to be held from October 3rd – 6th. The Opening Reception — Saturday, October 3rd, at the Oakland Museum of Art — is turning out to be a key event that promises to kick off the conference in style. In addition, the Programs Committee is working hard to finalize over 100 sessions; and the Mobile Workshops will be interesting and diverse. No matter which committee, whether it's Programs, Mobile Workshops, Diversity, Volunteers, Publicity, Fundraising, Hospitality, Merchandise, or the Planner's Guide, we have a wonderful and dedicated team that will host an incredible conference guaranteed to be

“Rooted in AuthenticITY.” It's not too late to get involved in the planning! The next meeting will be on June 6, 2015, location TBD. Please join us!

Our Section's Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) continue to organize interesting and fun events. A few events to consider attending are coming up in the next month: On April 30th from 5:30 – 7:30 pm, the East Bay RAC will host an after-work happy hour at the Stadium Pub, 1420 Lincoln Avenue in Walnut Creek, just a 10-minute walk from the Walnut Creek BART Station. On the same night from 5 – 7 pm, the South Bay RAC will partner with the Association of Environmental Professionals (AEP) to host a networking event at Billy Berk's, 99 South First Street in Downtown San Jose. Appetizers will be provided, and you'll have the opportunity to meet your new South Bay RAC Coordinator **Gerri Caruso, AICP**.

Talk it up, drink it down. For those who like to enjoy (or need) beer while discussing land use issues, the Section is partnering with UC Davis Extension for “Permitting Cultural Waterholes and Hangouts.” The City of Livermore's Planning Division will lead a discussion on how the new wave of craft businesses have shaped their community, and brewmasters will share their experiences in navigating the permit process. To learn about the intersection of good planning and tasty beer, show up at Eight Bridges Brewing Company, 332 Earhart Way, Livermore, on June 4th from 3–5 pm. The event includes a tour of the brewery, followed by an open social mixer at 5 pm after the event. Check out the Section's website for more information. ■

Some writing rules you absolutely can break. Think you can't end a sentence with a preposition, split infinitives, or start a sentence with hopefully? Find out how to overcome these and other grammar myths from Oxford Dictionaries, <http://bit.ly/1aLOJgV>. Then you can submit articles for publication by *Northern News*.

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

My Oakland *(continued from page 1)*

remain. There was actually a painting in Awaken Café, dated around the 1900s, of the Oakland street grid with those historic street names.

What do you enjoy most about your neighborhood?

I've mentioned the Korean restaurants and karaoke, but also the history of the neighborhood and its location. Temescal is close to Berkeley, Emeryville, West Oakland, and downtown, and everything seems to be available in just a 20-minute bike ride.

What surprises you most about Oakland?

The history and community in each and every neighborhood — something I learned through participating in community outreach with the City. Oakland has strong community leaders. Within each residential enclave are a lot of people doing really good work to support their neighborhoods.

What do you see as Oakland's strengths?

Diversity, again. It's a huge strength and brings a variety of ideas into play. More broadly, Oakland's location makes it attractive as it's close to both San Francisco and Silicon Valley. The layout of the city is also a strength. There are a lot of greenspaces in such a dense area; and if you want to be near the water, you have Lake Merritt and Jack London.

What do you feel is the biggest challenge facing the city?

How to increase housing stock while making sure it's affordable. Housing has been getting more expensive and inaccessible. Hopefully projects like Brooklyn Basin will bring in much-needed housing. Finding living-wage jobs for the people who live here is also part of the challenge in keeping Oakland accessible. The minimum wage increase might help keep people in Oakland by providing some cushion in the face of increased rents.

Do you have a favorite neighborhood outside of your own neighborhood?

I enjoy walking in the neighborhoods east of the Mandela Parkway. The housing is beautiful, it has a homey atmosphere, and you can feel Oakland's history there.

What do you think surprises others about Oakland?

That Oakland isn't so dangerous and that a lot is happening downtown. Even my friends who have lived their entire lives in San Francisco are surprised by what's happening downtown. The Fox and the Paramount are attracting people who have never been to the city.

(continued on next page)

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My Oakland (continued from previous page)

Where do you take out-of-town visitors and why?

Lake Merritt is perfect for people-watching and resting. It's close to restaurants, bars, and cafes. On a sunny day, it's enjoyable to sit under the Fairyland sign and look at the Oakland skyline.

Where do you think Oakland's going?

Oakland is making good progress towards sustainable transportation goals that will connect the city on many levels. Bike sharing is coming to Oakland, and bike lanes are proving that there is space for cars and bikes through inexpensive improvements, like green striping of lanes. The bike lane on Telegraph will link to the MacArthur BART transit village, which is under construction. In addition to housing, it will include ground-level retail, but I'm not sure what types of retail will be attracted to these spaces. There are still vacant storefronts on Telegraph and it's hard to say what will be revitalized first.

Interviewer **Erika J. Sawyer, AICP**, is a senior planner at Marstel-Day, Oakland. As the firm's Western Regional Manager, she oversees the Oakland and Oceanside offices and Marstel-Day's client work in Twentynine Palms. ■

Where in the world?



Photo by Marybeth Harasz, AICP. (Answer on page 11.)

(continued on next page)

"Who's most worried about global warming in America?" 63 percent of Americans believe that global warming is happening. Less than half think humans are causing it. That's according to a fascinating statistical model developed by Yale and Utah State University, estimating public opinion on climate change right down to congressional districts and more than 3,000 counties." —John Metcalfe, <http://bit.ly/1Jm64lp>. You can play with the interactive Yale Climate Opinion Maps at <http://environment.yale.edu/poe/v2014/>

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Local planning firm wins national award



Matt Raimi discussing community needs at an East Palo Alto Town Hall meeting, 2013.

Raimi + Associates, a Berkeley-based urban planning firm, will receive the American Planning Association’s 2015 National Planning Excellence Award for an Emerging Planning and Design Firm. The award honors a young firm that has helped elevate the planning profession and build public support for planning, while demonstrating the potential for continually influencing the planning profession through its work for years to come.

Raimi + Associates, founded in 2006, has a record of using creative outreach methods to plan successful projects, particularly those with a focus on health and sustainable planning in underserved neighborhoods. The firm, along with other APA award winners, will be honored at the 2015 National Planning Awards luncheon April 20, 2015, at the Washington State Convention Center in Seattle. The firm is also featured in the April 2015 issue of *Planning* magazine.

For more information on the firm, see <http://bit.ly/1BRZjZ1>. For more information on the National Planning Awards see <http://bit.ly/1HG4RdQ>. ■

Library parks. “When it comes to urban park design, Medellín, Colombia, is an inspiring model of innovation. The home of several exciting projects that have had a tremendously positive impact on the community, the South American city pioneered the ‘library park’ or *parque biblioteca*. The 10 library parks built between 2008 and 2011 include large public library structures surrounded by green park space for public use, strategically placed within the city’s most marginalized communities.” —City Parks Alliance, <http://bit.ly/1aLlA4>



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“A community has to make a decision about how they’re going to address homelessness, and the decision to make is whether they’re going to manage homelessness or end homelessness. Homelessness is instantly cured by housing.”—Sam Tsemberis, founder of Pathways to Housing, as told to Arthur Delaney, <http://huff.to/1H2Wz1x>

Gentrified but still here

By Thomas F. Lee, AICP



In its temporary space on Market, Root Division's evening gallery exhibition features the work of 16 artists selected from recent MFA graduates of the Bay Area's seven art schools. All seven are in the top 100 MFA programs in Visual Arts in the United States according to a *US News and World Report Survey*. Photo: Tom Lee, AICP

ROOT DIVISION, a San Francisco visual arts nonprofit founded in 2002, will be moving to new facilities at 1131 Mission St. this summer, settling in with a 10-year lease.

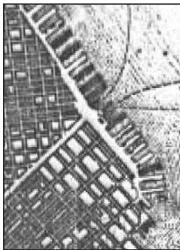
The nonprofit “offers discounted studios for artists who, in exchange for the subsidized space, teach art classes to school-age kids and adults.” (J.K. Dineen, *San Francisco Chronicle*)

Forced out by high rents after 10 years in the Mission, and then from temporary space in Mid-Market, the group is benefiting from the City’s new Nonprofit Displacement Mitigation Fund, established in 2013 to provide some relief to nonprofits threatened and displaced by high rents.

In the first grants from the program, announced April 2nd, 16 nonprofits received assistance. Root Division is the only nonprofit working with the visual arts to receive a grant.

The group offers a two-year incubator and artist-in-residence program, providing low-cost work studios, training artist-participants to teach art to school children and adults, supporting artists with art exhibition facilities, and providing classrooms, digital labs, workshops, and opportunities for collaboration and growth within the artist community. The nonprofit works with the San Francisco School District to assign artists to neighborhood schools in the nearby Tenderloin, Hayes Valley, and the Western Addition to support the District’s art education programs.

For more information on Root Division and the Displacement Mitigation Fund, see J. K. Dineen, “A feat in S.F. – Arts group finds space to rent,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 9, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1aj2fYs>, and the Northern California Community Loan Fund press release, April 2, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1FzZcpz>. ■



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"Milton Keynes opts for pod cars over rails. At its birth in 1967, the English 'new town' of Milton Keynes was designed to be a city of 250,000. Now at 248,000, the borough intends to stay true to its futuristic heritage by adopting a new form of transport over two time-tested ones. The Milton Keynes Council has ruled out building a tram or monorail system to serve the city," opting instead for "new driverless pods. The 'driverless pods' are self-driving electric minicars developed by the British Transport Systems Catapult."
—Sandy Smith, <http://bit.ly/1aLJBjS>

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

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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**.*

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Instructors: Antero Rivasplata and Ellen Unsworth. **AICP | CM 12.0**

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Gain an understanding of how to integrate the components of a CAP into existing plans based on recent case studies and the benefits of taking an integrated CAP approach.

Instructors: Erik de Kok, Heather Phillips, and Ted Holzem. **AICP | CM 4.0**

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In this seminar offered by the California Debt and Investment Advisory Commission (CDIAC), learn about community facilities districts (CFDs) and assessment districts (ADs) which provide public agencies resources to finance public facilities and services. For more information visit:

<http://www.treasurer.ca.gov/cdiac/seminars.asp>

Redesigning the Zoning Ordinance

Discover how to transform your zoning ordinance into a more understandable, streamlined, defensible, and effective planning implementation tool. Leading California zoning experts provide effective principles for revising and updating city and county zoning ordinances and discuss solutions to specific ordinance concerns raised by attendees.

Instructors: Bruce Jacobson and Laura Stetson. **AICP | CM 6.0**

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**

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This course will identify opportunities to promote, implement and manage sustainability projects through the use of GIS. Instructor: Robert Earle. **AICP | CM 18.0** ■

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Will an overturned fish truck hurt Seattle's new transportation tax?

By Rachel Dovey, *Next City*

The National APA Conference will be held in Seattle, April 18–21. *Northern News*, with permission, is republishing this article, which originally appeared in *Next City* on April 3, 2015.

On the last weekend in March, Seattle officials held their first outreach meeting for a \$900 million transportation levy called Move Seattle (<http://bit.ly/1BX1rPg>). Proposed by Mayor Ed Murray on March 2nd, the tax addresses public transit along with street, sidewalk, and bridge maintenance and emphasizes bike and pedestrian safety. In draft proposal form, at least (<http://bit.ly/1BX1evs>), it's an ambitious package with clear multimodal priorities. It's also the largest transportation levy in city history.

So, can it pass?

The Seattle area has a lukewarm history with large transportation bonds but, like many metro regions, city-dwellers tax themselves more readily than suburban residents, giving this Seattle-only measure a better shot. And the region's progressive politics favor rail/bus/bike taxes over freeway/road expansions, so Move Seattle seems locally in sync.

But several things could work against it. They are:

1. Anti-growth backlash to the city's increasing density,
2. Bertha, the world's largest tunneling machine, and
3. An overturned fish truck.

Let's start with the first (and save the fish truck for last).

Roger Valdez is the director of Smart Growth Seattle. For the most part, he likes Move Seattle and feels optimistic that it will pass, citing Seattleites willingness to self-tax for visible capital improvements.

Still, he sees the city's transportation and land use policies splitting, shoehorned by parking. Last year, for example, a legal decision upped parking requirements for some new development — a threat to density, despite the fact that Move Seattle's bus and bike lanes would thrive on compact growth. And he says that parking could get in the levy's way.

"We're doing all these things like emphasizing bike tracks and trolley — but what happens when people lose their parking spot?" he asks. "The city needs to invest in density, in the land use policies that should come with this levy, and I don't see that happening. I see it going in the other direction."

"I think you're going to see angry neighbors mobilize against this, asking 'Why should I pay to build more bike infrastructure when I can't find a place to park?'" he adds.

And it is expensive. The city's last levy, Bridging the Gap, totaled \$365 million and increased the property tax bill of a \$450,000 home (roughly Seattle's median) by about \$130, according to Joel Connelly of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.

"Move Seattle would more than double that property tax bite to \$275," he writes.

That large sell could be a tough sell right now, because of at least one high-profile flop: the Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement tunnel, known as Seattle's unbelievable transportation megaproject fustercluck and one of the country's 11 worst highway boondoggles. The underground freeway where a massive drill named Bertha broke down in 2013 (tweeting all the while) was financially green-lit through a 2009 bill sponsored by Murray, then a state senator. And though Move Seattle is the opposite of a giant freeway tunnel, Bertha's substantial shadow could block voters' view.

That was one worry for local advocacy group Transportation Choices, when the bus-funding Prop 1 went before voters last fall. But Shefali Ranganathan, the organization's director of programs, says those fears weren't substantiated. Prop 1 passed.

"Voters will open up their pocketbooks if it's a good strong plan that is very specific," she says, expressing support for the new measure's mix of maintenance and complete streets-type planning.

And according to Hannah McIntosh, project manager for Move Seattle's development, residents seem positive on the plan's Vision Zero-like safety priorities.

"So far that's something that people tend to be pretty excited about," she says, based on the three community meetings she's attended since last weekend.

One concern she's seen involves traffic.

"It's at the top of just about everyone's mind in the city right now," she says.

(continued on next page)

But while gridlock could nudge voters toward the multi-modal plan, Valdez says that traffic could also work against it. Case in point: the fish truck.

On Tuesday, March 24th at about 2:30 p.m., a semi full of salmon flipped on the Alaskan Way Viaduct. According to Mike Lindblom of the *Seattle Times*, the truck's driver sustained non-life-threatening injuries. City police called their go-to contractor, who restored the truck to its upright position around 7 p.m. With lanes closed until almost midnight, the fish truck managed to grind Seattle's transportation grid to a near halt.

Move Seattle's emphasis on multimodal transit could certainly address fish truck-like snarls. But Valdez worries that anti-growth activists won't see it that way. He worries that they'll only see road space taken away from cars.

"[Move Seattle] could run into the neighborhood crowd," he says. "And the fish truck could become their rallying cry."

The Works is made possible with the support of the Surdna Foundation.



Rachel Dovey is an award-winning freelance writer and former USC Annenberg fellow living at the northern tip of California's Bay Area. She writes about infrastructure, water, and climate change and has been published by *Bust*, *Wired*, *Paste*, *SF Weekly*, the *East Bay Express* and the *North Bay Bohemian*.

This article was originally published in Next City's "The Works" on April 3, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1BX0y9t>. Republished with permission. The Works is made possible with the support of the Surdna Foundation, <http://www.surdna.org> ■



Answer to "Where in the world?" (Page 5)

Rowes Wharf, Boston (1987), looking from Atlantic Avenue to the Boston Harbor waterfront.

Fifteen percent of Boston commuters walk to work compared to 10 percent in San Francisco.

Source: 2009-2011 ACS data from *Alliance for Biking and Walking*. Photo: Marybeth Harasz, AICP.

"Rise of the utopian police state. Lee Kuan Yew, the founder and longtime leader of modern Singapore who died [in March, left the world a] 277-square-mile fiefdom [that] is the paradigm for how a city can wield power in a globalized world. In 50 years, Lee and his successors transformed the country from a poor trading post with a tenuous geopolitical position into a gleaming and fantastically rich metropolis [that] routinely tops world rankings." —Henry Grabar, <http://bit.ly/1aLLaHy>



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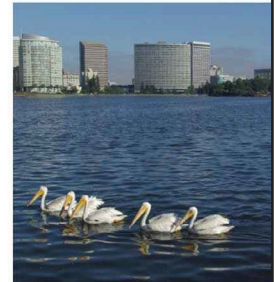
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Conference registration opens in May 2015

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Norcal roundup

Assembled by Jennifer Piozet, associate editor

Oakland will build residential tower without affordable housing

San Francisco Business Times, April 2, 2015

Cory Weinberg, <http://bit.ly/1H5tkeI> • After two years of trying to get neighbors' and city officials' blessing for Oakland's first high-rise since 2008, UrbanCore Development's proposed Lake Merritt tower will move ahead.

"The Oakland Planning Commission approved a 24-story residential tower on the east edge of Lake Merritt on April 1, rebuffing a parade of neighborhood critics who fear market-rate development would spur further gentrification. The commission voted 3–1 to allow developer UrbanCore to build the 298-unit building on an empty public lot in a neighborhood filled with new residents. Residents opposed the project because the city is not requiring the developer to also build or pay for affordable housing on the public site.

"Emily Weinstein, a planning commissioner, said the construction of a market-rate project should nevertheless ease fears of residents getting priced out because it will contribute to the total supply of housing stock. Oakland's multifamily market has lagged for the last decade, with subsidized affordable units representing three-quarters of new units built last year.

"The City Council still will have to give the green light on the development agreement between Oakland and UrbanCore. The Planning Commission gave the non-binding recommendation that the council should negotiate new community benefits from the developer and put \$5.1 million toward affordable housing."

Environmental lawsuit attacks SJ's general plan

Silicon Valley Business Journal, March 24, 2015

Nathan Donato-Weinstein, <http://bit.ly/1FyjYGh> • "When it was adopted in 2011, San Jose's new general plan, Envision 2040, promised to limit sprawl by focusing growth in urban nodes and balancing the city's jobs and housing mix. Now the city of San Jose is faced with defending the validity of its land-use bible after a little-known environmental advocacy organization scored a significant court victory earlier this year.

"Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge Joseph Huber in January found that a key element of the general plan's environmental impact report (EIR) was inadequate. Suing under the California Environmental Quality Act, Davis-based California Clean Energy Committee claimed the city's general plan EIR did not disclose an accurate 'base line' level of greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, the public would be unable to determine how just much GHG levels would rise under the new general plan. The city said that the baseline reading was included in the document, but not specifically called out. Judge Huber said that wasn't good enough. With the general plan's greenhouse gas section deemed faulty, [developers] will have to undertake their own analysis of their project's greenhouse gas emissions, at significant cost.

"The lawsuit turns on something of a technicality, but the larger issue, according to the plaintiff, is sprawl. The California Clean Energy Committee says Envision 2040 doesn't plan for enough housing in the city, which will in turn push development to other cities, causing more traffic as workers drive to jobs.

"In his ruling, Huber wrote that 'the Court would prefer not to void' the entire general plan's EIR, [which would require] the city to fall back on the old general plan. Both sides are scheduled to discuss the issue April 17 in Santa Clara County Superior Court."

(Norcal roundup continues on next page)

Peninsula may lose Bike Share

Streetsblog SF, April 7, 2015

Andrew Boone, <http://bit.ly/1c6Kb4Y> • “Bay Area Bike Share’s ten-fold expansion announced Thursday, April 2, will vastly increase the usefulness of bike-share in SF, the East Bay, and San Jose at no cost to the public. Peninsula cities, however, won’t be sharing in the bounty unless they chip in some of their own funds. Without public support, the 20 existing stations in Mountain View, Palo Alto, and Redwood City are in jeopardy of being relocated.

“[The Bike Share operator] Motivate plans to expand the current Bay Area allotment of 700 bikes to 7,000 by November 2017, with 4,500 bikes in San Francisco, 1,000 in San Jose, 850 in Oakland, 400 in Berkeley, and 100 in Emeryville. The contract says those cities were selected because that’s where ridership is expected to be highest. An additional 150 bikes will be sited somewhere in the system, according to the same criteria, with 50 of those reserved for the East Bay.

“Currently, bike-share on the Peninsula is more like a series of disconnected nodes than a real network. Consequently, usage is low, with no Peninsula city averaging more than 0.5 trips per bike per day. Peninsula bike-share would be more successful if the station network was denser, covered more ground, and connected to more major destinations. To make that happen under the terms of the new contract, Peninsula cities will have to pay into the system. In other words, Peninsula cities will be able to expand their bike-share networks, if they decide it’s worth public funds.

“The proposed 10-year bike-share contract between the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Motivate is up for approval by MTC’s Administration Committee on April 8, and the full MTC on May 27.”

SMART train pilot commuter car delivered

Napa Valley Register, April 7, 2015

Bay City News Service, <http://bit.ly/1FjRf5w>

• “Marin and Sonoma County officials and residents got their first look April 7th at the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit commuter trains that are scheduled to begin trips between the two counties starting in 2016. The green and gray pilot SMART Diesel Multiple Unit car was delivered by train from Chicago to the Cotati station.

“SMART officials have ordered seven two-car trains built by Nippon Sharyo of Arlington Heights, Illinois. Seven of the cars will have restrooms and seven will have a service bar. The cars are 85 feet long, 10 feet wide, and 14 feet tall.

“Sonoma and Marin County voters approved the project in 2008. The original project was for a 70-mile rail line between Cloverdale and Larkspur, but it was downsized because of the economic recession and lack of full funding. Plans now call for a 43-mile line between San Rafael and the Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport north of Santa Rosa. There also will be bicycle and pedestrian paths along segments of the rail line.

“SMART hopes to get \$40 million to build the two-mile leg of the line between San Rafael and the Larkspur Ferry. There is \$20 million in President Obama’s proposed federal budget and another \$20 million is earmarked from a regional transportation grant.”

Local planning student awarded ITE Grand Prize Scholarship



San Jose State University Master of Urban Planning student Melissa Ruhl has received the SF Bay Area Institute of Transportation Engineers’ Grand Prize Scholarship Award for her paper, ‘How It Rolls Out: The impact of automotive automation on the future of personal transportation.’ Melissa will be speaking about her project at the April 16th ITE lunch meeting at the Caltrans District Office in Oakland. For more information, see <http://bit.ly/1DiwMB8>.

(Norcal roundup continues on next page)

San Jose among Knight Cities Challenge winners

Next City, March 31, 2015

Jenn Staley, <http://bit.ly/1BMnRDQ> • “The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation have announced the winners of the first Knight Cities Challenge, with money going to innovators who hope to make a big community impact with one creative idea. Thirty-two of the 126 proposed projects will share the \$5 million prize to make their visions a reality. Participants included individuals, government, and nonprofit groups. Among the winning cities are Akron, Charlotte, Detroit, Miami, Philadelphia, St. Paul, and San Jose.

“San Jose won for two submissions: Houslets, which received \$40,000 for prototyping and deploying low-cost, modular housing and workspace units to test a new model for temporary and affordable housing for San Jose’s fast-growing population; and San Pedro Squared, which was awarded \$139,000 to test a new method of economic revival focused on bringing activity to the streets by installing pop-up retail units on the ground floor of a parking structure opposite the lively San Pedro Square market.”

According to Jason Su, SJDA Street Life Project Manager and the project lead for San Pedro Squared, the aim “is to turn San Pedro Street into a two-sided corridor with micro-retail on the ground floor of the parking garage, and to start a conversation about what San Joseans should expect and demand of their streetscapes.”

A full list of Knight Cities Challenge recipients may be found at <http://bit.ly/1BIXFJc>.

Sustainable Groundwater Act explained

Ukiah Daily Journal, April 6, 2015

William Cutlip, <http://bit.ly/1FeAcHk>

• “Mark Nordberg, senior engineering geologist with the California Department of Water Resources, came to Ukiah on March 26th to answer questions about the Sustainable Groundwater Act of 2014 (SGMA). SGMA ‘...is a package of three bills (AB 1739, SB 1168, and SB 1319) that provides local agencies with a framework for managing groundwater basins in a sustainable manner. Recognizing that groundwater is most effectively managed at the local level, the SGMA empowers local agencies to achieve sustainability within 20 years.’

“In part, SGMA carves up the state’s sensitive groundwater regions into high-, medium- and low-priority basins, and charges the municipalities around and within high- and medium-priority basins to collect detailed information on groundwater conditions, and to write rules for groundwater usage that reflect local needs and resources.

“At least one person in the room wanted to know how SGMA would be enforced, but Nordberg referred them to online publications, noting that those issues were in the hands of local agencies. A number of attendees questioned the accuracy of the maps, with particular reference to the map of Ukiah that was on the projection screen.”

Housing creation poor in central Bay Area

San Francisco Chronicle, March 30, 2015

Kathleen Pender, <http://bit.ly/1GlcGbG> • “When it comes to creating enough housing to keep up with population growth, San Francisco ranks second worst among the nation’s 35 largest metro areas, trailing only Los Angeles, according to new research from Zillow. The real estate website said that for every 1,000 new residents, Los Angeles County permitted only 187 new housing units and San Francisco permitted 193. The San Francisco area includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, and San Mateo counties. The national average was 384 new units per 1,000 new residents. Zillow looked at housing permits from 2012 and 2013 and population growth for 2013 and 2014.

Slow-growing areas, such as Detroit and Pittsburgh, ranked highest on the survey.

“Not surprisingly, the areas struggling to house new residents are the least affordable for home buyers and renters. Zillow looks at affordability for homeowners in two ways. One is to divide the area’s median home value by median household income. From 1985 to 2000, this number was around five, meaning if your annual income was \$100,000, you might spend \$500,000 on a home. In the fourth quarter, it was 8.6 times in the San Francisco area, up slightly from 8.5 times in the third quarter.” ■

San Benito wins battle against fracking

The Mercury News, April 7, 2015

Paul Rogers, <http://bayareane.ws/1ySHvwa> • “One month after mounting a legal challenge to San Benito County’s ban on the controversial oil exploration practice of fracking, a Southern California oil company has withdrawn its lawsuit. The decision means that none of the local bans on fracking in California is now under legal challenge, [although] several counties — including Santa Clara, Monterey, and Butte — may see similar bans on next year’s ballots.

“In the suit filed Feb. 27, Citadel Exploration, based in Newport Beach, attempted to overturn [the anti-fracking] Measure J, approved by 59 percent of San Benito County voters in November. Calling Measure J ‘an illegal local statutory scheme,’ Citadel said only the state can regulate oil and gas drilling.

“Measure J supporters say they are frustrated that Gov. Jerry Brown and state lawmakers haven’t banned fracking, a technique in which water and chemicals are pumped underground to release oil and gas — so they decided to go around them. Other counties and cities have followed suit, including Santa Cruz County, whose board of supervisors banned fracking last year, and Mendocino County, whose voters banned it in November.”

Fracking also requires water

Reuters, April 3, 2015

Rory Carroll, <http://bit.ly/1H2UiDE> • “California oil producers used 214 acre-feet of water, or nearly 70 million gallons, in fracking for oil and gas in the state last year, less than the previously projected 100 million gallons, state officials told Reuters.

“Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, occurs when water and some chemicals are injected deep underground at high pressure to break up rock and release oil and gas into wells. The practice has been criticized in the state, which is suffering from a severe drought. ‘Hydraulic fracturing uses a relatively small amount of water — the equivalent of 514 households annually,’ said Steven Bohlen, the state oil and gas supervisor. Bohlen said that not all of the water used for fracking is fresh water. Some portion of it is ‘produced’ water — water that comes to the surface during oil drilling that is not suitable for drinking or agricultural use.”

Simplified parking signs for LA

Los Angeles Times, April 3, 2015

Last year, *Northern News* ran an article about simplified no-parking signs created and proposed by New Yorker Nikki Sylianteng (*Northern News*, July/August 2014, page 27, <http://bit.ly/1GUdPWD>). Her idea seems to be catching on, although without attribution.

According to **Laura J. Nelson**, <http://lat.ms/1H2YPWz> “Los Angeles has launched a new sign aimed at making parking restrictions easier to understand. The chart-like sign features a series of green and red blocks that represent when parking is allowed, and when cars will be ticketed or towed.

“Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said he hoped the retooled signs would reduce the number of parking tickets given out to confused motorists. He added that the new design also should ease the parking process for downtown visitors whose first language is not English. About 100 redesigned signs will be installed between 2nd and 9th streets along Spring Street and Broadway in the Central City. The existing parking signs will be left up during the test period.

“After six months, transportation officials will seek approval from state regulators to remove the old signs and expand use of the new design. Officials will report on public feedback and analyze whether meter maids hand out fewer parking tickets in the area during the test period.”

(California continues on next page)

“If we dig out all our fossil fuels, here’s how hot we can expect it to get. I’ve tallied the projected warming from fossil fuels extracted so far and the projected warming capacity of various fossil fuels that can be extracted with today’s technology. For those who don’t like suspense, here’s the total: an astonishing 16.2 degrees. If we use all of the fossil fuels in the ground, the planet will warm in a way that is difficult to imagine. Unless the economics of energy markets change, we are poised to use them.”

—Michael Greenstone, <http://nyti.ms/1aLMzOb>

Los Angeles' slow-growthers got what they wanted

CP-DR.com, April 6, 2015

Josh Stephens, <http://bit.ly/1N5I95O> • “Los Angeles’ housing crisis has been building for long enough that just about anyone who rents an apartment here could have told you about it years ago. But last summer UCLA released a report confirming that, as a function of average rents (high) and average incomes (low, especially compared to those in San Francisco and New York), Los Angeles is the least-affordable rental market in the country.

“Los Angeles [once had a] maximum allowable population of 10 million. [The maximum is now 4.3 million. En route to that 4.3 million,] Los Angeles didn’t lose 60 percent of its landmass or power. Those 6 million were zoned, voted, and legislated off the island.

“What happened was a revolt by homeowners. The 1960s were heady times for the conversion of single-family homes into multifamily dingbat apartments, leading residents to fret about the loss of ‘neighborhood character.’ They were, at the same time, horrible times for public transit, as the trolley system clanged its last bell.

“So, homeowners pushed through anti-growth legislation. In 1986, Prop U, the mother of all slow-growth measures, down-zoned much of the city’s commercial areas. The implications were largely invisible for a while — you can’t see what you can’t build — until they started showing up in astronomical rents.

“People are going to keep coming to L.A. whether the slow-growthers of 1986 like it or not. And we’ll really have a crisis on our hands.”

Business can’t ignore warming, sea level rise

The Sacramento Bee, April 2, 2015

Tom Steyer and **Henry Cisneros**, <http://bit.ly/1C5hHi4>

• “Businesses and cities have the potential to be key players in solving the climate crisis. The Risky Business Project (<http://riskybusiness.org>) makes the urgency of these issues real and quantifiable to public and private investors.

“Our latest report focuses on California (<http://bit.ly/1C5hZp7>) and outlines the risks climate change poses to the state’s major industries, prosperous cities, and hardworking residents. For businesses, developers, and communities, the results are striking.

“If we don’t change our ways, rising sea levels will likely put significant amounts of property and infrastructure underwater by 2050 — with a price tag that grows substantially by the end of the century. Many coastal properties could become uninsurable, property values will decline, and families will face tough choices about whether to rebuild or relocate.

“As sea levels rise, we must change the way we think about city planning and development. We also must take proactive steps to make our communities more resilient.

“Meanwhile, rising temperatures will drive up energy demand across the state. This could have a real impact on companies’ bottom line. Climate change isn’t just an environmental issue — it’s an economic issue.

“We should take steps now to reduce our energy and water use, make buildings more sustainable and more efficient, and incorporate climate risk into our decision-making. By making changes at the local level, we can inspire action on the national and international stage.”

No more plastic bags, please

The Sacramento Bee, April 1, 2015

Marissa Lang, <http://bit.ly/1xEcYrh> • “Sacramento shoppers will ditch plastic bags starting next year, joining more than a third of Californians who live in places where such bags have been banned. In a unanimous vote, the Sacramento City Council approved a ban on single-use plastic bags that will effectively eliminate plastic bags from the checkout counters of all grocery stores, pharmacies, and convenience stores within city limits. In lieu of plastic, customers will be given the option of recycled paper bags or reusable bags that stores will be required to sell for at least 10 cents apiece.

“Opponents of a similar state law signed last year by Gov. Jerry Brown are challenging the statewide plastic bag

ban in a referendum that has qualified for the November 2016 ballot, effectively putting that measure on hold until after the vote. But no matter what happens statewide, Sacramento’s new ban will take effect next Jan. 1.

“According to a report compiled by city staff, nearly 14 million plastic bags are given out in Sacramento every month. California retailers distribute about 19 billion bags per year, or 522 per person, according to Californians Against Waste. But less than 5 percent of those bags are recycled. Those that are recycled can still prove problematic [as] they often clog the sorting machinery, forcing staff workers to shut down the process about six times per day to remove tangled bags, the report states.” ■

The American Housing Survey explained

HUD USER, April 7, 2015

“The American *Housing* Survey is a survey of the housing stock in the United States. It collects some information about people, but it’s mostly about the housing unit. The American *Community* Survey is mainly a survey about people. It does collect some information about their housing, but it also collects information about the computers they own, their work experience, and other things that have nothing to do with housing.

“The American Community Survey is much bigger than the American Housing Survey. The American Housing Survey has a sample of about 116,000 every two years whereas the American Community Survey has 3 million every year. And because of that, the American Community Survey can show much lower levels of geography. It can show places and counties, down to the census tract level, whereas the American Housing Survey cannot. But the American Housing Survey has a lot more information about housing than the ACS does.” Read more in this interview with **Dav Vanderbrouke**, HUD Senior Economist, at <http://bit.ly/1IHejOx>.

Canada pushes ahead with alternatives to Keystone XL

Climate Central, March 30, 2015

Bobby Magill, <http://bit.ly/1a2Fmb8> • “Myriad pipeline projects are on the table, designed to transport Canadian tar sands oil to refineries.

“The pipelines would move the oily bitumen produced from the tar sands to refineries in Texas and eastern Canada, and to ports on the Pacific Coast for shipment to Asia. Combined, the pipelines would carry more than 3 million barrels of oil per day, far in excess of the 800,000 barrels per day that Keystone XL is designed to carry.

“Roughly 2 million barrels of tar sands oil is sent each day from Alberta to refineries in the U.S. and Canada via rail or small pipelines, none of which is adequate to carry the 3.8 million barrels of oil per day expected to be produced by 2022. With Keystone XL’s future in question, Canada has a huge economic incentive to find alternative routes to markets.

“The U.S. Department of State, charged with the environmental review of Keystone, could decide at any time whether to green-light or kill it. As a way around this and other challenges, other pipelines are in the works. One pipeline is already sending hundreds of thousands of barrels of tar sands bitumen to Texas every day.”

This article reviews “the pipelines currently on the drawing board that will do much of what Keystone XL was designed to do.”

Large-scale markets can ease water shortages in American west

The New York Times, March 31, 2015

Scott Moore, <http://nyti.ms/1c00pN7>

• “Authorities in São Paulo recently announced they would restrict water availability for the city of 20 million to two days per week. The economic and social implications are staggering.

“The same combination of increased demand and decreased supply that afflicts São Paulo is also gripping the American West [because of] poor planning, climate change, and an over-reliance on engineering solutions to water scarcity problems. Unless policy makers heed the lessons of other countries facing crippling water scarcity, parts of America will also be left high and dry in the decades to come.

“First, the United States needs to move away from engineering solutions in favor of economic approaches. In most parts of the country, water prices are simply too low [to] give users incentive to conserve [or] to adopt water-efficient technology. Water markets — which allow people to buy and sell rights to use water — exist in some parts of the United States, but conflicting rules make them difficult to integrate and expand. Creating bigger water markets covering more water users is a critical step toward encouraging smarter use of dwindling water resources.

“Second, policy should move away from treating drought conditions as a temporary crisis necessitating immediate response. Instead, long-term adaptation should be encouraged.

“Third, lack of water is a long-term challenge requiring sustained political commitment. With proper planning and leadership, American cities need not see the taps run dry.”

(U.S. continues on next page)

The joke is on coastal homeowners

The Washington Post, March 28, 2015

Darryl Fears, <http://wapo.st/1JpDRRf> • “This April Fool’s Day, a 2014 congressional act that revised federal insurance premiums went into effect. The government is slowly phasing out subsidized flood insurance for more than a million Americans with houses in flood zones who, in some cases, pay half the true commercial rate. Houses near lakes, rivers, bays, and oceans were much more affordable with cheap rates that will now increase by as much as 25 percent each year until the premiums equal the full risk of settling down on property mapped as a flood zone.

“Congress ordered the rate increase because the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) managed by FEMA is \$24 billion in debt because revenue from the discounted premiums could not cover payments on flood claims, particularly after hurricanes Katrina and Sandy.

“Ninety percent of disasters in the United States result from flooding, according to NFIP statistics. Rising sea levels from climate change make coastal living even more dangerous.

“Discounted insurance is ‘expensive for taxpayers and encourages people to live in harm’s way,’ said Eli Lehrer, president the R Street Institute, a conservative Washington think tank, but doesn’t go nearly far enough to fix a program that’s broken. ‘Stupid, rich people who want to should be allowed to build wherever they want to as long as taxpayers don’t have to bail them out.’”

Only housing solves homelessness

Huffington Post, March 9, 2015

Arthur Delaney, <http://huff.to/1H2Wz1x> • “The current thinking about how to eradicate homelessness has moved on from the shelter-based response. Instead, for the past decade or so, homelessness experts have espoused an approach known as ‘Housing First,’ which gives people a permanent roof over their heads before anything else. Case studies strongly suggest it’s vastly more effective than letting chronically homeless individuals drift through shelters, jails, emergency rooms and the streets.

“‘Criminally punishing people for engaging in basic survival activity simply doesn’t work — an arrest record puts more barriers between people and getting housing and employment so they can get off the streets,’ Eric Tars, an attorney with the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, said in an email. ‘In the end, only housing solves homelessness.’

“Of course, most people who find themselves in need of shelter aren’t chronically homeless, a group that represents just 14 percent of the total. The broader homeless population is composed of people whose housing situations became unstable for economic reasons, such as low wages and unemployment, or because of illness or domestic violence. The average duration of a shelter stay is 24 nights. Homeless advocates agree that shelters remain an important part of overall homelessness policy — just so long as they aren’t the only response.”

Florida’s affordable housing win

Next City, March 24, 2015

Alexis Stephens, <http://bit.ly/1H0BiWr> • “Affordable housing groups in Florida faced an unlikely threat in the past couple of months. What began as a voter-approved increase in funding to conserve ecologically sensitive land and improve water quality almost worsened the Sunshine State’s housing crisis. An amendment to the state constitution that was approved by 75 percent of voters — and is now passing through the legislature — would see a portion of real estate transaction revenues (between \$300 million and \$500 million) go toward the Land Acquisition Trust Fund to preserve natural areas, waterways, trails, and more. With 16 percent of that revenue already slated to go toward the state’s Housing Trust Fund, lawmakers proposed cutting housing fund money to up the conservation funds. But housing activists rallied to restore the full allocation, pointing to the state’s deep affordability needs.

“The Shimberg Center’s housing needs assessments documents the dramatic increase in cost-burdened renters since the year 2000. Some conservation groups, like the Trust for Public Land, agreed that increasing the revenue going toward the Land Acquisition Trust Fund didn’t have to take away from housing money.

“On March 18th, the State Senate responded to calls from advocates to restore the original allocation of funding. Jaimie Ross, of the Florida Housing Coalition, says that the decision by the Senate was a ‘major victory’ for affordable housing groups in Florida and the momentary framing of a revenue tug-of-war between renters and the environment was a fabrication. The next step is for the amendment to be passed by the House, but Ross says there hasn’t been a timeline set just yet.” ■

There's order in Saigon's chaos

The New York Times, April 2, 2015

Roger Cohen, <http://nyti.ms/1CrNMQe> • “In Vietnam, where I recently spent a week, streets are a sea of scooters and small motorcycles. Saigon, or Ho Chi Minh City if you insist, buzzes to the eddying of this two-wheeled tide. Entire families perch themselves on bikes, often with a small child up front who gets the best view, the hot breeze in her face and, of course, the least chance of emerging unscathed from a collision. Adults wear helmets; children and live animals do not. Along with the living — a chicken or piglet perhaps — various things may be wedged at angles, including small refrigerators, potted plants, metal frames, and bunches of bananas. Bikes, the cars of the newly affluent, and pedestrians weave around one another in a seamless pattern fashioned not by any rule or organizing principle but by individual awareness. Major intersections, unburdened by anything as cumbersome or inflexible as traffic lights, function as massive group exercises in tentative advance. There is no logic at work, but there is a great deal of humanity.

...
“I am not recommending that Western urban planners go to Vietnam to study traffic management. I am suggesting that developed Western societies, increasingly fear-driven, tend to fall into a nanny-state mind-set where health, safety, and security must all be stringently regulated. To cross a highway in Saigon is to experience not just relief at reaching the other side, but wonderment at how unregulated people can work together.”



Saigon photos by Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP, 2011.



(World continues on next page)

Plans waylaid for luxury hotel in Rio

Next City, April 8, 2015

Jenn Stanley, <http://bit.ly/1an45HT> • “Major international sporting events like the 2014 World Cup and the upcoming 2016 Summer Games have highlighted Rio de Janeiro’s economic inequality. Affordable housing is one of the most pressing problems, as people have been pushed out of their homes to make way for new hotels to house spectators from around the globe. Now, the Associated Press reports that about 100 people are squatting at an Art Deco residential building in Rio that was supposed to transform into a luxury hotel ahead of the 2016 Olympics. The squatters are demanding that officials place them in public housing.

“The AP reports:

“Veronica Castro, one of the squatters at the Flamengo building, questioned the government’s spending priorities, particularly for the high-profile sporting events. ‘That’s the only thing that occurs to them to spend money on,’ said Castro, a mother of four. ‘They don’t provide affordable housing, health care, education, or security.’

“Rio’s local Olympics committee recently said it would look to Airbnb to help house people who visit for the games.”

China to step up urbanization along Yangtze River

News Daily, April 5, 2015

Gerry Shih, <http://bit.ly/1yQa7Xp> • “China’s government has released a framework to develop sprawling urban areas along the Yangtze River into an economic axis that would catch up with China’s highly developed coastal regions.

“China’s cabinet said on its website it would designate 317,000 sq. kilometers (nearly 123,000 sq. miles) along the river to become urban areas, hosting transportation and energy projects.

“The urban development will span the three provinces of Hubei, Hunan, and Jiangxi near and around the metropolitan areas of Changsha and Wuhan.

“The Yangtze runs from China’s western highlands into the East China Sea near Shanghai.”

Energy storage plant in Ireland could revolutionize renewables

The Guardian, April 8, 2015

Arthur Neslen, <http://bit.ly/1an6K4i> • “Foundations for an energy storage plant in Ireland that could ‘revolutionise’ the integration of renewable power into electricity supplies will be laid within weeks. The plant will use a motor-generated flywheel to harness kinetic energy from the grid at times of over-supply. This will then be released from submerged turbines at times of supply shortfalls.

“The project in Rhode, County Offaly, is expected to launch commercially in 2017, with an operating capacity of 20 megawatts.

“Although the system will initially feed off all energy in the grid, it has the potential to resolve the transmission system operators’ dilemma of how to store large amounts of energy created during windy or sunny conditions for instantaneous use when the weather changes. At the moment, such energy shortfalls are compensated for with fossil fuel generators such as coal or gas-fired power plants, or by hydro pump storage. Unlike conventional coal and gas generators, which have an efficiency ratio of 35–40 percent, the flywheel operates at upwards of 85–90 percent efficiency.

“So far the technology has only been used on a limited basis in the US, but the Irish project is already attracting interest from national grids across Europe, which plan to increase their renewable energy penetration in the years ahead.”

It’s Shenzhen for urban planning

Facebook, March 22, 2015

Riad Steven El-Bdour, <http://on.fb.me/1DgwJFG>

• “Shenzhen is easily one of the top places I’ve seen as far as urban planning goes. It seems the Chinese have taken a best practices approach to many things like separated bike lanes, wide sidewalks, and mixed-use buildings everywhere. I also don’t see so many people parking smack in the middle of the sidewalks. There is a bike-sharing program, too. Gas powered motorbikes / motorcycles / scooters are not allowed in the city, so there are many electric bicycles. It’s the quietest big city in Southeast Asia! The transit system is one of the best I’ve seen and may rival Tokyo eventually. The subway has more than 100 stops and is supposed to double in size in five years.”

(World continues on next page)

Can Paris become the world capital of cycling?

CityLab, April 6, 2015

Feergus O’Sullivan, <http://bit.ly/1an1ZaP> • “The French capital is taking bicycle transportation more seriously than ever before. The city has just announced a \$164.5 million program over the next five years to make Paris easier, safer, and more attractive for cyclists.

“At the heart of the project are plans to double the city’s bike lanes. Between now and 2020, Paris will add 80 kilometers (roughly 50 miles) of new, improved routes that will be bi-directional and almost entirely protected from automobile traffic by barriers. Quite apart from their value for commuters, the tourist potential for these is huge. Visitors on rental bikes will soon be able to amble down the Champs-Élysées and along the Seine Quays without braving traffic.

“Paris will also focus on overcoming obstacles that hamper cyclists from crossing the *Boulevard Périphérique* beltway. Separating the city core from its suburbs, routes across this barrier will be smoothed, easing the transition through Paris’s traffic-filled, potentially dangerous ‘city gates.’

“People who ride bicycles in Paris also stand to benefit from an ongoing plan to cut the citywide speed limit to 30 kilometers (18 miles) per hour, with only major roads rising to 50 kilometers (30 mph). And when they arrive at their destination, cyclists will have more places to put their bikes, as Paris will fund 10,000 new parking spots for bicycles.”

China designs world’s first hydrogen tram [VIDEO 1:15]

Future Cape Town, April 2, 2015

Carolina Giraldo Nohra, <http://bit.ly/1PdBT4b>

• “The China South Rail Corporation announced this month a hydrogen powered tram, making China the only country in the world that has applied this technology to a public transportation system.

“The power source — hydrogen fuel cells — has been used in the auto industry but not for public transport.

“The tram can transport more than 380 passengers and can go over 100 km (62 miles) at speeds of 70 km per hour (43.5 mph). The only emissions from the trams will be water vapor.

“Across China’s vast expanse are only about 83 miles of tram tracks, laid out in just seven cities.”

London ahead of the pack on cycling

The Guardian, April 1, 2015

Lawrence Wakefield, <http://bit.ly/1an8pGZ> • “Is Britain pedaling towards a future as a nation of cyclists? Following Britain’s Olympics 2012 cycling success, there was optimism that commuters could be persuaded to adopt a mantra of ‘two wheels good, four wheels bad.’

“So far, it hasn’t happened. While the last census found that the number of people cycling to work in inner London rose by a staggering 144 percent over the decade, other cities only saw modest increases, and the overall picture in England and Wales showed the number of people cycling to work rose just 90,000 to 741,000.

“So what is London doing differently? The answer lies largely in investment in infrastructure and safer roads that, unfortunately, we are not yet seeing in other regions. Under mayor Boris Johnson, the capital has seen the introduction of a number of ‘cycling superhighways,’ with more due soon. The newer routes will involve segregation from motor traffic and redesigned junctions, similar to those seen in mass cycling nations such as the Netherlands.

“Since 2010, London has also been home to the ‘Boris bike’ cycle hire scheme, which now includes 8,000 cycles available from 570 stations.”

Singapore slider — then and now

The Straights Times, April 1, 2015

<http://bit.ly/1Dgu9Qa> • “How has Singapore changed over the years?

“Let us show you how, in our new online feature called Singapore slider: Then and now. Just drag the handle left and right to compare how each place has changed.” (Fourteen interactive photos, worth a look.)

(World continues on next page)

“Urbanization can heat a place as much as climate change. By 2100, people will have built enough new roads and buildings to raise the Central Valley’s average temperatures by one to two degrees Celsius through urbanization alone. Plus, by that time, the Central Valley will be seeing higher temperatures due to global warming. A solution might be for cities to build in specific orientations that help buildings release their heat into space, instead of keeping it trapped.” —Francie Diep, <http://bit.ly/1aLIEkm>

China redesigns urban farming

Design Boom, March 22, 2015

<http://bit.ly/1yQb41M> • “In 2011, the majority of the Chinese population went from inhabiting rural farmland to living in urban sprawl. China contains 20 percent of the world’s population but only 10 percent of its arable land to feed this population. If China’s farmers are leaving the countryside, who is to cultivate the food for a traditionally self-sustaining culture with over a billion mouths to feed?

“With development pushing farther into what was once arable land, the government was forced to come up with a new system of urban farming. The RUAF Foundation (Resource Centers on Urban Agriculture and Food Security) implemented new stakeholder-based systems to maintain the close tie between agrarian and urban. Quality control assures that a decentralized farming system will produce a high standard

of product. Private citizens are encouraged to till their own gardens wherever possible. Suddenly the cities become greener and cleaner, and the people happier — and through the recycling of organic waste — more responsible in the production and use of its energy.

“Of course, the philosophy is easier than the reality. Some Chinese cities are developing so rapidly that the micro-farms are quickly engulfed by a mix of large-scale construction, heavy machinery, animals, and urban dwellers. Cities have to develop efficient ways to resolve the issue of green space, energy, and food production alongside (or integrated into) urban sprawl, especially as the population increases and more people are engulfed by the sprawl.” ■

“Free online courses for AICP ethics and legal requirements. APA California has joined the Planning Webcast Series. Various APA Chapters, Divisions, and universities are members. Each webcast is presented by a different chapter. Typically, there is one new webcast per week, usually on Fridays from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (PST).

The webcasts are free to all participants and offer 1.5 AICP | CM credits each. They offer distance education credits, including law and ethics, at no charge to participants. You can register for any webcast by going to the Utah Chapter website, <http://www.utah-apa.org/webcasts>.

This consortium for webcast opportunities is also offering the following distance learning webcast sessions from 2013:

Law Credits. The State of Takings after Koontz – 1.5 CM Law Distance Education Approved

<http://bit.ly/1z6cBkr>

Ethics Credits. Ethical Rules and Considerations for Planners, Plan Commissioners, and Lawyers – 1.5 CM Ethics Distance Education Approved <http://bit.ly/1z6ctkZ> (*Hat tip to Omar Masry, AICP!*)

“Singapore will collaborate with Sri Lanka on best practices in urban development. The Singapore Cooperation Enterprise, Temasek Foundation, the Centre for Liveable Cities, and Sri Lanka’s Ministry of Urban Development, Water Supply, and Drainage on April 6 signed a collaboration document under which Singapore will share lessons, experiences, and best practices in urban development from a whole-of-government perspective in a two-year partnership. The program aims to help the Sri Lankan government develop an integrated master plan in the areas of housing design and community building, master plan review and government land sales, and water infrastructure and greening.” —Channel News Asia, <http://bit.ly/1aLNXR0>

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- Provide an arena for communication and exchange of information about planning related activities;
- Raise member awareness and involvement in APA affairs;
- Increase public awareness of the importance of planning;
- Encourage professionalism in the conduct of its members; and
- Foster a sense of community among the members.

APA California Northern publishes *Northern News* 10 times each year in PDF for the exchange of planning ideas and information. Current and back issues are available for download at <http://bit.ly/JOV1Kn>. Entirely the effort of volunteers, the News is written and produced by and for urban planners in Northern California. Circulation (downloads per issue) 4,000.

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