

NORTHERN NEWS



American Planning Association
California Chapter
Northern
Making Great Communities Happen

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

MARCH 2016



Shaping campuses

Dan Kenney, AIA, AICP

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Byxbee Park, Palo Alto Baylands
Photo: Jonathan Schuppert, AICP



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Shaping campuses

The cultural forces that shaped college campuses, and the future of campus planning and design

Dan Kenney, AIA, AICP

Cultural and generational issues have triggered dramatic changes in campus planning over the past six decades. After WWII, the GI bill enabled more people to attend college, causing an enormous growth in campus populations — and buildings. In the Sputnik era, which began in the late 1950s, the U.S. government greatly expanded its spending on research, which also contributed to the large increase in new facilities on college campuses.

During this time, campus development suffered from two trends:

- To accommodate rapid growth and larger buildings, the basic principles of campus organization were discarded, with buildings being placed in available space away from the center of campus; and
- The onset of the Brutalist architecture era, which was more about creating objects than creating a sense of place, neglected important elements that make a campus.

Campus leaders felt that finding places for larger buildings, such as science and engineering facilities, near the center of campus threatened what people loved most about campuses — the ovals, the quads, the courts. The easiest solution was to push these new buildings out to the edge of the campus. This required people to rely on cars to get from one part of the campus to another, fundamentally changing the way people related to the campus and interacted with each other.

When the baby boomers began attending college in the early 60s — a period that coincided with extensive suburban growth — another era of very large population



Larsen Hall, Harvard University. Brutalist architecture, Caudill Rowlett Scott, 1965. Image: DSCN1026, trevor.patt, August 23, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1PQnVN9>

growth began. Many students were used to low density, auto-oriented living, so campuses needed to accommodate the automobile — and parking lots. Academic buildings continued to be moved to the outer edges of campus or were surrounded by parking lots, and college campuses continued to lose their special quality.

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Director's note

By Andrea Ouse, AICP

Getting it done in 2016!

I've had the pleasure of working with dynamic, intelligent, and inspiring professionals while serving on the Northern Section Board. It's hard to believe that I've spent the past two decades on the Board participating in various initiatives and in a variety of positions. As I reflect on those years and envision the road ahead, I'm thrilled that our current Board and membership are among the most engaged in the past 20 years.

Our annual Board retreat, held on January 30th, allowed us the collective energy to plan a successful 2016 for Northern Section. We met at the new San Jose Environmental Innovation Center (EIC), a first-of-its-kind "green enterprise" facility that houses services for residents and clean-tech entrepreneurs, all working for a healthy environment and economy in Silicon Valley. With the help of federal New Markets Tax Credits, the City of San Jose transformed a marginal property into a showcase for energy- and water-efficient practices. It was an amazing space for an all-day retreat. For more information on the EIC, check out the FAQs at <http://bit.ly/1SAfgkk>. Thanks to our City of San Jose colleagues for securing this wonderful venue.

Our first order of business (after doughnuts and coffee) was to consider nominees for open Board positions. From a very talented candidate pool, the Board appointed Sharon Grewal, AICP, as our Professional Development Officer, Veronica Flores as Young Planners Group Chair, and recent Chicago transplant Kathy LéVeque, AICP, as Advertising Director. In addition, the Board appointed Matthew Reiter as the new UC Berkeley Student Representative. You can find photos and more information on these folks on [page 13](#). Many thanks to Kim Ngoc Le, the previous UC Berkeley representative, and to outgoing Advertising Director Scott Davidson, AICP, for his tireless work and years of service to the Board. Welcome and congratulations to Sharon, Veronica, Kathy, and Matt!

After discussion of and preliminary adoption of the annual Section budget, we appointed an Executive Committee for 2016 comprising the Section Director,

Director-Elect, Administrative Director, Communications Director, and Professional Development Director.

The Committee's purpose is to provide a more flexible decision-making platform for items requiring action between Board meetings (which are held every other month). The Executive Committee will meet as needed and will report its actions to the full Board. Formalizing the Executive Committee structure was one of my primary goals, and I'm thankful for the Board's support in the effort.

To facilitate our annual goal-setting effort, the Board divided into two topic areas, membership and communications. After discussing the broad issues to address, the groups developed the following action items:

Membership

- Develop a consistent method of pricing for special events and professional development opportunities, and consider preferential pricing for APA members;
- Create marketing collateral, with a focus on the value of APA membership to not only the practicing planner, but to others in related professions who can gain from networking and the educational benefits of membership; and,
- Promote the value of membership to leaders in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Communications

- Facilitate improvements to the Section website for easier navigation to information on membership and opportunities for involvement in Board activities, as well as to promote events;
- Form website, social media outreach, and email subcommittees to identify issues, develop actions to address those issues, and to implement the actions.

I am thankful for the energetic efforts of our Board, and I'm optimistic that we are poised to successfully complete our 2016 mission. ■

Meet a local planner

By Siân Llewellyn, AICP

Aidan Hughes is a Group Leader at Arup, San Francisco, where he leads their North Americas Planning Practice. He joined Arup in 1986 and moved to the Bay Area in 2000.

Tell us a bit about yourself

I lead the local office of ARUP in San Francisco. We are about 270 people, a multidisciplinary practice that includes engineers, planners, and consultants. I am also the planning practice lead for Arup's American offices. I moved to the United States from the United Kingdom 16 years ago to start a planning practice in San Francisco. At the time, the local Arup office was small and focused on structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing engineering. Planning is now a significant part of our practice.

How did you become interested in planning as a profession?

After doing an undergraduate degree in civil engineering at University of Nottingham, I found myself less interested in the practical elements of engineering and much more interested in the systemic problems that planning addressed. I took some non-engineering classes and moved into transportation planning. My first two jobs out of university — with local governments in the UK — were on the public agency side as a transportation planner.

Tell us about turning points in your career

I had never heard of Arup, but when looking around for my next move, I applied and they hired me. That was 30 years ago! Arup was going gangbusters in London so I moved there. I had a lot of responsibilities very early on: my bosses trusted me, and I was hungry to learn more. It was the 1980s and we were doing a lot of work with developers to get permits for new commercial developments.

After three years, I moved to Birmingham to help set up a planning team in that office. While based in the Midlands, I did a lot of traveling for projects across Europe and spent a year in Melbourne, Australia.



Altogether, I spent nine years in Birmingham building a team and business and developing a strong client base.

In 1999, I was asked to go to San Francisco to start up the planning team. After moving to the Bay Area, it took me less than a year to figure out that I wanted to stay. I left the expat life behind and became localized. When I joined the office, we were 50 people, a fifth of what we are now.

Our North America transportation-planning group is now about 50 people, with 20 in San Francisco. After establishing the planning group, my interests broadened beyond planning and into other areas of

our business, especially the consulting business. I became head of office about two years ago. At the same time I have always enjoyed maintaining clients and projects across the Bay Area.

Tell us about some favorite projects

One of my longest standing projects is our work on the Concord Naval Weapons Station. We started the project with a smallish re-use plan about 10 years ago. Now we are prime consultant to the city of Concord for a variety of planning issues related to the project. We've managed to maintain a strong relationship with the city through many changes on the city side. I spent about five or six years in project leadership but now that has passed on to other staff members.

I see it as one of my best projects because of the strong client relationship and the nature of the work. The long-term effect of the base closure, and its replacement with a major addition to the regional park network and a significant new piece of city, make it transformative.

Another project of note for me is the Bay Area Core Capacity Transit Study (CCTS). It is an effort to prioritize investments that will improve public transportation to and from the San Francisco Core. The CCTS, led by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, is a joint effort of five transit operators: BART, Muni, AC Transit, Caltrain, and the Water Emergency Transportation Authority as well as the San Francisco County Transportation Authority.

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Assessing traffic impacts under CEQA

Governor's Office moves closer to replacing automobile delay with Vehicle Miles Traveled



Barbara Schussman

In enacting CEQA, the Legislature established a policy to “provide the people of this state with clean air and water, enjoyment of aesthetic, natural, scenic and historical environmental qualities, and freedom from excessive noise.” The Legislature did not mention freedom from intersection congestion. Yet detailed analyses of roadway levels of service and intersection delay have emerged as one of the most contentious and costly steps in the CEQA process. The addition of a handful of vehicles to a congested intersection can trigger preparation of a full EIR. And housing advocates have long contended that CEQA presents an obstacle to affordable housing near jobs.

On January 20, 2016, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research released a revised draft of proposed new CEQA Guidelines to replace automobile congestion-based thresholds for evaluating traffic impacts with thresholds that emphasize proximity to transit and a reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) on a per capita or per employee basis. The Guidelines implement a law passed in 2013, Senate Bill 743.

SB 743 reflects a Legislative policy to more appropriately balance the needs of congestion management with statewide goals related to infill development, promotion of public health through active transportation, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. SB 743 requires OPR to prepare proposed revisions to the CEQA Guidelines for determining the significance of transportation impacts. The criteria must promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses.

SB 743 dictates that once the CEQA Guidelines are amended to include new thresholds, automobile delay, as described by level of service or similar measures of vehicular capacity or congestion, *shall no longer be considered a significant impact under CEQA* in all locations in which the new thresholds are applied. The Legislature gave OPR

the option of applying the new thresholds only to transit priority areas, or more broadly throughout the State.

A “transit priority area” is an area within one-half mile of a major transit stop. A major transit stop is a site containing an existing rail transit station, a ferry terminal served by either a bus or rail transit service, or the intersection of two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods.

OPR released its preliminary discussion draft of the Guidelines amendments in August 2014. The initial draft focused generally on an assessment of whether a project would result in VMT that would exceed regional averages, and OPR proposed to apply the new thresholds broadly throughout the state rather than limiting their application to transit priority areas.

In presentations on the preliminary draft, OPR explained that the shift from level of service metrics to VMT will provide important benefits. Elimination of congestion-based metrics can remove a key barrier to infill development. Congestion based analyses often result in measures to expand roadways and intersections, which result in high capital and maintenance costs. Further, level of service does not equate to quality of life. OPR has shown that level of service metrics do not measure the total amount of time that an individual spends commuting; rather the focus is on delay at a single intersection. Total travel time can be reduced by bringing housing and jobs closer together. VMT-based metrics attack regional congestion and overall driving behavior. Reducing VMT will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, OPR has explained that VMT is easier to model than congestion based approaches.

In the updated draft Guidelines released on January 20, OPR continues to propose applying a new VMT-based approach to all areas of the state. Agencies would have a two-year period to transition to the new VMT-based approach. As under the initial draft, once this transition period ends, automobile delay can no longer be considered a significant adverse effect under CEQA.

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Identifying Baseline Conditions under CEQA — Back to the Future?



Stephen Velyvis

If you grew up in the 1980s as I did, you are intimately familiar with the movie *Back to the Future*, the highest grossing film of 1985. In the film, Marty McFly (played by Michael J. Fox) is sent back in time

via a plutonium-fueled time machine made out of a DeLorean to 1955, where he meets his future parents in high school and accidentally becomes his mother's romantic interest. McFly then sets out to repair the damage to history (and preserve his future existence) by coaxing his parents-to-be to fall in love and find a way to return back to 1985.

Many planners analyzing a project's potential impacts are themselves tempted to go 'back to the future' by using past or even future baseline conditions as the starting point, or baseline, for impact analysis. Pursuant to recent decisions by the California Supreme Court and Fourth District Court of Appeal in *Neighbors for Smart Rail v. Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority* (2013) 57 Cal.4th 439 and *North County Advocates v. City of Carlsbad* (2015) 241 Cal.App.4th 94, doing just that is permitted in certain situations. Before delving into the key facts and decisions in the *Neighbors for Smart Rail* and *North County Advocates* cases however, a quick CEQA primer and summary of relevant court decisions is in order.

Pursuant to CEQA, a full Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") must be prepared for a proposed project if there is any substantial evidence in the record that a project may have a significant adverse effect on the environment. Once a lead agency determines that an EIR is required, two tasks are fundamental — preparing an accurate, stable, and finite description of the proposed project, and describing the environmental setting. When describing a project's environmental setting, CEQA mandates that "[a]n EIR must include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time ... environmental analysis is

commenced. This environmental setting will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a Lead Agency determines whether an impact is significant." Thus, by law, the baseline conditions to be described and used for impact analysis under CEQA are "normally" those that exist on the ground when CEQA review for a project begins. By using the word "normally," the Guidelines created the possibility that some other point in time could be used in defining the baseline conditions. Many have explored this opportunity over the years with varying results.

[Note: Descriptions of the project and baseline conditions are also required when preparing impact analyses short of a full EIR. *I.e.*, a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration, as the initial study must also contain a description of the project and an identification of the environmental setting per Guidelines Section 15063(d)(2).]

Historically, a majority of the published court decisions addressing the issue have overturned CEQA documents that utilized baseline conditions other than those existing at the time CEQA review commenced. Most notably, the CA Supreme Court's decision in *Communities for a Better Environment v. South Coast Air Quality Management Dist.* (2010) 48 Cal.4th 310, addressing ConocoPhillips's application to modify a petroleum refinery to expand operations emitting nitrogen oxides, approved a line of prior Court of Appeal decisions that concluded the baseline for CEQA analysis must be the existing physical conditions in the affected area, that is, the real conditions on the ground, rather than hypothetical baseline conditions. A key fact underlying that decision was that the South Coast Air Quality Management District used a baseline for nitrogen oxide emissions equal to emissions from refinery operation at the maximum level allowed under the pre-expansion permit *even though ConocoPhillips had never operated the facility at those max-permitted levels*. As such, the nitrogen oxide baseline condition used in that instance was truly hypothetical, bearing no relation to existing let alone past conditions.

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Norcal roundup

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

West Marin: Point Reyes ranches could be a battle for 'soul'

Marin Independent Journal, February 13, 2016

Dick Spotswood, <http://bayareane.ws/1KUXiGx>

• “For years everyone involved in the West Marin scene denied any desire to eject or limit cattle ranching within the boundaries of the Point Reyes National Seashore. Marinites were assured that the successful effort to shut the Lunny family’s oyster farm wasn’t a preliminary step toward closing the peninsula’s historic cattle and dairy ranches.

“[Now] a lawsuit has been filed in U.S. District Court in San Francisco by a trio of environmental groups — the Resource Renewal Institute, Center for Biological Diversity, and Western Watersheds Project — whose objective is to end or greatly restrict cattle grazing in the park.

“The impetus for the suit is the U.S. Department of the Interior’s updated Ranch Management Plan which should be unveiled this fall. After the Lunnys lost their lease, senior Interior Department officials made it clear they did not intend to evict the cows and steers.

“The National Park Service’s accommodation to the ranching status quo led Mill Valley-based Resource Renewal Institute to say, ‘What’s really needed is a plan for the ranches to fit into the park, not how the park fits into the ranches.’ One goal of the litigation is to force the Interior Department to conduct a full environmental impact statement on the long-term implications of all park uses.

“While courts are poor forums to resolve public policy disputes, that increasingly common trend won’t discourage advocates on either side of the Point Reyes divide from getting passionately involved.”

Bay Area: Millennials hurt most by housing squeeze

Mercury News, February 9, 2016

Richard Scheinin, <http://bayareane.ws/1TXPsxQ> •

“Close to 75 percent of Bay Area millennials anticipate moving out of their current homes or apartments in the next five years — though only 24 percent expect to be able to afford the new place they desire. Those numbers sat at the heart of a public conversation on the region’s housing crunch, presented by the Urban Land Institute Silicon Valley. While the crisis affects all age groups, it’s millennials who increasingly feel priced out.

“The conversation’s takeoff point was the Urban Land Institute’s report titled ‘Bay Area in 2015,’ based on a survey of 701 adults and itself a drill-down from a larger survey, ‘America in 2015.’ The Bay Area report finds the South Bay to have the greatest dissatisfaction with housing options: 33 percent of respondents there are less than happy with those options, compared with 24 percent in the Greater Bay Area and 16 percent nationally. And it reiterates well-known preferences of homeowners and apartment dwellers: to live near transit and conveniences in safe, walkable neighborhoods.

“Creating more affordability ‘is fundamentally about the redistribution of wealth, from the older to the younger, from the owner to the renter,’ said Larry A. Rosenthal, adjunct professor at UC Berkeley’s Goldman School of Public Policy. He advocated the creation of land trusts as ‘entry points’ for affordable development, the legalization of cottages and small backyard dwellings, and the ‘re-imagining’ of modular housing. He predicted that a ‘pitched battle in favor of new forms of rent control’ will be waged by millennials once they ‘galvanize themselves’ around housing issues, as they have around other topics and political events.”

(Norcal roundup continues on [page 18](#))

“Energy Landscapes: An aerial view of Europe’s carbon footprint. Europe and the United States have very similar standards of living, but significantly different carbon footprints. Aerial photographer Alex MacLean decided to document this phenomenon in an attempt to understand how the highly developed nations of northern Europe are able to spew significantly less carbon into the atmosphere. Over a series of months, MacLean documented historical design advantages that many European nations have inherited and now knowingly reinforce in their physical landscapes. ‘How we organize ourselves on the ground is the key factor determining how much fossil fuel we burn,’ MacLean says.” —17 Photos by Alex Maclean, <http://bit.ly/1Qm7omm>

California roundup

Excerpts from around the state, linked to the original articles

Los Angeles: Neighborhood Integrity Initiative responds to unplanned density and insider deals

The Planning Report, February 16, 2016

<http://bit.ly/1QJsxRK> • The following are excerpts from an extensive interview with Jill Stewart, campaign director of the Coalition to Preserve LA.

“I have not been impressed by the new urban theory that very dense development through neighborhoods near bus stops is going to reduce congestion. Environmental Impact Reports show that it is not going to get people out of their cars. It’s just going to be an option for those who don’t drive.

“It goes back to the lack of a modern General Plan. The City Council does not want to do the work of creating a new General Plan. They are spot zoning. If a developer comes forward with an idea that’s close enough to a bus stop or in their transit-oriented district program, they will approve it. Then the neighborhood must deal with an idea that’s being forced on them and radically changes the neighborhood.

“We need more people on our transit lines, so we go into a community that is neighborly, friendly, and livable. It might not be beautiful and brand new but it might be filled with older, affordable housing.

“Each neighborhood that sees this coming should have the right to be involved. But there’s no General Plan telling people what’s coming. So the Neighborhood Integrity Initiative forces the City Council to update the General Plan in the next two years and put a moratorium on all spot zoning for developers while that goes on. We need to start the process.”

Encinitas: Granny-flat experiment fails

Voice of San Diego, February 10, 2016

Maya Srikrishnan, <http://bit.ly/1KPKCAO> •

“Encinitas tried to get creative in dealing with its housing affordability problem. It didn’t work.

“In November 2014, the city decided to encourage people to turn illegal ‘granny flats’ into legal homes reserved for low-income residents. Encinitas offered a deal to homeowners with out-of-compliance granny flats: If they would fix them up — electrical and plumbing work, replace or provide sprinklers, add a parking space — and make them part of the city’s affordable housing stock, the city wouldn’t penalize the owners for the illegal units.

“To further encourage participation, the city waived the \$900 application fee landlords normally pay to make apartments part of the low-income housing program. Those units have a 20-year restriction capping the rent at a certain amount in order to keep them affordable for low-income renters. After 20 years, owners can rent them at market rate.

“The hope was for a win-win for the city, which needed to provide low-income housing, and for residents, who opposed new construction on grounds it would change their community.

“A year later, the program managed to add only six low-income units [albeit] at a much lower cost than building new ones. On the other hand, most of the city’s illegal granny flats remain that way.

“City Council members voted to extend the program for six months to see if there was a way to get more people to opt in.”

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

Not that we do any better. The role of Australia’s “Minister for Cities and the Built Environment has been lost just six months after being created by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. A cabinet reshuffle saw Liberal MP Angus Taylor appointed to the newly created role of Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation. The role is essentially that of a parliamentary secretary, and moves the cities portfolio from the Department of the Environment to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. ‘Because it has a whole of government impact, it really needs to be in the central agency, the most important agency in the government, which is, of course, the Prime Minister’s own department,’ said the Prime Minister.” —Sian Johnson, <http://bit.ly/1Qm8xuf>

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Shaping campuses *(continued from page 1)*

Healing the campus

Today campus planners and administrators are realizing they need to “heal” their campuses to recover from the effects of the previous decades. To do that we can use the framework elements of good campus planning (buildings, open space, circulation, sustainable design principles, and infrastructure) to develop campuses into rich environments that support learning and research. By restoring connectivity and increasing density, we can enhance opportunities for meaningful intersections among faculty, students, and staff. This helps create campus spaces that encourage interaction.

Shaping the campus of the future

The Millennials brought to campuses technology and a love of urban environments, and as planners we need to creatively provide for technology-enhanced learning and to support today’s students different learning and engagement styles. Collaboration, hands on learning, interdisciplinary learning and research — informal engagement — all of these require a personal presence. How can the campus of the future facilitate and accommodate all of these successfully?

This can be accomplished in part by ensuring that buildings on campus have more than one use. Increasing density on campus will create more opportunities for people to engage and collaborate. Planning for more flexible buildings will help institutions prepare for the unknowns of future technologies.



2400 Nueces, The University of Texas at Austin. This mixed-use student residential tower also includes academic and office spaces for the university. Image: Page. Photo: Casey Dunn, September 27, 2013.

Also, more areas such as “maker” spaces and technology-enhanced classrooms will allow students to be more innovative and help them develop critical thinking and team building skills.

Two other factors critical to the future of the campus are sustainability and resiliency. While sustainability concepts have been applied to individual buildings for years, we need to think about the whole campus and how the various parts work together.

(continued on next page)



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Shaping campuses (continued from previous page)

Campuses can be eco-districts where resources like energy and water can be conserved by planning them as integrated systems. With climate change and more frequent storm events, resiliency (the ability to respond to and recover from environmental changes or disasters) is also becoming a more important planning factor.

Another exciting trend today is the relationship between campuses and their host cities. Many Millennials prefer to walk, bike, or take public transit, and by linking the adjacent community and the campus, we can enhance the student experience and support local economic development. Not everything has to be on the campus. Bookstores, theaters, and housing, for example, could be located in the community, nearby. These off-campus facilities allow students and faculty to be more engaged with the surrounding community.

The experience of being on a campus can be formative — especially for traditional age undergraduate students. They are given an opportunity to learn how to be good citizens, from embracing sustainability to building great places. A well-planned campus has the potential to help future generations learn how great places can positively affect lives.



Dan Kenney is a principal at Page, San Francisco. He is the primary co-author of "Mission and Place: Strengthening Learning and Community Through Campus Design." You can reach him at dkenney@pagethink.com

Save the date: Green infrastructure for coastal resilience — 6 AICP|CM

APA California–Northern Section

is hosting an all-day workshop on Thursday, May 19.

Sign-in at 9 AM, out by 4:30 PM, coffee, tea, and lunch included.

Training staff from NOAA's Office for Coastal Management (<http://1.usa.gov/1Vi6rJl>) will introduce you to fundamental green infrastructure concepts and practices that can play a critical role in making coastal communities more resilient to natural hazards. The day will feature presentations on green infrastructure projects around the Bay Area and group discussions and exercises.

Registration and location (north or east bay) information is forthcoming. In the meantime, please contact kristine.gaspar@ghd.com with any questions.

The basics: Thursday, May 19, from 9 to 4:30. *Approved for 6 AICP|CM.*

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Meet a local planner (continued from page 4)

We are in the first year of a two-year study. It is a challenging balance; everyone is looking for consensus but they are also wary of not having their own ambitions filled. This is a Bay Area transportation study to die for!

What were some early leadership lessons for you?

Providing staff opportunities and watching how they handle it. In London I was given significant responsibility early, with full backing from my bosses. Providing opportunity is important in learning about leadership. In the Concord project, we've had staff who got early project management training experience and have now developed into trusted advisors to the city. It was great to watch staff grow their careers once they were given early responsibility — just as I was early in my career.

What do you like most about the neighborhood you call home?

My children are grown and live on the east coast. My wife and I really enjoy the urban Oakland neighborhood we live in. We can walk to most necessities, and it has very convenient transit options. We've not been there long enough for our car lease to be up, but that's the only thing keeping us from being a one-car family.

What do you do for fun?

I cycle for leisure now, but used to be a lot more of an active cyclist. I had the amazing experience of completing the Aids/LifeCycle ride in 2012 and 2013. It's a supported ride from San Francisco down the coast of California to Los Angeles, raising money and awareness in the fight against HIV/Aids. While it was a major personal achievement, the real joy of the ride is the amazing and dedicated people you meet both on the ride and in training for the ride. It really was a peak experience.

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

LA's affordable housing lost to luxury developments. "The development of luxury housing in the last more-than-decade in Los Angeles has wiped out a net number of housing units that's a scandal. There has been a net loss of 13,000 affordable housing units because the affordable-housing community is waiting and begging for luxury developments to add a few units here and there, and for the city to create a few projects here and there. Developers know they're building the housing for an average person making \$135,000 a year. That number is higher now because there's more luxury housing going in and incomes have gone up." — Jill Stewart, <http://bit.ly/1QJsxRK>



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
- Communications Initiative
- Advancing Diversity and Social Change
- Planning Landmark
- Hard-won Victory

Awards for people, agencies, and firms

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

Get all the details, rules, and applications at:

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

The deadline for nominations is 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



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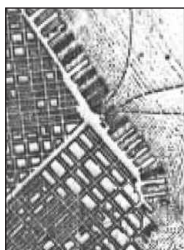
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Who's new on the Northern Section Board

Four APA members from the Bay Area were appointed to the board of APA California – Northern Section at the board's retreat on January 30th.



Veronica Flores, a planner with the City and County of San Francisco, was appointed Young Planners Group (YPG) Director. She previously served on the board in 2012–2013 as San Jose State University student representative to APA California–Northern. She holds a master in urban planning from San Jose State University and a B.A. in sociology (minor in city and regional planning) from UC Berkeley.



Sharon K. Grewal, AICP, was appointed as the Section's Professional Development Officer. She is a Planner III in the policy-planning unit of the Alameda County Community Development Agency. Her previous experience includes environmental planning for the California Department of Conservation. Grewal holds a land use and environmental planning certificate from UC Davis Extension and a bachelor's degree in public administration (with a minor in urban studies) from California State University Fresno.



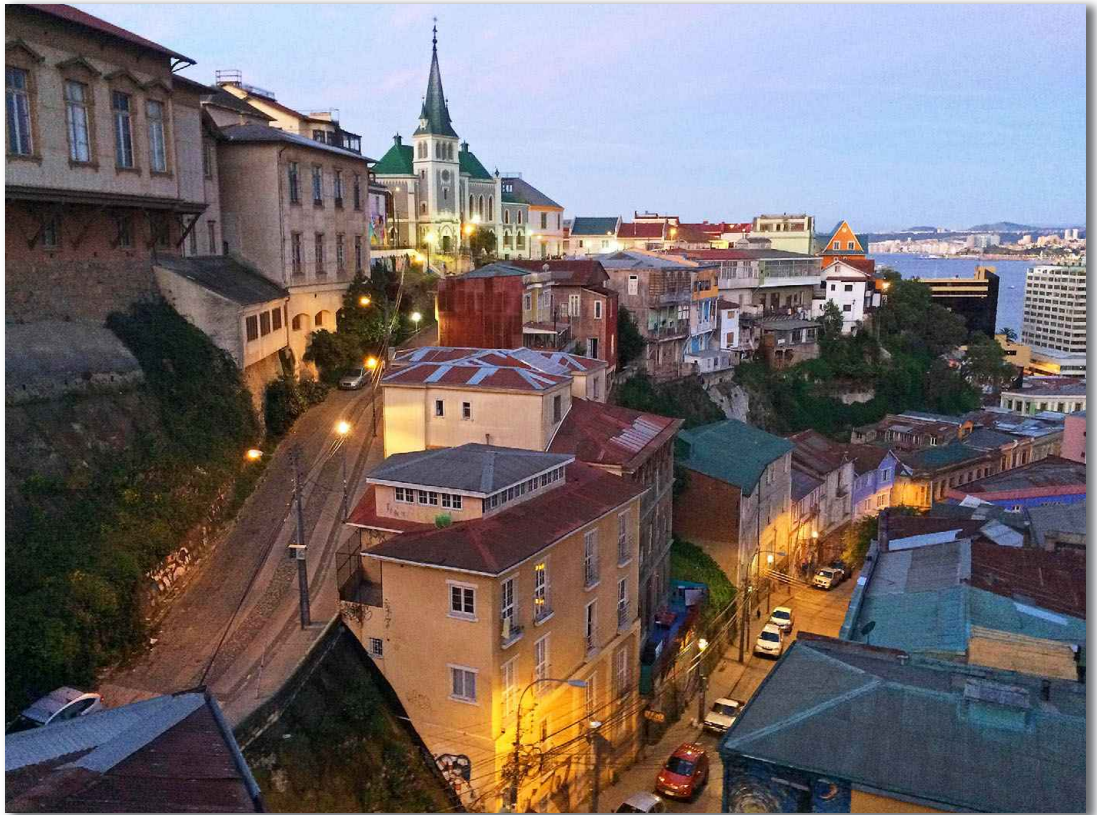
Kathleen LéVeque, AICP, was appointed to the board as Advertising Director. She is a Supervising Planner with the City of San Jose Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department and previously was a planner with the Village of Deerfield, Illinois, for over 10 years. LéVeque holds a master of urban planning from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a bachelor of arts in sociology from DePaul University.



Matthew Reiter was appointed as Student Representative from UC Berkeley, where he is currently a graduate student in the MCP/MS program in transportation planning and engineering. He previously worked for six years as a professional truck driver. Reiter holds a bachelor of science in civil engineering and mathematics from The University of Texas at Austin and a bachelor of arts from St. John's College. ■

Where in the world

Photo:
Jonathan Schuppert, AICP
(Answer on [page 17.](#))



Some works of creativity are beautiful. Others are functional. Others are beguiling. Crafted over the course of 160 years, California's urban landscape is all that and more.

In 2016 the California Chapter of the American Planning Association will convene in one of California's most venerable cities, Pasadena, to discuss how thoughtful, creative planning can craft a better future for all Californians. At the crossroads of California's urban ecosystems – old downtowns and new suburbs, metropolitan sprawl and gracious neighborhoods, freeways and rail lines, and the omnipresence of the natural landscape – California's planners will find plenty to inspire them in Pasadena.

Join us as history, technology, passion, and creativity mingle in an inspiring, educational annual conference.

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The updated draft Guidelines include a presumption that development projects that are located within one-half mile of either an existing major transit stop or a stop along an existing high quality transit corridor will not cause a significant transportation impact. A high-quality transit corridor is a corridor with fixed route bus service with service intervals no longer than 15 minutes during peak commute hours.

The draft Guidelines recognize that roadway projects that add travel lanes may induce automobile travel and vehicle miles traveled. Finally, the updated draft Guidelines state that if existing models or methods are not available to estimate VMT for a particular project, a qualitative analysis can be used. Otherwise, a lead agency can use models to estimate a project's VMT and may revise those estimates to reflect professional judgment based on substantial evidence.

A key difference between the newly proposed Guidelines and the initial draft is that, except for the presumptions for projects near major transit stops and high quality transit corridors, the Guidelines themselves do not set forth specific standards to assess whether a project's effect is significant. Much of the detail is now found in a proposed Technical Advisory.

The Technical Advisory describes two ways to count VMT. A trip-based assessment counts VMT to and from the project. For a residential project, a trip-based assessment counts trips from home to work and back, but not trips from work to a lunchtime restaurant. A tour-based assessment counts the same home to work trips, but also includes the lunchtime trips. The Advisory recommends use of a tour-based analysis for residential and office projects.

For retail projects, and other projects such as government offices that serve the public, the Technical Advisory suggests assessing the change in total VMT, because retail projects typically reroute travel from other retail destinations, which might lead to increases or decreases in VMT depending on previous retail travel patterns.

The Technical Advisory recommends thresholds for specific types of land uses, including the following:

- **Residential:** A project exceeding both existing city household VMT per capita minus 15 percent, and existing regional household VMT per capita minus 15 percent, may indicate a significant transportation impact.
- **Office:** A project exceeding a level of 15 percent below existing regional VMT per employee may indicate a significant transportation impact.
- **Retail:** A net increase in total VMT may indicate a significant transportation impact.
- **Mixed Use:** Lead agencies can evaluate each component independently, and apply the significance threshold for each project type included (e.g., residential and retail). In the analysis of each use, a project may take credit for internal capture.

In addition, the Technical Advisory suggests 'screening thresholds' to determine whether a quantitative analysis is needed. Agencies could determine not to conduct additional analysis for projects that generate fewer trips than the threshold for studying consistency with a congestion management plan (typically 100 trips). Further, agencies may create maps that identify low-VMT areas and presume that projects in those areas that incorporate features similar to the existing low-VMT development will tend to exhibit similarly low VMT.

The Technical Advisory identifies a list of potential mitigation measures and project alternatives to reduce VMT. Mitigation measures include improving access to transit, incorporating affordable housing into a project, and improving pedestrian or bicycle networks. Alternatives include locating a project in a region that already exhibits low VMT, locating the project near transit, and increasing project density.

The Advisory also contains extensive advice about analyzing VMT associated with roadway improvement projects, and about analyzing roadway safety impacts. More information is available on the OPR website at <http://bit.ly/1TpXWyr>.

Barbara Schussman is an environmental and land use partner at the law firm of Perkins Coie LLP. She secures approvals to develop a wide range of private and public projects, including water supply and storage projects, solar facilities, university campuses, hospitals, research and development facilities, oil refineries, maritime port and airport expansions, and industrial, commercial, and housing developments. She also is an experienced litigator, and has defended approvals and environmental permits in both the state and federal courts, including the California Supreme Court. Barbara is the author of the CEQA chapter of Curtin's California Land Use and Planning Law. She can be reached at BSchussman@perkinscoie.com ■

In 2013, the California Supreme Court revisited the baseline issue in *Neighbors for Smart Rail* and provided some much needed clarity, particularly regarding the exclusive use of a *future* conditions baseline. At issue in that case was the propriety of an EIR prepared for the Expo Phase 2 project in Los Angeles, which was the second phase of a light-rail transit project which would connect Santa Monica to Culver City and, together with the previously constructed Phase 1 project, provide high-capacity transit service between Santa Monica and downtown LA in order to alleviate extensive traffic congestion along the Interstate 10 freeway. Because the Expo Phase 2 project was to be constructed and operated at street level in most areas such that the rail trains could impede vehicles along the corridor, the EIR was required to analyze the significance of those potential traffic impacts. Notably, the EIR omitted an existing conditions baseline (2007, when environmental review began) and analyzed its traffic and air emissions impacts only against future background conditions projected to exist in the year 2030, when the project was expected to be completed.

The Supreme Court ultimately held that a lead agency has discretion to omit existing conditions analyses by substituting a baseline consisting of environmental conditions projected to exist solely in the future, but to do so the agency must justify its decision with substantial evidence showing an existing conditions analysis would be misleading or without informational value. Many CEQA practitioners commented on the decision at the time by noting the difficulty if not impossibility of justifying the exclusive use of a future conditions baseline, likely based on the fact that the Supreme Court actually held that the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority did not do so in the *Neighbors for Smart Rail* case.

That brings us to the recent decision in the *North County Advocates* case. There, the Court of Appeal addressed the legality of the EIR prepared for a regional shopping center renovation project in Carlsbad. The project included demolition and reconstruction of a 148,159 square foot building within the mall that formerly housed a Robinsons-May store which had been fully occupied for over 30 years until vacated by Robinsons-May in 2006, after which that building had lower and shifting occupancy levels by various retailers. Notably, under a Precise Plan approved by the City in 1977, the mall owner was entitled to renovate the interior of the former Robinsons-May building and fully occupy it without obtaining any further discretionary approvals.

Based on these facts, the City's EIR used a traffic baseline that augmented actual traffic counts with traffic volumes based on a fully occupied Robinsons-May building using trip generation rates and estimates for a "Super Regional Shopping Center" land use taken from a 2002 SANDAG publication. Using the deferential substantial evidence standard of review identified in *Neighbors For Smart Rail*, the Court of Appeal upheld the EIR's use of the augmented traffic baseline as being supported by substantial evidence. The key to the court's decision was that the City's traffic baseline was not hypothetical because it was not based solely on the entitlement to reoccupy the building at any time without discretionary action, but was also based on the actual historical operation of the space at full occupancy for more than 30 years and the recently fluctuating occupancy of the former Robinsons-May space.

Given the numerous aging malls currently being re-envisioned and redeveloped across the state, it is important to consider looking beyond traditional existing conditions baseline determinations.

In sum, when identifying baseline conditions for CEQA impact analysis, it is safest to use existing, on-the-ground conditions. However, it is permissible to use a baseline that goes 'back to the future' (by instead using actual historical or projected future conditions) so long as the baseline determination is supported by substantial evidence and demonstrates that a pure existing conditions analysis would be misleading or without informational value. It is also very important to consult expert CEQA attorneys because, in addition to these tricky baseline rules, as explained in Barbara Schussman's preceding article, the future of traffic impact analysis under CEQA will soon change dramatically upon the adoption of new CEQA Guidelines that will move CEQA traffic impact methodology away from a focus on level of service and toward vehicle miles traveled.

Stephen Velyvis, a respected land use and environmental law attorney, is Legislative Director for APA California-Northern Section. He has advised and represented public agencies and private clients in administrative proceedings and before state and federal trial and appellate courts for over 15 years. He is best known for his CEQA expertise, having represented parties on all three "sides" of the CEQA coin. Mr. Velyvis' broad-based experience with myriad land use and environmental laws gives him unique and invaluable insight into what all sides in a given project are thinking, enabling him to develop cutting-edge legal strategies aimed at spotting issues early on, resolving conflicts, and prevailing in litigation. ■

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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 Program (NWP), 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

Answer to Where in the world (Page 14)

Valparaiso, Chile. Looking from Hotel Fauna toward Iglesia Luterana de La Santa Cruz, 1897.

Photo: Jonathan Schuppert, AICP

"Fresno sued over affordable housing. Residents of a low-income southwest Fresno neighborhood say the city failed to identify land for affordable housing, denying residents an opportunity to better housing. The lawsuit says the city failed to rezone 700 acres for development of multifamily affordable housing that was in Fresno's 2009 housing element, and that the city failed to meet a deadline on Dec. 31 to revise the housing element to include additional land for affordable housing to meet needs through 2023. Fresno is not late in submitting a revised housing element and has until the end of April to do so, City Attorney Douglas Sloan said." —Barbara Anderson and Andrea Castillo, <http://bit.ly/1U9dnKQ>

Stanford: Housing proposal wins plaudits

Palo Alto Online, February 12, 2016

Gennady Sheyner, <http://bit.ly/1TXUgn8> • “While Palo Alto struggles to address its severe housing shortage, Stanford University is moving ahead to add housing for graduate students at Escondido Village.

“The project, which the city’s Planning and Transportation Commission discussed February 10th, calls for four new buildings, ranging from six to 10 stories and containing 2,000 beds for Stanford’s graduate students. The new housing and surrounding amenities could be open for occupancy 2019.

“Because the housing would cater to a population that already spends its day on the campus, it would be a rare example of a project that actually improves traffic conditions. And by offering students housing options, it would alleviate some of the pressure on Palo Alto’s increasingly unaffordable housing stock.

“Shirley Everett, Stanford’s associate vice provost for residential and dining enterprise, called the project one of the most ‘critically important’ initiatives the university has undertaken in the past 25 years. While the university is currently able to house about 55 percent of its graduate-student population, the Escondido Village development would raise that to 75 percent.

“Shaw told the commission that Stanford plans to give Escondido Village students further incentives not to own cars. They include more car-sharing Zipcars; a new car-rental business in the new garage; and new Marguerite shuttles, which will be free and available not just to Stanford students and faculty but to the greater community.”

San Jose: VTA launches on-demand bus service

CBS Local, January 11, 2016

Matt Bigler, <http://cbsloc.al/1PP699M> • “The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority is launching an on-demand transit service called Flex, where riders can request shuttle buses using a smart phone app or on an Internet-connected computer.

“VTA’s Flex service is designed to shuttle passengers between regular transit stops and high-density employment and retail centers.

“The buses are automatically routed to pick up and drop off riders with similar routes. ‘You can have various routings,’ said VTA spokeswoman Bernice Alaniz. ‘You can have varied pickup times. You can look at what are the requests and then be responsive.’

“Passengers can also pay for their rides through their smartphone. For now, the pilot program is only available in North San Jose within about three miles of the Tasman light rail station.”

Cupertino: Council uses new GP authorization system to stop two projects

Mercury News, February 5, 2016

Kristi Myllenbeck, <http://bayareane.ws/1TXTHtq>

• “Cupertino City Council’s first round of General Plan amendment ‘authorizations’ saw two projects hit a wall. KT Urban seeks to redevelop The Oaks Shopping Center across from De Anza College with office space, commercial, a hotel, and 200 residential units, 70 of them restricted for seniors. The other project proposes to replace a tire retailer with a nine-story hotel with a restaurant and space for meetings, conferences, and banquets.

“After taking a week to digest the council decision, KT Urban filed its intention with the city on Feb. 9 to circulate a petition to bypass the city council and approve its project. The notice states ‘the existing Oaks Shopping Center sits at the western gateway to the heart of downtown. Built in the

1970s, it has become an aged and obsolete retail center that no longer adequately serves the community.’

“[Earlier,] ‘Citizens Initiative to Revitalize the Oaks Shopping Center’ began collecting signatures to qualify an initiative on the June ballot that would give residents a vote on General Plan amendments as well as restrict the Vallco Shopping District to retail, hotel, dining, and entertainment commercial uses unless voters choose to modify those uses.”

“[In recognition of the Citizens Initiative,] KT Urban’s notice of intent states, ‘The provisions of this initiative not in conflict with other competing measures, as approved by Cupertino voters, shall also prevail and shall be valid.’ ”

(Norcal continues on next page)

San Francisco: How to do density right

San Francisco Examiner, February 9, 2016

Peter Cohen and **Fernando Martí**, <http://bit.ly/1SMsXNB>

• “San Francisco’s proposed ‘Density Bonus’ program offers developers increased density and additional heights in exchange for more onsite affordable housing. This basic principle is good, but two questions need to be asked.

“First, how much in additional profits will the city give to developers, and how much of that value should be recaptured by the public in terms of increased affordability or other public benefits?

“Second, what should our affordability goals be in exchange for developer incentives? What income levels need to be served in order to keep our neighborhoods affordable and diverse? The affordability [level] should be relevant to the local incomes within the community.

“Increasing density often means increasing heights and diminishing unit sizes. Instead, we can increase density while requiring that developers provide predominantly family units. As new development is financially incentivized through increased density, there should be attention to the transportation infrastructure and other community improvements that may be needed to support that growth.

“The process of building housing should also be about building relationships with the local communities that will live with new development for the many years to come. Design matters, ground floor retail matters, and transportation matters. Ensuring that the public has a role in shaping those outcomes and that developers are accountable is not unreasonable.”

Walnut Creek: Office park could see new retail life

San Francisco Business Times, February 9, 2016

Annie Sciacca, <http://bit.ly/1PZVuwh> • “Walnut Creek’s largest office park could soon see new life with zoning changes that would allow for new retail, restaurants, and even a hotel. The proposal would allow more flexibility for property owners at Shadelands Business Park, the 240-acre office submarket in north Walnut Creek.

“The zoning changes are key to the Shadelands’ revitalization. Once plagued by vacancy rates as high as 38 percent, the massive office park is seeing renewed interest from tenants following additions like a free shuttle between the Pleasant Hill BART station and Shadelands.

“Changing the zoning to allow ancillary retail, restaurants, and other uses will attract new tenants to Shadelands, said Angela De La Housaye, who chairs the Committee that manages the office park.

“De La Housaye, along with then-economic development manager Ron Gerber and Chamber of Commerce CEO Jay Hoyer, set out to see what the Shadelands community of business owners wanted. That wish list included transportation to BART, more security — Walnut Creek police now have a substation at Shadelands — and more signage.”

Concord: Improper lobbying in selection of weapons station developer

Contra Costa Times, February 11, 2016

Lisa P. White, <http://bayareane.ws/1R6n4qP> •

“A company competing to develop the Concord Naval Weapons Station improperly lobbied former Mayor Tim Grayson by orchestrating contributions to his Assembly campaign, an independent investigation determined.

“Lennar Urban and its competitor, Catellus Development Corp., agreed to a no-lobbying clause in May when the firms began negotiating with the city for the rights to develop part of the former base.

“In September, when Concord pulled the recommendation for Catellus from the staff report, the company demanded that the city investigate whether Lennar and its associates had lobbied council members in violation of the

negotiating agreement and whether the lobbying led to the omission of a recommendation.

“The Concord Reuse Project Area Plan calls for building up to 12,272 housing units and 6.1 million square feet of commercial space on about 2,300 acres of the former military base. In a 40-page report to the city, attorney Michael Jenkins said that, although the negotiating agreement does not define ‘lobbying,’ the city intended to prevent the developers from seeking to influence council members. Mayor Grayson challenged the conclusion that the campaign donations constitute lobbying because he did not know the donors were linked to Lennar and the firm did not take credit for the contributions.” See the report at <http://bit.ly/1OkAcnL>.

(Norcal continues on next page)

BART: New policy requires 20 percent of homes developed on its land be affordable

Berkeley Daily Planet, January 29, 2016

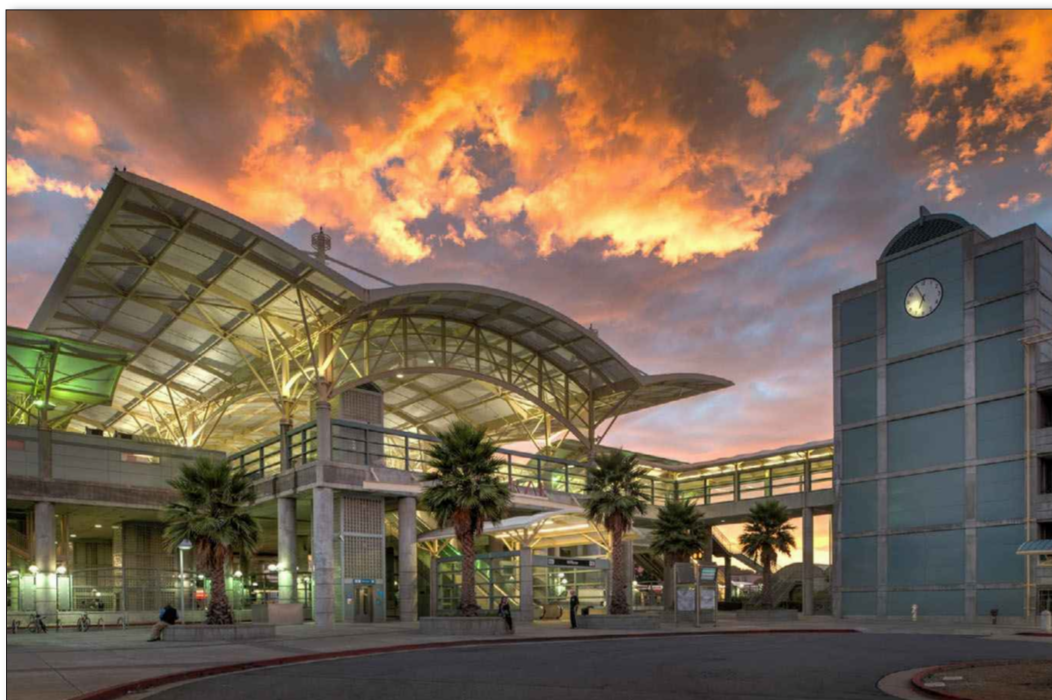
Scott Morris, <http://bit.ly/1VWkaGj> • After nearly two years of citizen advocacy efforts, BART's Board of Directors will require a minimum of 20 percent affordable housing in every residential project developed on BART-owned land, with a priority for housing affordable to low-income and very low-income households. In doing so, BART joins other transit agencies such as LA's metro in strengthening their commitment to affordable homes near transit.

For each RFP that the District issues, proposals will be evaluated based on the quantity and depth of affordability. The 20 percent requirement will not be applicable if a local jurisdiction has an 'affordable housing policy or ordinance with a goal that is equal to or that exceeds the BART requirements.'

Writes Morris, "The new policy allows for exceptions for developments where affordable housing is 'infeasible,' but developers would need to return to the BART board to explain why they would be unable to include the mandated affordable housing to be granted an exception."

"So far, developments at BART stations, such as the Fruitvale Transit Village in Oakland, have mostly included about 30 percent affordable housing. But at some stations, securing the necessary funding for affordable housing has been difficult, such as for a project underway at the Millbrae station, where developers could only accommodate 17 percent affordable housing."

The new policy passed 6-3 at the BART board meeting on January 28. ■



Millbrae BART station. Photo: Treve Johnson Photography

"Santa Rosa motel converted to housing for homeless. "For \$2 million, The Palms Inn, a motel on a run-down strip of Santa Rosa Avenue, has been transformed to single room occupancy housing for the homeless, elderly, and veterans. The new tenants — 60 homeless veterans and 44 chronically homeless people — are beginning to move into their new digs. Catholic Charities is spearheading the south Santa Rosa project. First envisioned in 2014, the project was launched about four months ago by a team of homeless advocates and county officials. It is being touted locally as a first-of-its-kind approach to addressing homelessness in a county where rents have risen 40 percent in four years and rental vacancy rates are at an all-time low."

—Angela Hart, <http://bit.ly/1mlfQhV>

On helping low-income Californians afford housing

Legislative Analyst's Office, February 9, 2016

<http://bit.ly/1V5yD2p> • “California has a serious housing shortage, ... the culmination of decades of shortfalls in housing construction. ... The current response to the state’s housing crisis often has centered on how to improve affordable housing programs. ...

“While affordable housing programs are vitally important to the households they assist, these programs help only a small fraction of the Californians struggling to cope with the state’s high housing costs. The majority of low-income households receive little or no assistance and spend more than half of their income on housing. Practically speaking, expanding affordable housing programs to serve these households would be extremely challenging and prohibitively expensive.

“In our view, encouraging more private housing development can provide some relief to low-income households unable to secure assistance. While the role of affordable housing programs in helping California’s most disadvantaged residents remains important, we suggest policy makers primarily focus on expanding efforts to encourage private housing development. Doing so will require policy makers to revisit long-standing state policies on local governance and environmental protection, as well as local planning and land use regimes. The changes needed to bring about significant increases in housing construction undoubtedly will be difficult and will take many years to come to fruition. Policy makers should nonetheless consider these efforts worthwhile. In time, such an approach offers the greatest potential benefits to the most Californians.”

LA and SF: Explaining their economic divergence

CP&DR, February 7, 2016

Josh Stephens, <http://bit.ly/20T0k5t> • “In 1970, the San Francisco Bay and Los Angeles areas ranked, respectively, numbers three and one in per capita income in the United States. In 2009, after both areas grew by more than 50 percent in population, they were, respectively, numbers 1 and 25. What happened?

“Some of the reasons for the divergence are obvious. L.A.’s aerospace industry crumbled along with the Berlin Wall. Steve Jobs grew up in Cupertino. Hollywood — Los Angeles’ superstar — represents 2.6 percent of the area’s economy, compared with tech’s 11 percent in the Bay Area.

“Michael Storper, lead author of ‘The Rise and Fall of Urban Economies’ (Stanford University Press, 2015, <http://bit.ly/20T0utC>) finds that a worker in the Bay Area makes more money and does more complex work than her counterpart in Los Angeles. In other words, they’re not just making more in the Bay Area. They’re making better. This patterns holds for educated and uneducated, immigrants and non-immigrants, and it trickles down even to unskilled workers. There are statistics that back this up, but they describe only the effect and not the cause.

“[Instead,] L.A.’s and the Bay Area’s divergence depends largely on what Storper calls the ‘dark matter’ of public policy. Lurking behind every data point and every policy are forces like curiosity, relationships, open-ness, diversity, civic self-image, and values. These factors are often disregarded — not because they’re not crucial, but because they aren’t easily quantified.”

(California continues on next page)

“East Palo Alto rising?” Menlo Park’s Sand Hill Property Co. is buying East Palo Alto’s Woodland Park apartments — a massive collection of more than 1,800 rent-stabilized units — in a blockbuster deal that puts a new landlord in charge of more than half of the city’s multifamily rental housing stock. The deal is another example of a changing East Palo Alto, which was long plagued by high crime and poverty despite its prime Peninsula location. Currently, a new office campus from the Sobrato Organization is under construction at East Palo Alto’s University Avenue gateway — the first major new commercial project in years. For-sale home prices in the city are rising as tech workers seek out relatively affordable housing close to work. And the city is working on a plan to increase its water capacity, which has restricted growth for years.” —Nathan Donato-Weinstein, <http://bit.ly/1Qm6nL2>

Pasadena: Local rules stymie granny flats

San Gabriel Valley Tribune, February 5, 2016

Larry Wilson, <http://bit.ly/1PhCIEp> • “My favorite fix for the housing crisis is granny flats. These second units in single-family neighborhoods already exist in all of our cities, practically on every block. Some are separate buildings; some are within existing houses. Many are unpermitted, and there is the rub. While AB 1866 (2003) ostensibly rezoned all single-family housing in California to allow granny flats, cities and counties have final say on how zoning works. Citizens worried about parking and density in suburbia have prevented any real progress on second units.

“Pasadena minister Jill Shook tells of having her activist heart broken when a citizen-based push to legalize granny flats in her city went south because of unreasonable restrictions written into the local ordinance at the last minute.

Her group had drafted neighborhood-friendly guidelines that allowed for flexibility for the enormous socioeconomic differences within the city. The planning commission approved.

“At the city council, Shook and her allies packed the chambers with 21 local pastors. She acknowledged that this was just a piece of the housing puzzle, if an easy and important one. There seemed to be council support. At the last minute, the ordinance was passed but radically changed: Only lots over 15,000 square feet could get a granny flat. Few such lots exist. In the years since, two homeowners have applied. One has been built. What will it take for the realities of our housing crisis to really hit home?”

California: Post-RDA affordable housing developer survey results

Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Community Development Department, December 7, 2015

Gabriella Chiarenza, PDF at <http://bit.ly/1W8PD88>

• “California’s 400-plus Redevelopment Agencies (RDAs) played a critical role in the development of affordable housing across the state for over 60 years. After the agencies were eliminated in 2012 in state budget negotiations, affordable housing developers had to adjust to a new funding landscape without the central source of state funding for subsidized housing development.

“The Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco’s Community Development Department surveyed the state’s affordable housing developers in October 2015 to learn how they are faring following RDA dissolution; how their development pipelines have been affected by the loss of RDA funds; and how new legislation, local regulation, or funding strategies have impacted affordable housing development in California over the past three years. The resulting report analyzes current conditions and challenges expressed in the survey responses of 71 affordable housing development organizations across California.”

The following are among the responses:

- “90 percent have seen an increased need for affordable housing in their markets over the past three years.
- “80 percent report that their pipeline projects have been negatively impacted by rising cost of land acquisition and/or site remediation and readiness.
- “65 percent have used or will be applying for new post-RDA sources of federal or state funding in upcoming projects.
- “62 percent report that changes to the unit mix of their pipeline projects had to be made after RDA dissolution for funding reasons.
- “61 percent say that their organizations have had to reduce staff or make other organizational changes as a result of funding reductions.” ■

“Potential changes to “Google bus” stops. “This is the board’s way of saying we want this program to continue. We know that if we required the full EIR that it would essentially kill the program. The objective here is how do we allow the program to continue but at the same time address some of the concerns that had been raised around traffic, congestion, and also issues around environment, air quality, and the issue of housing.” —San Francisco Supervisor David Campos, <http://bit.ly/1KGg1W9>

U.S. roundup

Excerpts from around the country, linked to the original articles

Urban America: Some urban homes values outpacing traditional suburbs

Property Wire, February 16, 2016

<http://bit.ly/1SG4ZTB> • “Urban homes values in most top tier metros in the United States are outpacing the value of homes in the suburbs, new analysis has found.

“City life is gaining in popularity, and high-end condos are popular in Boston, Washington, D.C., Seattle, and other cities with fast changing downtowns, according to a report from real estate firm Zillow.

“It points out that suburban homes, a longstanding symbol of the American Dream, have typically been worth more, on average, than homes in urban areas. While that is still true in much of the country such as Nashville, Cincinnati, Ohio, and Richmond, Virginia, elsewhere things are changing.

“The change is most marked in Boston, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco where the mean value of urban

homes has recently surpassed the mean value of homes in suburban areas. And urban homes are gaining ground in Denver, Phoenix, and Chicago.

“The shift reflects demographic trends of millennials delaying family life and choosing condos, and shifting preferences, as people seek walkable neighborhoods with urban amenities, the research suggests.

“It has vast implications for low-income people who have traditionally lived in cities to be near services and employment. Zillow recently found that, in San Francisco and Seattle, high-income people are making shorter commutes to downtown, while low-income people are traveling much farther to get to work in the urban core.”

Waterville: Maine city teams with Colby College to revitalize town

Boston Globe, February 13, 2016

Brian MacQuarrie, <http://bit.ly/1RE82dU> • “Mayor Nick Isgro does not pinpoint a specific date when Waterville hit bottom. Instead, he said, this blue-collar city has been near there for 20 years, a casualty of the job drain that has ravaged mill towns throughout New England.

“But something is stirring: A hard-charging newcomer has joined Isgro and other leaders to invigorate this mid-Maine community.

“That newcomer is David A. Greene, the president of Colby College, who is reconnecting the liberal-arts institution with its host city in ways that are designed to benefit both.

“The 203-year-old college that sits atop a hill two miles from downtown will be strengthening its ties to downtown, where the college was located for more than a century. New connections will include the proposed Main Street dormitory, where an estimated 150 students will be required to give back to the community by volunteering. [And the college is] talking about creating a fund to provide loans and grants to small businesses.

“In the last several months, Colby has bought five buildings downtown and is now the largest

property owner on Main Street. The acquisitions will not be permanent, but are intended instead to be a catalyst for revival.

“The investment has begun to pay off. A software design and development firm from Burlington, Mass., is expanding into a former mill in Waterville. Company officials hope to have 200 good-paying, high-tech jobs in Waterville within five years.”



Downtown Waterville, 2014. Photo: Billy Hathorn, CC BY-SA 3.0, <http://bit.ly/1QBTKWI>

(U.S. continues on next page)

St. Louis: Crosswalk art no longer permitted, violates federal rules

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, February 6, 2016

Kristen Taketa, <http://bit.ly/1QUNpI6> • “Say goodbye to the decorated fleur-de-lis and rainbow crosswalks that grace some intersections in St. Louis. The city now prohibits such crosswalk art projects, and the ones that exist will be left to fade away.

“In 2011, the Federal Highway Administration said that ‘crosswalk art is actually contrary to the goal of increased safety and most likely could be a contributing factor to a false sense of security for both motorists and pedestrians.’

“The reasoning is that the art inside a crosswalk could distract from the outer white lines that show a pedestrian where the crosswalk is. Or, a pedestrian could potentially stop in the middle of the street to gaze at the painted crosswalk, said Jamie Wilson, St. Louis’ bike/pedestrian coordinator.

“The city will let some crosswalks simply fade away, because the paint used to decorate them deteriorates within a couple of years anyway, Wilson said. Others were imprinted into the asphalt with heating technology to make them last for five to 10 years and will take much longer to go away.”

Jen Kinney (*Next City*, <http://bit.ly/1QUOQ9z>) adds: “Research has shown that marked crosswalks may be no safer than unmarked crosswalks, whether their stripes are rainbow or regulation white. If the goal is to decrease pedestrian injuries, cities might consider leaving those crosswalks alone, and installing traffic-calming measures instead.”

“Developers are these incredible, huge, moneyed organizations. But we have fought big groups before. We have fought whole countries on issues. Let’s save LA as we know it. Let’s do smart, forward-thinking development. Let’s end this smoke-filled-room development — decisions made between councilmembers and developers and then forced upon areas. It’s straight out of the 1960s, when the zoning corruption trials hit Los Angeles, except that we don’t have any trials going right now.”

—Jill Stewart, <http://bit.ly/1QJxRK>

First-time homebuyers: An endangered species

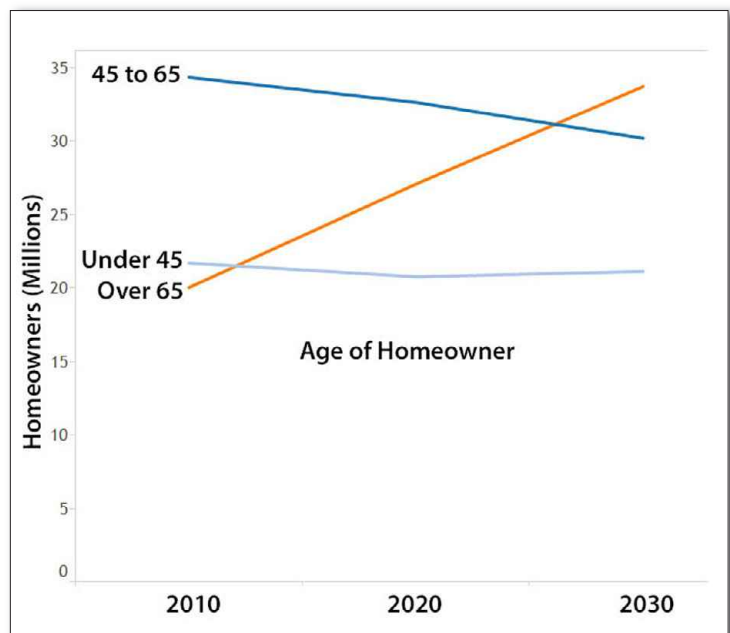
City Observatory, February 9, 2016

Joe Cortright, <http://bit.ly/1SP5sTO> • “All of the net growth in homeownership between 2010 and 2030 will be among households whose head is 65 years or older — and the number of homeowners under 45 will decline. The number of first-time homebuyers — the bottom of the home-buying pyramid — has been low since the Great Recession, in spite of low interest rates and lower housing prices nationally.

“These should be good times: the Millennials now just reaching prime home-buying age are the nation’s largest ever generation. But compared with the 1970s, today’s first-time homebuyers are older, have rented longer, have smaller households, and — strikingly — have less income than did their predecessors. And critically, the housing they’re looking to buy is much more expensive. Home prices (in inflation-adjusted terms) have increased 60 percent since the 1970s.

“On top of that, a much larger fraction of young adults today come from demographic groups (including Latinos and African Americans) whose families generally have less wealth — meaning less familial help to marshal a down payment.

“All of these factors lend credence to projections by the Urban Institute and others that housing markets are facing a long period of ‘gerontification.’ They predict that between now and 2030, all of the net increase in homeownership will be in households aged 65 and older, as Baby Boomers age.”



Falling homeownership for the young and middle-aged. Source: Urban Institute and City Observatory. <http://bit.ly/1PLsvJ2>

(U.S. continues on next page)

Oregon: Grand bargain on housing legislation

OregonLive, February 10, 2016

Denis C. Theriault, <http://bit.ly/1U9dUN5> • “Oregon lawmakers have moved closer to an agreement giving local governments the ability to require workforce housing while also protecting renters caught in Oregon’s housing crisis.

“First, legislation that would open the door to housing mandates, also known as inclusionary zoning, cleared a Senate panel with unanimous approval after several changes. Later, a House committee gave bipartisan support to a bill that would add 90-day notices for longer-term tenants facing

rent increases and no-cause lease terminations. The bill would ban rent increases in month-to-month tenancies over the first year. After the first year, landlords would have to give 90 days’ notice before raising rents or ending a tenancy without cause. It is possible lawmakers will drop the 90-day notice for no-cause evictions.

“A related Senate bill that would have tied inclusionary zoning to an expansion of the state’s urban growth boundaries was formally tabled.”

Urban renaissance often displaces people and businesses

Governing, February 2016

Alan Ehrenhalt, <http://bit.ly/1oBT6Sm> • “Our cities are changing at a speed few can comprehend. ‘Gentrification,’ an idea that some applaud and some abhor, has all happened rather fast.

“A couple of decades ago, gentrification applied to a select group of large American cities: Chicago, New York, San Francisco, Seattle. This first phase of gentrification began with the transformation of working-class and light-industrial neighborhoods into residential enclaves favored by the avant-garde young. The street crime that would have scared them off a few years earlier had begun to recede.

“Most of the areas that gentrified were blue-collar territory that residents had largely abandoned or old factory districts where few people had lived. There was scarcely any gentrification of neighborhoods housing the poor.

“In the second phase of gentrification, demand for living space in the reclaimed neighborhoods far outstrips the supply available. Virtually all of San Francisco became unaffordable to a couple with two decent incomes. Commercial rents rose. Banks, chain drug stores, and high-end boutiques replaced the mom-and-pop retail that attracted the original gentrifiers.

“As this happens, tensions between the existing residents of color and the mostly white new arrivals inevitably heat up. The demographics of the central

city as a whole begin to tilt in a white direction. But one positive effect is just taking root in America’s second-tier cities — Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and Milwaukee, among others. There the changes are focused downtown. The downtown streets no longer empty out.”



Gentrification along 1st Avenue in the Warehouse District (North Loop Neighborhood), Minneapolis. Public domain photo by Mulad, 2005.

(U.S. continues on next page)

New York: Photos, floor plans, of city's first micro-apartment tower

Dezeen, February 1, 2016

Alan G. Brake, <http://bit.ly/1KjttGz> • “New York architecture firm nArchitects has released photos of its modular, micro-unit residential building for cities facing an affordable housing crisis. The nine-story ‘Carmel Place’ is located in Manhattan’s Kips Bay neighborhood. The tall, narrow building — four thin, stepped volumes clad in varying shades of grey bricks — contains 55 modular units that range in size from 250 to 370 square feet. The units — made of steel frames and concrete slabs — were prefabricated off-site in Brooklyn, speeding up the construction process.

“Leasing is underway, and more than 60,000 applications have been received from potential tenants. A majority of the units will have a monthly rent of \$950, compared to a median rental price of \$3,400 for a one-bedroom Manhattan apartment.

“New York’s regulations require that residential units be a minimum of 400 square feet — regulations that were waived for Carmel Place. ‘The city’s housing codes have not kept up with [its] changing population, and currently do not allow apartments smaller than 400 square feet, nor an entire building of micro-units,’ said the firm.”

Providence: America’s oldest mall houses affordable micro apartments

WebUrbanist, January 25, 2016

Steph, <http://bit.ly/1WsNtQS> • “Built in 1828, and with most of its historic architectural details preserved, the first enclosed shopping mall in America now has affordable housing beyond its grand Ionic columns. The project could signal a new phase in adaptive reuse for interior malls, old and new.

“Rhode Island’s Providence Arcade began in the capital city’s downtown as Westminster Arcade, three stories of shops under a glass gable roof with sunlight streaming down to the first level in the airy atrium. But nobody wanted to go beyond the first level, putting the mall at risk of being razed decade after decade.

“Preservationists intervened to save it in 1944, and it was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1976. Still it languished, with most of its retail spaces empty. It closed in 2008, economically obsolete. As housing costs in the city rose, one developer saw the potential for the Arcade to shift its primary purpose.

“A \$7 million renovation completed in October 2013 added 38 rental units and eight larger apartments to the second and third floors, keeping the bottom floor for commercial use. The micro apartments are 225 to 300 square feet, with a bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, and storage, and built-in bed platforms and wardrobes.

“The commercial spaces on the bottom floor are enclosed by bay windows to minimize noise. Apartment rents start at \$550 a month, with a waitlist of at least 4,000.” ■

“Don’t let the Sharing Economy kill zoning. The sharing economy is changing the way we do a lot of things. It’s also disrupting a lot of things, not least of which is how we zone. You can complain all you want about zoning being a tool of exclusion and a remarkable micromanager of the economy, but at its core zoning exists to protect people’s health and quality of life from, say, noxious industrial activities or excessive traffic. A complicated regulatory apparatus built up over a century, zoning was ruled constitutional 89 years ago by an extremely conservative Supreme Court. They concluded that modern urban life had become so complicated that restrictions on private property rights were warranted. Now the sharing economy seems likely to toss the whole thing out the window, at least in urban areas. In practical terms, there’s little differentiation these days in big cities between where people work, where they sleep, and where they eat. The cities that administer complicated zoning ordinances are too overwhelmed to actually enforce them.” — William Fulton, <http://bit.ly/1QoABah>

World roundup

Excerpts from around the world, linked to the original articles

Jerusalem: 'Highly significant' discovery of 7,000-year-old settlement

The Times of Israel, February 17, 2016

Raoul Wootliff, <http://bit.ly/210ieDD> •

"Archaeologists have unearthed the oldest known remains of an ancient settlement on the site of modern-day Jerusalem, dating back some 7,000 years, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced. Experts dated the finds to 5,000 BCE, the beginning of the Copper Age. During the period, which continued to 3,000 BCE, man started using copper tools for the first time, a revolutionary advancement from the stone tools previously used.

"The excavation exposed two houses with well-preserved remains and floors. 'That there was a thriving settlement in the Jerusalem area in ancient times represents a highly significant addition to our research of the city and the vicinity,' said Ronit Lupo, director of excavations for the Israel Antiquities Authority. 'Apart from the pottery, the fascinating flint finds attest to the livelihood of the local population in prehistoric times: Small sickle blades for harvesting cereal crops, chisels and polished axes for building, borers and awls, and even a bead made of carnelian (a gemstone), indicating that jewelry was either made or imported. The grinding tools, mortars and pestles, like the basalt bowl, attest to technological skills as well as to the kinds of crafts practiced in the local community.'

"The site also yielded a number of animal bones, which will be analyzed to help understand the dietary and economic habits of the people who lived there."

Before the latest discovery, it was thought that the area was first settled in the early Bronze Age, from around 3,000 BCE.

Liverpool: Britain aims to strengthen North's cities

The New York Times, February 13, 2016

Kimiko de Freytas-Tamura, <http://nyti.ms/1RE30Ow> •

"Liverpool was once the most important trading hub of the British Empire. Now, the British government is scrambling to link cities like Liverpool and Manchester to counteract London's ever-growing dominance and correct a growing imbalance that many say is unhealthy for Britain's economy.

"Under a 'Northern Powerhouse' plan led by George Osborne, the chancellor of the Exchequer, the government has pledged to build more roads and railways and invest in technology and research hubs. The central government also passed a law last month granting cities new powers on taxes and spending, as well as the freedom to elect their own mayors.

"Part of Mr. Osborne's vision is to complete a high-speed rail link connecting London, Birmingham, Leeds, and Manchester, with another possible connection between Liverpool and Hull.

"[But] with public spending cut to reduce the national deficit, the amount of money transferred from the central government is fast dwindling. Decades-long local rejuvenation efforts in cities like Liverpool, which have attracted private investment, created jobs, and stemmed a brain drain to London, are at risk of being undermined by the government's austerity program. The city has lost 58 percent of public funding since 2010. Liverpool is still fighting social deprivation and is less able to withstand government cuts."

You can download a PDF of the 41-page report, "The Northern Powerhouse: One Agenda, One Economy, One North," at <http://bit.ly/1RE4f0b>.

Libya: A 6000-year old unplanned community photographed from above

Arch Daily, February 14, 2016

Luke Federer, <http://bit.ly/1VflgwJ> • "National Geographic photographer George Steinmetz has captured a stunning bird's-eye view of the ancient city of Ghadames, Libya.

"The old town, a UNESCO World Heritage site, sits on an oasis in the Sahara. The agglomeration of mud brick houses predates the Roman Empire. Each house is vertically stratified by function, with storage underneath family living spaces. The rooftop walkways captured in the photo serve as both private outdoor space and a means of circulation that allowed women to remain unseen from men on the streets below.

"In plan, Ghadames is strikingly similar to unplanned communities still being built across the globe."

(World continues on next page)

Morocco: Concentrated solar plant will be world's largest

Mashable, February 6, 2016

Gillian Edevane, <http://on.mash.to/1Q1dmCB>

- “Morocco has turned on its colossal solar power plant in the Sahara Desert, beginning the first phase of a project intended to provide renewable energy to more than a million Moroccans.

“The plant, the Noor I, is located in the south-central Moroccan town of Ouarzazate. The plant covers thousands of acres of desert and generates up to 160 megawatts of power, making it already one of the world’s largest solar thermal power plants. It comprises 500,000 solar mirrors divided into 800 glittering rows visible from space.

“The massive infrastructure is part of Morocco’s pledge (Paris Agreement on climate change, December 2015) to obtain 42 percent of its electricity from renewables by the year 2020, along with reducing energy consumption in buildings and transport by 12 percent.

“When future phases Noor II and Noor III are completed around 2020, the plant will be able to produce 580 megawatts and it will be the largest concentrated solar plant in the world.”

According to NASA (<http://go.nasa.gov/1Q1e7vo>), “concentrated solar power plants use the Sun’s energy to heat water and produce steam that spins energy-generating turbines. The system at Ouarzazate uses 12-meter-tall parabolic mirrors to focus energy onto a fluid-filled pipeline. The hot fluid (739° F) is the heat source used to warm the water and make steam. The plant doesn’t stop delivering energy at night; heat from the fluid can be stored in a tank of molten salts.”



Ouarzazate solar plant, Morocco. The area covered by the photograph is approximately 10.9 miles by 3.6 miles. Image: Earth Observatory, NASA, December 14, 2015.

Vancouver: ‘We don’t always have to build up to fit more in’

Governing, February 2016

Alex Marshall, <http://bit.ly/1R78hw1> • “As many Americans and others embrace what some call urban lifestyles, and as the dream of the home in the suburbs becomes less universal, just how to get residential density that works becomes a more important issue. Adding homes doesn’t have to equal adding height.

“Kitsilano, a lovely old neighborhood in Vancouver BC, looks much the same as it did a century ago when it was designed around a streetcar line. It still has enormous homes perched on lawns with alleys in the back, all within sight of downtown’s skyscrapers.

“But unlike 1930, when the neighborhood had a population of about 28,000, a lot more people live in Kitsilano now (about 41,000 by 2011). With family sizes smaller, the number of residences has increased by an even larger percentage.

“But just where are these new people and their homes if Kitsilano looks largely unchanged? They are tucked away, here and there. The big old houses have been split into two to five apartments, at first illegally, and recently with the city’s encouragement.

“Developers and architects have gotten good at adding rooms and floors without much altering the houses’ curb appearance. Along back alleys, new freestanding homes, locally called ‘laneway houses,’ have been added.

“The added density keeps housing prices lower and gives more people a chance to live in a popular neighborhood, and it gives the area the population it needs to make transit work (without tall buildings).

(World continues on next page)

Flummoxed by the EIR. “Perhaps the best hope for Palo Alto of 2030 may lie with the free market, which fueled the city’s economic prosperity and, in doing so, exacerbated its growing pains. Already, Palo Alto companies and agencies are making adjustments to the worsening conditions on local roads. Stanford University is moving along with a plan to add 2,000 beds for graduate students at Escondido Village, reducing those residents’ commute distance. And high-tech companies are revising work schedules, adding commuter shuttles and instituting telecommuting policies to make life easier for commuting employees.” —Gennady Sheyner, <http://bit.ly/1QrwLgq>

Perth reconnects with its waterfront

PennDesign Blog, February 2, 2016

<http://bit.ly/1KEcJCT> • “[Late in January,] the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority of Western Australia delivered the city of Perth a major new landmark with the opening of Elizabeth Quay, a much-anticipated waterfront redevelopment project that PennDesign Landscape Architecture Chair Richard Weller helped design. The public celebration came after seven years of controversy, two different governments, and innumerable phases of design development.”

The Elizabeth Quay development is located at the foot of Perth’s central business district. It will reconnect the city with the Swan River and provide much needed hotel, commercial, residential, and retail space around a 6.7-acre inlet surrounded by high quality public spaces.

“‘It should give the city a new lease of life,’ says Weller. ‘Like many cities around the world, Perth was divorced from its waterfront. The city had been trying to reconnect to its river for over 100 years, and for a long time it looked like our design would go the way of all the others. But the government had some money from the recent mineral boom in that part of the world, so they decided to finally go for it.’”



Perth's Elizabeth Quay development. Image: Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, Government of Western Australia, <http://bit.ly/1ov8GiA>

“‘This has changed the face of Perth forever,’ said Western Australian Premier Colin Barnett at the official celebration on January 29. ‘It’s a one in 100 year change.’”

Readers can experience a 2:38 flythrough at <https://youtu.be/57KAMNO0III>

Copenhagen makes mistakes too

Next City, February 1, 2016

Feergus O’Sullivan, <http://bit.ly/1QCGB1V> • “The city’s biggest economic and environmental challenges lie ahead.

“Copenhagener Jan Gehl began, in the late 1960s, to study public space and advocate for streets designed to prioritize pedestrians and cyclists rather than cars. Today, the world-renowned architect’s ideas for a ‘human-scaled city’ have guided the revitalization of countless urban centers. He says his hometown has managed to make progress through a willingness to experiment [with] ‘stealth urbanism.’

“But look hard enough, and cracks become visible. In Copenhagen, the fractures stem from developmental and environmental pressures similar to those faced by far less superlative cities. For example, Copenhagen is considering a new harbor tunnel that could end up flooding the city center with cars. Growth in housing demand is galloping

ahead of home building, causing higher-than-ever housing costs. Some housing schemes have predominantly targeted the already well-served rich. A member of the extreme right Danish People’s Party is now overseeing the city’s culture department, while [the] bike-riding Lord Mayor Frank Jensen’s greatest legacy looks like it might be the approval of 4,000 [car] parking spaces downtown. Meanwhile, [an] eye-catching proposal to create an international metro system between Copenhagen and Malmo — already connected by very frequent, through-routed trains — [seems] mainly aimed at gaining headlines.

“If left unresolved, these pressures could knock Copenhagen from its green pedestal. The urbanism movement’s model city is not immune to the challenges of growth, climate change, and increasing economic disparity.”

(World continues on next page)

Paris: An answer to affordable housing needs?

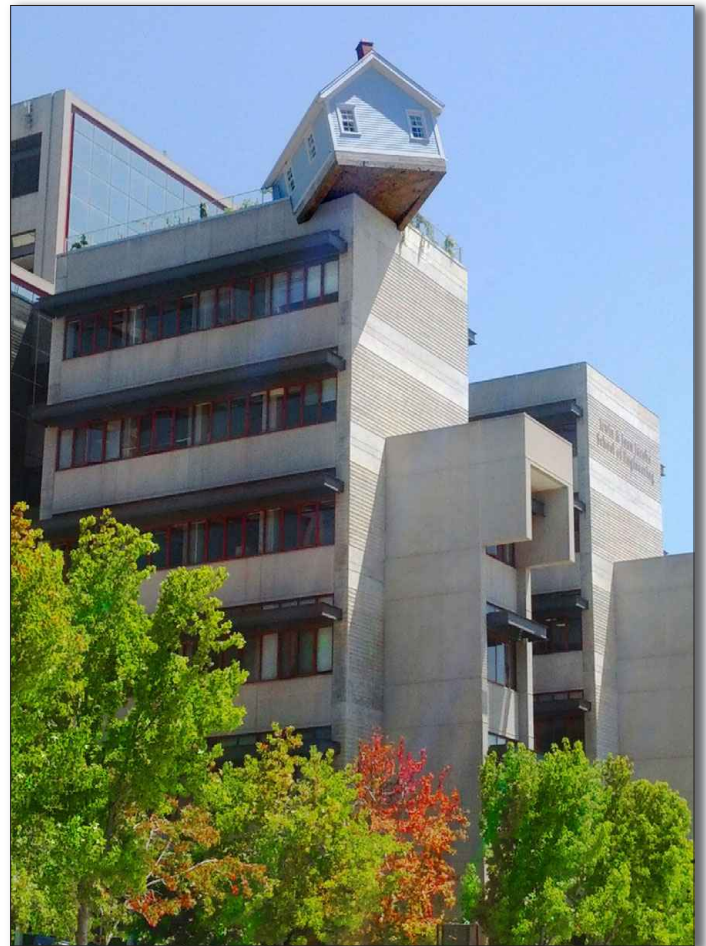
CityLab, February 2, 2016

Feergus O'Sullivan, <http://bit.ly/1UZqc8L> • “Next time you’re in Paris, don’t be surprised if you look up to find a contemporary prefab bolted onto a historic roof. A new social enterprise called Les Toits Du Monde (‘Roofs of the World’) is working in the context of Paris’s new property law, called ‘Loi ALUR’ (<http://bit.ly/1UZqXi8>), which has set a target of 70,000 new dwellings per year and introduced rent-stabilization.

“Les Toits du Monde is sniffing out sites [that allow extra construction on rooftops] to develop with a new funding model. Any building owner with a potentially suitable rooftop can apply to the organization’s team of planners, lawyers, architects, and property managers, who can help grease the wheels of development.

“If the site is suitable, the owner isn’t necessarily given money, however. Instead, he or she surrenders their rooftop in return for substantial renovations, such as façade repairs, better insulation, or new lifts.

“This arrangement enables Les Toits Du Monde to keep costs low, as does the development’s structure, which uses prefabricated units that are constructed off-site in a workshop, then bolted into steel supports. When completed in eight-to-12 months time, three apartments half-a-kilometer north of Place de la République, just off the canal near the city’s Quai de Valmy (map at <http://bit.ly/1UZrAZ2>), will cost a total of \$738,500 to build, not bad for a prime inner city site.” ■



Not in Paris. The 70,000-pound miniature house on top of this seven-story engineering building at UC San Diego is artist Do Ho Suh’s “Fallen Star,” designed specifically for the UCSD campus, 2011; but you get the idea. Photo: Aliza Knox.

Labor force participation dropped sharply in this century. In an economic letter published by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco on February 1, Robert Hall and Nicolas Petrosky-Nadeau write that, “Various factors have contributed to this decline, including the aging of the population and changes in welfare programs. ... However, the participation rate among people in their prime working years — ages 25 to 54 — has also fallen. [The authors’] findings suggest that the decline in [labor force] participation among people of prime working age has been concentrated in higher-income households. ... However, this has not been the case among older workers. Workers over the age of 55, particularly those in households at the top of the income distribution, have been increasingly participating in the labor force.” The authors suggest further research will help to “understand the underlying reasons for the diverging trends across household incomes.” The Economic Letter is available as a five-page PDF at <http://bit.ly/1o8H2r0>.

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