

# NORTHERN NEWS



American Planning Association  
California Chapter  
Northern  
*Making Great Communities Happen*

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

**JULY/AUGUST 2015**



## Good news and bad for SF housing and commercial markets

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## Pope to planners: build better cities

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Downtown Oakland from the deck of the USS Hornet  
Photo: Elizabeth Rynecki



# NORTHERN NEWS



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## Growth in San Francisco housing and commercial markets — The good news and the bad news

*Nina J. Gruen*



**T**he real estate industry is asking, “How do we retain talent in San Francisco, given its ever-escalating living costs?” When I’m asked this troubling question, my response is to present the “good news” and the “bad news.” In the long term, which one wins out is primarily a political, not an economic, issue.

### **The good news**

San Francisco has attracted — and can continue to attract — highly skilled 18–34 year old “millennials,” because of its significant level of retail, service, and entertainment amenities. The ability to walk, bike, or use public transit to work is also a plus for this group. Many of these millennials currently get around the higher housing costs by their willingness to double or triple up — and of course, some get help from Mom and Dad. Also, given their tendency to spend what they earn, their much higher starting salaries, compared to the majority of workers in their age group (often in the \$80,000–\$120,000 bracket), boost the San Francisco economy. It has been estimated that each high paid tech worker has a multiplier of five, meaning that each of them creates five additional jobs due to their expenditure patterns.

Secondarily, there is an increasing number of high-income boomers attracted by the same amenities. As a result, we continue to see some affluent boomers trading their larger but more distant suburban homes for a condo in San Francisco. Quite a few of these boomer households also have a second home “in the country,” while yet other boomers do hold onto their suburban home and use their S.F. condo as a pied-à-terre.

The post-2000 increase in housing demand has both been encouraged by and served as a catalyst for the significant increase in the office supply, as well as additional retail businesses and services. Many major high tech companies feel pressured to locate in San Francisco in order to be able to attract the best and brightest millennial tech workers, as there is always a shortage of the most competent. In addition to the relatively recent addition of two million-plus square feet of major tech companies in San Francisco, including Twitter, Zendesk, Salesforce, Zynga, and Uber, an additional four million square feet of new office space is currently under development, 60 percent of which has already been leased. Much of this new office development is taking place in the Mid-Market and Transbay areas.

### **The bad news**

Since the mid-70s, decades of restricting housing development, along with rent control ordinances that keep an estimated 30,000 rental housing units off the market, have led to a huge gap between the supply and demand for housing. Meanwhile, the potential for constraints on office production has existed since the passage of Proposition M, which puts an annual cap of 875,000 square feet on new large-size office development projects. The recession somewhat dampened the upward pressure on housing rents and prices, while it also hid the effect of Prop M. But with the end of the recession, the demand for both office space and housing has surged, raising housing costs still further and bringing the potential impact of Prop. M sufficiently close to push up office rents. There are currently about nine million square feet of office space in the planning stages, but Prop M would limit this proposed future office development to approximately two million square feet.

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*Nina J. Gruen*

Can San Francisco retain talent, given ever-escalating living costs? The City's amenities attract highly skilled millennials and many boomers. Housing development has been restricted for decades, and rent control ordinances keep some 30,000 rental units off the market. Meanwhile 9,000,000 sq. ft. of offices are in the planning stage. [Page 1](#)

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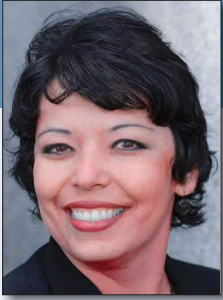
## World roundup

Time for new approach to fixing Christchurch • Climate change boosted European heat wave • Golf course repurposed for Kyoto's largest solar power plant • Paris approves first skyscraper in over 40 years • China will move government from Beijing to new town • How to navigate a city without using street names • Vienna Celebrates Ringstrasse's 150th Birthday. [Page 28](#)

## Board member directory and newsletter information

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Find JOBS and EVENTS CALENDAR  
at [www.norcalapa.org](http://www.norcalapa.org)



## Director's note

By Andrea Ouse, AICP

### Summer 2015, but no doldrums here!

Northern Section continues to increase its momentum and activity. The 2015 APA California Conference planners have achieved many major milestones. For example, registration for the conference in Oakland is now open. You can access the new registration interface through the Chapter conference page at <http://bit.ly/1pRDeFe>. It's easy to use! Make sure to register early, and book your hotel; rooms are going quickly!

On the conference webpage, you'll find extensive information to help you make this year's conference the most valuable professional development experience of the year. In particular, you'll find the "Conference-at-a-glance," an 8-page booklet that provides session titles and times, along with descriptions of the amazing Mobile Workshops.

**To get updates** on all things conference-related, make sure to follow the event on Twitter [@APA2015CA](https://twitter.com/APA2015CA).

**Students:** Check out information about the Student Poster Competition. The competition is a way for student planners to visually convey ideas addressing topics that align with one of the main "Rooted in AuthenticITY" themes: Roots and Foundations, Rings and Form, Branches and Specializations, Green Canopy, Harvest and Diversity, and Beyond Forests – Innovation Frontiers. The competition opens August 1; and on September 5, a 200-word narrative briefly describing the poster content and its relevance to California planning, the conference theme, and the particular track, is due. Once the posters are approved, teams will prepare and mount them for display at the conference Opening Reception at the Oakland Museum of California (October 3 from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm). Posters will be evaluated, and up to two of the posters will be selected for monetary awards (\$100 for the first place recipient). Winners will be announced at the Opening Reception and will be featured in *CalPlanner*, *Northern News*, and relevant social media outlets. For more information, visit <http://bit.ly/1Oa7sQb> or contact Mariaclara Zazzaro at [mariaclara.zazzaro@sjsu.edu](mailto:mariaclara.zazzaro@sjsu.edu).

**Exhibitors and sponsors:** If you're interested in joining our growing list of conference sponsors, you still have an opportunity! The deadline has been extended to September 1 to sign up for one of our sponsorship pack-

ages, sponsor an event, purchase an exhibit booth only, or advertise at the conference. Sponsorships provide excellent visibility and exposure to over 1,600 planning professionals throughout the state, and they are a great way to show your support for APA California's mission to make great communities happen through good planning.

**Volunteer.** Are you a student seeking a way to attend the conference while minimizing costs? Sign up as a volunteer. Volunteers are key to making our conference run smoothly. In addition, there are great benefits to being a volunteer, such as professional networking and learning opportunities, free meals, and a \$50 refund bonus for every eight hours volunteered! The volunteer teams are known for camaraderie and offer a great way to meet other students and future planners. If you're interested, contact Volunteer Chair Syd Wayman at [volunteers2015@norcalapa.org](mailto:volunteers2015@norcalapa.org).

**What else is going on in Northern Section?** While our Section's energy is largely focused on planning the state conference, our members are also busy with Section-focused efforts. We currently have two Board positions open: Sustainability Committee Co-chair, and Planning Commissioner Representative. The Sustainability Co-chair works to promote events and awareness of sustainability practices throughout the section. The Planning Commissioner Representative works as a liaison between citizen planning commissioners and the Board. If you or someone you know might be interested in the positions, please send a letter of interest and résumé to Section Director Elect Erik Balsley, AICP, at [balsley@alum.mit.edu](mailto:balsley@alum.mit.edu).

**Board election coming up.** This is an election year for the Board. The position of Section Board Treasurer will be on this year's ballot, and incumbent **Laura Thompson** has chosen not to run. If you are interested in learning more about the Board or helping to find strong candidates, consider joining the Elections Committee. Contact Section Director Elect Erik Balsley, AICP, at [balsley@alum.mit.edu](mailto:balsley@alum.mit.edu).

In closing, I'd like to thank **Laura Thompson** for her steady, insightful leadership and years of service to the Board as our Treasurer. She has done an exemplary job managing the Section's finances and will be missed. ■

# My Oakland

Erika J. Sawyer, AICP, interviews Robert Zimmerer, AICP

**Bob Zimmerer** is an Oakland-based Senior Planner at TranSystems, where he enjoys the challenges and innovations of helping the Federal Railroad Administration oversee its high-speed rail grants in California, as well as in the Southwest and Southeast U.S. Before moving to Oakland, Bob spent over a decade as a planner for two smaller municipalities and suburbs in the Chicago area. He grew up in Orange County, California, but he has also lived in Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Illinois, and New York. His planning degree is from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.



## What brought you to Oakland?

After living in the Midwest for 15 years, I got “homesick.” I missed California’s culture of entrepreneurship and openness to trying new things, like high-speed rail and other “firsts” in the planning profession. I also missed the diversity and climate — especially during a couple of horrid Chicago winters. I chose the Bay Area because it is like a hybrid between the Chicago or New York areas with SoCal’s geography and culture. I chose Oakland to be in a central city while being close to my office and away from the fog and expense of San Francisco.

## What did you know about Oakland before moving here?

I had been to the Bay Area before, but, like a lot of visitors, my experience with Oakland was traveling through on my way to another area. That changed when one of my friends showed me around Chinatown during a pre-move visit. I immediately liked that Oakland’s Chinatown was inclusive of multiple Asian cultures and not as commercialized as SF’s. Then, a few days later, another friend took me to Lake Chalet for brunch and then to various wine bars around Uptown for some drinks. I thoroughly enjoyed doing all that in a warm climate, but the vibe was warm as well. From that moment on, I was ready and willing to move to Oakland.

## How long have you lived here?

I moved here in early October 2014, so seven months.

## What has surprised you the most about living here?

The number of neighborhoods and their diversity. I came from Chicago, a city of 2½ million with about 50 neighborhoods. Oakland has one-sixth the population and nearly the same number of neighborhoods, if not more. Moreover, Oakland’s neighborhoods have unique geographies — e.g., hill-neighborhoods east of CA 13 (the Warren Freeway) have a different terrain from hill-neighborhoods along 580. I’m also realizing that it’s too simple to separate the area into hills and flatlands. Where would you put North Oakland or the downtown — in the hills or the flats? I can’t wait to explore more neighborhoods to get a feel for the rest of the city.

## What do you think surprises others about Oakland?

How nice it is and how much there is here. Oakland is overlooked and underrated. If people were to stop and visit Oakland, they would find that it doesn’t fit the stereotypes. There are pleasant surprises behind the entrance gates to businesses. I go home at lunchtime and can’t help but notice how many shops are open and how active the street is. Businesses are starting to use the second floors of buildings, bringing jobs and people downtown. The Oakland School of Arts Sweet’s Ballroom on Broadway is a great example. It has a less-than-glorious entry, but just beyond the gate and up the stairs is a rejuvenated historic treasure. The Warriors’ victory parade went by my office and house. After the parade, I saw a lot of people who probably weren’t familiar with Oakland sticking around to patronize businesses and explore Lake Merritt.

## What neighborhood do you call home?

Good question — Valdez Triangle and/or Northgate-Waverly. I live on Grand Avenue near Webster Street on the north side. Uptown’s northern limit is Grand Avenue. The route map on the “B” indicates that I live in the Valdez Triangle, but long-time residents say the area bounded by Broadway, Grand, Harrison, and 27th is Waverly. I am identifying with Valdez Triangle, since that’s what the city called my block in the recently adopted Broadway/Valdez District Specific Plan.

*(continued, with map, on [page 17](#))*



# Pope to Urban Planners: Build Better Cities

Anna Clark, *Next City*

**P**ope Francis called for an extraordinary global response to climate change in June in his much-anticipated encyclical. But the first pope from the developing world also has a message for urban planners: Build better neighborhoods for the poor. And while you're at it, find a way to integrate the natural world in city design. "We were not meant to be inundated by cement, asphalt, glass and metal, and deprived of physical contact with nature," he writes in *Laudato Si'* [Praise be to you]. It's subtitled "On Care for Our Common Home."

Cities have become unhealthy places for human beings — not only because of toxic emissions, but also because of poor transportation, visual pollution, congestion, social exclusion, violence, noise and even "the loss of identity." And inequality looms over it all.

"In some places, rural and urban alike, the privatization of certain spaces has restricted people's access to places of particular beauty," Francis writes. "In others, 'ecological' neighborhoods have been created which are closed to outsiders in order to ensure an artificial tranquility. Frequently, we find beautiful and carefully manicured green spaces in so-called 'safer' areas of cities, but not in the more hidden areas where the disposable of society live."

Call this the B-side of the groundbreaking treatise that has aligned the leader of the Roman Catholic Church with mainstream science. The pope's urban planning analysis is a thoughtful take on the interconnectedness of the natural and built environments. His theme? The choices we make in cultivating the places we live in have consequences for human behavior. Francis specifically urges "those who design buildings, neighborhoods, public spaces and cities" to go beyond their planning niches and "draw on the various disciplines which help us to understand people's thought processes, symbolic language and ways of acting. It is not enough to seek the beauty of design."

That is, our plans and projects must also serve the quality of life of others, contributing to a culture of encounter and mutual assistance. At every step, it's

crucial that "urban planning always take into consideration the views of those who will live in these areas."

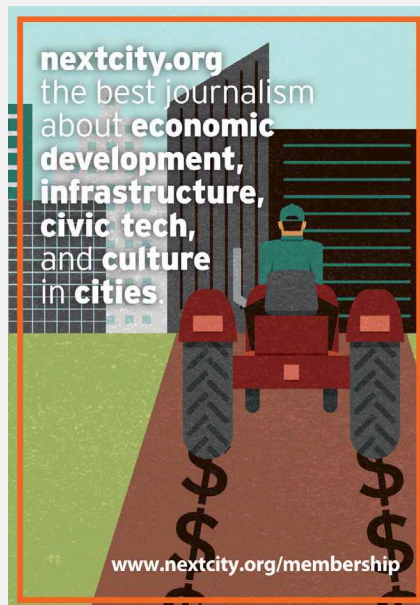
Historic preservation is also on Francis' radar. The man whose residence is adjacent to St. Peter's Basilica, which opened in 1626, recognizes the need to protect the "common areas, visual landmarks and urban landscapes" that increase "our sense of belonging, of rootedness, of 'feeling at home' within a city which includes us and brings us together." That sense of community is essential. Preservation of structures and spaces for their own sake is irrelevant; rather, preservation efforts should be tailored to the public good, and should be accessible to all. When they are well integrated into the landscape, residents of the city will feel a deepened sense of the whole. When they are not well integrated, they contribute to isolation and separateness.

"Interventions which affect the urban or rural landscape should take into account how various elements combine to form a whole which is perceived by its inhabitants as a coherent and meaningful framework for their lives," Francis writes. "Others will then no longer be seen as strangers, but as part of a 'we' which all of us are working to create. For this same reason, in both urban and rural settings, it is helpful to set aside some places which can be preserved and protected from constant changes brought by human intervention."

Housing, too, is a concern for Francis. He notes that state budgets cover only a tiny portion of the demand for housing across social classes, which cuts right at the heart of the human dignity that he champions throughout the encyclical.

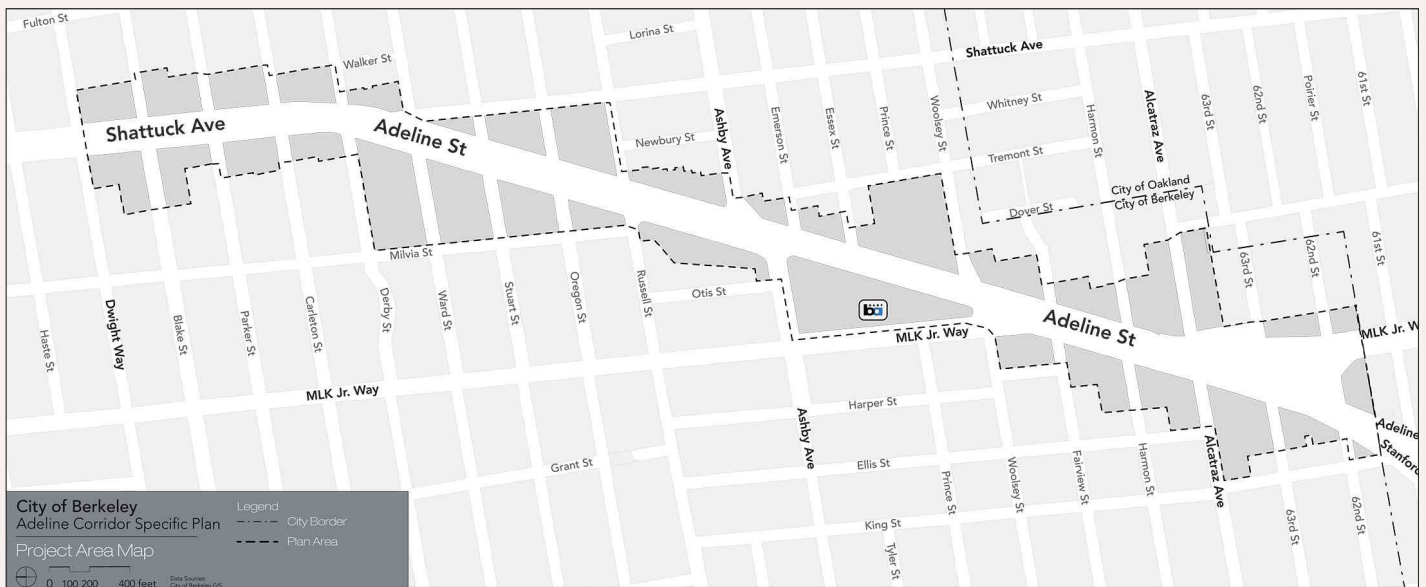
"In some places, where makeshift shanty towns have sprung up, this will mean developing those neighborhoods rather than razing or displacing them," he writes. "When the poor live in unsanitary slums or in dangerous tenements, 'in cases where it is necessary to relocate them, in order not to heap suffering upon suffering, adequate information needs to be given beforehand, with choices of decent housing offered, and the people directly involved must be part of the process.'" (He's quoting from the 2004 Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church.)

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# Adeline Corridor pop-up event highlights robust public participation process

Kim Ngoc Le



Adeline Corridor Specific Plan area boundaries. Source: City of Berkeley.

On Saturday, June 13th, the City of Berkeley held a pop-up event in South Berkeley as part of the public outreach effort for the Adeline Corridor Plan. The planning process is funded by a \$750,000 Priority Development Area (PDA) grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. The plan area includes Adeline Street from Ward Street to Oakland and a section of Shattuck Avenue from Dwight Way to Ward Street.

The 24-month process kicked off with a community meeting on January 31, 2015. Phase one of the process entails a robust public participation strategy aimed at identifying existing conditions, assets, issues, and opportunities in the corridor.

According to the city website, the Adeline Corridor Plan will “study opportunities, craft a vision for the Adeline Corridor, and identify an implementation process to achieve the community’s goals.”

Community goals that have been identified include affordable housing, local jobs, historic preservation, and an arts district. Moreover, the plan “will provide a strategy for a ‘complete community’ in South Berkeley, using quality design to create neighborhood structure with livable features and services.”

Over 150 people participated in the June 13th pop-up event, held from 11 am to 4 pm in a public plaza in front of the Berkeley Design Center at Adeline and Fairview Streets.

Elements of vibrancy commonly seen at pop-up events abounded at the Adeline Corridor Pop-up, with live music, live painting, and family-friendly activities offered throughout the day. Local vendors hawked food and beverages.



Photomontages of residents holding up signs that read, “I heart Adeline/South Shattuck because (fill in the blank)...” framed the doorway and skeletal part of the plaza. An ornate dome-shaped wooden art structure that functioned as seating furniture (and climbing gym for kids) was on loan from a local artist. Red plastic lawn chairs and fiery-colored mats for the jazz musicians formed a “living room” where participants could sit, relax, mix and mingle, and enjoy the music. Colorful balloons added to the animated atmosphere.

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# Place It: Collaborative spatial problem solving for diverse audiences

Miroo Desai and James Rojas

One of the goals of the Diversity Committee of the APA California Northern is to educate members to better serve diverse communities. As part of fulfilling this goal, the Committee organized a training workshop and invited James Rojas to teach planners the “Place It! method.” The one hour workshop, “Place It: Community Visioning through Civil Rights, Art, and Play,” was held June 17th at the ABAG/MTC office in Oakland. Designed to help planners communicate and collaborate with the public through visual and spatial knowledge, the workshop brought together 15 Bay Area planners, mainly women of color. And given their animated participation and feedback, it was a great success.

Unlike the setup for a typical planning meeting, the room was transformed into a creative, craft space with tables, chairs, and thousands of found objects. Participants quickly realized they were in for a new experience.

Rojas introduced his innovative public-engagement and community-visioning tool that uses art as the medium — and play as the venue — to teach the public about the planning process through their own lived experiences, memories, and imagination. Simply by moving their bodies through the built environment, people every day perform the considerations and evaluations involved in urban planning. This relationship people have with the world and each other can produce meaningful and truthful data. Space, textures, colors, and objects are best at capturing this data.

## Build your favorite childhood memory

People like talking about themselves. Choosing from hundreds of small objects, participants were asked to build their favorite childhood memory in 10 minutes. This step uncovers who we are, where we come from, and what we value.



Seeking. Photo by Michael Hernandez

The participants sought and gathered objects, then started the design process by laying out a few objects on construction paper. For the next 10 minutes, their hands moved furiously to build the memory. Activity slowed as people became satisfied with their models. They began to talk, look around at the other dioramas created by their colleagues, and pulled out their smart phones to take photos.



Building. Photo by Michael Hernandez

With the memory building complete, each person presented his or her childhood memory to the group, naming the place and the memory in one minute.



Explaining. Photo by Michael Hernandez

(continued on [page 16](#))





## Norcal roundup

Assembled by Jennifer Piozet, associate editor

### Apple to lease in North San Jose

Mercury News, July 14, 2015

George Avalos, <http://bayareane.ws/1L8tvJl>

• “Apple’s decision to lease a big office building in San Jose gives a boost to North San Jose and could bring well over 1,000 jobs to that part of Silicon Valley. Neither Apple nor the property owner would confirm that Apple is the new tenant of the 290,000-square-foot building near Orchard Parkway and Charcott Avenue. However, multiple sources familiar with Apple’s real estate activities said the Cupertino-based technology company is the tenant.

“The site could accommodate a further expansion for Apple. Next to the existing building that Apple is expected to occupy for seven years is about 12 acres of empty land on which Ellis Partners could develop three more buildings that would total 665,000 square feet.

“While North San Jose might seem somewhat removed from Apple’s Cupertino headquarters, that location is proximate to a big chunk of Apple employees’ residences. About 25 percent of Apple’s Cupertino-based employees live in San Jose, a 2013 economic study by Keyser Marston Associates determined. That is by far the largest concentration of residences of Apple employees who work in Cupertino. The deal also suggests that there’s no letup in the leasing spree by tech companies in Silicon Valley.”

### ‘SF loses affordable housing almost as quickly as it builds it’

San Francisco Business Times, July 8, 2015

Cory Weinberg, <http://bit.ly/1Oc9UGv> • “The San Francisco Planning Department released its first ever report card for affordable housing production. The report underlines why the city is failing: It’s not enough for the city to build affordable units. It has to save them, too. The Mission District, ground zero for development battles in the city, has a net 2 percent increase in total units.

“While the city has built 6,559 new deed-restricted, affordable housing units for low-income people since 2005, it has lost 5,470 rent-controlled, affordable units over the same span: For every 10 affordable units that developers build, more than eight units have been taken off the market by landlords.

“Urban policy think tank SPUR warns that too much focus on the ratio of affordable units to market-rates units could limit the supply of new units overall, making the housing crisis worse.

“Many housing battles lately have centered on how to force private developers to build more affordable units and how to get the city to buy more land for nonprofit builders. The city is exploring how to save more rent-control units and restrict them for poor residents instead of relying on building new affordable units.

“Rent-control units sometimes go to the lucky, not the needy, as they aren’t restricted by income. That causes some units to sit empty and leads to higher rents overall in the city, most economists say.”

### ‘SF Giants revise housing plan’

CP&DR, June 22, 2015

Matthew Hose, <http://bit.ly/1BzLox2> • “The San Francisco Giants have revised plans for a large mixed-use project next to AT&T Park to include an unprecedented amount of affordable housing, garnering the endorsement of all 11 supervisors and prompting Supervisor Jane Kim to withdraw her threat to draw up a countermeasure lowering allowed building heights and require half of all residential

units to be designated affordable. The new proposal for the 28-acre project built on land controlled by the Port of San Francisco will include 40 percent of its 1,500 apartments priced to various levels of affordability, with 12 percent available for people making \$32,000 to \$39,000, 21 percent for people making \$64,200 to \$85,000 and 7 percent for people making [no more than] \$108,000.”

(Norcal roundup continues on [page 20](#))

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

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## Where in the world?



Photo by Aliza Knox. (Answer on [page 11.](#))

**In case you missed it:** How New York City and Charleston are planning for sea level rise (9:19, PBS). <http://video.pbs.org/video/2365522176>. Also see APA's summary of how other cities are preparing for hazards and disasters (with links): <http://bit.ly/1K2I2Gg>



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## Who's where



**Forrest B. Ebbs, AICP**, is now the community development director for the City of Antioch. His previous roles include deputy community development director, planning and engineering, for the City of Stockton; senior planner for the City of Monterey; Planner II for the City of Seaside; and planner with Pacific Municipal Consultants. Ebbs holds a bachelor's degree in environmental policy analysis and planning (emphasis in urban and regional development) from UC Davis.



**Rachel Hawkins** has joined EMC Planning Group as an assistant planner in the Monterey office, where she will focus on CEQA and NEPA documents, permit processing, and various planning projects. Prior to joining EMC Planning Group, she completed a legal fellowship with the Institute for Fisheries Resources. Hawkins has a Juris Doctor degree (environmental focus) from Golden Gate School of Law, and a bachelor's degree in political science from California State University, Chico.



**Kim Ngoc Le** is the new UC Berkeley student representative to the APA California Northern Section Board. She is pursuing a master of city and regional planning, concentrating in transportation. Le is interning at the Port of San Francisco, and is actively involved with several organizations including SPUR, TransForm, and MoveLA. She holds a bachelor's degree in international relations and East Asian area studies from USC. ■

**"Making climate-smart federal investments.** Through its 'Circular A-11' guidance document (<http://1.usa.gov/1guSBVY>), the White House Office of Management and Budget is directing all Federal agencies to consider climate preparedness and resilience objectives as part of their FY 2017 budget requests for construction and maintenance of Federal facilities. For the first time, all funding requests in support of Federal facilities — from office buildings and hospitals to laboratories and warehouses — must align with climate preparedness and resilience goals." More info at "Actions to Build Resilience to Climate Change Impacts in Vulnerable Communities," <http://fb.me/6luMMekiV>

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Answer to “Where in the world?” (Page 9)  
Baku, Azerbaijan. Photo: Aliza Knox.

## AICP exam workshops this fall

National APA’s application window for the fall AICP Comprehensive Planning Examination closed June 30th. APA accepts applications twice a year — in June (for the exam administered in November) and in December (for the exam administered in May).

You can visit APA’s AICP website, <http://bit.ly/1K8mxCx>, for more information on the Spring 2016 exam.

As always, the Northern Section is sponsoring AICP Exam Prep workshops to help those who have already applied to take the test in November. Dates for the workshops are September 12, September 26, October 10, October 24, and November 7, 2015. All sessions will be held at UC Berkeley on Saturdays from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm in Wurster Hall.

Each session will cover a different section of the exam. If you are interested and need more information, contact Northern Section’s AICP Director, Don Bradley, at [dr.donbradley@comcast.net](mailto:dr.donbradley@comcast.net).

A fee of \$100 is assessed to cover the workshops and all the study materials needed to pass. Check the *eNews* and *Northern News* for up-to-date information.

## Eight from Northern Section awarded CPF scholarships

California Planning Foundation scholarship interviews were conducted in May and June. Of the 34 scholarships awarded statewide, eight went to Northern Section students:

- Outstanding Student (Runner-up) \$3,000, Alison Ecker, UC Berkeley
- Merit Scholarship, \$3,000, Eric Tucker, SJSU
- David Wilcox Scholarship, \$1,000, Sam Blanchard, UC Berkeley
- Northern Section, \$1,000, Evelyn Saint-Louis, UC Berkeley
- Northern Section, \$1,000, Alexandra Ball, CSU Monterey Bay
- Northern Section, \$1,000, Jaime Scott, SJSU
- Northern Section, \$1,000, Mariaclara Zazzaro, SJSU
- Northern Section, \$1,000, Colleen Courtney, CSU Monterey Bay ■

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**Growth in San Francisco housing and commercial markets**  
 — The good news and the bad news *(continued from page 1)*

As millennials enter their thirties, it is anticipated that their amenity preferences will change, particularly if they have a child (although fewer than 40 percent of the professional middle class are expected to have children). Safety, good schools, the quality of mass transit (particularly Muni), and the lessening of traffic congestion will increase in importance. Many of these family households will seek larger living spaces elsewhere in the Bay Area, where they can get more space for the buck, including a yard for their child and/or dog. They will continue to move to nearby East Bay communities like Walnut Creek and Oakland. (Last year, Oakland had the most significant rental and condo percentage price increases in the Bay Area.) Each new development in these communities has had an upward price effect on the well-located existing stock.

In the near future, we may also see a shift in the makeup of households in suburban and exurban communities. The outer suburbs will increasingly house lower- and middle-income millennial households. Many of these — particularly Hispanic households — are multi-generational, which permits the parents to travel farther to their jobs as the grandparents take care of the children.

As professional millennials age, an increasing number will seek lower-cost living in secondary “brain hub” cities with high levels of amenities. Austin, Denver, Provo, and Raleigh appear to fit this definition today, but more competitors to the Bay Area’s dominance in high tech will appear in the future if we don’t improve the transportation and education deficiencies that exist today in San Francisco.

So how do we retain talent in San Francisco? There is no easy answer — there will always be tradeoffs between San Francisco’s opportunities and its challenges. But we all know what needs to be accomplished; the question is, will we do it?

*Nina J. Gruen is Principal Sociologist at Gruen Gruen + Associates, a research-based urban economic real estate and development consulting firm with offices in San Francisco, Denver, and Deerfield, IL. She has pioneered the use of behavioral research in conjunction with the analysis of demographic data to forecast user reactions to real estate projects. She has conducted many productive, innovation-identifying studies for real estate investors and developers, as well as local, state, and federal agencies. You can reach her at [ngruen@ggassoc.com](mailto:ngruen@ggassoc.com).*

This article was originally published in CREW SF: *The View* (2nd Quarter 2015, <http://bit.ly/1Irn2Y2>, page 6). Republished with permission. ■

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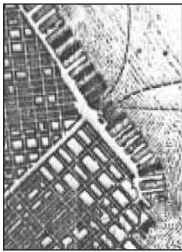
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**“Every second on the Internet.** Thirty years ago there was no Internet. Twenty years ago there were only 130 websites total; Google wasn’t even around; and you had to pay for an email account through an ISP. Ten years ago Skype, Facebook, YouTube, Reddit, Twitter, Tumblr, Dropbox, and Instagram didn’t exist.” And now? See Steven Lewis’s creation at <http://onesecond.designly.com>



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“Reading *Laudato Si’* simply as a case for taking climate change seriously misses the depth of its critique — which extends to the whole technological paradigm of our civilization, all the ways (economic and cultural) that we live now.”

—Russ Douthat, <http://nyti.ms/1dakf8u>

## Pope to Urban Planners: Build Better Cities *(continued from page 5)*

When Francis turns his attention to transit, there is perhaps unintentional humor in his understatement. “The quality of life in cities has much to do with systems of transport, which are often a source of much suffering for those who use them.” Driving culture is a major polluter, and the building of roads and parking lots spoils the urban landscape. But directing everyone to get on the buses and trains is no easy solution either. Public transit, he writes, needs to make marked improvements if they are going to win over the majority. Crowding, inconvenience, infrequent service, and lack of safety are the particular gripes of Francis, who has been seen numerous times taking public transit.

Collectively, the encyclical affirms how important it is to make the *moral case* for city design. Whether he is discussing the need for improved utilities in rural areas or the value of beauty in architecture, Pope Francis connects it all back to the web of life. “Our insistence that each human being is an image of God should not make us overlook the fact that each creature has its own purpose. None is superfluous,” he writes.

Our civic spaces are intensely personal, shaping the terrain of our lives and our memories. They influence how we think, feel, act and express our identity. “We make every effort to adapt to our environment, but when it is disorderly, chaotic or saturated with noise and ugliness, such overstimulation makes it difficult to find ourselves integrated and happy,” he writes. On the other hand, if our built environments are well designed — equitable, serviceable, historic, coherent and integrated with the natural world — they make it possible to “recover something of our true selves.”

Too often, developers, urban planners and city leaders seem to think that it is obvious or implied why the decisions they make are in the best interest of the public. But there is no shortcut to articulating why our planning choices speak to the fundamental *human dignity* of the communities we’re working in. Indeed, *Laudato Si’* is a powerful template for how to do just that. And if, even with that model on hand, we can’t articulate the moral case for what we are doing — consider that a major red flag.

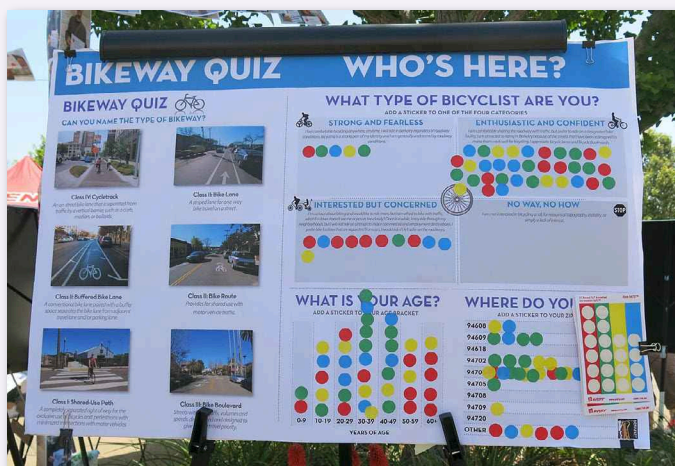
*The Equity Factor* is made possible with the support of the *Surdna Foundation*, <http://www.surdna.org>. This article was originally published in *Next City* on June 19, 2015, at <http://bit.ly/1MTW2j1>. Republished with permission.

Ed note: A PDF of the encyclical is available in full at <http://bit.ly/1MTTNMH>

Anna Clark is a freelance journalist in Detroit. She has written for the *New York Times*, the *New Republic*, NBC News online, *Pacific Standard* and other publications. She is a political media correspondent for the *Columbia Journalism Review*. Anna is the editor of *A Detroit Anthology* and author of *Michigan Literary Luminaries: From Elmore Leonard to Robert Hayden*. Her website is [annaclark.net](http://annaclark.net). ■

Mukul Malhotra, principal at MIG, the Berkeley-based consulting firm for the project, praised the idea of activating underutilized public spaces such as this plaza. “There are many places like this already in the neighborhood,” said Malhotra, who also lives in the corridor. “Make use of what already exists,” he said, noting that this landscaped plaza is well configured for place-making ideas, yet is devoid of activities most of the time.

Different interactive workshop stations dotted the plaza: A mapping station asked participants to place colored stickers on where they lived or worked; another station surveyed the demography of bicyclists.



The day’s two notable activities were the interactive walking and biking tours, with separate walking tours for the northern and southern segments of the corridor. Participants were given a detailed map with space to respond to location-specific questions.



Roughly 20 people took the northern walking tour. It had four main stops: Potential Ashby BART Access and Safety Improvements, Potential Shattuck Gateway and Intersection Improvements, Potential Shattuck Streetscape Improvements, and Potential Median and Open Space Enhancements. The participants comprised a wide range of residents living in or near the corridor, from a third-generation resident of the area to recent transplants. One participant was on her way to the supermarket and detoured to the pop-up.

Issues important to the residents included housing affordability and the changing character of the neighborhood. While gathered across the street from the 155-unit Parker Place mixed-use development project under construction, participants expressed concern about the recent flood of development projects in this section of the corridor. One participant lamented that it doesn’t matter if the corridor adds housing if the people can’t afford to live there. Another was skeptical of the implementation process. One resident commented that the 1990 South Berkeley Area Plan and the 1997 South Shattuck Strategic Plan just sat on the shelf.

But enthusiasm and a sense of optimism reigned throughout the day. “We’re really happy with how the event turned out,” said Jamillah Jordan, project manager at MIG. “A broad cross-section of the community came out. A lot of people didn’t know what the event was about, such as passersby heading to BART or to Berkeley Bowl. The goal was to involve these casual community members who might not otherwise participate.” Unlike a community meeting, the daylong pop-up event was created to remove set-time barriers for residents. People were free to come and go as they pleased. Some stayed for minutes; others for hours.

Jordan shared that, on the whole, residents indicated they would like to see more recreational and public open space as well as neighborhood-serving retail. Long-term residents were particularly concerned about housing affordability and displacement.

Other outreach activities beyond the pop-up event characterize the public participation process for the Adeline Corridor Plan. The planning team emphasized an inclusive outreach and engagement strategy that involves going into the community and meeting people where they are.

One such innovative strategy to gather public feedback is the Adeline Corridor Community IDEA Center. This

*(continued on next page)*

## Adeline Corridor pop-up event highlights robust public participation process *(continued from previous page)*

drop-in project storefront was open on Mondays from 3 pm to 7 pm and Thursdays from 11 am to 3 pm at the Firehouse Art Collective, a popular gathering place in the corridor. And mobile IDEA centers were held on Saturdays at well-known local establishments such as the Berkeley Bowl, Ashby Flea Market, and Stone-mountain & Daughter Fabrics.

The team also had a booth at the annual Juneteenth Festival held in the corridor, where community youth showcased their stories of the Adeline/Shattuck corridor through “photovoice” collages.

In addition, the Adeline Community Outreach Team was established to involve community members to help “raise awareness about how to participate in the planning process and shape the opportunities for community engagement.”

Public feedback and comments were closed on June 30th. The immediate next step for the planning team is to summarize the community feedback and to prepare an Existing Conditions report analyzing a range of topics, including socioeconomic conditions, land use and urban design, traffic and transportation, and infrastructure. A community visioning workshop will be held in August to set community priorities based on the results of community input and the report.

The Adeline Corridor Plan consists of four phases, with plan adoption expected in early 2017. More information can be found at <http://bit.ly/1H79COz>.



*Kim Ngoc Le is a Masters student in the Department of City and Regional Planning at UC Berkeley. She concurrently interns at the Port of San Francisco and is the Student Liaison representing UC Berkeley on the Board of the APA California Northern Section. You can reach Kim at [kimngoc2@gmail.com](mailto:kimngoc2@gmail.com) ■*

## Northern Section’s pilot agreement with São Paulo moves forward

*Alex Hinds*

**Northern Section’s** international planning collaboration and exchange agreement with **São Paulo** has been officially signed, sealed, and delivered. This effort builds upon Section-sponsored international planning tours, providing additional opportunities for professionals and students to participate in planning activities abroad. Signatories to the agreement are representatives of the municipality of São Paulo, SP Urbanismo (a state-owned enterprise under São Paulo City Government), Secretary of Urban Development, and Mackenzie Architecture College. Also signing the official documents were Hing Wong, AICP, APA California Chapter President; and Andrea Ouse, AICP, APA California Northern Section Director.

Following recent Skype conference calls, the draft work plan has been refocused to initially exchange information on land use and transportation modeling techniques — including visual simulations — and on innovative urban development financing techniques (such as the purchase of air and development rights).

Next steps are to extend the collaboration to include one or more universities located in the Northern Section’s boundaries (or nearby with existing ties to São Paulo) and to involve applicable faculty, students, and professionals in the study. A representative from São Paulo has also been invited to participate in a panel featuring the Section’s international activities at the upcoming APA California conference in October.

An APA Chapter Presidents Council mini-grant was approved to help launch the initial pilot project and to prepare a tool kit for other interested APA chapters. Aided by colleagues near and far, the Section’s international planning collaboration program continues to generate interest. Stay tuned for more news and opportunities to participate!

*Alex Hinds and Hing Wong, AICP, are Northern Section’s International Directors. You can reach Alex at [alexhinds47@gmail.com](mailto:alexhinds47@gmail.com) ■*

**Engrossing graph:** World Internet users by year. <http://i.imgur.com/VHLGzUU.png>



Most of the childhood memories occurred outside the home in playgrounds and yards, on sidewalks and streets, and in natural settings. The memories generally fell into three categories of importance:

1. Physical activity, such as walking to buy ice cream, playing in mud, or climbing a tree.
2. Social interaction, such as cooking with father, traveling with family, or walking with grandmother.
3. Problem solving, such as building “roads” through grandmother’s garden, learning how to cook noodles, or playing “car accident.”

The process of physically building and arranging materials on a map provided a platform for storytelling. Everyone listened intently to visceral details that engaged the group visually, orally, and emotionally. Through the storytelling, people quickly became empathetic toward each other and started to bond.

This activity erased all age, racial, economic, and professional differences. No matter where the participants had grown up, they shared similar experiences with physical environments. As a wrap-up, the participants were asked to state three words or themes that were consistent through everybody’s memories. The common words that emerged were nature, physical activity, shelter, access, sharing, family, love, curiosity, imagination, and patterns (like seasons and holidays). These seemed to be the key values in everyone’s early life. In short, workshop participants learned the value of place and how to examine it through their personal criteria.

### **Collaborative spatial problem solving**

Next, the participants collaborated in teams to solve urban planning challenges in 15 minutes using the same objects. The participants were all urban planners, and each team chose a different planning-related topic — sustainability, water, mobility, economic development, shelter, and health. The teams were not given any constraints; all solutions were welcomed.

The communal nature of this activity again provided a platform for everyone to participate regardless of typical barriers. Building with objects on imaginary maps allowed participants to illustrate and negotiate ideas that would have been difficult to describe using words alone. As team members tested their ideas with their colleagues, models began to fill the tabletops. When time was up, each team presented its solution in one to two minutes, starting with the name of

each team member, the problem and solution, and a visual and oral walk through the model.

- The Water Team took on the drought and emphasized the importance of individuals changing their daily behavior patterns.
- The Economic Team created jobs through green manufacturing.
- The Shelter Team built a bus stop that served as shelter.
- The Sustainability Team built a sustainable city.
- The Mobility Team built a multi-modal approach to transportation that was based on time.
- The Health Team focused on improving health from the day a child is born.

Each team spoke with conviction and enthusiasm. They had collaborated and negotiated in a safe space to generate new opportunities for communities. The workshop ended with questions and comments on individual experiences.

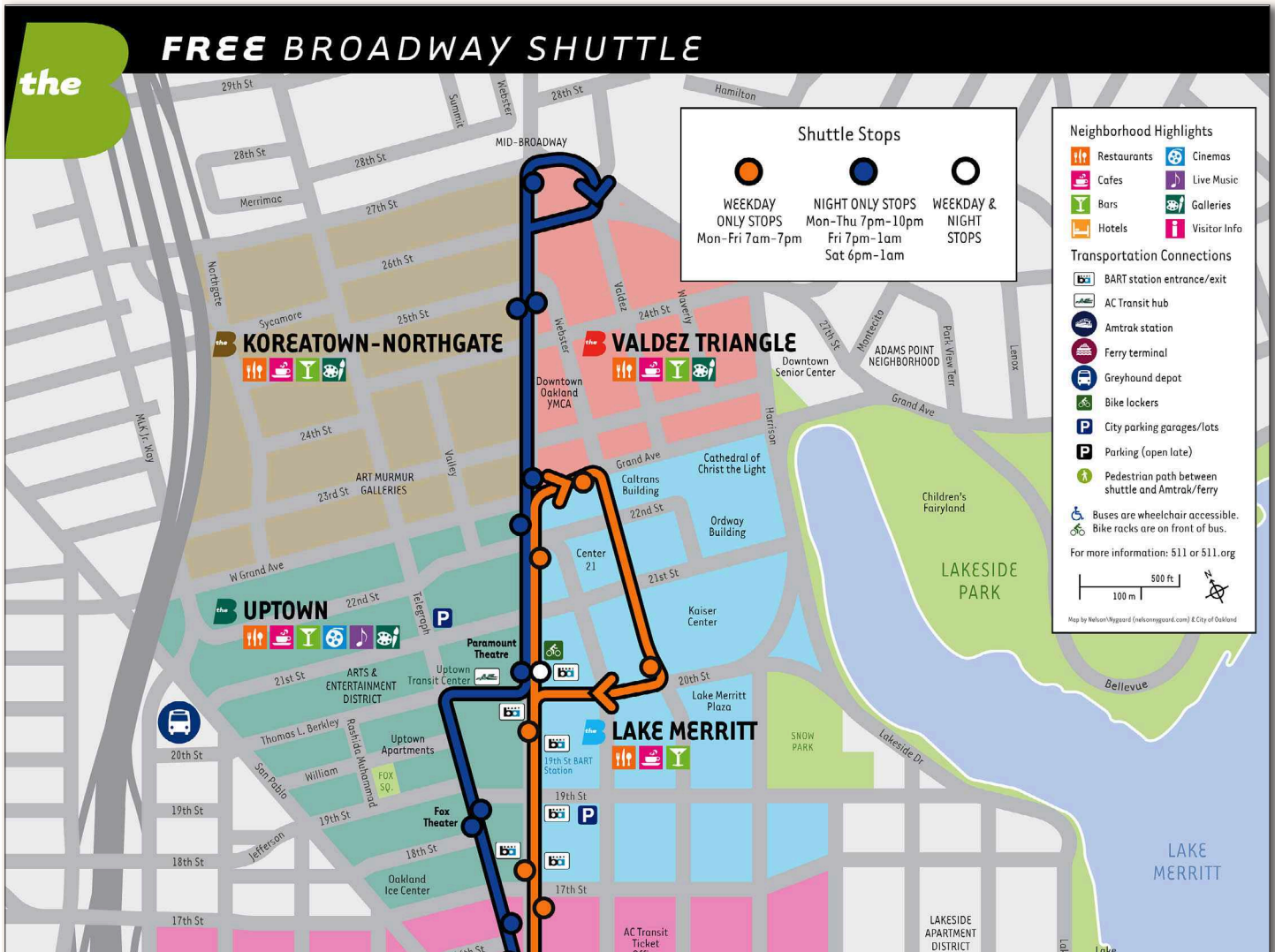
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We live in a world in which people’s experiences are characterized by race, class, gender, profession, language, and other categories. Place It! workshops create a space where participants are comfortable expressing themselves. By working together, and through conversations along the way, differences are peeled away to reveal shared values. When we respect these, we facilitate consensus.

In the coming months, the Diversity Committee plans to hold more of these training workshops. We hope to facilitate creation of a cooperative for planners, instructors, and community organizations to train in this process so they can run their own workshops. Cooperative participants will learn the method, can borrow the bag of objects, and would have to write about the process. The result would be an open source planning process that can be tweaked through participant feedback.

*Miroo Desai, AICP, is APA California Northern’s Diversity Co-Director, APA California’s Inclusionary Director (North), and Senior Planner, City of Emeryville.*

*James Rojas is a globetrotting planner who engages communities in the urban planning process through a unique visualization method using found objects. Rojas, who lives in Alhambra, California, is a member of the California Planning Roundtable and a founder and member of the Latino Urban Forum. More information on Rojas’ Place It! method can be found at <http://www.placeit.org> ■*



Oakland neighborhoods along the north end of the B Route, part of a map by Nelson\Nygaard and City of Oakland.  
 Source: Broadway Shuttle Project Application, March 7, 2012, page 24.

**What do you enjoy most about your neighborhood?**

Great access. When a locality has several names, it usually means that it's transitional and has a lot of potential. We're only a few blocks from 19th Street BART. The "B" runs along Broadway and we're close to the freeway. We are also adjacent to the northwest tip of Lake Merritt, Adams Point, Northgate, and Uptown, and just a block or two from big employers like Kaiser and Pandora Internet Radio.

**What else do you wish your neighborhood offered?**

While there are certainly several thriving businesses in the neighborhood, there are also a number of vacant buildings and underutilized parking lots, so there's a lot of redevelopment potential with little pressure for displacement. We could use a regular grocery store, which would keep some

money in Oakland — there's just a Whole Foods and Sprouts now. I'd like to see residential development, but also more entertainment and shopping. I hope that some of the shopping happens organically and that shop owners can afford the increases in rent. I didn't know about the Broadway/Valdez District Plan when I moved here, but it's exciting to live a plan's implementation.

**What do you see as Oakland's strengths?**

Historically, Oakland has grown because of its access and location. It's accessible from ports, public transit, and converging interstates. Open space is 10 minutes away door-to-door, which is something lacking in many metro areas. And a city is its people. People here seem very open-minded about where the city is going.

(continued on next page)

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

Having our own identity. We are always measuring ourselves against San Francisco. We are similar to Newark, New Jersey, and Long Beach — diverse, unique cities, living in the shadow of their neighbors. Oakland is on the cusp; we should acknowledge that what works in San Francisco might not work here. We need to do our own thing, have a collective vision of what we want, and achieve our best persona in that way. A comprehensive plan for the entire city would help build consensus on our identity. Oakland can be the tree species that thrives beneath the forest canopy of San Francisco.

### Where do you think Oakland's going?

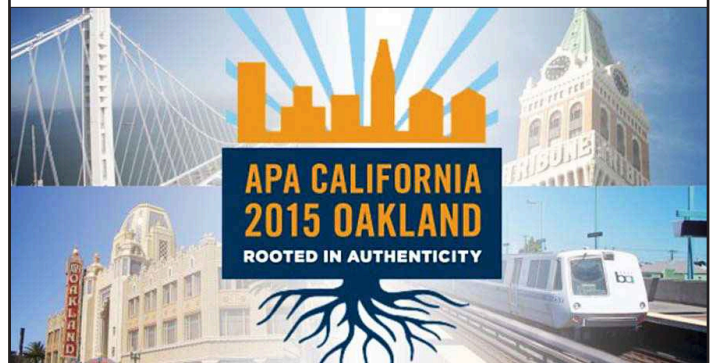
I believe Oakland will overcome its identity challenge, but it could lose its middle class as is happening in many places across the country — including San Francisco. People who want to live in the Bay Area are migrating here, and Oakland has the unique chance to absorb people seeking diversity in a thriving urban environment. As the city evolves, it will need to work on preserving the opportunity for the middle class (and new entrepreneurs) to thrive here, as incoming populations and new ventures could push them out. ■

## Less than three months to the 2015 APA California Conference

**It's time to register.** Early bird registration closes July 31. Check the **conference website** (<http://bit.ly/1pRDDeFe>) for rates and to register online. If you are paying by check, choose 'check' as payment option to finish registering. Just follow the directions from there. The electronic system allows us to better plan and coordinate services.

**Hotels are filling up quickly.** The conference hotel — Marriott Oakland City Center — is full. Rooms are still available at the Waterfront Hotel (<http://bit.ly/1fHLSb3>) located just a short walk (or free shuttle ride) from the Oakland Convention Center. The Courtyard Marriott Oakland Downtown has rooms but is booking quickly. Book now to lock in your conference rate: <http://bit.ly/1fHLVnr>.

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**Europe's climate policies lead to cutting U.S. trees.** "For the sake of a greener Europe, thousands of American trees are falling each month. The popularity of wood pellets as a fuel is being driven largely by European government policies. Facing mandates to cut back on coal, European governments are offering generous subsidies to utility companies that switch to biomass and other renewables. The price break makes wood pellets — easily twice as expensive per ton as coal — affordable. (Wood is less energy-dense than coal, so it takes more of it to produce the same amount of electricity.) For formerly coal-dependent countries such as Britain, wood pellets are an especially attractive option because they can be burned in the country's existing coal-fired power plants without significant modifications." —Joby Warrick, <http://wapo.st/1QGPh5c>

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

**City of Marina/CSU Monterey Bay housing completed.** “The Promontory — a multimillion-dollar CSU Monterey Bay student-housing project — is slated for its ribbon-cutting July 23. The dormitories will help relieve the housing crunch the university has been facing the past few years. The complex is built in Marina, is owned by developer AMCAL General Contractors of Agoura Hills, and will be managed by the university.” —James Herrera, <http://bit.ly/1LbCY2C>

## San Francisco to combat business side of gentrification

*Next City*, July 2, 2015

**Josh Stephens**, <http://bit.ly/1JCXAAs> • “San Francisco’s Mission District, long known for beloved burritos, is also known for gentrification. With an infamous influx of young, well-paid tech workers fueling higher rents, many businesses, restaurants included, are threatened.

“San Francisco Supervisor David Campos has proposed a ballot initiative to prevent the city’s commercial landscape from being overrun by Starbucks and Chipotle. The Legacy Business Historic Preservation Fund would provide up to \$500 in annual assistance per employee and grants of up to \$4.50 per square foot to landlords in exchange for 10-year leases to legacy businesses. Funding for the program, around \$3 million annually, would come from the city’s general fund, which amounts to roughly \$3 billion annually. As proposed, the program would assist up to 300 legacy businesses per year out of an estimated 3,000 such businesses citywide.

“Eligible businesses would be drawn from a legacy business registry, established by the city last year as an initial step toward identifying and supporting threatened businesses. While the city’s challenges with residential gentrification have been well publicized and heated — such that some activists have proposed development moratoriums in neighborhoods like the Mission — support for businesses has been more muted. If passed, the fund would likely be the first such program in the nation. That’s in contrast with the multitude of federal, state, and local programs designed to promote and preserve affordable housing.”

## Tech demand reaches downtown San Jose

*Mercury News*, July 1, 2015

**George Avalos**, <http://bayareane.ws/1CG3iyT> • “The purchase of a South Bay office complex for \$62 million — despite it being only 51 percent occupied — points to the emergence of downtown San Jose as a destination for tech companies, say realty experts. SV Towers has been bought by a real estate venture that wasn’t deterred by the half-empty status of the 413,000-square-foot office center at the northeast corner of East Santa Clara and North 2nd streets.

“San Francisco has landed plenty of tech companies. More recently, downtown Oakland has been attracting technology firms. And now, downtown San Jose has begun to capture tech firms. Despite the resurgence of the downtown, San Jose’s urban core still faces plenty of challenges. Foremost among them: Downtown San Jose doesn’t have very many jobs — about 39,000, compared with 83,000 jobs in downtown Oakland and 317,000 jobs in downtown San Francisco.

“[But] Dice.com and Xactly are among the tech companies that have jumped into downtown San Jose recently. A recent burst of residential construction in the area, with more on the horizon, has helped fuel the interest by tech firms and other tenants to move to downtown San Jose.”

## Santa Rosa to get new greenway

*The Press Democrat*, June 22, 2015

**Angela Hart**, <http://bit.ly/1TBHzMU> • “Community activists who have sought for years to transform a 55-acre strip of vacant land in southeast Santa Rosa into public open space are heralding a milestone in their quest to create a new linear city park.” Ten months after state transportation officials officially rescinded use of the land for extending Highway 12, “plans for the Southeast Greenway are being advanced under a deal that would transfer ownership of the state property to the county and city of Santa Rosa.”

“The Santa Rosa City Council is scheduled to approve an agreement allowing the city to take ownership of the larger share of total acreage. Caltrans is expected to sign off on the agreement. Sonoma Land Trust, the private nonprofit, and

the greenway campaign would be at least partly responsible for fundraising.

“Once the agreement is signed by all the parties, the land will be appraised to determine a purchase price. Any park plans would be subject to accommodate public use.

“LandPaths, the Santa Rosa nonprofit organization, is expected to help build and manage the future park, which could include walking and bicycle paths, restored wildlife habitat, and community gardens. The property consists of grassland, dotted with oak and walnut trees. The public would have a chance to weigh in on park plans, environmental review, and any zoning changes needed after the purchase.”

(Norcal roundup continues on next page)

## Silicon Valley cities unprepared for sea level rise

*Palo Alto Weekly*, June 26, 2015

**Sue Dremann**, <http://bit.ly/1eO5muo> • “The Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury has a message for city and county officials who are dragging their feet regarding sea-level rise: Get with the program.

“Mired in complacency toward what they see as a slow-moving emergency, public agencies are not adequately preparing for future flooding from climate change, the grand jury found after investigating a complaint questioning countywide planning and preparedness related to rising seas.

“Grand jurors made three determinations in their report, ‘A Slow Rising Emergency — Sea Level Rise’: current flood-control measures won’t prevent flooding from higher water levels; cities abutting the bay, along with the county, are inconsistent in their responses to the problem; and not every government entity that should be addressing sea-level rise is doing so.

“Mountain View has done the most to address the problem; Milpitas has done nothing, the grand jury found.

“Palo Alto has done some work — mainly through its plans for San Francisquito Creek. But it is ignorant of other cities’ efforts, and it has focused on sustainability and greenhouse gas reduction, but not sea-level rise, in its Climate Action Plan, the report noted.

“Mountain View has a 12-project plan in place. Its Public Works Department produced a feasibility report and capital improvement program for the Shoreline Regional Park community, which addressed sea-level threats to the entire city.”

## Richmond plans to save decaying houses

*KQED News*, June 5, 2015

**Amanda Font**, <http://bit.ly/1B26Avt> • “The city of Richmond has a zombie problem — houses left abandoned and in extreme states of disrepair for years, some crumbling, others completely gutted by fire. In many cases the owners have died or were forced to walk away due to foreclosure. Richmond estimates there are 1,000 such homes — each one costing the city \$7,000 on average per year in cleanup and policing — and they are a major eyesore. Now the city has a plan to tackle the problem.

“On June 2nd, the Richmond City Council voted to issue \$3 million in social impact bonds to private investors. They’re low-interest loans that will allow funders to front the money for the city to purchase the houses and renovate or rebuild them. Once they sell, the investors get paid back and Richmond has more money to funnel into revitalizing more houses. The city can collect property taxes on the lived-in homes, and the property values in those neighborhoods rise.

“The Richmond Community Foundation is helping to facilitate purchasing the properties, navigating probate to reclaim houses from unresolved estates. Other properties abandoned after the 2008 housing bust will be purchased from the banks that hold the mortgages.

“Once the houses are returned to a livable state, [they will be sold] to low- and middle-income families through a First Time Homebuyer program.

“The City expects the bonds to be filled within 30 to 60 days. They have 10 to 15 houses in their sights to start with, but plan to roll out the revitalization program to many more, bringing new life to many of Richmond’s neighborhoods.

## SF’s Old Mint among 11 most endangered places in US

*SF Heritage*, June 24, 2015

<http://bit.ly/1H8C5n7> • “The National Trust for Historic Preservation has named San Francisco’s Old U.S. Mint to its 2015 list of ‘America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places.’

“Completed in 1874, this National Historic Landmark became a centerpiece in the nation’s financial workings as the 1859 discovery of the Comstock Lode and ensuing Silver Rush fervor gripped the nation. After narrowly surviving the 1906 earthquake and fire, the Old Mint was the only financial institution in the city open for commerce, serving as the depository for the city’s relief fund.

“Today, despite a tech-fueled development in the SoMa neighborhood, the City-owned ‘Granite Lady’ stands shuttered, deteriorating, and at risk of being forgotten. San Francisco Heritage, working alongside the National Trust,

is advocating for the City to remedy this longstanding ‘civic black eye.’ While the Old Mint languishes, the surrounding area is poised for major upzoning, and massive future developments would literally shadow the Old U.S. Mint.

“San Francisco Heritage and the National Trust share long-held community aspirations to remake the Old U.S. Mint into a vibrant cultural destination anchored by a thriving nonprofit partner, using a combination of local, state, federal, private, and philanthropic funds. The building is ideally situated to be a centerpiece of San Francisco’s civic life, geographically close to public transit and a concentration of other cultural institutions and convention facilities in the area.” ■

## Woodland: Nation's first Net Zero multi-family homes for farmworker households

Woodland Daily Democrat, June 30, 2015

**Jim Smith**, <http://bit.ly/1H8DPwW> • “The sun was beating down mercilessly during open house ceremonies for the new Mutual Housing Project. To a great degree, that was the point of the first 100 percent zero net energy rental housing development in the nation. The homes are all electric, no gas. All appliances are energy efficient. The 62 apartments will use a total of about 300,000 kilowatt hours a year, offset through the solar power coming from accumulators on the buildings and over the parking lots.

“And other differences qualify the complex as ‘zero net energy.’ The paints and finishes don’t emit as many toxins. Cabinets and flooring are made of recyclable and long-lasting materials.

“Designed for farm laborers, the homes are wireless-enabled, providing access ports for computers so children can do their homework electronically and families can get online education.

“There are 5,000 farmworkers living in the county. The 62 apartments give 230 people a place to live in safety, be healthy, and grow.”

Former Acting Director of the California Department of Housing and Community Development, Cathy Creswell, said in a LinkedIn posting, “Mutual Housing of California has built homes for farmworkers that allow them to live affordably with dignity and contribute significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The development is also a model for other communities — it enjoyed the support of Woodland public officials and was welcomed by the surrounding neighborhood. This is how California should be building safe, affordable, and green communities across the state.”

**The next big one.** “The Cascadia situation, a calamity in its own right, is also a parable for this age of ecological reckoning, and the questions it raises are ones that we all now face. How should a society respond to a looming crisis of uncertain timing but of catastrophic proportions? How can it begin to right itself when its entire infrastructure and culture developed in a way that leaves it profoundly vulnerable to natural disaster?” — Kathryn Schulz, <http://nyr.kr/1CAQ460>

## Going brown

Los Angeles Times, July 15, 2015

**Matt Stevens**, <http://lat.ms/1CEOAIK> • “The California Water Commission has approved revisions to the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance that severely limit the amount of water that can be used by landscapes surrounding newly constructed buildings such as houses, businesses, and schools.

“Under the new rules, grass will be all but banned in landscapes of new commercial, industrial, and institutional buildings and could consume only about 25 percent of a homeowner’s combined front, back, and side yards. The changes apply to new construction with landscape areas larger than 500 square feet and to existing landscapes larger than 2,500 square feet that undergo complex renovations. Exemptions are included for recreational areas and landscapes irrigated with recycled water.

“Families can still install a small amount of lawn at their homes where children or pets can play. And nonresidential landscapes will be allowed to have a small slice of turf if the rest of the area is covered in plants that use very little water.”

## How to fix California’s housing affordability crisis

San Diego Free Press, July 10, 2015

**Murtaza H. Baxamusa, AICP**, <http://bit.ly/1Lh3Cpa> • “...Market-rate developers in California have no reason to build below-market-rate housing. It does not make economic sense.

“Developers will continue to exploit the toothless planning system in California to minimize affordable housing and maximize profits, unless they are required to play by a different set of rules. This different set of rules has been recently validated by the California Supreme Court, in San Jose’s inclusionary housing law [in which] case developers of new construction over 20 units were required to sell at least 15 percent of the units at affordable prices.

“Inclusionary housing creates balanced communities with enhanced economic opportunity for lower-income families to escape a cycle of poverty. There is no more compelling economic interest for the state today, than the fact that it is too expensive for our workforce to live here. Therefore, the state of California should require developers to include affordable housing for a fifth of all new projects.”

(California continues on next page)

## Makers: Stand up and be counted

*Next City*, June 29, 2015

**Josh Stephens**, <http://bit.ly/1UMcMyq> • “With over 350,000 manufacturing jobs, Los Angeles County has more than any other county in the U.S., and an attendant number of factories. The City of Los Angeles wants more of them. First, though, it has to find the ones it has. That’s why the city recently launched the ‘Make It in L.A.’ survey and a complementary website, [<http://bit.ly/1UMd20m>, to gain] insight into the city’s manufacturing community.

“The city’s hundreds of thousands of jobs tend to be housed in small shops producing and designing specialty items such as medical equipment, apparel, decor, and small, high-tech devices for industries like aerospace or automobiles. [While] the city’s ‘Silicon Beach’ community, anchored by Snapchat, Google, and Yahoo, has a high profile, [the city’s] manufacturing base is diffuse and overwhelmed by the vast L.A. expanse.

“If the survey can identify all of these companies — and determine their needs — the city can then assist them and attract more of them.

“Physical objects must be made somewhere — not just on a computer screen. That means that maker companies need real estate, and the city has slowly been losing industrially zoned lands to other uses. Even so, the types of companies that the city wants to attract might not need large footprints [and] may find neighborhoods willing to accept maker tenants in mixed-use developments or other spaces typically reserved for offices. That’s because today’s maker businesses, especially when defined as those involved in design and marketing, do not come with the noxious hallmarks of their predecessors.”

## Calif. farmers hope to tap city wastewater

*KQED Science*, June 29, 2015

**Lauren Sommer**, <http://bit.ly/1Jtjf9m> • “Modesto’s wastewater treatment plant is undergoing a \$150 million upgrade to meet new water quality requirements. Currently, most of its wastewater is discharged into the San Joaquin River, and to protect the river, the city is being required to meet higher, ‘tertiary,’ standards. New equipment will filter and disinfect the wastewater with ultraviolet light. It won’t be drinking water quality, but, according to state standards, it’ll be clean enough to use on crops.

“In what’s called the North Valley Regional Recycled Water Program, the Del Puerto Water District would construct a six-mile, \$100 million pipeline to carry the wastewater from the city to the Delta Mendota Canal. From there, it would go to the district’s farms.

“The water would be expensive for farmers, four to five times normal prices, but that’s the cost of reliability, [and some] growers are more than willing to pay. The water would meet about one-third of the water district’s ‘hardened’ demand, or the minimal supply it can get by on. The cities of Turlock and Ceres are also looking at joining the project.”

## Stockton approves infrastructure help to jumpstart downtown projects

*Stockton City Limits*, July 8, 2015

**David A. Garcia**, <http://bit.ly/1KZab13> • “The city council has unanimously approved a new tool to jump start large-scale downtown revitalization efforts. By a vote of 6-0 on July 7, the council gave the green light to a Downtown Infill Infrastructure Incentive Program that will provide reimbursements for infrastructure improvements tied to major downtown investments.

“The program aligns with existing city priorities of incentivizing development in Downtown Stockton. Any project with at least 35 market rate residential units or 30,000 square feet of retail or commercial will have access to city funding for infrastructure improvements tied to that specific project. This could include items such as streetscaping, bike lanes, sidewalk improvements, and

utility enhancements that occur within a specific boundary in the greater downtown area. The program will reimburse applicants up to \$900,000 per year for expenses tied to these infrastructure upgrades. Funding will come from a variety of sources such as capital improvement funds, CDBG money, and federal and state grant opportunities.

“Most cities will make public infill improvements without any guarantee that development will follow, but Stockton will require a major investment in downtown before approving city dollars for these upgrades. Any public money spent on infrastructure improvements will have to come with an assurance that a major investment will be made in downtown.”

*(California continues on next page)*



## Rich immigrants can solve L.A.'s housing crisis

*Time Magazine*, June 29, 2015

**Ali Jahangiri, Zocalo Public Square, <http://ti.me/1CIjF8N>**

• “If the city wants affordable homes, it needs to tap into funds from wealthy foreign investors.

“To build apartments that are accessible to low-income residents, high-rent cities across the country have been tapping funds from EB-5, a federal program that offers U.S. green cards to foreigners in exchange for investments in U.S. businesses. The program requires each investor to give at least \$500,000 to a business that provides 10 full-time jobs to Americans.

“The investment ... was rarely used until the Great Recession [and] capital dried up. Since then, developers have embraced EB-5 as an alternative for financing all kinds of construction, including buildings with affordable housing units. San Francisco’s Shipyard development includes several hundred million dollars from EB-5 investors.

“EB-5 funds are relatively cheap capital. Most EB-5 investors want to immigrate to the U.S. to raise families, send children to American universities, and take advantage of entrepreneurial opportunities. That translates into reduced demand for a high rate of return, which ends up costing the borrower less. Developers don’t have to put as much cash into projects, maintaining equity amounts of just 15 to 25 percent of total project cost.

“Los Angeles developers with EB-5 have focused on building hotels — an easier route to show job creation. Affordable housing advocates would do well to look into EB-5 funding as an alternative source for financing mixed-use projects that include affordable and workforce housing.”

## Two contrary experts agree LA needs more multifamily housing

*GlobeSt.com*, June 3, 2015

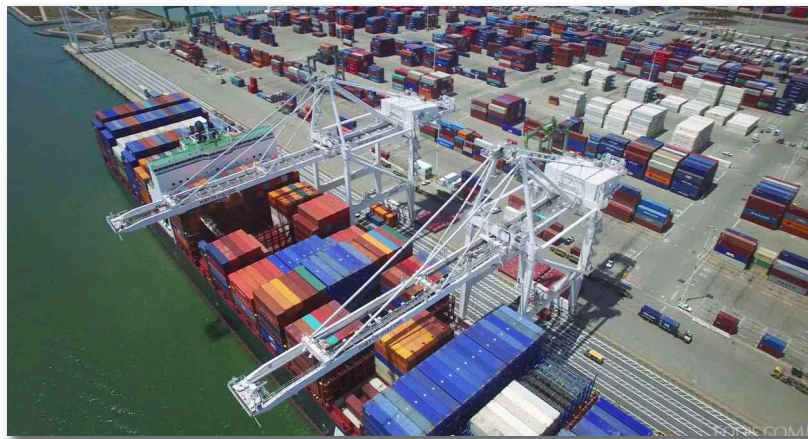
**Kelsi Maree Borland, <http://bit.ly/1EXGQeP>** •

“LOS ANGELES — At a recent Urban Land Institute breakfast, market experts Wendell Cox, principal of public policy consulting at Demographia, and Dowell Myers, professor at the Sol Price School of Public Policy at USC, went head to head about housing affordability and demographic trends.

“Cox took the position that smart growth or urban containment was the cause of affordability issues. He said Los Angeles in the densest city in the country, with some suburbs that are twice as dense as suburbs of New York City. His solution: develop more multifamily housing on the urban fringe to spread the densities and increase the urban sprawl.

“Myers, a supporter of smart growth, [agreed] we have a dense population, [but noted that] Los Angeles is predicted to achieve a population of 12 million by 2060, a dramatic decrease from previous predictions. His answer: build more apartments in dense, infill settings [to] curb sprawl and help affordability. Additionally, the millennial generation is not moving toward home ownership and will remain apartment renters for longer than previous generations.

“Although the two market experts presented contrary views on density, they agreed that more multifamily development was a necessity.” ■



**Trucking on 880.** “The Port of Oakland is the fifth-busiest container port in the US. Here’s what it looks like when container cargo is unloaded from ships by massive cranes. Be sure the watch in fantastic 4K UHD” (3:43). Mute the sound and fly like a bird. <https://youtu.be/EmymvXhqUOo>

## The Really Big One — not here, but a chilling tale

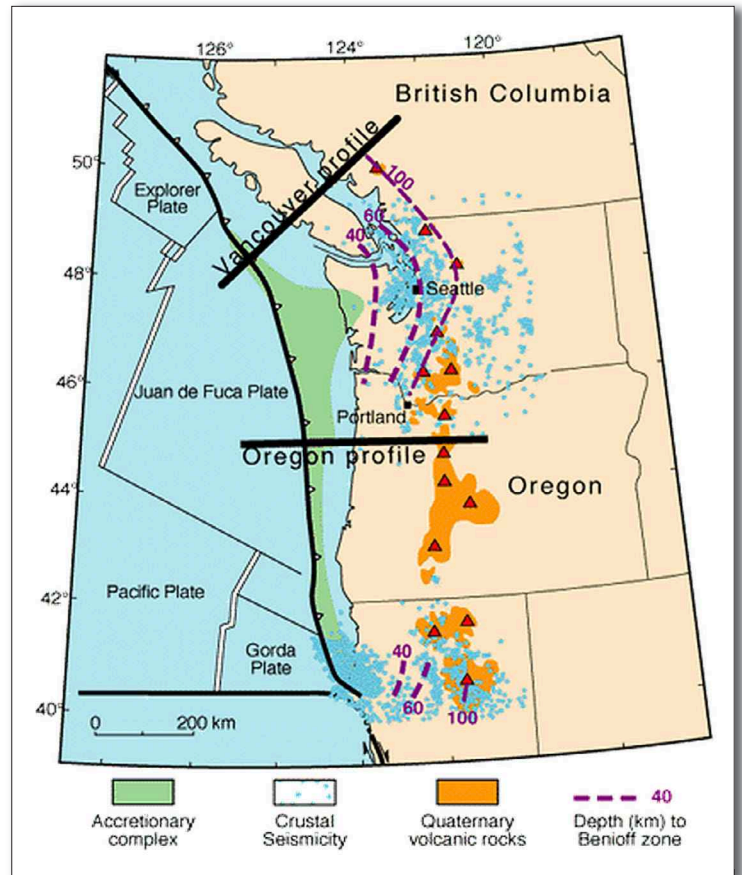
*The New Yorker*, July 20, 2015 issue

**Kathryn Schulz**, <http://nyr.kr/1CAQ460> • “The next full-margin rupture of the Cascadia subduction zone will spell the worst natural disaster in the history of the continent. The question is when.

“When the next very big earthquake hits, the north-west edge of the continent, from California to Canada and the continental shelf to the Cascades, will drop by as much as six feet and rebound 30 to 100 feet to the west—losing, within minutes, all the elevation and compression it has gained over centuries. Some of that shift will take place beneath the ocean, displacing a colossal quantity of seawater. (Watch what your fingertips do when you flatten your hand.) The water will surge upward into a huge hill, then promptly collapse. One side will rush west, toward Japan. The other side will rush east, in a 700-mile liquid wall that will reach the Northwest coast, on average, 15 minutes after the earthquake begins. By the time the shaking has ceased and the tsunami has receded, the region will be unrecognizable.

“Kenneth Murphy, who directs FEMA’s Region X, the division responsible for Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Alaska, says, ‘Our operating assumption is that everything west of Interstate 5 will be toast.’”

**Andrew Revkin** writes on July 13, <http://nyti.ms/1CAQEBm>, “[T]he inevitable seismic disaster [is] building day by day. Strain is growing along the Cascadia fault beneath the seabed offshore and, as seismologist Chris Goldfinger told Schulz, ‘[T]he gap between what we know and what we should do about it is getting bigger and bigger.’ [And] this particular earthquake threat [poses] danger to hundreds of unreinforced schools.”



Cascadia Subduction Zone. Source: <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/data/crust/cascadia.php>

## ‘In flood-prone areas, a rising tide of population’

*Brookings*, July 14, 2015

**Joseph Kane** and **Robert Puentes**, <http://brook.gs/1IZ5x1y>

• “Recently, we highlighted how the population is surging in some of the most drought-stricken areas of the country, straining water infrastructure in California, Nevada, and other parts of the Southwest. Yet, many flood-prone regions are also seeing an uptick in population as well, leading to additional concerns over the resilience of their existing water systems in the face of greater climate pressures, investment needs, and an assortment of governance challenges.

“While the risk of flooding can fluctuate daily, several areas have historically absorbed the brunt of damage, including those near low-lying coastal lands or major inland waterways. As part

of the National Flood Insurance Program, FEMA tallies the total number of flood losses in each locality. The count reveals a remarkable concentration of damage in many of the country’s fastest-growing markets.

“Although numerous flood-prone areas in Louisiana have shed thousands of residents in the wake of destructive storms, many vulnerable parts of Texas, Florida, and New York continue to record large population gains. Likewise, Miami-Dade County and Broward County in Florida, and Nassau County and Suffolk County in New York, four counties with mounting flood concerns, have attracted more than 880,000 people combined over the same span.”

(U.S. continues on next page)

## Hopkins Minnesota tests art-filled avenue

*Finance & Commerce*, July 10, 2015

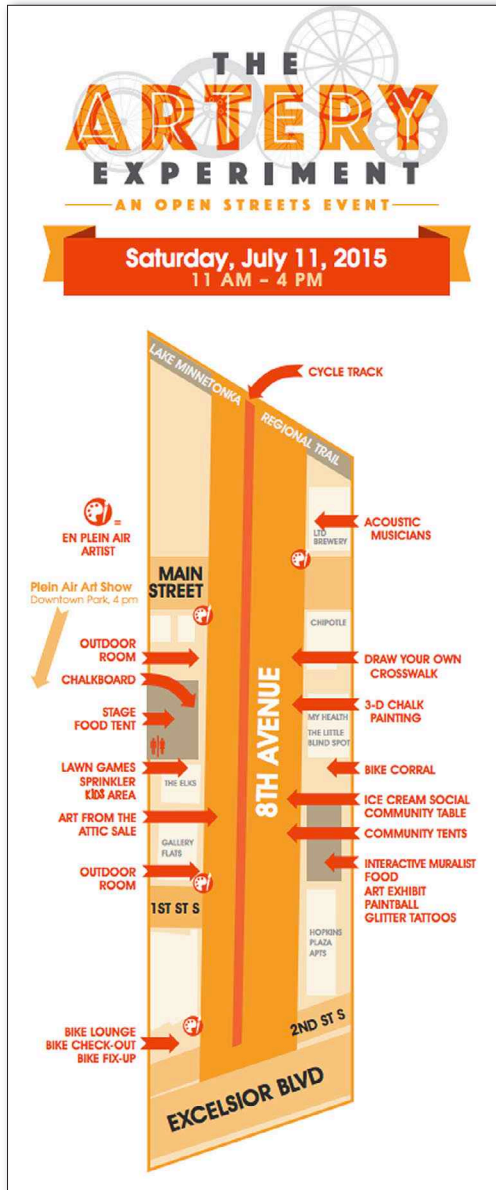
**Cali Owings**, <http://bit.ly/1NZbryW> • “Hopkins tested a new concept for Eighth Avenue on Saturday, July 11, with a temporary installation of art, outdoor furniture, and a cycle track.

“The city plans to reconstruct Eighth Avenue as ‘The Artery’ — an art-filled connection between its historic downtown and a future stop on the Southwest light rail line from Minneapolis to Eden Prairie. On Saturday, proposed elements of the new street were demonstrated while the city gathered feedback for the project’s final design.

“The city’s ‘experiment’ is a low-cost way to bring in temporary versions of the project elements to help residents get a feel for what it will be like after reconstruction.

“The Artery was planned as a way to draw future transit riders into downtown Hopkins, since the rail stop is farther south at Excelsior Boulevard and Eighth Avenue. To open up space for pedestrians and a two-way off-road bike track, Eighth Avenue will be converted into a one-way street between First Street South and Main Street [see map].

“The estimated cost of the project is \$2.8 million. So far, the city has received more than \$2 million in grants from Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council. Property owners will not be assessed for the project. Construction is planned for 2016.”



Eighth Avenue ‘Artery’ proposal. Source: [hopkinsmn.com/events/artery/artery-handout.pdf](http://hopkinsmn.com/events/artery/artery-handout.pdf)

## Supreme Court decision strikes down Arizona sign law’

*American Planning Association*, June 18, 2015

<http://bit.ly/1LoNmnu> • “The U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Reed v. Town of Gilbert, Arizona*, is likely to affect sign rules and regulations in many communities across the country. In a unanimous decision, the Court concluded that the town’s sign code regulated based on content. This decision reverses a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision [but] did not overrule any existing precedents.

“A clear majority — six justices — continue to believe that certain kinds of distinctions, such as those between

on-premises and off-premises signs, between signs on commercial property and signs on residential property, and signs with fixed messages and electronic signs with changing messages, may continue to be regulated locally.

“APA in conjunction with a group of national, state, and local government organizations had argued that adoption of the strict scrutiny test has the potential to invalidate nearly all sign codes in the country.”

(U.S. continues on next page)

## Seattle's single-family neighborhoods may just become denser

*Next City*, July 14, 2015

**Jen Kinney**, <http://bit.ly/1RAIK1C> • “For Seattle to remain affordable, the city will have to grow taller and denser, says Mayor Ed Murray’s task force on housing affordability. At the heart of the recommendations, released July 13, is what Murray is calling ‘the grand bargain.’ Residential developers will be allowed to build taller in newly developed ‘upzones,’ in return for either building affordable housing units in their projects or paying into a fund for the city to build them. Commercial developers will pay a linkage fee based on square footage to fund affordable housing.

“The status of Seattle’s iconic single-family neighborhoods became a contentious flashpoint a week earlier when the *Seattle Times* (July 7, <http://bit.ly/1TsjPuB>) leaked a draft of the recommendations (<http://bit.ly/1Tskaxe>) that suggested the ‘single family’ designation would be eliminated altogether. But the final proposal didn’t do away with them. Instead, it recommends that the 94 percent of single-family neighborhoods not being upzoned become denser by allowing more types of small-scale multifamily housing, including duplexes, triplexes, and backyard cottages.

“Under the proposal, residential projects taking advantage of upzones will be permitted an extra one or two stories and they will need to make 5 to 7 percent of their units affordable to households with incomes at or below 60 percent of area median income. In Seattle, that’s \$54,000 per year for a family of four.

“The upzones mostly encompass areas of the city with already significant density, including the downtown area and designated urban villages. However, about 6 percent of single-family zoned neighborhoods — those adjacent to denser urban villages — will be upzoned as well.”

## St. Louis: Urban farmer uses rooftop and food to spur renewal

*The New York Times*, July 1, 2015

**Joe Gose**, <http://nyti.ms/1Kz5QBA> • “A two-story concrete building on the edge of downtown St. Louis is bearing its heaviest load 88 years after construction. Mary Ostafi, an architect who founded the nonprofit Urban Harvest STL in 2011, has led an effort to dump some 40 tons of dirt on the building’s 9,000-square-foot roof and grow organic vegetables in a venture called the Food Roof Farm.

“Mrs. Ostafi sees the project fostering a lumbering urban revitalization in St. Louis, which has seen its core downtown population increase 133 percent, to 8,300 residents, over the last 10 years during a conversion of old commercial buildings into loft apartments. ‘St. Louis is definitely a one-block-at-a-time kind of city, and it starts with grass-roots initiatives,’ she said.

“While Urban Harvest STL’s undertaking represents the first roof farm in downtown St. Louis, precursors have sprouted in New York, Seattle, Chicago, and Milwaukee. ‘For community development and redevelopment, I see food roofs as the fastest-growing green roof sector, at least east of the Rocky Mountains,’ said Anthony Mayer, chief executive of Hanging Gardens of Milwaukee.

“Mrs. Ostafi views the Food Roof Farm as the first of many. ‘To be self-sufficient, we’ll need to scale up to several more rooftops to where they’re generating the revenue needed to support expenses,’ she said. ‘But we want to learn how to do it right, so that’s exactly what we’re going to do for the next couple of years.’” ■

**“Nobody can figure out how to fix San Francisco’s housing crisis.** When I asked Corey Cook, Professor of American Politics at the University of San Francisco, about what the future holds for San Francisco, he told me, ‘Absent substantial public investment in affordable housing at the federal, state, and local level (much of which will not be forthcoming), changes in state law to protect tenants (which it appears the legislature will not enact), and regional cooperation to build affordable and moderate income housing particularly on the peninsula, I think the best we can hope for is some mitigation of the most extreme social dislocations in the city — using the limited policy tools to prevent evictions, utilize public resources to build affordable housing, support residents in public and subsidized housing with high quality integrated social services, and maintain strong inclusionary zoning policies — and hope to wait out this cycle.’” George McIntire, <http://bit.ly/1JefzDA>

## Time for new approach to fixing Christchurch

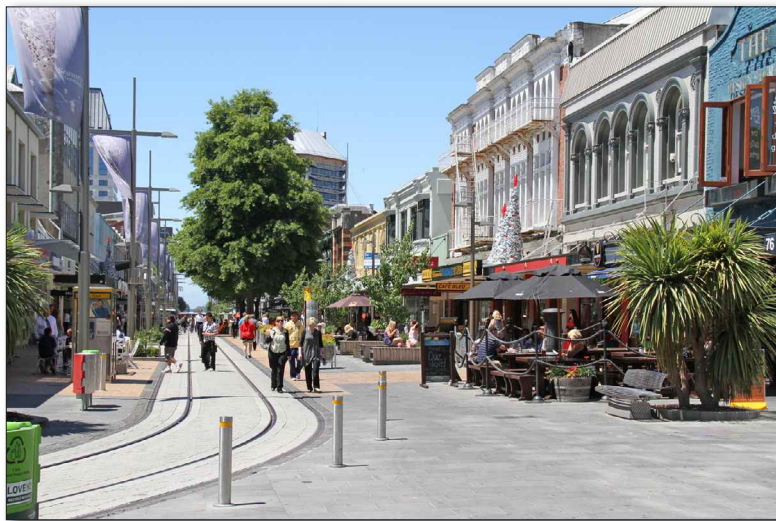
*The Press*, July 8, 2015

**David Killick**, <http://bit.ly/1JZepFM> • “Nearly five years after the earthquakes, it’s time for a new approach to fixing Christchurch. Many of the challenges we face pre-date the earthquakes; the quakes simply exacerbated them. It is not just a case of putting the city back the way it was before — even if that were possible, it wouldn’t be the best solution for the 21st century.

“Who funds what will be a case for ongoing debate. Some developments would be better funded by private enterprise, not by the state or ratepayers. Creating the conditions for businesses to succeed, however, is very much the role of government, both local and national.

“The ‘CBD’ is no longer merely a central business district. It will be a place for some businesses and retail, for entertainment and the arts — and increasingly a place for people to live.

“Christchurch is not merely the central city. Rather than the present model of residential subdivisions sprouting up on the city fringe with no thought of how they connect, encourage outlying townships to grow as centers for housing, business, and entertainment. Make them self-contained, attractive places you would want to live in.



**Christchurch on November 28, 2010, three months before the earthquake.**  
Photo: Chandler Lee.

“Affordable, warm, safe, durable housing should be a right. We need more multipurpose housing to cater for changing demographics, including more singles and elderly. It is not just about increasing supply but balancing demand.”

## Climate change boosted European heat wave

*CBC News*, July 3, 2015

**Thomson Reuters**, <http://bit.ly/1Hpo0zH> • “As Germany and Spain sweated and London sweltered through its hottest July day on record, scientists said it is ‘virtually certain’ that climate change is increasing the likelihood of such heat waves in Europe. In real-time data analysis released on July 3rd, a team of international climate scientists from universities, meteorological services, and research organizations said the kind of heat waves hitting Europe this week — defined as three-day periods of excessive heat — are becoming much more frequent in the region.

“The heat wave analysis, which looked at five European cities, is part of a World Weather Attribution program led

by Climate Central, a U.S.-based science journalism organization, and supported by scientists from organizations around the world, including Oxford University, the University of Melbourne, the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute, and van Aalst’s Climate Centre.

“The program aims to use climate and weather data, forecasting, and climate models to show how changing weather patterns are linked to climate change. It hopes to help cities and countries better understand and prepare for more extreme weather like [July’s] scorching days in Europe.”

*(World continues on next page)*

**“Electric vehicle infrastructure is famously difficult to access and navigate.** What’s more, while the city [San Francisco] can place chargers on city-owned land, it doesn’t have any kind of zoning program to designate where else chargers go. Any business or retail property owner can choose to put a charger on his or her property, which doesn’t necessarily make for an ideal match-up between chargers and EVs. Still, that’s how gas stations work.” —Rachel Dovey, <http://bit.ly/1O7RupU>

## Golf course repurposed for Kyoto's largest solar power plant

*Inhabit*, July 2, 2015

**Taflin Laylin**, <http://bit.ly/1guTein> • “Kyocera has broken ground on Kyoto’s largest solar power plant on an abandoned golf course. Golf courses have long been the bane of environmentalists, who consider them a waste of space and natural resources. Now the Japanese electronics company is availing themselves of the same properties that make the ideal golf course to build solar power plants. With expansive sunny spaces and minimal shade cover, abandoned golf courses in both Kyoto and Kagoshima Prefectures will soon host two new solar power plants with a combined capacity of 115MW.

“The Kyoto power plant will generate an estimated 26,312 megawatt hours of solar energy per year — sufficient to power 8,100 typical local households, the company said of its joint venture with Century Tokyo Leasing Corporation.

“The two companies have embarked on another, larger, solar project in Kagoshima Prefecture. A stretch of land originally slated to become a golf course more than 30 years ago was never developed as such. Instead, the companies will construct a 92MW solar power plant at the abandoned site.”

## Paris approves first skyscraper in over 40 years

*CNBC*, July 1, 2015

**Kayleena Makortoff**, <http://cnb.cx/1CfepOX> • “Ushering in construction for a controversial 590-foot building in the south of the city, the Paris city council approved the privately-backed \$555 million ‘Tour Triangle’ in June, with 87 votes in favor and 74 votes against, following months of opposition.

“The pyramid-shaped building will be roughly the same height as the ‘Gherkin’ skyscraper in London’s financial district, but around half the height of New York’s Empire State building.

“Tour Triangle, to be designed by the Swiss architectural firm Herzog & de Meuron, will feature offices, a conference center, restaurant, and a 120-room hotel.

“Construction is expected to begin near the end of 2016 and be completed by 2020.”

## China will move government from Beijing to new town

*The New York Times*, June 25, 2015

**Ian Johnson**, <http://nyti.ms/1KgFwub> • “Chinese officials are finalizing plans to move Beijing’s municipal government to a satellite town, Tongzhou. The move [recognizes] ever-worsening traffic problems and widespread destruction of Beijing’s old city.

“Officials have been slowly unveiling an ambitious plan to create a new urban cluster of 130 million people [called Jing-Jin-Ji,] that would be the size of Kansas. The idea is to promote less haphazard growth by developing coordinated urban belts and corridors.

“A new municipal government center of Tongzhou would help this project — it lies in Beijing’s eastern suburbs near Hebei Province. In theory, this could allow the municipal government to focus on regional integration and economic development, while leaving the city center to China’s national ministries.

“For decades, moving government offices outside Beijing has been a taboo subject. In the 1950s, prominent architect and urban planner Liang Sicheng proposed building an administrative center outside the old city. Communist China’s first leader, Mao Zedong, and his associates, rejected the idea as running against the revolution. Instead, they put national ministries and the urban administration of their capital in the old city, purposefully using palaces and parks to symbolize the Communists’ overturning of the old order.

“Over the years, this has meant the destruction of the old city as alleys, temples, city walls, and old buildings were torn down for an ever-expanding bureaucracy.”

*(World continues on next page)*

**Et tu Britanica?** “The worst scenario is an end to Wikipedia, not with a bang but with a whimper: a long, slow decline in participation, accuracy, and usefulness that is not quite dramatic enough to jolt the community into making meaningful reforms. No effort in history has gotten so much information at so little cost into the hands of so many — a feat made all the more remarkable by the absence of profit and owners. In an age of Internet giants, this most selfless of websites is worth saving.”

—Andrew Lih, <http://nyti.ms/1dam6do>

## How to navigate a city without using street names

*The Guardian*, June 2, 2015

**Jenny Gustafsson**, <http://bit.ly/1Fv9bL5> • “It’s Saturday afternoon in Beirut. An event has invited people to one of the city’s old stairways, and a girl at the bottom of the stairs is giving directions over the phone: ‘You know that small corner shop with the sleeping dog outside? That’s it, I’m here.’”

“Try to locate any place in the Lebanese capital and you will hear details and places, not street names or numbers. To find someone’s home or office, the best bet is to find landmarks. Official addresses may exist, but won’t be of much help because no one uses them.

“In 2005, Bahi Ghubril — a Lebanese brought up in London — realized he couldn’t go anywhere without getting lost and ‘decided to map the streets and local points of reference.’ He also ‘mapped the buses [and] exactly where to catch

them.’ Indeed, Google Maps took the idea of adding landmarks to maps from its team in India, where winding and unpredictable roads, informal neighborhoods, and a makeshift economy make cities highly communicative places.

“Yatin Pandya, an architect from Ahmedabad, agrees the notion of location in Indian cities is highly social and visual. ‘Addresses are very detailed references with directions like nearby, opposite, and in between, because roads often have no signs.’ Instead they tend to take literal names like ‘The Road with the Oak Tree.’”

“Beirut does the same, says Ghubril. ‘Officially there’s a Baalbek Street, but everyone calls it Commodore Street because of the Commodore Cinema, which no longer exists, but the Commodore Hotel does, and that helps!’”

## Ringstrasse’s 150th birthday celebrated

*GlobalSitePlans.com*, May 7, 2015

**Ajit Niranjani**, <http://bit.ly/1IaZhmV> • “The Viennese Ring is one of the most culturally, architecturally, and historically significant streets in the world. The five-kilometer-long promenade celebrated its 150th birthday on May 1st.

“The Ringstrasse was built on the site of the former city walls after the short-lived Viennese Revolution in 1848. The defensive walls, dating back to the 13th century, had successfully repelled the invading Ottoman Empire twice before. However, the introduction of firearms now rendered them largely obsolete. On May 1, 1865, Emperor Franz Josef I ordered their demolition and subsequent replacement with a grand boulevard showcasing the wealth and splendor of the Habsburg Empire.

“The result was a masterpiece of urban planning that is still marveled at today. Along with the magnificent array of royal palaces, theatres, museums, and opera houses, a selection of more democratic buildings were constructed around the Ring — such as the City Hall, Parliament, and University. Such a large-scale construction project, set against the tumultuous backdrop of war-torn 19th Century Europe, was unprecedented at the time.

“But for the urban planners of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it may have been born out of necessity. Amid rising public discontent for the ruling elite, the once-protective city walls came to be seen as a symbol of oppression [that] segregated the working-class suburbs from the ruling nobility in the center.”



**Ringstrasse, Vienna.** The ring road bends around the core (to the right in this photo). The cars and tram are leaving Schubert Ring (foreground) and entering Karntner Ring. Photo: Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP



**The neo-Renaissance Vienna State Opera.** Built on the Ringstrasse, the building opened in 1869. Heavily damaged in World War II, it was reconstructed and reopened in 1955. Photo: Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP ■

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- Raise member awareness and involvement in APA affairs;
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