

NORTHERN NEWS



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



American Planning Association
California Chapter
Northern
Making Great Communities Happen

June 2018

HOUSING

Build all kinds of housing almost everywhere

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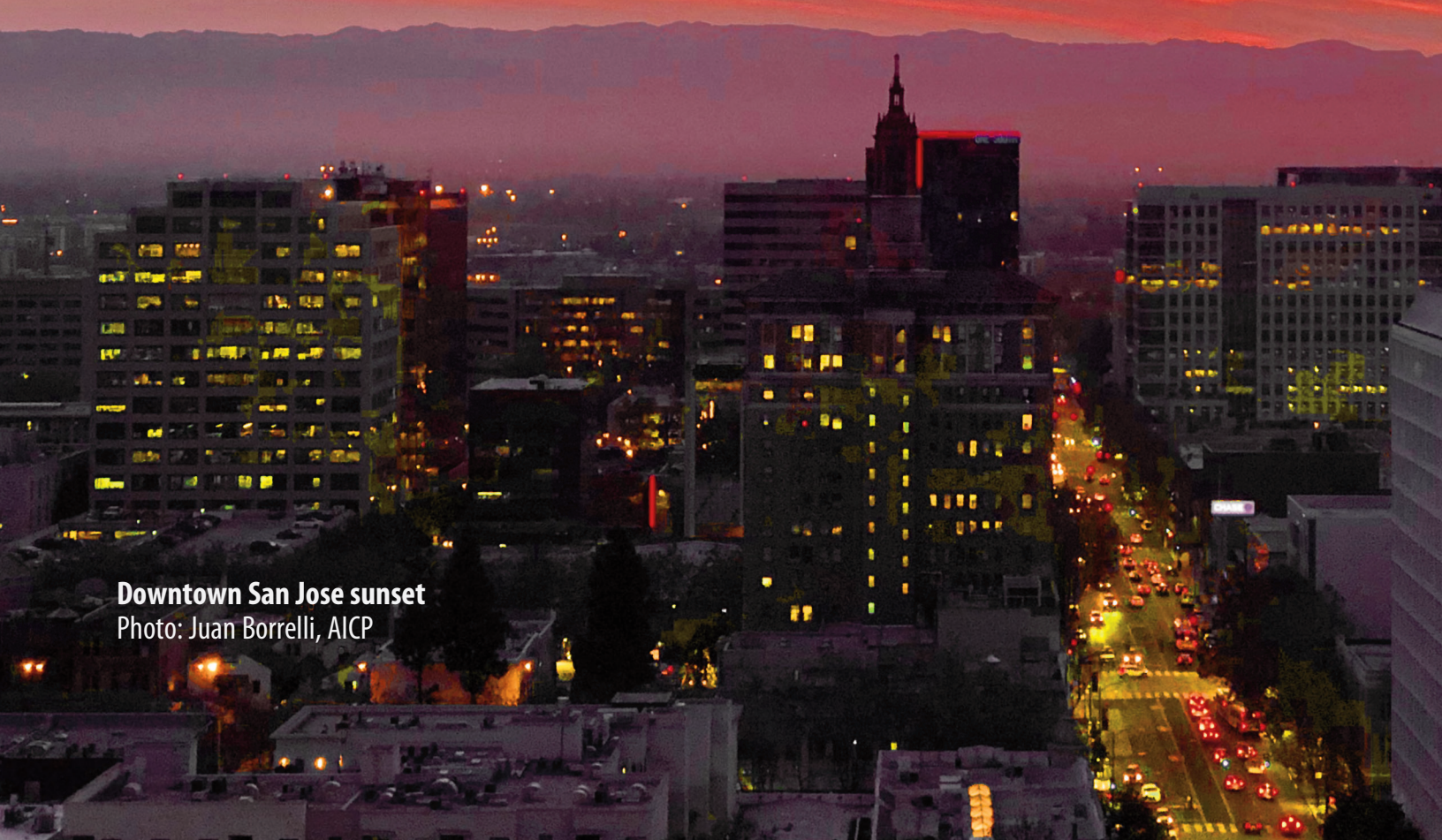
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Downtown San Jose sunset

Photo: Juan Borrelli, AICP





Reverse BANANA: Build all kinds of housing ... almost everywhere

Naphtali Knox, FAICP, interviews Denise Pinkston, MCRP



Denise Pinkston is a partner with TMG Partners, San Francisco. She has 30+ years of experience in real estate, planning, and project management. Before joining TMG Partners, Ms. Pinkston directed current planning and redevelopment for Marin County, including the \$100 million Marin City USA Project and the Buck Center for Research on Aging. Pinkston serves on MTC's CASA-

the Committee to House the Bay Area, and was a panelist at APA's recent Summit on Livable Communities for All Ages (LCA). She holds a master's degree in city and regional planning and a B.A. in history, both from UC Berkeley. *Northern News* caught up with her on April 30 for this interview.

Northern News: You noted at the San Francisco LCA summit that to build a mid-rise unit in the Bay Area costs nearly \$800,000. What goes into that figure?

The number is based on our own company experience with mid-price multifamily buildings; \$700,000 to \$800,000 is a commonly referenced cost in the Bay Area. High-rise units can cost more. It costs nearly twice as much to build a multifamily unit in California as it does in other states.

An average mid-rise unit is 1,000 sq.ft., and you have to rent it for \$5 per sq.ft. (so \$5,000 per month). Developers lower unit cost by reducing unit sizes until the space fits people's housing budgets (say 600–700 sq.ft. units), or they can only sell or rent to households able to pay \$5,000 or more for housing. High building costs are making middle-income and family housing scarce.

NN: Cities charge fees for accessory dwelling units. Are you finding that city fees make ADUs prohibitory?

Yes, fees are a definite impediment. Some California jurisdictions charge ADU fees as high as \$60,000 to \$70,000. Why would you pay that if you were building an accessory unit that only costs \$150,000? You can remodel your house with a building permit, pay no fees, and rent it as an Airbnb to avoid the steep impact fees.

This is a California phenomenon. Prop 13 makes it hard for localities to raise property taxes, and communities raise development impact fees, especially on housing, to pay for public services. Some fees are so high that it raises the question as to whether the fees intend to exclude people of modest means from living there. Why should new residents have to pay the equivalent of Mar-a-Lago country club dues just to live in an average California community? Most prospective renters cannot afford the prices that reflect these imbedded fees.

That's why S.B. 1069 (Wieckowski, Chapter 720, Statutes of 2016), which went into effect on January 1, 2017, included measured steps toward fee containment. Bills now pending in the legislature also address fees, including SB 831 (Wieckowski, <http://bit.ly/2Ft1Q5j>) and SB 1469 (Skinner, <http://bit.ly/2Fulxd5>).

California needs a sea change in how we finance local government so that impact fees can be made rational. (See "The Cost of Housing Development Fees in Seven California Cities," Turner Center, <http://bit.ly/2GpFjIA>.)

NN: You have said we need to educate elected officials and others about the importance of housing flexibility. Please explain.

Cost is a massive problem in California that has driven the price of housing beyond what most people can afford — and is therefore suppressing new housing construction. Even in high demand cities, the math doesn't currently work for high-rise housing. San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo recently

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San Francisco: Cost stops developer from building approved residential tower. “San Francisco officials have been working to rezone the transit-rich area around Van Ness Avenue and Market Streets (the ‘Hub’). With an existing busy BART station and the forthcoming bus rapid transit on Van Ness, the area is prime for high-rise residential and office. But just like San Francisco’s Central SoMa rezoning, the effort has been slow going. The draft environmental review for the Hub is now expected to be released in 2019, instead of 2018. Several developers have decided to wait to see what happens with the rezoning, rather than just zoom ahead with current height and density on their parcels. One developer that didn’t wait is Build Inc., which won approvals for One Oak, a 304-unit, 40-story tower at the northwestern corner of Van Ness Avenue and Market. The approved site, though, is now for sale after spiking construction costs made it too difficult to build.” —*Emily Fanher, San Francisco Business Times, <http://bit.ly/2FYdBkl>*



Director's note

Sharon Grewal, AICP

Awards Gala – June 1st

Join us on this special Friday night to honor Northern Section's innovative plans and projects, distinguished APA members, and future planners. We will be in the beautiful Green Room of the famous San Francisco War Memorial Veterans Building, which features a balcony patio looking over San Francisco City Hall. The Green Room was originally designed as a lounge for World War I veterans, and now serves as a performance and reception hall.

The evening will feature a networking reception from 6:30–7:30 followed by a background video for presentation of the awards from 7:30 to 8:30. Come along to network, get energized, have fun, and meet current and future star planners. You can buy tickets at <http://bit.ly/2GYGpuf>, and ticket bundles are available, so bring your friends. If you have any questions regarding the event or would like to become a sponsor, please email our Awards Program Directors, Florentina Craciun or Carmela Campbell, at awards@norcalapa.org.

Special Recognition Awards

I'm also excited to announce the expansion of the special recognition awards. It has been our local practice for the Section Director to give a Special Recognition Award to a seasoned Northern Section planner. But we have so many members who are outstanding at all levels that our board decided to recognize the contributions made by an accomplished planner, a mid-career planner, and an emerging planner. Three deserving planners in our Section have excelled in serving our communities and advancing the planning profession. Northern Section is pleased to recognize the following for their contributions.

Special Recognition Award – Emerging Planner

Melissa Ruhl, Arup Transportation Planner

Special Recognition Award – Mid-Career Planner

Jonathan Schuppert, AICP, Facebook Campus Connectivity Manager, Northern Section Board

Special Recognition Award – Accomplished Planner

Fay Darmawi, San Francisco Urban Film Festival,
Chinatown Community Development Corporation

2019 National Planning Conference Sessions and Workshops

We are announcing the upcoming 'call for submittals' starting on June 1st for National Planning Conference Sessions and Mobile Workshops. Our region has much to offer, and this is our opportunity this decade to showcase our work in northern coastal California and the San Francisco Bay Area. Please see [page 6](#) for details, and feel free to contact us at npc19@norcalapa.org if you have any questions.

Our next Local Host Committee meeting is Saturday, July 28, from 10 AM to Noon in Jack London Square, Oakland. All are welcome. Save the date and time!

An Overview of Cal-Adapt Tools and Resources

Erik de Kok, AICP, of Ascent Environmental, Sacramento, will present an overview of the tools and resources available for your climate adaptation planning — temperature, precipitation, snowpack, sea level rise, and wildfire — all in one place, and something you can integrate with your own applications. Cal-Adapt was a recommendation of the 2009 California Climate Adaptation Strategy. It was designed to let you access the wealth of data and information that has been, and continues to be, produced by California's scientific and research community. The Geospatial Innovation Facility at UC Berkeley developed Cal-Adapt with funding from and advisory oversight by the California Energy Commission. Go to <http://cal-adapt.org> and browse. Come for the hour-plus session (brown bag lunch provided) on Thursday, May 31, 11:45 AM, at GHD, 2235 Mercury Way, Santa Rosa, or join us from afar on Web Ex. RSVP at <http://bit.ly/2GmFwuB>. AICP | CM 1.0 pending. No cost for APA or AEP members; nonmembers pay \$7.33. ■

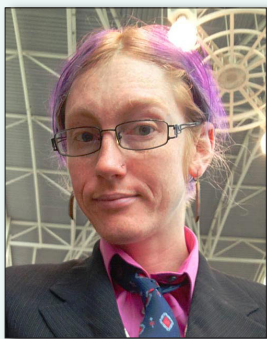
Focusing on Housing Accountability Act, nonprofit takes cities to court

Bill Chapin

California's Housing Accountability Act has been on the books since 1982, but it hasn't always been on the minds of city staff and local politicians.

Enacted to promote housing amid a statewide shortage, the law requires cities to adhere to established, objective standards when considering proposed developments. In practice, it was not too hard for planning commissions and city councils to skirt the HAA's rules, or just flat-out ignore them. The act was rarely invoked and had no state-level enforcement.

That dynamic has changed within the last few years, particularly in Northern California. That's due partly to court decisions and legislative amendments that have given the law some new teeth, and partly to one upstart nonprofit organization that has been willing to wield the HAA as a political tool. The California Renters Legal Advocacy and Education Fund, commonly known as CaRLA (<https://carlaef.org>), has been racking up a string of victories that have forced Bay Area cities to reverse course and approve new housing. In just one week in April, CaRLA reached a settlement with the City of Sausalito (<http://bit.ly/2GIPrR0>) and filed suit against the City of San Mateo (<http://bit.ly/2GIF5R6>).



Victoria Fierce, via Twitter

"Cities are waking up," said Victoria Fierce, the organization's co-executive director. "They're having a good look at the HAA because they're scared."

Commonly known as California's "anti-NIMBY" legislation, the HAA was based on the conclusion that "the excessive cost of the state's housing supply is partially caused by activities and policies of many local governments which limit the approval of affordable housing" The law states that local governments may not reject housing developments that meet their own "applicable, objective general plan, zoning, and subdivision standards and criteria," nor require a reduction in housing density. Exceptions are allowed only if the government can document that the "project would have a specific, adverse impact upon the public health or safety" that cannot be avoided or mitigated.

A 2011 court case (*Honchariw v. County of Stanislaus*, <http://bit.ly/2GhV7vr>) established that the HAA applies even if the development includes no below-market-rate units. Legislation passed in 2017 (<http://bit.ly/2GLAiyZ>) enhanced several aspects of the HAA. The changes include a more demanding standard of evidence that jurisdictions must meet in their findings, increased fines for failure to comply with court orders, and specifying that jurisdictions can't alter their objective standards after the developer completes an application.

Even before these reforms became effective on Jan. 1, CaRLA was utilizing the HAA in ways no outside group had before. The organization grew out of the San Francisco Bay Area Renters' Federation's "Sue the Suburbs" campaign, which launched in 2015 as an early effort in the "Yes in My Backyard," or YIMBY, movement. Their first target was the City of Lafayette, which had rejected a 315-apartment development and instead approved 44 single-family homes on the site. The reduced-density plans eventually moved forward, but not before the city agreed to a settlement that included attorney fees and having its planners attend an HAA training session.

CaRLA scored a more decisive victory with its next suits, filed against the City of Berkeley over a proposal to raze a deteriorating single-family home to build three new houses on the lot. The City Council twice rejected the project, and Alameda Superior Court twice found the City had violated the HAA. Berkeley ended up paying \$45,000 in attorney fees, and demolition is ready to begin.

"The funny thing about these lawsuits is they kind of write themselves," Fierce said, noting that she often observes councilors and commissioners in public meetings asking city staff about how to get around the HAA. "They just blatantly conspire to flout the law. ... We just have to get the transcript, copy, and paste."

San Francisco-based attorney Daniel Golub said that, just a few years ago, nearly every jurisdiction was unfamiliar with the HAA's limits on local government authority. While that's still the case with some cities, his firm has started to see a shift.

(continues on next page)



1310 Haskell Street, Berkeley. The house was at the center of a legal battle between the city and the California Renters Legal Advocacy and Education Fund, which supported the property owner's efforts to build three new homes on the site.

"I think it's certainly and indisputably the case that CaRLA's legal strategies have been a catalyzing force," said Golub, an associate in Holland & Knight's West Coast Land Use and Environmental Group. "Nothing focuses the mind like a lawsuit."

Golub identified several other factors that have helped raise the HAA's profile. Some land-use law firms, including his, had started invoking the HAA behind the scenes to get projects approved for clients even before the 2017 reforms passed. Then the bills focused attention on the act as soon as they began to circulate among state lawmakers — which is "a little surprising," he said.

"While [the reforms] significantly increased the burdens on local jurisdictions, ... it's not like the core [elements] of the act were new this year," he said.

The other issue is that "the housing crisis has gotten so much harder to ignore," Golub said. "People are flipping through the code book and saying, 'What do we have that's supposed to be spurring new housing?'"

In addition to the pending case in San Mateo, one of CaRLA's priorities moving forward is to expand its scope beyond the HAA and look at other state laws, such as the bills passed over the last two sessions to promote the construction of accessory dwelling units. Fierce said she also wants CaRLA to increase its educational outreach, including to planning departments and city staff. The group is happy to lead sessions on the HAA for anyone who asks, she said.

Fierce said she views CaRLA as being "on the side of planners who want to see the rules followed." Too often, she said, politicians ignore the work of planners who have developed zoning codes and specific plans.

"It's not fair to the city staff and all the citizens who put in time and energy," said Fierce, who is also co-executive of the YIMBY-affiliated advocacy group East Bay for Everyone. "CaRLA is here to give them some support and ... let planners do their planning without having to go through the politics of it."

The cases CaRLA takes on vary widely in size. The Sausalito case revolved around a proposed addition to a home that will increase the city's housing stock by just one unit. On its own, that obviously doesn't represent a big shift in the Bay Area's housing supply, but CaRLA sees potential in the sum of small decisions across the region.

"You've got to start somewhere. For decades, Sausalito has been doing this," Fierce said. "And now they're going to be more careful about it and follow their own rules."

There's also an expectation that, with growing awareness of the HAA and how it is being used, other cities will at least think twice about denying housing that complies with existing zoning. Fierce and Golub both are seeing evidence of that already.

When the Dublin City Council considered a 220-apartment, transit-oriented development next to the city's BART station in March, city staff explicitly warned that rejecting the proposal or requiring a reduction in density would be inviting a lawsuit, and cited CaRLA by name. After outlining the city's legal options, the staff report concluded: "It is not certain that the City's defenses would be successful. But, litigation challenging a disapproval appears much more certain, and it would be costly and time consuming for City staff."

The council rejected the application.



*Bill Chapin works as a planner in Michael Baker International's Oakland office, focusing on affordable housing and hazard mitigation. He is a former newspaper reporter and co-authored a chapter in the research collection, *Parking and the City* (2018, Routledge).*

Submit sessions and workshops for APA National Planning Conference

Hing Wong, AICP

Our 2019 National Planning Conference Local Host Committee wants your help in highlighting our amazing region at next year's conference in San Francisco.

Starting June 1, we will have an open call for conference sessions and mobile workshops for NPC19. Everyone is welcome to propose a conference session or mobile workshop, but don't wait until the June 25th deadline to start developing your great ideas.

We are looking for conference sessions and mobile workshops that showcase what we're doing locally and how

those efforts might be applied elsewhere in the country (or world). We will soon offer more information on how to submit your conference session or mobile workshop proposal, but we hope you will start thinking now about what you might like to propose.

We will hold our next Local Host Committee meeting on **Saturday morning, July 28.**

Please contact us at npc19@norcalapa.org if you have any questions or to be added to the mailing list for all Local Host Committee announcements.

Where in the world



Photo: Aliza K. (Answer on [page 15](#))

North Bay planning rules evolve

“There is pretty much something in the *Press Democrat* everyday related to housing, rebuilding, or fire recovery,” writes our North Bay Regional Activity Coordinator (RAC) Kristine Gaspar. These excerpts are from May 8–10.

Santa Rosa relaxes setback rules to make rebuilding easier

Kevin McCallum, <http://bit.ly/2Gbp6A>

- “Santa Rosa took another step May 10 to make it easier to rebuild burned homes, tweaking setback rules that could be an unexpected obstacle for more than a thousand homeowners. The city estimates 29 different subdivisions containing 1,537 lots have strict setbacks, some requiring them to build in the same footprint as the former home. But the Planning Commission gave city staff the ability to adopt less restrictive setbacks similar to those in other parts of the city.

“Prior to 1987, final maps were recorded with setbacks and building envelopes specific to each lot. The setbacks listed on the subdivision map filed with the city were effectively ‘custom zoning’ with precedence over the zoning code.

“Instead of making each property owner go through the time and expense of hiring a civil engineer or surveyor to change setbacks, city staff brought forward the solution to allow the city engineer to make them on behalf of residents. As applications come in, the changes will be recorded as corrections to the subdivision maps case-by-case.”

County needs 25,000 homes in five years in fires’ aftermath

Bill Swindell, <http://bit.ly/2G7AFgJ>

- “Sonoma County officials outlined in a new strategic plan (<http://bit.ly/2GapDHm>) innovative strategies to guide economic development and build at least 25,000 housing units by 2023 to account for employment growth, fire losses, and overcrowding.

“The county Economic Development Board report offered such solutions as the formation of a Sonoma County Employer Housing Council, a campaign for a proposed \$300 million housing bond, and housing code changes to temporarily allow trailers on and near rebuilding sites for construction workers.

“Besides housing, the board’s plan identified five key areas where economic development efforts are needed in the next decade: workforce and education, business diversification, sustainability, transportation, and fire recovery. The focus on workforce needs would include efforts to retain students who attend Santa Rosa Junior College and Sonoma State University from leaving the area after graduation.”

County loosens restrictions for new homes, ADUs

J.D. Morris, <http://bit.ly/2Gbv2OI>

- “Sonoma County supervisors signed off on policy changes to encourage construction of more new homes, loosening restrictions on granny units, and lowering other development hurdles seven months after nearly 5,300 residences were lost in last year’s devastating wildfires.

“Under the revised rules, homeowners in unincorporated areas could build a larger granny unit or fit one on a smaller property than the county allowed before. And homeowners looking to build granny units will face lower fees.

“The new policy [is only] the first in a series of housing initiatives to be brought forward in the coming months by county planning staff.

“One of the most significant changes approved could be the increase in residential floor space allowed in projects that also have a commercial component. The county will now allow up to 80 percent of the space to be residential — up from half — making room for a potential of 200 new units in pending projects. And the county will now allow developers to create small single-room occupancy facilities without having to get a land-use permit in commercial and mid- to high-density residential areas, [and it won’t] cap the number of units allowed in larger single-room occupancy projects.” ■

An offshoot from SB 827. “Senate Bill 961 (Allen, D-Santa Monica) has cleared two legislative committees without a single no-vote. It would allow a portion of tax revenue from businesses and properties around rail stops and major bus lines to pay for affordable housing, parks, new stations, and streetscape improvements. ‘If you’re a city or a county and you’re eager to see affordable housing built near transit, this is a tool for that,’ says Denny Zane, director of Move LA. The transit-oriented zones created by the bill — officially Neighborhood Infill Finance and Transit Improvement districts — would be similar to those proposed in Senate Bill 827. SB 931 allows cities and counties to decide how and when to begin using new tax revenue in these areas, which would then be used to fund bonds for new development.” —Elijah Chiland, *Curbed Los Angeles*, <http://bit.ly/2GeVw1q>

The evolution and application of a CEQA exemption

Stephen Velyvis

This article provides an update on two recently published CEQA decisions — *Covina Residents for Responsible Development v. City of Covina* (2018) 21 Cal.App.5th 712 and *Protect Telegraph Hill v. City and County of San Francisco* (2017) 16 Cal.App.5th 261. In those cases, the First and Second District Courts of Appeal confirmed that the parking and aesthetic impacts of transit-oriented infill projects located within transit priority areas cannot be considered significant environmental impacts and thus are exempt from CEQA.

Before delving into the specifics of the opinions and the challenged projects at issue, it is important to summarize the legislative and regulatory efforts that set the stage for these decisions: Executive Order S-3-05, the passage of the California Global Warming Solutions Act in 2006 (AB 32), the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (SB 375), and the enactment of Public Resources Code Section 21099 as part of Senate Bill 743 in 2013.

Brief history

Confronted with mounting scientific consensus and real world evidence regarding the adverse impacts resulting from anthropogenic climate change (increased temperatures, rising sea levels, diminished water supply), Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed and issued Executive Order S-3-05 on June 1, 2005, to expressly acknowledge these climate change-related threats and require sharp reductions of greenhouse gas emissions. Specifically, Executive Order S-3-05 set greenhouse gas emission reduction targets requiring California to reduce its GHG emissions to year 2000 levels by 2010, to 1990 levels by 2020, and to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) needed authority from the State Legislature to actually implement the order, which was provided the following year when Governor Schwarzenegger signed the California Global Warming Solutions Act into law on September 27, 2006.

The passage of that Act was a watershed moment: It legally required compliance with the sharp reductions of GHG emissions called for in Executive Order S-3-05 and was the first program in the country to take such a comprehensive, long-term approach to addressing climate change.

The key element in that approach has been CARB's Climate Change Scoping Plan, which lays out California's strategy for meeting the GHG emissions reduction goals from virtually all sectors of the economy through a combination of policies, planning, direct regulations, market approaches, incentives, and voluntary efforts. CARB approved the initial Scoping Plan in December 2008 and the First Update to the Scoping Plan in May 2014.

By all accounts, we are in line to meet the 2020 goal (and actively planning to meet the 2050 goal) thanks in part to gains in renewable energy development, electric vehicles, and energy efficiency standards, and a refocusing of land use planning and development on transit-oriented urban infill as a replacement for past sprawl and the lengthy vehicle commutes it spawned.¹

To assist CARB in its efforts to curtail GHG emissions from cars and trucks specifically, the Legislature adopted and Governor Brown signed the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008. That Act is complex and affects a number of regional planning activities, but generally speaking supplements the above-referenced GHG reduction efforts by requiring CARB to establish 2020 and 2035 GHG emissions reduction targets for passenger vehicles, and facilitating those reductions by requiring regional transportation planning agencies to prepare and implement sustainable communities strategies built upon changed land use patterns and improved transportation systems designed to decrease California's total vehicle miles traveled.

Last but not least, on September 27, 2013, Governor Brown signed SB 743 into law and started a process that significantly changes how transportation impacts are analyzed under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) by eliminating auto delay, level of service (LOS), and other similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion as a basis for determining significant impacts for land use projects and plans in California.

¹ In an effort to bridge the significant gap between AB 32's 2020 and 2050 GHG emissions reduction goals, Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-30-15 in April 2015 and signed SB-32 into law on September 8, 2016, requiring CARB to plan for and achieve an intermediate reduction in GHG emissions to 40 percent below the 1990 levels by 2030.

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Planning news roundup

Excerpts linked to the original articles

Affordable housing fees from Stanford could raise \$156 million

The Almanac, May 15, 2018

Kate Bradshaw, <http://bit.ly/2GizMC0> • “Santa Clara County could collect at least \$156 million in affordable housing dollars from Stanford University in the coming years if the university opts to build out all the new space it plans for, based on a fee supervisors approved on May 8.

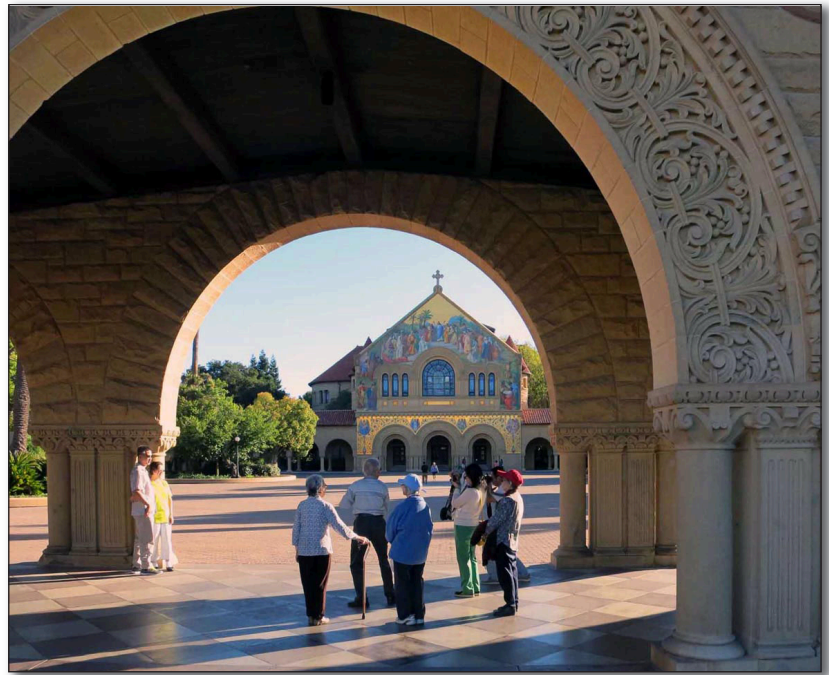
“The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to nearly double the affordable housing fees that Stanford currently pays — and halve the maximum amount it could require — to address the affordable housing needs Stanford’s ever-expanding campus generates.

“With the vote, the supervisors raised the per-square-foot affordable housing fee for new nonresidential development on Stanford’s campus to a floor of \$68.50, up from the current \$35 per square foot.

“The university is seeking to build 2.275 million square feet of new academic space and 3,150 new housing units or dorm rooms between 2018 and 2035.

“Setting the fee at \$68.50 per square foot means potentially giving up roughly half of the ‘maximum’ supportable amount of \$143.10 that a nexus study by Keyser Marston Associates found would be needed to fully mitigate the demand for below-market-rate housing triggered by the university’s planned expansion of its academic spaces.

“The nexus study also found that the university’s proposed 3,150 new units of housing would, in turn, create more housing demand. New residents in the area increase the demand for services, thereby generating jobs. The people working those new jobs, in turn generate more demand for housing — especially affordable housing.”



Stanford University. Photo: Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP

ARB will spend VW fine to incentivize polluters to go greener

The Sacramento Bee, May 14, 2018

Dale Kasler, <http://bit.ly/2Gixfb7> • “Californians spent six years breathing dangerous exhaust fumes from illegal diesel cars produced by Volkswagen. Now the California Air Resources Board is finalizing a plan to spend \$423 million of Volkswagen’s money on financial incentives to persuade trucking companies, mass-transit agencies, tugboat operators, and other major polluters to upgrade their fleets and buy greener vehicles.

“The idea is to eventually take as much pollution out of California’s air as Volkswagen’s dirty cars put in. As part of a court settlement, VW handed the Air Resources Board \$423 million to address how to fix the environmental harm that

has already occurred. The Air Resources Board plans to vote on the spending plan May 25. (<http://bit.ly/2Ggraff>)

“Getting transit agencies, trucking firms, and others to buy cleaner vehicles will reduce NOx levels in California by 10,000 tons — the same amount generated by Volkswagen’s illegal cars. But it won’t make the VW problem immediately go away. That’s because the Air Resources Board is doling out the financial incentives gradually, to give transit agencies and other participants enough time to budget for these expenditures. It could take as many as 10 years for ARB to complete the program.”

(The news roundup continues on [page 20](#))

Meet a local planner

By Catarina Kidd, AICP

Heather Hood is deputy director of Enterprise Community Partners in San Francisco. She holds master's degrees in architecture and in city planning from UC Berkeley and a B.A. in architecture from Carnegie Mellon University.



Tell us about where you live, work, and attended school.

I moved from Philadelphia to northern California for graduate school in architecture and city planning at UC. After a year in Berkeley, I moved to Oakland, married a city planner, fixed up a dilapidated house by Lake Merritt, and started a family.

You have a background in architecture and planning.

What was the path you took to what you now do?

I had wanted to be an architect since I was five. Thomas Hine was the architecture and design critic for the Philadelphia Inquirer. My parents would give me that section of the Sunday paper.

I have been doing this city-maker work one way or another since 1992. I worked in construction, then urban design, and volunteered for Habitat for Humanity in the mid 90s. As a researcher at UC Berkeley, I was attracted to research and policy that could create equitable, transit-rich environments. I focused on how to steer the university's brainpower to serve California cities and low-income communities.

A favorite project was technical assistance to the Great Communities Collaborative at The San Francisco Foundation. This was about equitable transit-oriented development and engaging 25 different non-profit partners in multiple cities and 14 philanthropic partners to infuse station area plans in the Bay Area with practical community benefits.

How did you jump from community based research and planning to finance?

I had been doing a lot of planning work that remained paper plans. I was determined to figure out how the money worked, to make these plans real. Enterprise Community Partners, a community development finance institution (CDFI) and an intermediary, was the right place for my skills — it brings passionate people together to do things. After nearly eight years, I am still learning about the technical aspects of community-oriented finance and how to be effective in what used to be called 'participatory planning.'

What is a "community development finance institution," and what does "intermediary" mean?

CDFIs are private financial institutions that are completely dedicated to delivering affordable lending to low-income and disadvantaged people and communities. CDFIs bend capital to where it doesn't naturally go. We create financial tools and use public money to leverage philanthropic and other resources for community development. Tax credits are one way for private industry to lend resources to non-profits for things like affordable housing. Structured loan funds and social impact bonds are other development tools.

Intermediaries help sectors work together smoothly on programs, projects, and policy. The team I manage thinks about and builds capacity for how a city can best deliver a program, or how to distribute affordable housing in the region so residents can access both schools and transit, or how to make homes permanently affordable so the residents aren't displaced. *Intermediaries* are the glue in various collaborative efforts.

Speaking of collaboratives, what about the Great Communities Collaborative?

That collaborative (<http://www.greatcommunities.org>) is now in its twelfth year, still creating mixed-income, transit-oriented communities. A decade ago, its partners were focused on how to engage local stakeholders in station area planning. Still going strong, the GCC is now focused on protecting the affordability of the Bay Area's existing communities with more than \$100 million in funding. You can now see some of the results. GCC helped with Walnut Creek BART station plans. Later at Enterprise, we provided the affordable housing developer with pre-development grants. I still work directly with GCC to see that the station area plan gets done.

I take it philanthropy is tough work.

GCC's 'engaged philanthropy' is tough. The hard part is working with so many groups with differing perspectives on what problem is being solved. Are we resolving historic racial injustices or building more efficient transportation systems? Protecting open space or improving air quality? Creating culturally-sensitive main streets with bus stops or attracting new investment for local economic development? That work entails creating an ecology of actors whose work is complementary rather than competitive.

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Meet a local planner (continued from previous page)

Tell us about some favorite projects.

Geeta Rao, my colleague at Enterprise, and I have worked with government agencies quite a bit. We recently were inspired by what's going on around the country to advance housing goals at regional scales, and wanted to get that information to people in the Bay Area. So we wrote "The Elephant in the Region" to showcase how other regions — Massachusetts, New York, Seattle — do things that work. Ideas in *The Elephant* paper were warmly received by the private sector, city staff, and advocates. At first it seemed a boring topic. Now, lots of people are talking about how a housing department should work.

I am also proud of the recommendations of "Oakland at Home" (<http://bit.ly/2GIMGiH>) from the Oakland Housing Cabinet, which I co-chaired. Our objective was to set quantifiable goals and strategize ways to implement them over eight years. While two-thirds of our policies and funding are done, Oakland still faces a housing crisis and homelessness, but our work was designed to bear fruit over eight years. I am confident the gains will be more obvious within a few years.

What great advice have you received and from whom?

From Professor Judith E. Innes in graduate school — who studied the things that really matter in successful collaborations: Show respect for everyone you work with. Results will never be optimal if you don't. You may not like someone or they may have some frustrating qualities, but show them respect and look for the good they bring.

And David Bell, a leadership coach, said every time you hear yourself saying, "I have to do this and this, then I have to do that," remind yourself that "I get to do this, then that." He also said, "Show the love you have for the work and it will be infectious." That's so true.

What is your advice about balancing principles with reality?

It's important to know and keep your values. If 80 percent of my values are intact at the end of a process and things get done, I am comfortable with that. I don't expect things to be ideal or perfect. I am comfortable with very good instead of great. Take a breath and keep going.



Interviewer Catarina Kidd, AICP,
is *Northern News*' associate editor.
All interviews are edited. ■



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THE VERY BEST

2018 Northern Section Award winners announced



Congratulations to our 2018 award winners! APA California–Northern is again proud to honor a variety of innovative plans, programs, and people. Awards will be presented at the Awards Gala on Friday, June 1, 2018, at San Francisco's Veterans Memorial Building, Green Room.

Come support your fellow planners while enjoying great food in a wonderful setting. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit <http://bit.ly/2GYGpuf>.

Awards of Excellence

Academic Award

Newark Old Town Urban Design Concept Plan

City and Regional Planning, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

Best Practices

SB 1000 Implementation Toolkit

California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) and PlaceWorks

Comprehensive Plan, Large Jurisdiction

Propel Vallejo General Plan 2040

City of Vallejo

Comprehensive Plan, Small Jurisdiction

Belmont General Plan Update, Belmont Village Specific Plan, and Climate Action Plan

City of Belmont, Dyett & Bhatia

Emerging Planning and Design Firm

SITELAB urban studio

Grassroots Initiative

Pop-Up Care Village

SITELAB urban studio, Lava Mae

Transportation Planning

Berkeley Bicycle Plan

City of Berkeley, Alta Planning + Design

Transportation Planning

West Contra Costa High-Capacity Transit Study

West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee

Awards of Merit

Best Practices

City of Mountain View Transfer of Development Rights Program

City of Mountain View

Implementation Award, Small Jurisdiction

Walnut Creek Shadelands Gateway Specific Plan

City of Walnut Creek

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THE VERY BEST (continued from previous page)

Awards of Merit (continued)

Innovation in Green Community Planning

Living Community Patterns

San Francisco Planning Department, Living Future Institute

Planning and Health

City of Vallejo Healthy Community General Plan Element

City of Vallejo and Center for Sustainable Communities,
Sonoma State University

Hard-Won Victory

Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan

City of Palo Alto, PlaceWorks

Public Outreach

San Leandro Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan 2018 Update

City of San Leandro

Social and Environmental Justice

Santa Cruz Climate Adaptation Outreach Campaign

City of Santa Cruz Climate Action Program

Comprehensive Plan, Small Jurisdiction

Redwood City El Camino Real Corridor Plan

City of Redwood City, Dyett & Bhatia

Transportation Planning

SR 68 Scenic Highway Plan

Transportation Agency for Monterey County, Caltrans,
Kimley-Horn, Kittelson & Associates, Pathways for Wildlife



Thanks to the Awards Jury whose members read and deliberated the applications and selected this year's winners: L to r: Benjamin Fu (Assistant Director of Community Development, Cupertino); Sharmila Mukherjee, AICP (Senior Planning Manager, WSP); Hanson Hom, AICP (Planning Consultant and Vice-President of Conferences, APA California); and Sarah Jones (Planning Director, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency); with Awards Program Co-director Carmela Campbell, AICP (Planning Manager, Union City). ■



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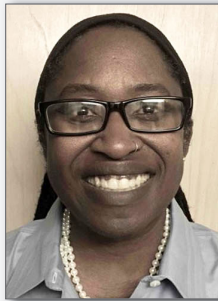
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Who's where



Amalia Lorentz Cunningham, AICP, is the new Economic Development Manager for Contra Costa County. She was previously a project-based public policy consultant, and before that was a full-time parent for four years after serving as economic development manager for Benicia. Cunningham earlier worked in redevelopment and economic development for the cities of San Leandro, Berkeley, and Pinole. She holds a master's degree in city and regional planning from UC Berkeley and a bachelor's degree from Amherst College. She resides with her family in El Cerrito where they are heavy users of the local library and the Ohlone Greenway.



Sonja Caldwell Kos, AICP, is now Associate Planner, City of San Carlos. She is also a lecturer at San Jose State University, a post she has held since January 2017. Before that, Kos was a community advocate manager in San Francisco with TODCO, an affordable housing developer; and a City Planner III with the City and County of San Francisco, 2001–2009. She holds a master of regional planning from the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill) and a B.Arch from Hampton University, Hampton, Virginia. She lives in South Park, San Francisco, with husband Rick Kos, AICP.



Steve McHarris, AICP, is now Deputy City Manager for the City of Milpitas, managing and directing the operations of planning and neighborhood services, economic development, building, and the land development aspects of engineering and fire prevention permits. He previously served as planning official and deputy director for the city of San Jose's Planning, Building and Code Enforcement Department. McHarris holds a master's degree in public administration with an urban planning concentration from Cal State Fullerton and a B.S. from Cal Poly, Pomona.

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Answer to Where in the world (Page 6)

Huaqiang Plaza, Shenzhen. Shenzhen, in Guangdong Province, southeastern China, is a modern metropolis that links Hong Kong to China's mainland. Once a market town of 30,000, Shenzhen in 1980 was designated China's first Special Economic Zone. By 2017, the city had a population of 12,528,300 and a density of 16,000 persons per square mile. Photo: Aliza K.

Who's where (continued from previous page)



Richard T. (Ricky) Williams, AICP, is now an Environmental Planner at Ascent Environmental in San Diego. He previously worked for Hexagon Transportation Consultants in San Jose as a Transportation Planner/Engineer, and was a wildland fire researcher for CalFire before that. Williams holds a master in city and regional planning and an M.S. in transportation engineering, both from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, and a B.S. in community and regional planning from Iowa State University.



Hannah Young, AICP, is the new Director of Environment and Planning for the urban solutions team at Hatch in Oakland. Her consulting experience spans more than a decade: She previously was principal planner at Urban Planning Partners, project planner at AECOM, and planner at LSA Associates. Young holds a master's degree in regional planning from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a bachelor's degree from Georgetown University. ■

"Are tech CEOs finally tackling the Bay Area housing crisis?" Stripe, an online payments company, is the latest with a \$1 million donation to California YIMBY, a nonprofit group that wants to see statewide housing production balloon from an average of 80,000 homes per year to 500,000. The company's goal with the donation is to encourage more lower-cost, higher-density housing to be built. 'At Stripe, our goal is to lower economic barriers,' said Patrick Collison, CEO of Stripe, in a statement. 'We want California to remain a land of opportunity: a place where hard-working people of all backgrounds can come to pursue new jobs, start new businesses, and create better lives for their families.'" —Blanca Torres, *San Francisco Business Times*, <http://bit.ly/2FNCDTI>

told the *Mercury News*, “We have more than 6,000 units fully entitled and ready to be built, but developers can’t get shovels in the ground because the development costs are scaring away the financing.” The mayor recently brought a group of experts to the city council to talk about what it costs to build housing, and San Jose is now proposing to reduce development fees. (See “Bay Area residential towers too costly,” <https://bayareane.ws/2Fu1trc>.)

We’re not going to solve the housing crisis by relying on dense high-rise if you can only afford to build them in a few places like San Francisco or downtown Oakland on BART. And in markets where background rents are \$2 to \$3 per sq.ft. — for example, Richmond, Pinole, or Castro Valley, places where middle class families have been moving — the rents aren’t high enough to support much in the way of new expensive buildings.

The private market can’t build a lot of housing because of what it costs and what households can pay, or because city councils are loathe to quickly approve new housing. So, building accessory dwellings is one of the few viable

options for adding housing, and is a primary strategy to build housing fast in the North County fire recovery zones, for example.

NN: We read about the “missing middle” housing. Smaller communities seem not to be receptive.

Two-, three-, or four-story buildings without onsite structured parking are more cost-effective and affordable. The less complicated the building, the less it costs to build. We’re now seeing a “barbell effect” in housing production — housing for higher income households often in mid- or high-rises, a lot of affordable housing by non-profit builders for families earning less than median income, but nothing in the middle that’s affordable to median-income earners. A number of us are advocating for more quads and triplexes — wood frame, no elevators, ADA only on the ground floor — plus duplexes and cottage courts, all with very limited or public street parking.

This was the urban pattern in older cities before the advent of modern zoning — walk-ups, townhomes, and duplexes mixed in among apartments and some single-family homes. In California, 60 percent of the single-family homes have unoccupied bedrooms (Turner Center, 2017). If people with too much house share with those who have too little via an ADU or rear-yard cottage, we can make small but important steps to repopulating every neighborhood. Small, gentle infill should be on the table in every city.

NN: Minneapolis proposed allowing fourplexes in virtually any neighborhood, <http://strib.mn/2KnRnM2>.

Similar rezoning of single-family neighborhoods is being considered nationally. Portland has also moved in that direction. They allow quads on every street corner in single-family neighborhoods, and other “missing-middle” types within blocks. They reduced minimum lot sizes in R5 from 7,000 to 5,000 sq.ft., so a 10,000 sq.ft. lot can now be divided in two. Those are the kinds of zoning changes with which planners will have to become conversant and for which they will need to advocate over the next decade.

There are lovely neighborhoods in the East Bay with duplexes and triplexes that look just like single-family homes. Many are Craftsman buildings with multiple entrances. Instead of being 3,000 sq.ft., they are 1,000 to 1,500, a perfect size for a modest family home, with

(continues on next page)



A garage converted to an ADU southwest of the Claremont Hotel.
Photo: Denise Pinkston

access to a garden. These infill duplexes and quads are not scary, and they house teachers, nurses, and cops who would otherwise never live in town because they can't afford \$1.5 million for a house.

NN: How do rents in duplexes or triplexes compare to single-family houses?

The floor area is less, the open lot area is smaller, and there is sharing of common spaces, so the cost is lower. We have to go this way from a cost standpoint. Planners and planning schools need to take on the challenge of how to recreate small, affordable home-ownership and rental opportunities in every neighborhood. Part of that is unlocking single-family zoning to allow multiple families. California has started with ADUs: homeowners build them, and they're part of the economic unit of the single house.

We planners need to lead the thinking and planning for these infill changes. Eliminate minimum lot sizes? Allow a lot split with a unit on each side and a shared driveway in the middle? Allow a one- or two-story building in the backyard? In places in the East Bay, backyard condos or tenant-in-common units are selling for half the cost of new single-family homes and allow a diversity of folks to live in the community.

NN: Where are we likely to get the biggest volume?

We're so deep in the housing hole that it has to be "all of the above." Within 12 months of the first ADU bills, with virtually no publicity, ADU production went from an anemic couple-of-hundred a year statewide to 4,000, moving towards 10,000 **actual homes under construction**. In Los Angeles, they're working towards 3,000. In San Francisco, it's 2,500 and moving up. In many small cities it's 50–200. By contrast, it takes five or more years to get a 200-unit building approved and constructed in most California cities. The uptick in ADUs shows how much pent-up demand exists for homeowners to do these if you make it possible.

But we can't make just one move and declare victory. We need to think about how to allow these smaller, cost-effective infill forms in neighborhoods. We have 1.5 million single-family homes in the Bay Area. If 30 percent added an ADU or became a duplex, that's a half-million new units. Can you imagine getting 500,000 new units approved and built in the Bay Area in the next 10 years? It can take a decade in some cities just to get 250 units approved!



This Berkeley triplex is just west of the Claremont Hotel. The third unit is entered from the back. Photo: Denise Pinkston

Small infill is immediately viable, cost-effective, and helps middle-income families. But to reduce greenhouse gases and automobile dependence, we must also continue to advocate for and build more density on transit. Communities are very divided about how to do that, but the issue cannot be shelved. As long as people block initiatives to create more housing, we aren't going to get any more homes. It's a lot easier to block than build.

NN: So where does that leave us?

We have to pursue all of the above: We have to build more ADUs, and we have to try some harder things, like rezoning to allow duplexes, triplexes, and quads in single-family neighborhoods. To double your density with one zoning change would be remarkable. And yes, more and larger buildings on transit must also be a part of our future, but they cannot be our only focus.

We're going to have to massively bring down the cost of building dense infill — which is very hard, as the costs are embedded in the building and planning codes, impact fees, how long it takes, and CEQA mitigation.

It's time to revisit zoning in low-density neighborhoods to allow modest infill where the homes cost less to build because they are simpler structures. Such units work economically; only the zoning barriers we have created over the last 100 years prevent them.

Interviewer Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP, is the editor, since 2005, of Northern News. All interviews are edited. ■

That long and arduous process is worthy of its own article, but for our purposes it is enough to simply note that the Governor's Office of Planning and Research completed the proposed updates to the CEQA Guidelines in November 2017, which include, among other things, the key provisions developed to implement SB 743 by replacing the traditional LOS traffic impact methodology with one based on new vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The state's Natural Resources Agency is currently going through the required rulemaking process to officially adopt and add them to the CEQA Guidelines.

The impact of SB 743

While the update to the CEQA Guidelines to implement a new VMT-based traffic impact analysis has thus far garnered most of the attention, a different provision of SB 743 is significantly impacting land use planning in California: SB 743 added a new section to CEQA in Public Resources Code Section 21099 that not only specified how and when the CEQA Guidelines should be revised to accomplish the shift toward a VMT-based methodology in subsections (b) and (c), but also expressly declared in subsection (d) that “[a]esthetic and parking impacts of a residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center project on an infill site within a transit priority area shall not be considered significant impacts on the environment.”

CEQA practitioners know such language is significant as it creates what appears to be the holy grail of CEQA exemptions — an absolute *statutory* exemption (as opposed to a categorical exemption that can be negated by a host of potential exceptions) — at least for qualifying projects' potential parking and aesthetic impacts. As demonstrated below in the summaries of the *Covina Residents* and *Protect Telegraph Hill* decisions, the California Courts of Appeal wholeheartedly agree.

Covina Residents

At issue in *Covina Residents* was a mixed-use project that sought to redevelop a former car dealership site with 68 residential units above ground floor commercial space a mere quarter-mile from Covina's Metrolink commuter rail station. The project was designed to be consistent with a Town Center Specific Plan (adopted to spur infill redevelopment of deteriorated properties and create new walkable housing near the Metrolink station), and each of its proposed units was designed with rooftop solar energy and

a 220-volt outlet intended for use as an electric vehicle charging station.

Anticipating that the transit-oriented infill project would be eligible for parking credits, the developer did not originally include enough on-site parking to meet the City's typical requirements. Based on pressure from City decision makers and despite the fact that the developer redesigned the project several times during the approval process to narrow if not eliminate that parking gap, opponents filed a lawsuit challenging the City's project approval based on several claims, including one asserting that the Mitigated Negative Declaration relied upon by the City was inadequate, and a full EIR was required to address the project's allegedly significant parking impacts. The trial court rejected those claims and the opponents filed a timely appeal.

Predictably, the Court of Appeal also thoroughly rejected the opponents' CEQA claim. Citing AB 32, SB 375, and SB 743 and their shared goal of encouraging transit-oriented, infill development consistent with the State's GHG reduction plans, and concluding that the Legislature endorsed the approach taken by the 1st District Court of Appeal in a 2002 decision rejecting an inadequate parking-based CEQA challenge to a large Market Street redevelopment project in San Francisco when it passed SB 743,² the Court had no trouble finding that the alleged parking impacts were exempt from environmental review under Section 21099(d). In short, the challenged project truly was a mixed-use residential project on an infill site (a previously developed urban area) in a transit priority area (within ½ mile of a planned or existing major transit stop) and as a result the alleged parking impacts were exempt from CEQA review.

Protect Telegraph Hill

A similar decision was rendered in *Protect Telegraph Hill* by the 1st District Court of Appeal where it rejected a CEQA lawsuit challenging the City of San Francisco's approval of a project that proposed to rehabilitate a small 1906 cottage

² See *San Franciscans Upholding the Downtown Plan v. City and County of San Francisco* (2002) 102 Cal.App.4th 656, 697 [“[T]here is no statutory or case authority requiring an EIR to identify specific measures to provide additional parking spaces in order to meet an anticipated shortfall in parking availability. The social inconvenience of having to hunt for scarce parking spaces is not an environmental impact; only the secondary effect of scarce parking on traffic and air quality is.”]

(continues on next page)

and construct a new 3-unit residential building on a long-developed property in the City's Telegraph Hill neighborhood. Opponents of that project challenged the City's reliance on the Class 1 and Class 3 CEQA categorical exemptions, claiming that the unusual circumstances exception negated the exemptions because of allegedly significant aesthetic/viewshed impacts stemming from the project's location on the rare/unique Telegraph Hill and proximity to nearby Pioneer Park and its City skyline viewing terrace. In upholding the City's approval and CEQA exemption determination, the Court agreed with the City's finding that the project site was not unusual and further held that even if it were, Section 21099(d) mandated that the alleged viewshed impacts could not be considered a significant impact on the environment under CEQA.



Stephen Velyvis, a partner at Burke, Williams & Sorensen, LLP, is a respected land use and environmental law attorney with more than 17 years of experience advising and representing public agencies and private clients in administrative proceedings and before state and federal trial and appellate courts. Mr. Velyvis also is the Legislative Director for APA

California – Northern Section and regularly reports to their Board of Directors on legislative and legal issues pertaining to land use planning and environmental law. With a focus on CEQA and having represented parties on all three “sides” of the CEQA coin, Mr. Velyvis is adept at spotting and resolving CEQA issues early and, if needed, prevailing in litigation. Feel free to contact him at svelyvis@bwslaw.com or (510) 273-8780 with questions or to suggest topics for future articles. ■

“We’re focused on the river, we’re located on the river.” The Coastal Watershed Council (CWC) in Santa Cruz measures success in its mission to an improved public perception, health, and use of the San Lorenzo River. The Council has moved to a property on Santa Cruz’s Dakota Avenue that abuts the river along its east side. The city of Santa Cruz now requires new riverfront development to connect to, rather than turn its back on, the river. It also requires riverfront developers to fill space between their building wall and levee, plus negotiate easements for the filled area to create “a positive open space relationship with the Riverwalk.” Said Greg Pepping, the environmental nonprofit’s executive director, “It’s about all of us getting to the river. Our having an office here is an example of that. We’re walking the walk.” —*Jessica A. York, Santa Cruz Sentinel*, <http://bit.ly/2G3KDzG>



Looking northwest from Soquel Avenue to (l-r) San Lorenzo River, Branciforte Creek Bridge, the Santa Cruz Riverwalk, and at the far right, CWC offices on Dakota Avenue. Photo: Laurie Egan, CWC

“Las Vegas: Fleet of AVs operating on Lyft network. Aptiv, formerly Delphi Automotive, has launched a fleet of 30 autonomous vehicles in Las Vegas, operating on the Lyft network and Aptiv’s fully integrated autonomous driving platform. On an ‘opt-in’ basis, Lyft passengers can hail a self-driving vehicle to and from high-demand locations. The partnership is a multi-year agreement between the two companies. Highly trained safety drivers will oversee the self-driving vehicles. the Aptiv-Lyft AVs became available to the general public in Las Vegas on May 3rd.” —*Adam Frost, Traffic Technology Today*, <http://bit.ly/2FYwlQN>

A lottery they can't afford to lose

The New York Times, May 12, 2018

Emily Badger, <https://nyti.ms/2G9sQXX> • “The downtown San Francisco development, Natalie Gubb Commons at 255 Fremont Street, was reserved for households with incomes up to 50 percent of the local median: 95 complete homes, one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments with privacy, a sense of peace, a place to cook. The applications were open for three weeks last fall, and 6,580 households applied for a chance to rent there, or *nearly 70 for each unit*.

“[San Francisco is not alone.] Last year, 53 households applied *per each new affordable unit* at The Meridian in Los Angeles; 84 for every home at Parcel 25 in Boston; 391 for each unit at Stargell Commons in Alameda, Calif.; 979 for every home at Our Lady of Lourdes Apartments in New York.

“[But with the declining value of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits under the new tax bill,] the odds [for winning the housing lottery] are likely to grow worse. Since Mr. Trump’s election, that fall in prices [per LIHT Credit] has translated to about \$45,000 less per housing unit in San Francisco from investors in the common 4 percent tax credits, according to Novogradac & Company, an accounting firm that tracks the affordable housing market. And because tax-credit investors aren’t providing that equity, the city must fill gaps in projects with other public dollars.

“The lotteries that follow, said Kirk McClure, a professor of urban planning at the University of Kansas, ‘are a simple manifestation of the fact that we have never in America made affordable housing a right.’”

SF Planning Commission adopts Central SoMa Plan

San Francisco Examiner, May 11, 2018

Laura Waxmann, <http://bit.ly/2G8FbeJ> • “The Planning Commission has unanimously approved a rezoning plan for San Francisco’s South of Market that included slightly more housing than the original plan.

“The Central SoMa Plan is projected to bring up to 33,000 new jobs and 8,300 homes to the neighborhood over the next 30 years through changes to local zoning and height limits, as opposed to the 40,000 jobs and 7,000 housing units in the original plan.

“The potential for more homes and a ‘good jobs’ policy to support the creation of living-wage jobs across all sectors were added after community stakeholders criticized the plan’s jobs-housing fit.

“The plan calls for 33 percent of the housing developed to be affordable — though housing advocates had called for up to 50 percent.

“We were very careful to create a plan that we think is not an extension of downtown, but a special district for Central SoMa that surgically allows high rise development in a number of key places in the neighborhood but generally maintains the character of the neighborhood there today,’ said Planning Department Director John Rahaim.

“But Housing advocates and community stakeholders said the plan’s housing element doesn’t measure up to the influx in households that will result from the more than 30,000 jobs it stands to create.”

“An ordinance has been introduced to establish an AB 73 Housing Sustainability District in the area to streamline the approval process for eligible projects.”

(The news roundup continues on next page)

Are street grids making cities hotter? “In a paper published March 9th in the journal *Physical Review Letters* (<http://bit.ly/2KIBAxp>), Roland Pellenq, a senior research scientist at MIT’s Concrete Sustainability Hub, and his team concluded that airflow and street grids may be making cities much warmer than nearby suburbs and countryside. In disorganized cities, the air tends to flow uniformly. But the perpendicular streets of Chicago often trap heat by disrupting that airflow. Beyond massive energy costs and a big boost in carbon emissions, the design of a city can mean life or death as climate change fuels deadly heat waves.”

—Linda Poon, CityLab, <http://bit.ly/2KhODzi>

Tackling the rising costs of building homes in the Bay Area's biggest city

Silicon Valley Business Journal, May 10, 2018

Janice Bitters, <http://bit.ly/2G3t8zj> [subscription required]

• “When San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo unveiled his 15-point housing plan in late 2017, he set an ambitious goal of seeing 25,000 new housing units rise in the Bay Area’s largest city over the next five years; but in recent weeks, city leaders have learned they may not be on track to hit that goal.

“As rents flatten and costs to develop new units skyrocket, elected leaders in San Jose are now grappling with understanding the roadblocks for developers, and whether the city has the power to change things enough to make this the right time for developers to trek ahead.

“But other cities, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Denver, and Seattle, are building at a faster rate

than San Jose’s approximately 3,000 units a year, Liccardo noted in a meeting earlier this month. ‘Why are we lagging?’ he asked.

“‘Ease of process,’ Drew Hudacek, chief investment officer of development properties for developer Sares Regis, told Liccardo.

“Most housing developers are not making massive profit margins, especially as rents in the past year have [slowed and] land values continue to rise, especially in San Jose. Pair that with the rising costs of construction felt across the region, and trying to kick-start a new development today would either lose money or come out even in most parts of the city.”

Sacramento will have faster apartment growth than any large U.S. city

The Sacramento Bee, May 8, 2018

Tony Bizjak and Ryan Lillis, <http://bit.ly/2G3Qk0C>

“The Sacramento metropolitan area is expected to lead the country this year in percentage growth of new apartment units, a national analysis shows.

“More than 1,600 rental units will be built there, according to data from RealPage, a national real estate data company.

“Though Sacramento is expected to have a greater percentage increase — 137 percent — Los Angeles will construct far more units: 14,000.

“Local officials say the projected number of new units will help but is not enough to provide the kind of affordable housing needed. The average apartment rent in the Sacramento metropolitan area hit \$1,300 at the end of 2017, according to Colliers International, a real estate services company.

“A center of building activity has burgeoned around the light rail station at 65th Street and Folsom Boulevard, near California State University, with plans filed to construct a six-story, 125-unit apartment building at Q Street and Redding Avenue, one block east of the light rail stop.

“The project ‘comes at a time when demand in student housing has grown in and around the campus,’ the developer, Stacy Kincaid of the Latigo Group, wrote in her application to the city.

“A few blocks away, construction has begun on a 90-unit apartment building on 65th Street, near Elvas Avenue.

“The central city is also seeing a surge in new apartment buildings along 19th, with some rents expected to be below \$1,000 per month.”

(The news roundup continues on next page)

“To manage traffic, towns are making streets less accessible: ‘Do Not Enter, 6 am to 10 am, 4 pm to 9 pm, Residents Exempt.’ Besieged by Waze-guided commuters, Leonia, NJ, closed its side streets to non-residents. Traffic is now contained on Fort Lee Road, which connects to the George Washington Bridge, two miles to the east. Other towns have complaints about Waze-diverted drivers: Los Altos Hills installed “No Thru Traffic” signs (and reportedly got Waze to reroute drivers). Los Gatos closed certain roads on weekends to prevent beach traffic from navigation apps. But the Leonia ordinance raises questions about how government can respond when private companies impact public space.”—*John Surico, CityLab*, <http://bit.ly/2qMxO7Z>

Construction workers needed as housing crisis spreads to smaller cities

Huffington Post, May 5, 2018

Michael Hobbes, <http://bit.ly/2FUjDm0> • “Renting a two-bedroom apartment in Jacksonville, Florida, requires earning \$10.53 more per hour than the state minimum wage. In Tacoma (pop. 211,000), a property management company is evicting low-income residents so it can flip their building into luxury units.

“Boise (city pop. 223,154, urban pop. 664,422) is projected to add another 200,000 by 2025, but isn’t adding homes fast enough to keep up. There’s a demand for more than 10 times as many homes as the city is building, and incoming residents are bidding up and pricing out current residents.

“In 2007, the city was issuing more than twice as many building permits as now. Boise’s metro area built fewer homes in 2016 than it did in 2004.

“The reason, says a retired HUD administrator in Boise, is that the recession wiped out the city’s construction sector. Between 2008 and 2012, Boise home prices fell by 40 percent. Thousands of construction workers took other jobs or left for North Dakota or Alaska. Once the foreclosed homes had been scooped up, the city needed new housing, but there was no one left to build it. Construction workers, even in high-paid jobs and booming cities, are in short supply.

“Fred Cornforth, CEO of a Boise development organization that builds affordable housing in 17 states, says the only way to make prices fall is to overbuild. You need vacancy rates of 8 percent or more before rents start to come down.”

Marin lacks coordinated effort to address housing and worker shortage

North Bay Business Journal, May 4, 2018

<http://bit.ly/2FURRWv> • “The Marin Economic Forum leadership has called for a single-purpose effort by public and private sectors to address a county housing shortage, including a campaign to ‘dispel’ the myths about affordable housing.

“The group’s chief economist, Rob Eyler, said Marin County seeks low-density housing, slow growth, low traffic, and a ‘vibrant job market.’ Only problem is, ‘you cannot have all four.’

“Marin County added 87 new homes, the lowest among area counties, Eyler said, citing 2016 statistics. And ‘Marin has punted on higher density.’

“Marin Economic Forum CEO Robin Sternberg outlined a plan to address the problem. It included organizing a collective effort of public and private interests to identify

areas to build housing and ‘put it together on one plan.’ The plan also calls for engaging in more programs to train construction workers.

“Added State Sen. Mike McGuire, D-Healdsburg, ‘We are about to hit the wall of a shortage of housing for workers.’ in the next 18 to 24 months, areas like Marin and surrounding counties need to collectively fashion their own solutions, ‘or the state will do it for us.’

“Sternberg called for polling on the need for and attitudes toward affordable housing, to go beyond the current voice ‘of a vocal few.’ Public campaigns should follow to dispel myths about the issue and make it clear the lack of housing ‘is affecting all of us now.’”

(The news roundup continues on next page)

The East Bay once had an all-electric, zero-emission mass transit system. In 1902, “a coalition of wealthy landowners, [knowing] that a good transit system increases property values, consolidated local rail lines to create a new, electric interurban railway system, renamed in 1938 for its key-like shape. The Key System employed hundreds and made their own trains and electrical equipment in Emeryville. By 1924, more than 800 Key System trains brought passengers to [Oakland’s] Key System Pier for passage to San Francisco. The Bay Bridge opened in 1936, and by 1939, train access was added to the bridge. Riding BART from University Avenue in Berkeley to San Francisco takes 27 minutes today; it took a Key System train 28 minutes to make the same trip in 1940.” *James Gage, The Monthly*, <http://bit.ly/2KjTjoN>

Green building isn't enough; we need green zoning

Treehugger, May 4, 2018

Lloyd Alter, <http://bit.ly/2FRNtrv> • “The great proportion of cities are locked into single-family zoning, and building anything but a detached house seems almost impossible. But the same cities also have green building standards ... to ‘save resources and promote renewable, clean energy,’ and ‘reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.’

“The great hypocrisy is that the single biggest factor in the carbon footprint of cities isn't the amount of insulation in our walls, it's the zoning.

“We have been saying it for years: denser urban living is the key to reducing our carbon footprint. The fashionable phrase now is the ‘missing middle’: density high enough to support local businesses so that one can mostly get around by walking, but [residential] buildings low enough they can be efficiently built with low carbon materials like wood.

“Everybody knows this, and dozens of studies prove it. (See one at <http://bit.ly/2FSsoNC>) Yet when cities approve higher densities, they do so in pockets and strips and around main streets, many of which are louder and more polluted, avoiding the established and protected single-family houses. Instead, [density] should be everywhere, ‘like butter across a piece of bread.’

“Planner Gil Meslin has been documenting examples of Toronto's ‘missing middle’ housing built before the city formalized its zoning and stopped this kind of development. They are very popular places to live in wonderful, quiet residential neighborhoods, and they co-exist just fine.” See them at https://twitter.com/g_meslin.

California population nears 40 million

NBC Bay Area, May 2, 2018

Brendan Weber, <http://bit.ly/2FMobuR> • “The Golden State added approximately 309,000 new residents last year, according to numbers released by the California Department of Finance. The year-to-year 0.78 percent bump in population growth means that an estimated 39,810,000 people call California home as of Jan. 1, 2018.”

[According to Dan Walters, <http://bit.ly/2FTsmVu>, a commentator in Sacramento, “During the 1980s, thanks to high immigration and birth rates, California was expanding by 2-plus percent a year, adding 6 million residents in just 10 years.”]

“Los Angeles is far and away California's most populous city with an estimated 4,054,400 residents, according to the report. San Diego follows with 1,419,845, and San Jose with 1,051,316 residents.”

[Among the 10 cities under 300,000 with the largest numeric change are Bay Area cities Santa Clara (4,076), Sunnyvale (2,790), Dublin (2,754), and Pleasanton (2,453), according to the DOF report.]

“California as a whole in 2017 added roughly 85,000 net housing units, according to the report.”

[More than 13,200 housing units were demolished statewide in 2017, compared to an average of 5,500 housing units between 2010 and 2016, with wildfires heavily influencing a number of areas. Still, total housing in California reached 14,158,000 units, a 0.6-percent increase. Of those, 9,147,000 are single-family, 4,449,000 are multi-family, and 562,000 are mobile homes. Multi-family housing growth outpaced single-family by more than 12,000 net units, according to the report.]

“Los Angeles beat out all other cities by adding 13,852 housing units. San Diego (5,961 units), San Francisco (4,464 units), Irvine (3,798 units), and San Jose (2,590 units) followed, respectively.”

“For a comprehensive look into the latest population numbers, see the California Department of Finance report,” May 1, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2FNGnUT>. ■

“Who's most responsible for global warming? China is today's biggest emitter, by a mile. In 2014, China released 10.3 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide from fossil fuels and industry, while the United States released more than 5.2 billion metric tons. Divvying up national emissions by population gives us a different view of ‘responsibility.’ In 2014, the average American was responsible for more than twice as much carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere (16.2 metric tons per person) as the average Chinese citizen (7.5 metric tons); two and a half times as much as the average Briton (6.5 metric tons); and 10 times as much as the average Indian (1.7 metric tons).”

—Nadja Popovich, *The New York Times*, <https://nyti.ms/2FnhjE1>

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