

NORTHERN NEWS



American Planning Association
California Chapter
Northern
Making Great Communities Happen

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

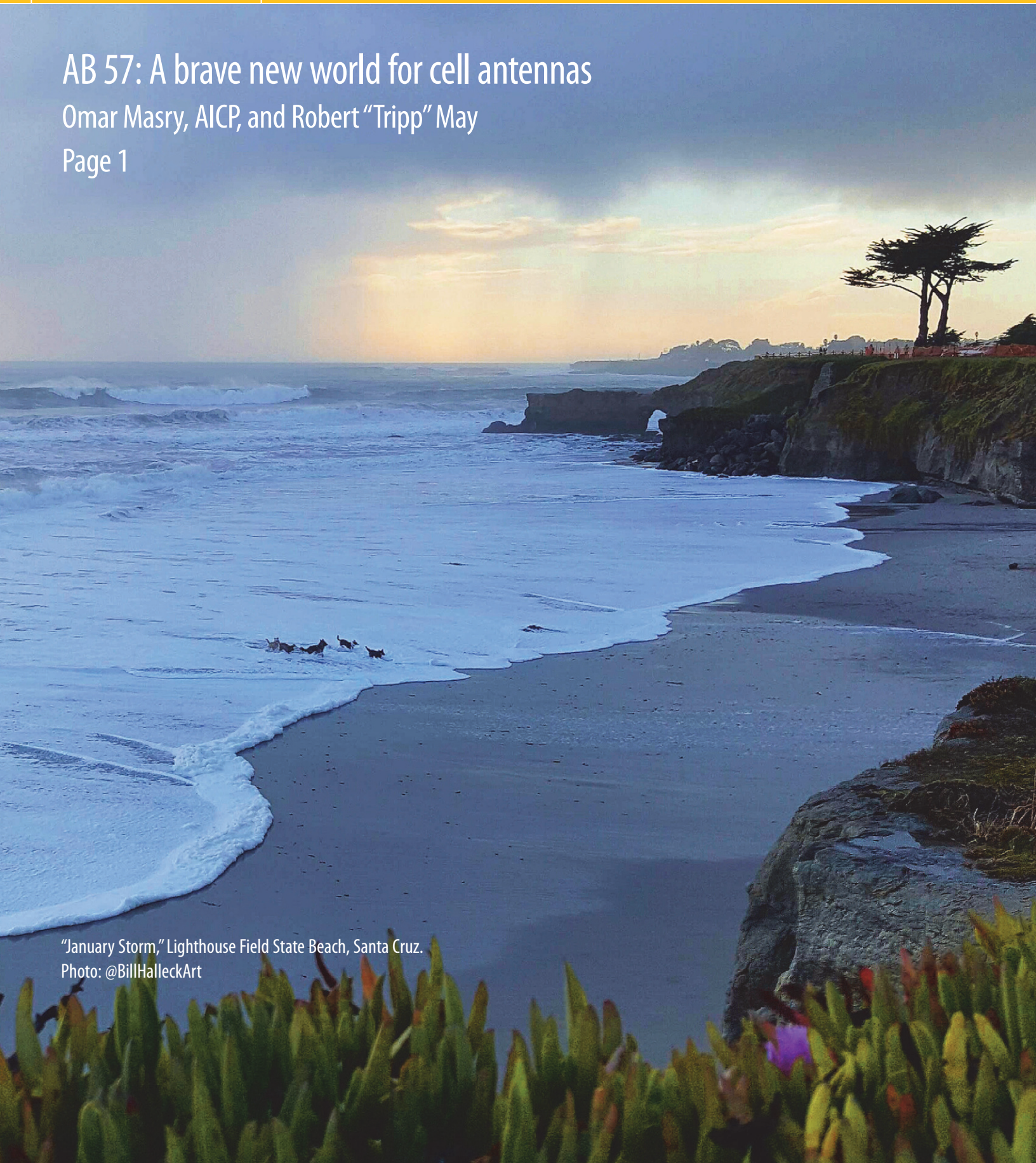
FEBRUARY 2016



AB 57: A brave new world for cell antennas

Omar Masry, AICP, and Robert "Tripp" May

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"January Storm," Lighthouse Field State Beach, Santa Cruz.

Photo: @BillHalleckArt



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AB 57: A brave new world for cell antennas and towers in California

Omar Masry, AICP, and Robert “Tripp” May

Effective January 1, 2016, all wireless permit applications will be subject to an automatic approval rule under either California or federal law. In early 2015, the FCC promulgated a “deemed-granted” rule for applications for less-than-substantial requests for collocations or modifications to existing facilities pending for more than 60 days. In late 2015, the California legislature adopted AB 57 (Quirk), a new state statute codified Government Code Section 65964.1 (see <http://bit.ly/1RcnIpb>), which deems approved all applications for new sites after 150 days and all collocations not covered under the FCC’s rules after 90 days.

AB 57 turns the development process in California upside down to accelerate wireless infrastructure deployment. Whereas applicants must normally submit at least a complete permit application before it becomes entitled to an approval, AB 57 merely requires a submittal without an approval or denial within a specified period. Even the “deemed approval” provisions in the California Permit Streamlining Act required the applicant to complete CEQA review and observe due process, but now AB 57 grants wireless site projects a free pass irrespective of environmental or constitutional concerns.

The California legislature adopted this radical departure from orderly and deliberate deployment decisions about more-or-less permanent installations despite a consistent refusal from the FCC to grant the same extraordinary privileges to these applicants. Wireless lobbyists twice petitioned the FCC for deemed-granted permits for any wireless site application, and twice went home empty handed. In both instances, the FCC felt that too many complex and important issues are at stake to simply deem any permit granted.

Nevertheless, AB 57 is the law in California. Local governments, their planners, public works engineers, officials, and elected representatives must learn to navigate

the new law. This article introduces planners to AB 57 and provides some real-world applications.

Which Shot Clock?

At its core, AB 57 automatically deems approved any application for a new or substantially changed wireless site after the FCC’s “shot clock” expires. Those shot clock rules established “presumptively reasonable” times to process an application for a new site (150 days) or a collocation (90 days), after which an applicant could sue to force a decision.

The distinction between a new site and collocation seems simple enough, but people often disagree over which clock applies. For example, most municipalities define a collocation to mean two wireless facilities on the same structure, but wireless industry lawyers sometimes claim that new wireless equipment added to *any* existing structure (whether it has wireless equipment or not) qualifies as a collocation subject to the 90-day clock. In contrast to both definitions, the FCC said in 2009 that a 90-day collocation means an application “does not involve a substantial increase in the size of a tower,” and a tower means a structure solely or primarily intended to support wireless antennas. So what’s a collocation?

For AB 57 purposes, the FCC’s 2009 rule applies. Unless a shorter shot clock applies (and yes, they exist), municipalities must process less-than-substantial increases in the size of a tower in 90 days or less. New sites, and substantial changes to existing sites, must be processed in 150 days or less.

Exceptions to “pause” the Shot Clocks

There are two “pause” mechanisms that apply to these 90- and 150-day clocks. The first exception applies if a carrier submits an application and the local government provides

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Director's note

By Andrea Ouse, AICP

Happy New Year!

Planners, by nature, are forward-thinkers. We favor the dynamic over the apathetic. A new year, at least symbolically, provides us an opportunity to reflect on the past year — and more importantly, on our path forward in the coming year.

Northern Section's major accomplishment in 2015 was the immensely successful APA California Chapter Conference in downtown Oakland. Together with the 1,900 who attended, we recognized great planning work and the professionals who drive success, all the while expanding and defining our individual professional practice. The impressive efforts of the Conference Host Committee paid off, and the Northern Section membership, in addition to being proud of what we accomplished, will enjoy the fiscal benefits brought by a well-managed and popular conference: over the next eight years, our events and professional development programs will be funded by net revenues from the conference.

With the goal of unifying our members around a vision for our organization and a course for the Northern Section in 2016, we will hold our annual Board Retreat on January 30th. We'll consider new appointments to the Board, discuss and adopt an annual budget, and develop new goals, actions, and responsibilities aligned with the general goals of APA California. Board members will be divided into work groups on communications, membership, and bylaws. I look forward to working with the Board in paving a productive and ambitious path towards continuing success for the Northern Section.

I participated in the annual Chapter Board Meeting and Retreat on January 15–16 in Burbank, not far from the Pasadena Convention Center, the site of the 2016 APA California Chapter Conference October 22–25.

The retreat included a visit to the APA California Planning Archives at California State University, Northridge. The Chapter Planning Archives were established in 1998 to help document the history and practice of planning and to record the evolution of APA in California. Material and financial donations to the archives are always welcome. We are constantly creating history and need to support the archival work and space financially. Contact Chapter Historians Steve Preston, FAICP, at spreston@sgch.org, or J. Laurence Mintier, FAICP, at mintier@mintierharnish.com for more information.

The APA California Chapter Board adopted a 2016 Budget and received updates from the Executive Board and the Section Directors. We also received an update from the California Planning Roundtable (CPR). CPR is an organization of experienced planning professionals — public, private, and academic — from across the state who provide policy research and development resources for the planning profession. CPR provides guidance on emerging policy issues, such as the recently-published "Social Determinants of Health for Planners: Live, Work, Play, Learn!" — a paper that offers a deeper understanding of public health approaches and the value these methodologies can bring to planning practice. The paper provides an introduction for planners to social determinants of health to ensure that these factors are considered throughout the decision-making planning process. Check out this publication, as well as other great work produced by CPR, at www.cproundtable.org.

I look forward to an amazing 2016 for our members. With the hard work and dedication of our Board, we will continue on track towards providing extraordinary professional development and networking opportunities for Northern Section! ■

Meet a local planner

By Siân Llewellyn, AICP

Samuel (Sam) Herzberg, AICP, is a senior planner with the San Mateo County Parks Department in Redwood City. He is also a drummer and has been a member of APA since 1999.

Tell us about yourself and how you became interested in planning.

I grew up in San Francisco; I'm the third generation in my family from here. My parents were high school history/social studies/economics teachers. Dad used to tell me stories of what things were like in his childhood; what it was like to be a kid in San Francisco in the 1930s. I was enthralled by this — imagining how folks lived, the shape of the city, what it was then, and how it got to be the way it is now. The constant reinvention of the landscape fascinated me and made me wonder — what will the next generation do with our urban and rural landscape?

I went to Lick-Wilmerding High School and San Francisco State. I bounced between majors for a few years — forestry or biology, then radio and TV broadcasting — I had a lot of different plans. I had been playing drums and percussion, and in the mid-1980s I toured California and England with the band *Mrs. Green*. My band got some traction, so I quit college for two years and toured California full time, made a record, and toured England. When I came back home, I decided that music was my hobby but not my career choice, and I returned to San Francisco State. I graduated in 1989 with a bachelor's in geography (emphasis on land use planning and natural resource management).

My first job was a water resources technician with Alameda County Public Works, monitoring rainfall, surface runoff, and groundwater, and implementing the public education component of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program. Budget cutbacks led me to the San Mateo County Planning Department where I served as a current planner and natural resource planner for not



quite 10 years, until 1999. Then I moved to the San Mateo County Parks Department as their senior planner. I guess you could say I'm a hybrid and not your average planner.

Tell us about your work approach and favorite projects.

I completed a master's degree in urban and regional planning at San Jose State University while working full time in the San Mateo County Planning Department. I was able to use my work in my studies and vice versa. One of my initial responsibilities in the County Planning Department was assisting in

administering the formation of the City/County Association of Governments for three and a half years. This involved me in subregional transportation planning, airport planning, and implementation of the storm water pollution prevention program. Working with this variety, I began to understand the importance of regional planning to accomplish comprehensive consensus-based solutions to problems that could not be solved within individual jurisdictional boundaries. In my subsequent planning and park career at the county, I have had the opportunity to serve on a number of regional planning and conservation efforts, where regional approaches were often a more cost-effective and efficient means for delivering services.

One favorite project has been the Devil's Slide Trail, a very recent and major link in the California Coastal Trail. San Mateo County voters passed Measure T in favor of the Devil's Slide tunnel instead of the surface highway bypass proposed by Caltrans. I completed the Local Coastal Plan Amendment and served as staff during monthly meetings of Devil's Slide Task Force. We assisted Caltrans in emergency repairs/dewatering, securing funding for the project, and completing the environmental review for the tunnel project.

(continued on next page)

While in Parks, I developed the RFP to select a contractor team to improve the Devil's Slide Coastal Trail within a year, assisted in development and review of design plans, and developed a series of interpretive signs for the Coastal Trail. I also had a chance to develop a sign and recognition ceremony for Ollie Mayer, California's first female engineer who, as a Sierra Club leader, fought Caltrans for 50 years over an alternative to the bypass and in favor of the tunnel. The Devil's Slide Coastal Trail has received five awards, and is now up for a National APA award.

I am currently reviewing plans for the Green Valley Trail section of the California Coastal Trail South of Devil's Slide to Grey Whale Cove, and working on the County's acquisition of the Pedro Point Headlands to the north, and on the environmental review and permitting of trail improvements and restoration of damage caused during its former use as a motorcycle park.

What do you find most fulfilling about your job?

As the senior and only planner for the San Mateo County Parks Department (which is unlike most Bay Area regional park districts that have planning staffs of up to 10), I enjoy a huge diversity of work and projects. I take pleasure in seeing plans, capital projects, and natural resource management projects I've worked on, sometimes for decades, come to fruition. When I see people enjoy, access, recreate, and learn about the amazing scenic, natural, and historic resources of San Mateo County Parks, I am very proud.

What was the biggest challenge in your career?

After 10 years of incremental budget cuts totaling 50 percent, San Mateo County Parks was eliminated as a department and became a division of County Public Works. This was not a good match of organizations, and reminds me of the current debates about ABAG being swallowed by MTC, another organization heavily focused on engineering. After passage of Measure A, a 10-year sales tax, the County Board of Supervisors re-established County Parks as a department with support and significant additional funding from the County Board of

Supervisors. In the past four years our budget has increased from \$13.5 million to \$23 million. Having been through the desert of budget cuts, we are now poised to better serve the public.

Any advice for planners starting out?

Get experience even if it is not paid. Pursue a master's degree in planning, and continuing education is a must. I've had a dozen interns, and I'm always happy to see how they bring new approaches to our work. I've enjoyed watching them find their careers, and I've encouraged them to continue their education.

Has being a planner affected what you do on your days off?

My volunteer work is varied. For the past 12 years, I've been very active as an elected member of the Greater East San Carlos Neighborhood Board, which is surrounded by pre-Silicon Valley former industrial uses, but is in transition. We were a transit-oriented neighborhood before they called it that. As a result, I've been involved with general plan updates for the East Side of San Carlos, subsequent zoning updates, and major development projects surrounding my neighborhood including the Palo Alto Medical Foundation and the Transit Village, among others.

We've also been working with the city to improve our local parks, and on pedestrian and bicycle improvements to better connect our neighborhood to the rest of San Carlos. I just received a resolution from the San Carlos City Council for my positive contributions in representing the neighborhood in collaboration with the city for over a decade.

I enjoy spending time with my wife and two daughters and friends. I like to garden, am a beekeeper, and I still play drums and sing backup with the Tribal Blues Band, a nine-piece R&B dance band that plays frequently in the Bay Area. We've been together for nine years, and frequently play two to three times a month.

Interviewer Siân Llewellyn, AICP, lives in San Francisco and is a vice president at AECOM. ■

North Bay planners active. "We are currently working on the 2016 regional activities program for the North Bay. Look for a lunchtime event in April, co-hosted with AEP, on CEQA streamlining opportunities. For May, we are working on hosting a full day workshop on Green Infrastructure for Coastal Resiliency. We're always looking for spaces to use for lunchtime events that can accommodate up to 20 people. If you have any program ideas you would like us to consider, or would be interested in helping put together an event, please contact North Bay Regional Activity Coordinator Kristine Gaspar at kristine.gaspar@ghd.com."

Norcal roundup

Excerpts from around our Northern Section, linked to the original articles

Santa Clara County: Yes to speedy buses on El Camino

Mercury News, January 11, 2016

Scott Herhold, <http://bayareane.ws/1OWisny> • “Earlier this week, [Santa Clara County] Supervisor Joe Simitian wrote an opinion piece critical of the proposed bus rapid transit (BRT) system on a 17.6-mile stretch of El Camino Real between Palo Alto and San Jose. The veteran supervisor argued that BRT was a costly system that would clog traffic on El Camino and have an uncertain payoff in ridership increases. ‘When you’re riding a dead horse, dismount,’ Simitian began.

“Transit advocates have been pushing for a dedicated bus lane next to the El Camino median, with a limited number of stations that would allow boarding at the level of the bus floor. This would eliminate one lane of traffic in each direction (El Camino would have two remaining lanes on each side).

“‘It’s going to cost money to build a really good project,’ says Chris Lepe, a senior community planner for TransForm. ‘But if we’re going to spend money, El Camino is the number one traffic corridor for VTA and the place to spend it.’

“VTA’s consultants estimate that BRT would increase daily ridership in the corridor from 12,500 to more than 18,600 in 2018. Is that reasonable? Less than a year after its opening, Los Angeles’ Orange Line more than tripled its projected ridership to 22,000 daily.

“This week, I boarded one of the sleek new blue buses that VTA bought in anticipation of the new speedy bus line. And I can tell you, the horse is not dead.”

San Francisco: Fog over growth

Bloomberg View, January 11, 2016

Justin Fox, <http://bv.ms/1SfAxPJ> • “Shifting the politics of growth in the nation’s in-demand cities is hard because most of the potential beneficiaries of that growth live somewhere else.

“San Francisco is the main urban center of a region that is home to many of the leading corporations of the digital age, an area that has become an unparalleled hub of innovation, invention, and entrepreneurship. Yet it had just 852,469 inhabitants as of July 2014, according to the U.S. Census, only 10 percent more than it did in 1950.

“San Jose passed it in the 1980s to become the region’s biggest city. And while San Francisco is pretty densely populated by U.S. standards, it could clearly fit a lot more people. If it were as densely settled as the New York City borough of Brooklyn, for example, it would have a population of 1.7 million.

“Homeowner opposition to growth is a big issue in the Bay area’s suburbs, an early hotbed of slow-growth sentiment, and in some parts of San Francisco. But 65 percent of the city’s housing units are rentals, and 75 percent of those are subject to rent control.

“Most of the San Franciscans who oppose new development do so apparently not to maximize the value of their property but to minimize the odds that they will be forced out of their apartments or otherwise priced out of the city.”

Salinas: Rents grow at fastest rates in state

Santa Cruz Sentinel, January 5, 2016

James Herrera, <http://bit.ly/1TIZrox> • “Salinas posted the strongest year-over-year increase of California cities with the fastest growing rents at 15.1 percent over December 2014. Fremont was second at 12.1 percent. The national figure is 2.6 percent, and it is 4.9 percent for the state.

“Two-bedroom apartments in Salinas now average \$1,520 per month. That puts a burden on an already constricted housing market in the Monterey/Salinas

area where construction of new homes stopped during the recession. And even with housing development picking up steam in cities like Salinas and Marina, it remains to be seen if local workers remain largely priced out of the market and continue to rent.

“San Francisco ranks No. 1 in most expensive cities to rent with two-bedroom apartments going for \$4,610.”

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California roundup

Excerpts from around the state, linked to the original articles

Fresno passes groundbreaking 'tiny house' rules

KQED –The California Report, January 19, 2016

Sasha Khokha, <http://bit.ly/1S2NCL2> • “We are the first city in the nation to actually write into its development code authorization for tiny homes,” says Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearingen. Fresno’s new rules (<http://bit.ly/1S2PTWw>) specifically pertain to tiny homes on wheels, which are often treated like RVs in other cities. So that means there are limits on where and how long they can be parked. That’s angered some tiny-house activists.

“Some counties, like Alameda, Contra Costa, and Napa, allow cottages on wheels as caregiver dwellings in the backyard of someone who needs assistance. You can see a list of California rules from the American Tiny House Association at <http://bit.ly/1S2PW4E>.

“Some of Swearingen’s motivation comes from wanting to support local jobs and manufacturing. A new Fresno company, California Tiny House, is now building these custom homes for people all over the state. It recently held an unusual open house to celebrate Fresno’s new rules, parking a 270-square-foot cottage on wheels in front of City Hall.

“That’s not to say Fresno is a tiny-house mecca yet. So far, all the tiny houses manufactured here have gone to Santa Cruz, Napa, and other California cities.”

New planning director for LA

Office of the Mayor of Los Angeles, January 4, 2016

<http://bit.ly/1JUrHyR> • Mayor Eric Garcetti started 2016 by announcing “the nomination of Pasadena Planning Director Vince Bertoni, AICP, as the new head of the Los Angeles Department of City Planning (LADCP). Bertoni comes to the Department with more than 25 years of planning experience — including a previous stint at LADCP.” He was deputy planning director under Gail Goldberg from 2008 to 2010.

In LA, according to The *Los Angeles Times*, Bertoni oversaw “the creation of 16 historic preservation zones, approval of a bicycle master plan, and new guidelines for downtown’s Broadway corridor.” In Pasadena, he led a general plan update of the land use and mobility elements, adopted by the council in August 2015.

If approved by the Los Angeles City Council, Bertoni will replace Michael LoGrande, who has headed the department the past five years.

Bertoni holds a BA in geography from San Diego State University and is a member of the California Planning Roundtable.

Environmental activists sue Riverside County over GP

The Desert Sun, January 16, 2016

Ian James, <http://desert.sn/1S2QOGn> • “Three environmental groups have sued to challenge Riverside County’s approach to development, saying the latest update of the county’s general plan would lead to more suburban sprawl.

“The Sierra Club, the Center for Biological Diversity, and San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society argue that an amendment to the general plan and a ‘climate action plan’ approved by the Board of Supervisors in December would promote a proliferation of subdivisions and threaten open space and wildlife. They also say the county’s plan would reinforce the area’s emphasis on transportation by car and contribute to air pollution and emissions of climate-warming CO₂.

“Said Aruna Prabhala, an Oakland-based attorney for the Center for Biological Diversity, ‘We’d like to see more public-transit-oriented development as opposed to sprawl. We’d like to really see that important wildlife corridors and habitat are better protected. And we’d like to see greater and more stringent commitments to addressing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and tightening the requirements for new development.’

“The lawsuit, filed Jan. 6 in Riverside County Superior Court, asks the court to direct the county to set aside those decisions by the Board of Supervisors on Dec. 8 approving the general plan update and certifying an environmental impact report.”

(California continues on [page 21](#))

Chilean architect receives 2016 Pritzker Architecture Prize

A consistent contributor to projects of public interest and social impact

Alejandro Aravena of Chile has been awarded the 2016 Pritzker Architecture Prize, often called the Nobel for architects. The 48-year-old Aravena is an architect based in Santiago, Chile. He is the first Pritzker Laureate from Chile, and the fourth from Latin America, after Luis Barragán (1980), Oscar Niemeyer (1988), and Paulo Mendes da Rocha (2006).

Tom Pritzker, Chairman and President of The Hyatt Foundation, said, “Alejandro Aravena has pioneered a collaborative practice that produces powerful works of architecture and also addresses key challenges of the 21st century. His built work gives economic opportunity to the less privileged, mitigates the effects of natural disasters, reduces energy consumption, and provides welcoming public space. He shows how architecture at its best can improve people’s lives.”

Since 2001, Aravena has been executive director of the Santiago-based ELEMENTAL, a “Do Tank,” as opposed to a think tank. ELEMENTAL, focusing on projects of public interest and social impact, has designed more than 2,500 units of low-cost social housing. A hallmark of the firm is a participatory design process in which the architects work closely with the public and end users.

ELEMENTAL is also known for designing social housing that they call “half of a good house,” in which the design leaves space for the residents to complete their houses themselves and thus raise themselves up to a middle-class standard of living. This innovative approach, called “incremental housing,” allows for social housing to be built on more expensive land closer to economic opportunity and gives residents a sense of accomplishment and personal investment.

The late Jay A. Pritzker and his wife, Cindy, founded the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 1979. Its purpose is to honor annually a living architect whose built work demonstrates a combination of talent, vision, and commitment that has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through the art

of architecture. The laureates receive a \$100,000 grant and a bronze medallion.

Each year the award ceremony is held at a culturally or historically significant venue around the world. This year the formal award ceremony will be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on April 4th.

Visit pritzkerprize.com for more information and images. ■



Villa Verde incremental housing, Constitución, Chile, 2013. Top: “Half of a good house,” a development financed with public money. Bottom: Infill upgrades by the residents themselves. Arauco Forest Company wanted to give their employees and contractors access to home ownership in the context of Chilean housing policies. These houses begin with an initial area of 570 sq. ft. and can grow to 850 sq. ft. Photo: ELEMENTAL.

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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AB 57: A brave new world for cell antennas and towers in California *(continued from page 1)*

a written letter indicating why the application is incomplete within 30 days. Then, the clock pauses until the carrier re-submits the application or provides the information requested. Once a project is re-submitted, the local government has 10 days to determine if the submitted materials are complete; otherwise the clock continues.

A second exception involves the wireless carrier and the city/county agreeing to a tolling agreement to extend the clock until a certain date, or a certain metric is met, or indefinitely. However, the carrier has to voluntarily agree in writing to such an extension.

However, even when the application is “complete,” but the design is still *not viable* (e.g., minimally-intrusive and/or consistent with local development policies/guidelines/ordinances) or *not legal* (e.g., violates building codes, noise ordinances, CEQA, historic preservation regulations, has no legal access to the site), the time it takes to make further changes (e.g., revise the design, conduct outreach, perform environmental review and so on) to make the project “viable” (i.e., less-intrusive) counts against the city/county and the clock still runs.

Given that 20 to 30 days of the clock will typically be used in reviewing the application when it is first submitted—and that in most cities/counties, it takes around 30-40 days to get a project and neighborhood notification mailed out in advance of the public hearing (*assuming the hearing body doesn’t take time off in the summer*)—the 90-day clock becomes an even greater challenge, especially if there are other recommendation hearing bodies such as Historic Preservation Commission or a public design review board.

What happens after a Deemed Approval?

Quite frankly, no one knows for sure. Neither the statute nor the legislative record gives any clues about the applicants’ or the municipalities’ respective rights and obligations.

Does the applicant need a physical permit, or can it just go out and build the site? Although the statute permits localities to seek judicial review, that provision hardly authorizes construction without actual permits. Can the applicant build whatever it wants, or must it obey zone height restrictions and setbacks? What if the application involved a variance? Can municipalities attach conditions to permits issued after a deemed approval? What happens when the clock runs out during an appeal? Localities should think about these problems now rather than after they receive the first letter from an applicant declaring its application automatically approved.

Perhaps the best approach is to build safeguards into the review process that help prevent applications from falling through the cracks. Given that a deemed approval cannot occur unless the applicant has provided all the public notices required for the application, localities should consider requiring the applicant to

(continued on next page)



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AB 57: A brave new world for cell antennas and towers in California *(continued from previous page)*

send public notice that the shot clock is about to expire (and require a copy of the notice to be sent to the planner!).

CEQA challenge

Unlike existing California “deemed approvals” in the Permit Streamlining Act, AB 57 provides no timing exceptions for complex environmental (CEQA) review. So, if a new hilltop tower (plus access roads and generators) would require an Environmental Impact Report (or similar) and complex studies (*e.g., biological sampling for endangered species during the Spring, storm water review for new access roads, or geotechnical and archaeological review*), what choice does the local government have? It may hope the wireless carrier will voluntarily request a tolling agreement (to extend the clock for a new facility). But failing that, the locality faces a conundrum: It will want to avoid automatic approvals for incompatible designs/locations, but it won’t be able to approve a project (or subsequent permits) if it hasn’t undertaken complete CEQA review.

Due Process

AB 57 also deviates from the due process protections that appear in the Permit Streamlining Act. Whereas the PSA prohibits any deemed approval without a public hearing when one is required, AB 57 was worded to avoid as many public hearings as possible. Under the PSA, a permit cannot be deemed granted unless “the public notice required by law has occurred,” which the courts interpret to include a public hearing when a project would substantially impact neighboring property rights. AB 57, however, only requires the public notice specified for the application. So if your local code doesn’t require a public hearing, but the Constitution would, AB 57 apparently deems the permit approved whether neighbors receive their fundamental rights or not.

So how many wireless sites “substantially” impact property rights? That’s a good question, and like most good questions it doesn’t have a clear answer. However, it’s worth mention that the Ninth Circuit in *American Tower Corp. v. City of San Diego* recently found that the mere *renewal* of a large tower’s permit could substantially impact property rights — so it seems fair to say that an approval for a new tower might require a hearing in some circumstances.

Local jurisdictions should look very hard at their notice requirements. AB 57 seems to push localities toward more public hearings rather than more streamlined administrative processes. Wireless sites are already controversial in many cases. Can you imagine how the public might react if it found out that the jurisdiction could have required a hearing but didn’t?

(continued on next page)

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AB 57: A brave new world for cell antennas and towers in California *(continued from previous page)*

Conclusion

AB 57 presents significant new challenges for public officials and municipal staff members. Not only does it completely change the traditional development process, it also offers few if any clear rules to guide governments and applicants through the new paradigm. The regulatory void leaves ample room for gaming and bad behavior on both sides of the counter.

It doesn't have to be that way. Omar Masry has developed an excellent supplement to help guide planners through the wireless permit process: "Supplement: Tools for adapting to AB 57" is available at <http://bit.ly/1Q9UEM3>. In addition, the authors encourage local officials and staff members to study AB 57, discuss it with the applicants, and develop thoughtful approaches to fill in its gaps and holes.



Omar Masry, AICP, served as a city planner in Los Angeles, Orange, and San Francisco counties.



Tripp May is an attorney and partner with Telecom Law Firm. ■

Correction

In some early editions of the December-January issue of *Northern News* ("Meet a local planner," page 16), a community assistance division in the office of Governor Jerry Brown was incorrectly associated with the California Office of Planning and **Budget**. The correct name of the office (of which the community assistance division was part) is the California Office of Planning and **Research**. ■

"How fire feeds. A trio of fires swept through southern Lake County last summer, destroying thousands of buildings and killing four people. The Rocky, Jerusalem, and Valley fires are a cautionary tale of what is in store for many living near wildlands: overgrown forests that have reached an explosive tipping point." Interactive map at <http://fire.revealnews.org>



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Call for nominations— Get recognized by APA California–Northern!

Northern Section is officially opening a call for nominations for Section Awards. In previous years, several Northern Section winners went on to garner State Awards. Let's keep up the tradition and recognize the best in planning.

The Section Awards categories for 2016 are:

Project awards

Opportunity and Empowerment
Comprehensive Plan – Large and Small Jurisdictions (2 awards)
Implementation – Large and Small Jurisdictions (2 awards)
Innovation in Green Community Planning
Economic Planning and Development
Transportation Planning
Best Practices
Grassroots Initiative
Public Outreach
Urban Design
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Get all the details, rules, and applications at:

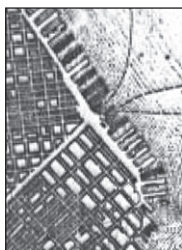
<http://norcalapa.org/programs/awards/>

The deadline for nominations is Monday, March 7, 2016

AICP | CM Credit is pending for this event.

For more information, please contact Awards Co-directors
Florentina Craciun at fcraciun@mbakerintl.com, or
Carmela Campbell, at CarmelaC@unioncity.org

Can you get a perfect score on this California quiz? Try these 10 questions. Quick and fun. —Casey Rackham, <http://bzfd.it/23079AV>



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San Jose entries among Knight Cities Challenge finalists

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation announced 158 community-transforming ideas as finalists in its second annual Knight Cities Challenge. The winners, to be announced in the spring, will realize their designs through a share of the \$5 million prize. Among the eight San Jose finalists are these five:

Smart Street by San Jose State University (submitted by Jerry Gao): Creating a "smart street" that showcases cutting-edge technology, helps to attract more people to the city, and bolsters San Jose's brand identity.

Post Street Night Market (submitted by Justin Triano): Expanding economic opportunity with a recurring night market that features local crafts, food, and entertainment.

SITability Project by URBAN SPACEship (submitted by Leemor Chandally): Creating a network of modular street furniture designed to encourage interaction between people in public spaces.

East Side Linear Park by San Jose Department of Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services (submitted by Marybeth Harasz): Increasing civic engagement by having residents help convert a public street into a new linear park along Havana Drive in East San Jose.

Green Necklace by Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition (submitted by Shiloh Ballard): Expanding public space and increasing community connections by permanently opening trails along San Jose's closed canal system to pedestrians and cyclists.

The complete list of finalists, announced January 12, can be read or downloaded at <http://bit.ly/1UPMcCN> ■

"Office rents in San Francisco have eclipsed those in Manhattan. San Francisco landlords asked \$72.26 a square foot in the fourth quarter of last year, edging out the \$71.85 a square foot in Manhattan. Office rents in San Francisco rose 14 percent last year, compared with 7 percent in Manhattan. Not since the original Internet gold rush more than 15 years ago has the price of office space in San Francisco surpassed that of Manhattan, long the country's most expensive commercial market. Office rents could tumble if the tech sector falters badly, yet evidence of a cataclysmic shakeout in tech hasn't materialized." —Nick Wingfield, <http://nyti.ms/1NkJ9g9>

Joint APA/ITE meeting on Complete Streets

Have lunch with traffic engineers; earn one CM credit

Andrew Mogensen, AICP, East Bay RAC

On February 18, 2016, the local chapters of the American Planning Association and the Institute of Transportation Engineers will host their first joint luncheon. The focus will be Complete Streets. AICP members will earn one **AICP | CM** credit for attending.

ITE has long hosted a successful monthly luncheon featuring guest speakers presenting on various topics of interest to transportation engineers. The upcoming February event came together last fall when Lin Zhang, Vice President of ITE's San Francisco Bay Area Section, reached out to APA California-Northern board members since both organizations share a common interest when it comes to planning for complete streets.

The luncheon will feature three noted speakers who will discuss regional efforts to squeeze more out of our

existing roads through complete streets and bicycle planning. The speakers include Bryan Jones, AICP, PE, of Alta Planning + Design; Kevin Mulder, Bike Share Coordinator for MTC; and Dave Campbell, Advocacy Director for Bike East Bay.

The luncheon will be held at 11:30 AM on February 18 at the Peony Seafood Restaurant, 388 9th Street, Oakland. Tickets are \$30 for APA and ITE members, \$40 for non-members, and \$50 at the door. Tickets should be purchased online in advance, as seating is limited. To purchase tickets, go to <http://conta.cc/1RjpbKp>.

For more information, contact Frank Penry, SF Bay Area ITE Secretary, at fpenry@chsconsulting.net. ■

Where in the world



Photo: Linton Atlas (Answer on [page 16](#).)

— Plan for success —
Take a course from UC Davis Extension this Fall
APA members: Get a 10 percent discount on UC Davis Extension courses

APA California members receive a 10 percent discount on most Land Use and Natural Resources courses at UC Davis Extension. You can earn **AICP | CM** credits, stay up to date on the new policies, laws, and practices, and learn from experts in the field. *If you are registering online please use code: **APA2016**.*

Successful CEQA Compliance: An Intensive Two-Day Seminar. CEQA is the state's most comprehensive environmental law. Its requirements influence virtually all prospective land use and public agency projects. Learn how to clearly understand and comply with CEQA guidelines in this interactive seminar designed to assist public agency staff, consultants, attorneys, developers, members of environmental organizations and others. Instructors: Antero Rivasplata and Maggie Townsley. **AICP | CM 16.0**

Clean Water Act Section 404: Nationwide and Other Specialized Permits. Understand and comply with requirements of the most widely used set of permits for projects in wetlands and other waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which requires projects to first obtain a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the placement of dredged or fill materials in U.S. waters. Through the Corps' Nationwide Permit (NWP) Program, general permits may be issued on a nationwide basis for activities that have minimal effects on the aquatic environment. Study the current Nationwide Permits, including general and specific regional conditions. Gain a thorough understanding of the NWP program and the latest information from the Corps as well as other state and federal agencies. Review verification and pre- and post-construction notification processes and discuss requirements for notification contents. Instructors: Megan Smith and Michael Vondergeest. **AICP | CM 6.0**

Cultural Resource Management: CEQA, NEPA, and Section 106. Learn how cultural resource concerns can help or hinder your community or development projects and how these concerns can derail environmental review or become part of a community's sustainable design strategy. Gain an understanding of key historic preservation laws and how historic preservation can be an asset for community revitalization as well as for successful commercial and residential projects. Explore practical issues involved with implementation and avoid unnecessary delays in environmental reviews by learning how to comply with historic preservation requirements under CEQA and NEPA, as well as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Instructors: Antero Rivasplata and Susan Lassell. **AICP | CM 6.0**

Project Planning for Permit Integration. Learn how to integrate environmental permitting and consultation requirements for projects subject to CEQA and NEPA. These acts affect natural or cultural resources, therefore many projects that are subject to CEQA and NEPA also require compliance with other major state and federal environmental laws. To obtain timely and cost-effective project approvals, CEQA/NEPA lead agencies and project applicants must navigate a complex permitting and consultation maze, including regulation of wetlands, endangered species, and historic resources. Instructors: Antero Rivasplata and Megan Smith. **AICP | CM 6.0** ■

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

"East Portland is too big to fail. As Portland experiences ballooning rents and one of the lowest vacancy rates in the nation, middle-class residents are moving east, drawn by lower-priced housing and new parks. As these arrivals push up housing prices across the area, poorer residents in shabby housing complexes are being evicted so owners can renovate for the new renters. At a public meeting in December, a group called East Portland Action Plan presented a list of displacement prevention tools, <http://bit.ly/1JYvyjQ>. Among them: • Lift Oregon's ban on inclusionary zoning, and require developers to include affordable units. • Help keep families in their homes if they own them. • Increase renter protections. • Provide living wage provisions for East Portland's working poor." —Kelsey E. Thomas, <http://bit.ly/1RrqpmT>

22 Northern Section members passed November's AICP exam

Please join the Northern Section Board of Directors in congratulating our newest AICP members — those who passed the national certification examination given in November 2015.

Sarah Allen, Concord
Lauren Armstrong, San Francisco
Kristi Bascom, Castro Valley
Grace Bogdan, Salinas
Brianna Ceglia, Oakland
Catherine Clark, Oakland
Noah Friedman, San Francisco
Luca Giaramidaro, San Francisco
Kathrin Gladstein, Berkeley
Brian Harrington, San Francisco
Dana Marie Cuciti Hoffman, Oakland
Melissa Jones, San Francisco
Xue Ling, San Francisco
Cindy Ma, Oakland
David J. Mack, Salinas
Sean Mullin, San Jose
Kieulan Pham, San Jose
Amit Price Patel, San Francisco
Avant Ramsey, San Francisco
Laura Simpson, Concord
Matthew Van Oosten, San Jose
Yangyang Zhang, Richmond

APA California–Northern has been offering AICP Exam Prep workshops for 27 years. Our next Exam Prep workshops will be held on the UC Berkeley campus over the course of five Saturdays from 10 AM to 3 PM on January 30, February 20, March 12, April 2, and April 23.

To register for the AICP Exam Prep spring series at UC Berkeley, call Dr. Bradley at (650) 592-0915 or email Dr.DonBradley@comcast.net for more information. ■

2016 Clean Air Plan and Regional Climate Protection Strategy

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District will be holding Open Houses from January 28 through February 9 for those who want to learn about the Clean Air Plan and RCPS.

The Clean Air Plan update will include the Bay Area's first-ever comprehensive climate protection strategy that the Air District can pursue to reduce greenhouse gases in the Bay Area. The District is soliciting ideas and suggestions for rules, control measures, and strategies to include in the draft plan.

The District will accept public comment to finalize the draft plan until Wednesday, March 9. Following is the open house schedule:

Redwood City, Thursday, January 28, 5–7 PM

Sequoia High School Multipurpose Room,
1201 Brewster Avenue, Redwood City

San Jose, Tuesday, February 2, 6–8 PM

San Jose Elks Lodge, 444 West Alma Avenue, San Jose

Santa Rosa, Wednesday, February 3, 6–8 PM

Sonoma County Water Agency, 404 Aviation Boulevard,
Santa Rosa

Richmond, Thursday, February 4, 6–8 PM

East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, 339 11th Street,
Richmond

Dublin/Pleasanton, Monday, February 8, 6–8 PM

Sheraton Pleasanton (Salon), 5990 Stoneridge Mall Road,
Pleasanton

Oakland, Tuesday, February 9, 4–6 PM

Laney College (Bistro), 900 Fallon Street, Oakland

To submit a comment on the Clean Air Plan, contact Christy Riviere at criviere@baaqmd.gov or call (415) 749-4925. To submit comments on the RCPS, contact Dave Burch at dburch@baaqmd.gov or call (415) 749-4641. Questions or concerns can be addressed to Kristina Chu at kchu@baaqmd.gov or call (415) 749-4758 ■

Answer to Where in the world ([Page 14](#))

Pyongyang, North Korea, 2016. Photo: Linton Atlas

What \$2,000 rent gets you in San Francisco vs. everywhere else.

Nine examples, 26 photos. —Jessica Misener, <http://bzfd.it/23079AV>

Bay Area: How green is your neighborhood?

UC Berkeley News, January 6, 2016

Robert Sanders, <http://bit.ly/1UFWHbG> • UC Berkeley's CoolClimate Network and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District have produced a new map of neighborhood-by-neighborhood carbon consumption in the San Francisco Bay Area (<http://arcg.is/1UFWXHC>).

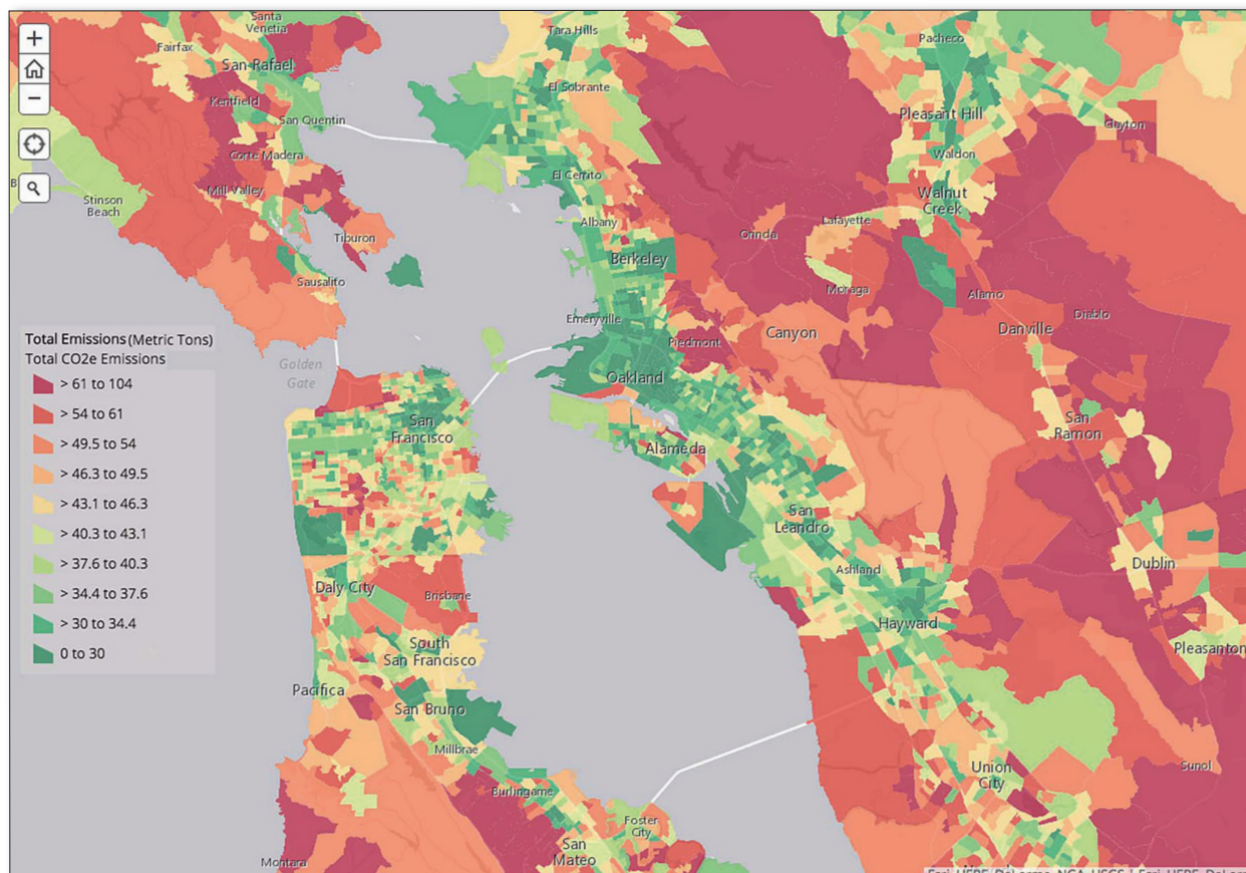
"This first-of-its-kind interactive map 'is the most granular carbon footprint assessment anywhere in the world,' said Christopher Jones, the program director of the CoolClimate Network. 'It includes energy use, transportation, food, goods, services, construction, water, and waste. No one has compared neighborhoods like this before.'

"Greenhouse gas emissions per family vary depending upon household income, household size, home size and location, and many other factors. This map displays average household carbon footprints at the level of US Census

block group. (Block groups in the Bay Area contain an average of 690 households.) Use the tabs to see a more detailed breakdown of emissions within the five key sectors of transportation, housing, food, goods, and services.

"The study (<http://bit.ly/1UFXhWO>) found that transportation is the largest source of emissions by Bay Area households (33 percent), followed by food (19 percent), goods (18 percent), services (18 percent), heating fuels (5 percent), home construction (3 percent), electricity (2 percent) and waste (1 percent). In some areas, food accounts for over one-third of emissions.

"The work is funded in part by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and the California High-Speed Rail Authority."



Detail of Interactive Bay Area Carbon Footprint Map

(continued on the next page)

Oakland and Marin: New rules on secondary units

East Bay Express, January 6, 2016

Darwin Bond Graham, <http://bit.ly/1MUBIfu> • The Oakland City Council voted [January 5th] to ease restrictions on the construction of secondary housing units, or backyard cottages. The new rules promote more rental housing by easing parking requirements, allowing homeowners to transform existing backyard buildings like sheds and garages into living spaces, and relaxing height and setback requirements. Other Bay Area cities have passed, or are considering similar relaxed rules to promote the construction of new secondary housing units.

“‘This is the best way to quickly build our stock of much-needed rental housing,’ said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf in a press release. For example, Berkeley passed new secondary unit rules in March of last year.”

From the *Marin Independent Journal*, January 3, 2016, **Richard Halsted**, <http://bayareane.ws/1MUBTY8>, reports: “Novato and Tiburon have already adopted junior second unit ordinances. The San Rafael City Council is expected to vote on its own ordinance, and three other Marin municipalities — Fairfax, Larkspur, and Belvedere — are moving toward adopting junior second unit standards.

“Unlike a standard second unit, a junior second unit is a pre-existing bedroom within a legal primary dwelling that has provisions for living, sleeping, eating, and cooking. Cooking and food preparation facilities are limited to an efficiency kitchen; bathrooms may or may not be shared with occupants of the primary dwelling. The units [are seen] as a sensible approach to addressing what is a grievous imbalance in housing.”

Menlo Park: Facebook offers workers cash to relocate near its campus

KQED News, December 21, 2015

Devin Katayama, <http://bit.ly/1O577kB> • Facebook is offering payments of \$10,000 or more to workers who relocate to within 10 miles of its main campus, just off Highway 84 at the western end of the Dumbarton Bridge. Reuters reporter Sarah McBride notes Facebook’s move could help relieve some congestion and traffic, and give employees a better work/life balance. But it also threatens residents in nearby communities — East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and Redwood City, for instance — who find themselves competing for housing with well-paid Facebook workers.

“‘Despite the fact that there are many new companies and thousands of new jobs, this is causing a bit of a housing crunch. And the people who are hardest hit are the poorest people in Silicon Valley. They used to be able to live in Redwood City and East Palo Alto, both of which are getting much more expensive than previously,’ McBride said in an interview.

She added, ‘If you’re a young single Facebook employee you probably don’t want to live in Silicon Valley. It’s pretty boring. There are a lot of strip malls. It’s a little bland. San Francisco is much better. So \$10,000, for some people with active social lives — that would barely cover their Lyft rides to and from San Francisco in a year.’”

Walnut Creek: Control housing proliferating downtown, or not?

Contra Costa Times, December 24, 2015

Andrew McGall, <http://bayareane.ws/22xdh3g> • “Where the City Council asked for general plan changes to control construction of residences over stores in the downtown core, the Planning Commission asked, ‘What’s the problem?’ ‘The community encouraged mixed use downtown ... it is not appropriate to eliminate it at this time,’ Planning Commissioner Bob Pickett said at a meeting this month.

“At a meeting earlier in 2015, Councilwoman Cindy Silva called for action on the condos and apartments

rising over the downtown streets. It was ‘shocking to see it all happen at once,’ she said. Ten residential projects had won approval to build in commercial and office zones through use permit changes that the Planning Commission granted.

“The permit procedure was created years ago to encourage housing downtown, but developers have been using it to build outside the areas the city had planned for what it calls mixed-use residential.”

(continued on the next page)

Santa Rosa: Motel switches to house homeless, veterans

The Press Democrat, December 20, 2015

Angela Hart, <http://bit.ly/22l0Ur6> • “An experiment is underway at a motel on a downtrodden stretch of Santa Rosa Avenue just outside the city limits. If successful, supporters say it could provide permanent lodging for Sonoma County’s most imperiled homeless people and save taxpayers thousands of dollars per year by steering residents away from emergency rooms, jails, and other high-cost treatment facilities.

“Akash Kalia, a 24-year-old college dropout who left school in 2012 to purchase his parents’ floundering motel, is converting all 104 rooms at The Palms Inn into single-room-occupancy housing for homeless people and military veterans. His attorney, Jenni Klose, a Santa Rosa City Schools trustee, worked on a similar project in San

Francisco, where a substandard, largely vacant building located at 250 Kearny St. was transformed into single-room-occupancy housing for homeless veterans.

“Kalia said he immediately saw an opportunity to fill a need in his neighborhood by replicating the model. County supervisors, seeking to fast-track the site’s opening, approved a \$260,000 contribution to cover operational costs for six months.

“The Palms project is being developed around a national model known as ‘housing first,’ adopted in Sonoma County last year. Housing and services for tenants at The Palms Inn is expected to cost \$1.9 million annually, with the bulk of the funding, \$1.7 million, from state and federal sources.”

Peninsula: Support grows for TOD

Peninsula Press (Stanford Journalism), December 17, 2015

Jeff Barrera, <http://bit.ly/1YXHUKx> • “The Bay Meadows development ... may represent the future of Silicon Valley. In response to skyrocketing rents and gridlocked freeways, a group of policy experts, developers, and residents is pushing to transform downtowns and major thoroughfares along the Peninsula into transit-oriented projects like Bay Meadows.

“‘Denser development is the new thing,’ said Bay Meadows developer Janice Thatcher. ‘We can create a nice life for people in a 2,000-square foot condominium where they can be close to their work [and] transportation, have all sorts of opportunities to walk, meet their neighbors, use the parks, [and not] put another car on the freeway.’

“According to surveys conducted by [Thatcher’s firm], over a quarter of Bay Meadows’ residents take Caltrain on a weekly basis, and 85 percent walk or bike to nearby shops and restaurants.

“Between 2010 and 2014, Santa Clara County added 189,000 new jobs, but only built 36,414 more housing units. And Census Bureau data show that what housing has been added often isn’t located in job centers like Palo Alto and the city of Santa Clara.

“This gulf between jobs and housing is driving up prices and forcing workers — especially lower income workers — to move farther from their jobs to find affordable places to live. That’s straining the region’s highways, which are carrying more cars for longer distances. Between 2010 and 2014, the number of daily vehicle miles traveled on freeways in the San Jose area increased 63 percent, from 16,922,000 to 27,553,000.”

(continued on the next page)

City can’t remove low-income units from plan. “A Los Angeles Superior Court judge struck down changes Huntington Beach officials made to a housing plan that left the city more than 400 units short of required low-income housing sites. When the city adopted the Beach-Edinger plan in 2010, it included up to 783 units for low- and very-low-income housing. After changes in June, the number fell to 123 units. The state required 533. Judge James Chalfant directed the city to ‘cease enforcing, administering, or implementing’ the changes to the plan, ruling that the changes undermine ‘the objective and policies of the general plan.’” —Greg Mellen, <http://bit.ly/1JYsnJ1>

Benicia: Clean Energy Project is surpassing targets

PR Newswire, December 16, 2015

Lani Wild, <http://prn.to/1UZoCnS> • “The City of Benicia, California, announced that its Clean Energy Project is surpassing originally expected financial performance by over \$850,000. Initially designed and implemented in 2012, the energy program is garnering over \$5 million in energy savings and rebates as a result of its energy upgrades.

“Benicia’s Clean Energy Project consists of solar photovoltaic (PV) systems at 10 city sites, completing energy efficiency upgrades at seven city facilities, and replacing approximately 95 percent of city-owned street lighting with energy efficient fixtures. In tandem with the city’s recent participation in Marin Clean Energy (MCE), a community choice energy program, the project results demonstrate significant progress toward the goals of the city’s 2009 Climate Action Plan.

“The project was structured financially such that no capital outlay was required by the city, and finance payments are covered by the savings and rebates, with a net positive benefit to city coffers.

“The Council’s 2011 decision to ‘Go Solar’ was based on a conservative business case, and the Clean Energy Project is substantially out-performing those projections. Benicia is saving tax dollars for residents, saving energy, and accelerating our region’s move toward clean energy and greater climate protection.

“While cities across the globe are moving forward from the recent signing of the Paris climate agreements, Benicia’s strong track record of climate action leadership stands out as a tremendous model for regional success,” said Lindsey Corbin, vice president at OpTerra Energy Services, a partner with the city since 2012.” ■



City Hall parking canopy. Photo: Dave Bosse, City of Benicia

We need more urgency on sinking Valley

The Sacramento Bee, January 10, 2016

Editorial Board, <http://bit.ly/1S2S0cX> • “Some parts of the Central Valley are sinking, and time is running out to make the hard choices to slow the over-pumping of ground-water causing it.

“Some areas in the southern part of the San Joaquin Valley are sinking an inch a month, says the U.S. Geological Survey.

“Roads can crack and become uneven. Bridges, anchored to either side, can twist. Cement canals can leak. Damage could reach hundreds of millions of dollars, even billions. In the Central California Irrigation District, one canal has suffered a significant crack and a bridge will have to be raised. The district has spent \$4.5 million so far on fixes.

“There are ways to stop subsidence. First, the state knows the aquifers most at risk and the location of wells drawing from them. It could impose per-acre fees to pay for infrastructure repairs where the dangers are greatest, such as the Tulare Basin. Second, farmers could pump only from aquifers above the clay, which would not compact the soil as water is pulled out. Third, the state could beef up its monitoring — require real-time monitoring for pumps drawing from aquifers below important infrastructure — and could limit pumping if subsidence is detected.

“As more demands are made on water supplies and if the drought persists, farmers will again be faced with hard choices. If they pump, the ground will subside. If they don’t, an entire region’s agriculture-based economy could sink.”

San Diego’s center gets the big city treatment

The Wall Street Journal, January 7, 2016

Candace Jackson, <http://on.wsj.com/1O7ihUR> •

“Luxury condos, new hotels, and upscale restaurants are appearing in San Diego’s burgeoning downtown.

“San Diego has long been a car-centric city. Now, cranes downtown mark where new office towers, luxury condos, and hotels will soon join the skyline. The population of downtown is about 30,800 residents — a 76 percent increase since 2000 — and more than 9,000 apartment and condo units are currently in the pipeline for development.

“Downtown is an area of about 2.6 square miles along San Diego Bay. For decades after WW II, downtown had a seedy reputation, its large homeless population mixed in with office buildings and a few tourist attractions.

“In the mid-1980s, the opening of the Horton Plaza shopping mall and, later, the city’s convention center, marked a major push to revitalize downtown. More recently, residential developers began looking seriously at downtown. In 2004, the opening of Petco Park, the baseball stadium, brought with it another wave of condos and apartments. Then the recession hit, halting nearly all development.

“Strong job growth in the science and technology sectors, and a trend toward urban living, are bringing buyers and developers back. There is no sign of a slowdown. Over the next 30 years, the city’s population is forecast to grow by an additional 1 million residents.”

Budget puts rising cap-and-trade money toward affordable housing, transit

FutureStructure, January 7, 2016

Ben Miller, <http://bit.ly/1S2UzM6> • “California Gov. Jerry Brown on Jan. 7 put forward a 2016-17 budget that includes \$3.1 billion in cap-and-trade spending — some left over from last year. Brown set aside large chunks of the money for many of the same uses as previous years [including] \$500 million for the High Speed Rail Authority, \$500 million for the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) — \$400 million of which will go toward a program meant to focus affordable housing development in areas that reduce the need for driving — and \$600 million to the State Transportation Agency for its Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program.

“Brown’s funding allocations for affordable housing and transit-oriented development adhere to a theme the state is beginning to embrace more and more: reducing the need for people to drive personal vehicles on a regular basis. The idea behind the SGC’s Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program is, per its website, to encourage ‘infill and compact’ development of low-income housing. That means putting new low-income housing in places where it is either close to most of the things its residents need or close to public transportation that can get them there. The ultimate goal is to reduce a metric called ‘vehicle miles traveled’ associated with those places.

(California continues on next page)

Caltrans design bulletin OKs protected bike lanes

Streetsblog California, January 4, 2016

Melanie Curry, <http://bit.ly/1OBKm85> • “Caltrans issued its Class IV Bikeway Guidance on the last day of 2015 [PDF at <http://bit.ly/1Ovm1j7>].

“There are already existing sources of information on best practices and engineering guidance for protected, or separated, bikeways, but this is the first from Caltrans. It was prepared in response to the Protected Bikeways Act of 2014 that mandated Caltrans create an official category of protected bike lanes and write guidance for planners and engineers to build them.

“This ‘design bulletin,’ a supplement to the state’s official Highway Design Manual, defines various types of protected bikeways, provides examples, and refers to existing publications (including federal guidance) for specific standards.

“That Caltrans issued this is a big deal. The lack of official standards for protected bike lanes in California has sometimes been an obstacle for local planners, engineers, and advocates who want protected bikeways. Engineers and planners look to Caltrans for transportation standards, even for local streets and roads that are not directly controlled by the state. Issuing a set of guidelines that provide background, resources, and

consistent standards gives local jurisdictions some certainty about planning protected bike facilities.

“There is still work to be done. For example, the bulletin makes it clear that Caltrans engineers still consider it an acceptable solution to ‘discontinue’ a protected bikeway at driveways or loading zones. Bike riders will be left to figure out what to do when their protected facility suddenly disappears.”



Bike lanes, Redondo Beach. Photo: Caroline Teng

First U.S. freeway is 75 years old

KPCC Public Radio, December 30, 2015

John Rabe, <http://bit.ly/1SsID6F> • “Seventy-five years ago, on December 30, 1940, the first freeway in the United States opened to cars, changing the way Los Angeles would get around forever.

“Nobody would design one like it today. It’s curvy and swervy. Its entrances and exits are five-mile-an-hour kiddie-car ramps. The median is so narrow you feel you could stick your hand out the car window and high-five the drivers going the other way.

“In its day, the Pasadena freeway was hot stuff. Imagine — finally being able to drive all the way from Pasadena to downtown LA in the time it took to smoke a cigarette.

“On New Year’s Eve 1940, the Rose Parade queen and the governor of California tugged at opposite ends of a red silk ribbon, and the first freeway in the west was open and running. The speed limit was 45 miles an hour, the lanes

were a foot narrower than modern freeway lanes, and the whole concept of a freeway was so unfamiliar that people actually stopped their cars on the freeway to pick up passengers and let them out.

“Less than a year after the freeway opened, we were at war. A fake airfield was built alongside the parkway, using logs for airplanes, in hopes that enemy bombers — which never materialized — would bomb that instead of real defense plants.

“Seventy-five years on, the original name, the Arroyo Seco Parkway, is back. It evokes another time, and a pioneering roadway that was built for looks, not so much for speed. Which is good, because on a roadway built for 27,000 cars a day, not the 122,000 it now carries, sometimes that’s just about the only way you can drive it.”

(California continues on next page)

HSR bids are in, under budget

The Hill, January 6, 2016

Keith Lang, <http://bit.ly/1ZjwQgi> • “California officials have unveiled bids for construction of a controversial high-speed railway that is being partially financed by the federal government.

“The California High-Speed Rail Authority said California Rail Builders has offered to build a 22-mile segment of the high-speed railway for \$347 million, which is less than the agency’s previous estimate of \$400–\$500 million. California Rail Builders is comprised of a company called Ferrovial Agroman US Corp.

“Republicans in California and Washington have questioned the viability of the Golden State’s high-speed rail proposal, but officials with the agency overseeing construction of the railway said the private sector bids are proof of the line’s viability.

“People are already and will continue to see major construction projects underway on over 100 miles of infrastructure in the Central Valley as we move this program forward,’ California High-Speed Rail Authority CEO Jeff Morales said in a statement.

“President Obama spoke frequently in his first term about developing the nation’s high-speed rail network, with the California route identified as a potential cornerstone. Obama included \$8 billion in his 2009 economic stimulus package to jump-start the high-speed rail program in the U.S., but [the funds were] rebuffed by Republican governors in Ohio, Wisconsin, and Florida. Most of the money was later redirected to California.”

San Diego climate change plan okayed

The San Diego Union-Tribune, December 15, 2015

Joshua Emerson Smith, <http://bit.ly/1OaYrou>

• “San Diego has adopted one of the nation’s most ambitious Climate Action Plans: It creates legally binding mandates for reducing levels of greenhouse gases, requiring annual emissions be cut in half during the next two decades based heavily on a strategy to use 100 percent renewable energy within that same timeline.

“Besides San Diego, Sacramento is currently the only other city in the state with enforceable mandates on this issue.

“To make sure San Diego stays on track to hit its emissions targets, yearly monitoring reports prepared by city staff in collaboration with consultants will measure the impacts of each strategy laid out in the plan.

“Urban planning and environmental experts said ushering in most of these changes should be fairly straightforward, but that’s dependent on political will at City Hall.

“The most controversial decision could be whether to implement community choice aggregation, or CCA, a program that would take control away from the local electric utility when deciding how much renewable energy a city uses.

“Earlier this year, the state Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal by the county of San Diego, which had tried to fend off legal challenges to its own climate action plan. Under a case brought by the Sierra Club, the county will now be forced to redraft its climate plan with enforceable measures for curbing emissions.”

(California continues on next page)

“Town divided over downtown homeless shelter.

Fort Bragg’s historic Old Coast Hotel was vacant for years, until the city approved a grant to the non-profit Mendocino Coast Hospitality Center to buy it. The agency moved in last summer and began providing case management and mental health services to the homeless. It will eventually use the hotel rooms as transitional housing. Now a concerned citizens’ group is hoping voters will pass its ballot measure prohibiting social services in the downtown commercial district, retroactive to Jan. 1, 2015.” —April Dembosky, <http://bit.ly/1ZxZ0zb>



The Coast Hotel. Source: City of Fort Bragg

Megaship brings new era to LA, Oakland

Los Angeles Daily News, December 26, 2015

Greg Yee, <http://bit.ly/1OpMkUM> • “A massive, blue ship that called at the Port of Los Angeles in the predawn hours Dec. 26 was the capstone to a record-setting year for Los Angeles, local leaders said.

“The CMA CGM Benjamin Franklin is the largest container ship ever to dock at a North American port. It is longer than the Empire State Building is tall, wider than a football field, and as tall as a 20-story building.

“That size, combined with advances in technology, makes it environmentally friendly, and local leaders say it’s the first wave in a bright future for shipping and goods movement in the Los Angeles area. The Benjamin Franklin offers the lowest carbon dioxide emissions per container per kilometer at 37 grams, and has met 2025 emissions standards.

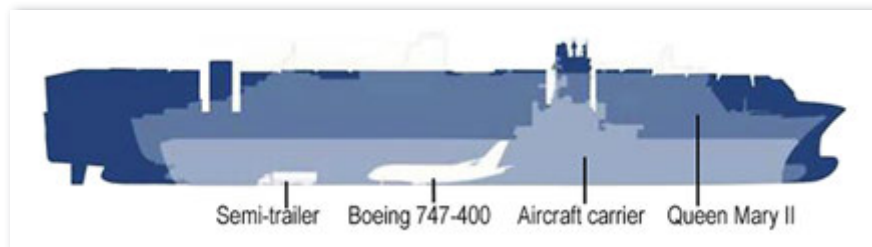
“The Benjamin Franklin is a third larger than the largest ship previously seen in the Port of Los Angeles.

“Marc Bourdon, president of CMA CGM American operations, said, ‘the question is whether U.S. port infrastructure is ready for this size of vessels. Some ports are ready. The reality is a ship like this will not be deployed on a permanent basis until more ports are ready to accommodate them.’

From AP and NBC News, December 31, 2015,

<http://nbcnews.to/1PPH54m> • “The nearly quarter-mile-long megaship Benjamin Franklin cleared the Golden Gate Bridge on the morning of December 31 with about 20 feet to spare as it steamed to the Port of Oakland at low tide.

“The megaship can hold up to 18,000 20-foot shipping containers (TEUs). The largest ships serving the U.S. can carry 14,000 containers. The Franklin’s U.S. visit is considered a trial run. Officials want to ensure that the vessel can be berthed and cargo discharged efficiently.” ■



Cross-section comparisons: CMA CGM Benjamin Franklin, length 1306 ft., semi-trailer, 98 ft., Boeing 747-400, 231 ft., USS GHW Bush aircraft carrier, 1092 ft., Queen Mary II, 1132 ft.

Source: cma-cgm.com

Austin acts to promote affordability. “The city council has greenlighted measures to create and maintain affordable housing for low-income residents by establishing three new homestead preservation districts in East Austin. The districts will be able to reinvest property tax to promote housing affordability, either by building or rehabilitating affordable housing. Area residents facing rising property taxes and the ongoing threat of displacement need the long-awaited plan more than ever. The district boundaries were selected because they are suffering from institutionalized housing segregation, exacerbated by rapid gentrification. The preservation plan is an attempt to protect residents from getting priced out and displaced from their communities.” — Mary Tuma, <http://bit.ly/1OpNCiA>

U.S. roundup

Excerpts from around the country, linked to the original articles

'Fixing Food: Fresh solutions from five U.S. cities'

Union of Concerned Scientists, January 2016 (20 pages)

<http://bit.ly/1PwhASI> • “[UCS] reviewed hundreds of initiatives in dozens of U.S. cities, ultimately choosing five case studies that illustrate the challenges to accessing healthy food in cities. Collectively, the five case studies show how local policies and programs can tackle food system challenges from farm to fork.

“[Populations of] the five cities — Oakland, Memphis, Louisville, Baltimore, and Minneapolis — range between 400,000 and 700,000. Whites account for nearly two-thirds of the populations in Louisville and Minneapolis, but only about one-third in Oakland, Memphis, and Baltimore. In each of the five, the percentage of residents living below the poverty line exceeds the national average of 15 percent.

“[In] Oakland, urban farming arose as a response to rapidly increasing cost of living, [but] urban farmers [were] hampered by large permit fees. The Oakland Food Policy

Council (OFPC) worked with residents and the city to remove the permit barrier.

“Oakland’s zoning rules had allowed residents to sell food grown in their own backyards if they obtained a permit, whereas growing and selling food on vacant lots or other land without a residence required a conditional use permit. The permit and its nonrefundable \$3,000 application fee were viewed as excessive and unfair. OFPC’s advocacy [succeeded] on November 18, 2014, when the city implemented an ordinance waiving the permitting requirement.”

The UCS study estimates that “farming just 500 of the 800 acres of publicly owned land in Oakland could produce as much as 48 percent of the vegetables consumed in the city.”

Can Philly land bank improve derelict areas without displacing residents?

The New York Times, December 29, 2015

Jon Hurdle, <http://nyti.ms/1NWda7z> • “[Is there] any hope of reviving Philadelphia’s many blighted streets? An estimated 32,000 abandoned properties may be tempting developers, but buyers have often been deterred by delinquent taxes or by having to locate absent owners or determine that the owners are deceased.

“Developers and city officials hope that the Philadelphia Land Bank, a recently created city program, will help sift through the labyrinth of records on vacant and abandoned lots and make them available for sale and redevelopment.

“While other United States cities have operated land banks for years, Philadelphia, with a population of about 1.5 million, is the largest to do so. By consolidating vacant property, the Land Bank aims to free up adjoining lots that

can be put together to create market-rate or low-income housing, commercial developments, or green space.

“While the Land Bank has the potential to clear urban blight and return land to productive use in a way that conforms with neighborhood and citywide plans, some neighborhood residents and activists worry that developers’ efforts will lead to higher taxes and gentrification, forcing out longtime homeowners.

“By the end of 2015, about 8,500 publicly owned vacant properties are to be transferred from a number of city agencies to the Land Bank, which would become a ‘one-stop shop’ for developers. Developers are looking forward to working with a single city entity rather than three or more agencies that made for a cumbersome acquisition process.”

(U.S. continues on next page)

Largest desalination plant in western hemisphere is in operation, “heralding what may be a new era in U.S. water use. The Carlsbad plant serves San Diego County with the capacity to produce 50 million gallons of fresh water daily, about one-tenth of the county’s total water use. Poseidon Water of Boston owns and operates the structure, which it built over 14 years for about \$1 billion.” —Laura Bliss, <http://bit.ly/1Yzn9EO>

How to stop gentrification from hurting the poor

Vox, December 25, 2015

Matthew Yglesias, <http://bit.ly/1RQmIXQ>

• “Discussions of ‘gentrification’ usually focus on changes in the built environment and economic impact. The latter can be fixed [by increasing] the pace of change.

“[Notwithstanding] the experience of expensive coastal cities, most American central cities are relatively affordable. Many are still suffering from population loss and disinvestment and could benefit from an influx of affluent newcomers whose presence would create new job opportunities and bolster local tax bases.

“It seems true that an influx of newcomers will tend to raise prices. Research by Veronica Guerrieri, Daniel Hartley, and Erik Hurst (<http://bit.ly/1RQnmED>, revised Oct. 2012) shows [that] price increases tend to concentrate in specific neighborhoods. When affluent people move to a neighborhood, the retail mix shifts in favor of things they like, which draws more affluent people to that specific neighborhood but not necessarily to other places in the city.

“Whether this is good or bad for older residents depends. Janna Matlack and Jacob L. Vigdor examined market data from 1970 to 2000 and found that when houses are plentiful, gentrification can be a win-win — increases in other people’s incomes create new opportunities for the poor. But when houses are scarce, increases in other people’s incomes merely exacerbate scarcity and leave the poor worse off.

“Zoning codes and historic preservation rules generally prevent the priciest neighborhoods from becoming denser. Relaxing these rules [to allow more housing at higher densities] would [address the economic dimensions of gentrification but] accelerate [changes in] the built environment. Addressing one issue will likely exacerbate the other.”

Great Lakes are warming twice as fast as oceans

The Weather Network, December 17, 2015

Cheryl Santa Maria, <http://bit.ly/1JwOikY> • “A new study out of York University (Toronto) suggests the Great Lakes are warming more than twice as fast as the world’s oceans. ‘We found that ice-covered lakes are warming twice as fast as air temperatures, and the North American Great Lakes are among the fastest warming lakes in the world,’ study lead Sapna Sharma said in a statement. ‘This can have profound effects on drinking water and the habitat of fish and other animals.’

“Sharma’s team predicts that algal blooms, which can pose a risk to aquatic life and humans in large amounts, will increase by 20 percent over the next century if the current warming rate continues.

“Researchers analyzed annual data taken from 236 lakes over a period of 25 years. The information included manual lake measurements as well as satellite measurements of lake temperatures collected by NASA. ‘While that’s a fraction of the world’s lakes, they contain more than half the world’s freshwater supply,’ Sharma said.

“The findings were announced December 16th at the American Geophysical Union meeting in San Francisco.”



The Great Lakes, April 2000. Credit: Visible Earth, NASA

(U.S. continues on next page)

Bakersfield acts on High Speed Rail. “City council members agreed December 9th to hire Skidmore Owings and Merrill to help them determine [where] to build the local bullet train station [to] generate the most money and help improve the downtown area. The consultant will hold community meetings to gather public input, conduct studies, and do some research before making recommendations” in 2017. —Jeanne Pastore, <http://bit.ly/1P43XtU>

Potemkin village: Gentrification tears at Provincetown

The New York Times, December 20, 2015

Katharine Q. Seelye, <http://nyti.ms/1OIBMuj>

• “At the tip of Cape Cod, Provincetown draws up to 65,000 people to its galleries and Cape Cod National Seashore. But come late fall, tourists, most second-home owners, and people who once made Provincetown their home year-round decamp. Just 2,800 hardy souls stay the winter.

“Provincetown, like many summer havens, is caught in a vicious cycle of economic and demographic change, with a widening divide between the haves and the have-nots. Second-home owners and investors now own 71 percent of the homes. One 418-square-foot waterfront home is going for nearly \$1.6 million.

“With housing and year-round jobs increasingly scarce, Provincetown is hollowing out. The winter population dropped 14 percent between 2000 and 2010. The high school closed a few years ago. And the median age of the dwindling population is 54.3, far above the national median of 37.4.

“[In a step they hope will] make housing somewhat more affordable and to encourage year-round residency, the town selectmen voted unanimously to lower property taxes on year-round residents while raising taxes on part-time second-home owners. (Seasonal homeowners already pay 80 percent of the taxes but cannot vote in Provincetown.)

“Michael Goodman, executive director of the Public Policy Center at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, said the exemption could provide some modest relief, but questioned whether it would solve fundamental problems like the housing pinch, the lack of well-paying jobs, and the population drain.”

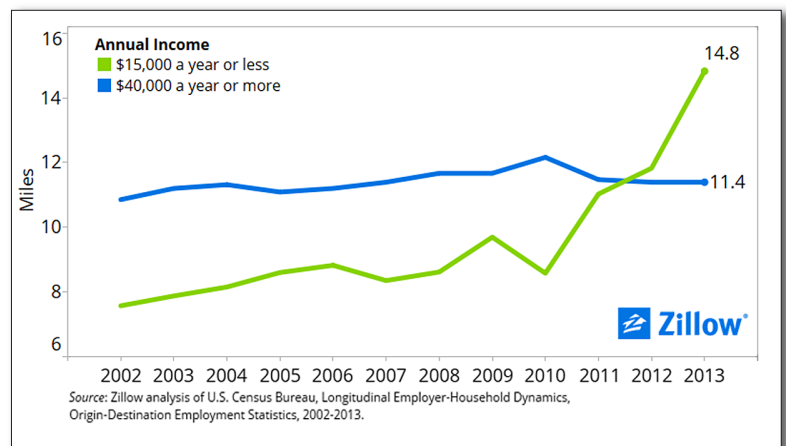
Longer median commute for lower-income Downtown workers

Zillow, December 9, 2015

Aaron Terrazas, <http://bit.ly/1PdFWD7> • “While the distances between the homes and workplaces of higher-income Seattleites and San Franciscans who work in the cities’ downtown cores have been flat over the past decade, in both cities lower-income workers are facing longer commutes. Increasingly, lower-income workers are finding themselves searching for affordable housing farther and farther afield from the downtown jobs centers. Culprits include deteriorating housing affordability in the neighborhoods adjacent to downtown and the evolving employment base in the two city centers.

“In Seattle, where the median commute distance for workers earning \$40,000 a year or more has been roughly constant at 10 or 11 miles for more than a decade, the median commute distance for those earning \$15,000 a year or less has increased sharply, from about 12 miles in 2006 to about 21 miles in 2013.

“We see a similar, more recent jump in the typical commute distance for lower-income employees working in downtown San Francisco, from about 9 miles in 2008 to almost 15 miles in 2013. [As in] Seattle, the median commute distance for higher-income workers in central San Francisco has been largely flat over the past decade, at roughly 11 to 12 miles.”



Median commute distance to downtown San Francisco. ‘Downtown’ is the core area bounded by Market Street, Broadway, Grant Avenue, and Davis Street. Source: Zillow analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2002-2013.

[Ed. note. I tweeted the author: “For the timeframe investigated, was there any significant increase in the number of lower-income employed in downtown SF?” His reply: “Good question! We did not look into this specific statistic. However, overall employment in both cities is booming.”]

(U.S. continues on next page)

Tax credit extension for renewables favors solar and wind

The New York Times, December 17, 2015

Diane Cardwell, <http://nyti.ms/1MmMJGa> •

“Renewable energy companies suddenly seem to be on firmer footing, as lawmakers extended important tax credits in exchange for lifting the decades-old ban on exporting American crude oil. But even as advocates cheered, some sectors appeared to benefit more than others.

“The solar and wind industries got much of what they wanted, while fuel cell storage and geothermal were largely left off the table. Biofuels were somewhere in the middle.

“The investment tax credit for solar projects, which was to fall to 10 percent at the end of 2016, is to stay at 30 percent until 2019, then gradually decline to 10 percent by 2022. And projects will be required only to begin construction, rather than operation, as is the case now, to qualify for the credit. This will make large, commercial-scale projects more viable.

“Wind industry executives and proponents were similarly bullish about how the extension would affect them. The production tax credit, which expired at the end of 2014, will be extended retroactively through 2016 and then decline in value each year until it is phased out in 2020. The five-year step-down offers one of the longest periods of certainty in more than a decade.

“In the near term, developers may proceed with projects that had stalled. But longer term, the new time horizon would help the industry to bring costs closer to those of conventional fuels, even cheap natural gas.”

New locus of Seattle planning in 2016

The Urbanist, December 16, 2015

Stephen Fesler, <http://bit.ly/1IlwM8r> • “The Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD) will be split in half at the mayor’s behest. Comprehensive, long-range, and code development planning work will be in a newly created Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) within the Mayor’s Office. Meanwhile, the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) will retain a small group for code development and will add DPD’s permitting and development review, construction and rental housing inspections, code compliance, and tenant protection competencies.

“The Mayor had intended OPCD to be a broad planning group with experts from nearly all current city departments and offices. That initial direction has changed, and now the group will essentially consist of current staffers within the City Planning Division of DPD. Still, the office will directly collaborate between other departments and offices to align planning policies and goals, investments, and implementation. The relationship with SDCI will also be very strong with staffers from both groups working very closely.

“Both units will be busy in 2016. Permitting and development review is at near all-time highs with no signs of slowing. The city has committed to a two-year process on the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda recommendations, completion of Seattle 2035 (the comprehensive plan update), and dozens of neighborhood planning updates and code development changes.” ■

Hyperloop will never be faster than HSR. “Much of the Hyperloop buzz centers on its cost, supposedly far lower than HSR. But Elon Musk’s initial estimate of \$6 billion for the L.A.-S.F. line has been battered, and mathematician-blogger Alon Levy finds that reported costs for one of the test companies, Hyperloop Transportation Technologies, which plans to build its practice track in Quay Valley, California, are also about a wash with HSR. Cost aside, there’s the comfort factor. You don’t need to understand lateral acceleration or canting or g-force to realize how unpleasant it will be. The Hyperloop would be faster than HSR, but not much faster once you factor in terminals outside downtown areas; and travel time saved is only worth so much if it’s spent feeling sick.”
—Eric Jaffe, <http://bit.ly/1YXGOHv>

World roundup

Excerpts from around the world, linked to the original articles

The world has built 50 super-tall buildings since 2010

CityLab, January 15, 2016

Kristin Capps, <http://bit.ly/1NdusLR> • “The completion of 432 Park Avenue this year (<http://bit.ly/1ZEf9Z2>) will add to New York the tallest residential building in the Western Hemisphere.

“It’s the world’s 100th super-tall tower [according to] the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Environment, which is tracking the dramatic emergence of skyscrapers that are 300 meters tall (just short of 1,000 feet) or more (<http://bit.ly/1ZEfmeY>). Half of them are brand new.

“Many more are coming. Many of the new projects will be built in China. If all of them are built, the number of super-talls could nearly double again by 2020.”



432 Park Avenue, April 2015. Photo: oionio,
<https://www.flickr.com/people/ockam/>
CC by SA 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Jakarta is breaking

Inverse, January 14, 2016

Neel V. Patel, <http://bit.ly/23bdn0X> • “Since 2000, the world’s second-largest megacity, Jakarta, has seen its population swell by a staggering 34 percent. Though the city proper is home to just 10 million, the urban zone has 30 million and experts expect another seven million to migrate to the city over the next 15 years. Although Jakarta is translating its newfound growth into economic growth, density has a downside. The infrastructure simply isn’t in place to handle the traffic. Also, the flooding is getting worse.

“Jakarta needs to build an extensive subway that can get commuters to and from places faster and more efficiently. ‘A metro is the most crucial element of transportation for a megacity. There’s no way it can exist otherwise,’ says Deden Rukmana, professor of urban studies and planning at Savannah State University in Georgia.”

“To the government’s credit, a rail-based transit system that will stretch 67 miles and connect communities to the central district of the city will finish in 2017.

“Gloomier than Jakarta’s traffic conditions is its problem with flooding. Jakarta, with 40 percent of the city already below sea level, is sinking into the ground at an average of three inches every year. So Jakarta has greenlighted a \$40 billion wall off the coast, 25 miles long and 80 feet high. The project will take 30 years to complete. Indonesia ought to start investing heavily in [satellite] planned cities.”

‘Half the World lives on 1 percent of its land, mapped’

CityLab, January 6, 2015

Tanvi Misra, <http://bit.ly/1UBi8L6> • “The people of Earth really love their cities. Data viz extraordinaire Max Galka created a map (<http://bit.ly/1PKIbvD>) using NASA’s gridded population data, which counts the global population within each nine-square-mile patch of Earth. In the simple map lies a stark spatial imbalance: half the people in the world cram into just 1 percent of the Earth’s surface (in yellow), and the other half sprawl across the remaining 99 percent (in black). Each yellow cell has a population density of about 900 people per square mile — ‘roughly the same population density as the state of Massachusetts,’ Galka writes.”

(World continues on next page)

'London's Big Dig reveals amazing layers of history'

National Geographic, January 12, 2016

Roff Smith and **Simon Norfolk**, <http://bit.ly/1P22NFa>

• “Spurred by a building boom, archaeologists are plumbing the deep past of one of Europe’s oldest capitals.

“Peel back the pavement of a grand old city like London and you can find just about anything, from a first-century Roman fresco to a pair of medieval ice skates — even an elephant’s tooth. London has been continuously lived in and built over by a succession of Romans, Saxons, Normans, Tudors, Georgians, Regency rakes, and Victorians, each of whom added to the pile. As a result, the modern city sits atop a rich archaeological layer cake that’s as much as 30 feet high.

“The challenge for archaeologists is that London is also a bustling metropolis of more than eight million inhabitants, chock-full of busy streets, skyscrapers, and monumental architecture. Opportunities to lift the concrete veil and poke around in the artifact-rich soil tend to be few and brief. But a perfect storm of landmark engineering projects and a building boom in the archaeological heart of London has provided an unprecedented chance to peek beneath the surface and explore the city’s deep past.

“The resulting haul of archaeological goodies has been almost overwhelming. They include millions of artifacts covering the vast sweep of human history along the River Thames — from the early Mesolithic, some 11,000 years ago, to the late Victorian, at the end of the 19th century.”

Generously and beautifully illustrated — have a look.

The transit tourist: Medellin, Colombia

The Source, January 11, 2016

Nolan Borgman, <http://bit.ly/1nhMdos> • “The Transit Tourist takes a look at transit systems across the globe from the first person perspective of a visitor. Medellin has about 2.4 million people — the metro area has about 3.5 million — and is surrounded by lush mountains. Medellin’s transit system is anchored by a logical North-South ‘A’ line that runs up to every five minutes along the Medellin River at the valley floor. The B line juts out to serve the western edge of the city. Two cable cars help distribute people living in the hills to the valley where they can efficiently transfer throughout the whole system.

“Although imperfect, the transportation and land-uses are fluid and logical. Many residents are very proud of their civic assets and how they often blended into and complemented the environment around them.

“Medellin faces the same pervasive societal issues that all major cities face, but crime, litter, and vandalism are just not seen on Medellin’s transit system. The Medellin Metro is a safe zone.

“The most striking thing about Medellin is that the city and its residents made a profound choice about what they wanted their city to be and to represent. They didn’t want drug culture, so they cleaned it up and built public infrastructure — transit, parks, libraries, etc. — that would appeal to most people and be used by most people.”

El Niño was felt across the globe in 2015

The Globalist, December 28, 2015

<http://bit.ly/1mpCJaD> • “El Niño’s effects diminish with distance from the origin, but it can still be felt to some extent around the world. Most 2015 effects so far have occurred in Latin America, the Caribbean, Oceania, Southeast Asia, and Africa.

“The 2015 event is so strong that it has been felt heavily as far away as Africa. In 2015, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Zimbabwe experienced severe drought leading to crop failure

and food shortages. At least eight million people in those countries are either on food aid or are at risk of hunger as a direct result.

“South Africa, the largest and most developed economy in the affected areas of sub-Saharan Africa, has seen severe drought put serious strain on water reserves across the country affecting agriculture, industry, and drinking supply.”

(World continues on next page)

Monumental housing projects show how the French really live

Slate, January 8, 2016

Kristin Hohenadel, <http://slate.me/1PUb8ty> • “Since 2011, French photographer Laurent Kronental has been working on an ongoing series documenting life on the edge of Paris in the ‘grands ensembles.’ These monumental housing projects were built between the 1950s and the 1980s on the outskirts of major French cities as answers to a dearth of housing and an influx of foreign migrants. Aging monolithic concrete structures with an almost alien presence in the French landscape, they are a far cry from the Haussmannian apartment blocks that dominate central Paris and the world’s collective imagination about how the French live.

“Kronental said in an artist’s statement that he is ‘fascinated by these projects’ ambitious and dated modernistic features’ that ‘are today often stigmatized by the media

and marginalized by public opinion.’ He hopes that his images provide ‘sharp contrast with these cliché views’ and celebrate the often overlooked ‘urban veterans who have aged there.’

“Punctuated by the occasional human silhouette, the images make the housing projects otherwise look like ghost towns. ‘Exposing these unsung and underestimated suburban areas is a means to reveal the poetry of aging environments slowly vanishing,’ he writes, ‘and with them, the memory of modernist utopia.’

“Kronental’s photos are currently on exhibit at the French National Library until Feb. 7. The full set, including some close-up portraits of the elderly residents, can be viewed on his website, <http://bit.ly/1PUbyzY>.”

The great melting

The Economist, January 9, 2016

<http://econ.st/207cdko> • “When it comes to race, appearances often deceive. Streets can appear black or Asian when they are actually full of black or Asian shoppers who live somewhere else. Statistics are more reliable.

“In 45 of 52 big American metropolises with sizable black populations, black-white segregation has fallen since 2000, according to William Frey, a demographer at the Brookings Institution. Southern cities, which many blacks fled in the first half of the 20th century, are now less segregated than northern ones such as Chicago and New York. Sunbelt cities such as Las Vegas and Phoenix are more mixed still.

“America is unusual, both for its obsession with race and for its superb statistics. Poor countries lack the means to collect precise data, and many rich ones choose not to.

“The European country that stands out is Britain. Like America, Britain collects excellent data on race and

ethnicity; also like America, it is becoming steadily more mixed. Every ethnic minority became less segregated between 2001 and 2011, the two most recent British census years. Black Africans, who had been among the most clustered, are spreading out especially quickly.

“Yet Britain’s streets are often quite different from America’s. Around West Ham football ground, in the east London borough of Newham, is a ward called Boleyn. Once largely white and British, Ethnic Pakistanis, who may be immigrants or British-born, are now the biggest group in Boleyn.

“Explore maps showing the ward-by-ward breakdown of each ethnic group in London. Visit <http://econ.st/207cKTv>”

(World continues on next page)

Affordable housing the Vancouver (lane)way. “There are still the occasional complaints about parking problems or construction noise or discomfort with neighborhood change. But generally, the laneway homes have been popular. That’s not surprising. UCLA urban planning professor Vinit Mukhija says skyrocketing housing costs often lead to innovations like Vancouver’s. As the middle class struggles with the rising cost of real estate, the idea of adding density to existing neighborhoods becomes less and less objectionable. And as city politicians struggle to deliver on promises for more affordable housing, they’re more willing to look at alternatives.” — Frances Bula. (More on laneway homes on the next page.)

Seoul's Cheonggyecheon, a major river reborn

The Jakarta Post, January 5, 2016

Ganug Nugroho Adi, <http://bit.ly/1OBJY9R> • “Over the past 10 years, the once filthy and smelly river dividing Seoul from west to east has become an attractive tourist spot. During daylight hours, visitors meander along the pedestrian-only riverside lanes, seeking peace from the bustle of the city.

“For centuries prior to its restoration, rows of wooden houses lined the river, and it was oft used as a public latrine and garbage dump. Cheonggyecheon was a symbol of urban poverty in Seoul and, at night, the area was notorious for its crime.

“In 2001, Seoul's mayor initiated a river restoration project due to a threat to safety posed by the deteriorating road that had been built over the river.

“Despite the river's more modern appearance, Seoul continues to maintain the river's ecology. Cheonggyecheon has been reverted to function as the original habitat of a variety of the city's birds. The river's transparent water is teeming with fish, and flowers can be found along its banks. ‘It's not easy to build an environment-friendly zone in the hub of a busy city. Cheonggyecheon, as an icon of Seoul, demonstrates that a project isn't likely to be beneficial unless it is environmentally sound. That's the point,’ said Choi Sung-jin, manager of Cheonggyecheon Museum in Seoul.

“Along the stream the city has built 22 bridges, seven of which are pedestrian bridges. From atop these structures tourists can stop and observe the true charm of the river.”



Cheonggyecheon River, Seoul, 2012. Photo: 螺, CC by SA 3.0
via Wikimedia Commons

Vancouver creates affordable housing along its alleys

Cityscape, December 11, 2015

Frances Bula, <http://bit.ly/1kB9yQ5> • “Laneway houses are Vancouver's answer to a growing trend in North America's priciest metro areas. The idea is to squeeze more housing into residential areas without changing the character of the neighborhood too much. The small homes (‘coach houses,’ ‘granny flats,’ or ‘accessory dwelling units’ in other cities) are meant to offer a way for middle-income people to live in locations they otherwise could not afford.

“Vancouver created the most permissive policy in North America: laneway homes can be built on almost all single-family lots. The city of 640,000 has seen almost 2,000 applications for laneway houses in the six years they've been allowed. About 85 per cent of those have been built.

“Living in the laneways has proven so popular that the city recently initiated a variation — the laneway apartment building. In the dense West End neighborhood, property owners can build mini-apartment buildings up to six stories facing alleys. Four such projects have been approved (none are built yet). The units must be rentals, and at least half must have two or more bedrooms.

“San Francisco, Austin, and Seattle also have adopted policies to promote accessory dwellings. But Vancouver's strategy stands out. For one thing, Vancouver created a fairly simple process for homeowners to follow, and getting a permit is not dependent on approval from neighbors. The owner is not required to occupy one of the units. And the rules apply all across Vancouver, not just in certain neighborhoods. That means practically every homeowner in a single-family zone has the right to build a laneway house.” ■

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- Raise member awareness and involvement in APA affairs;
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