

NORTHERN NEWS



American Planning Association
California Chapter
Northern
Making Great Communities Happen

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

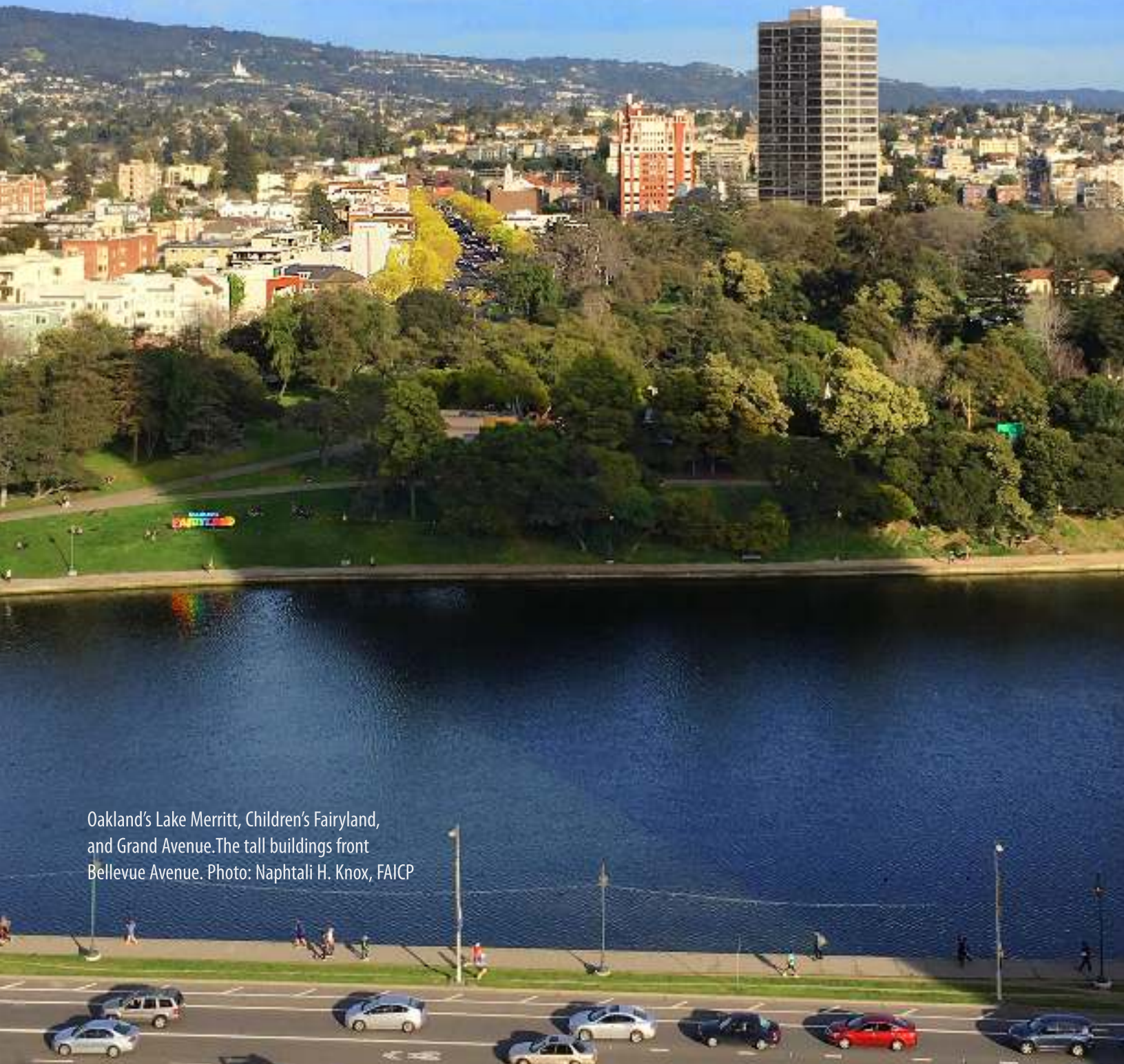
April 2017



From neglected alley to 'open gallery'

Jason Su

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Oakland's Lake Merritt, Children's Fairyland,
and Grand Avenue. The tall buildings front
Bellevue Avenue. Photo: Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP



From neglected alley to 'open gallery' — Work in progress in Downtown San Jose

Jason Su

This is a story of how a fellowship launched a project that engaged people in improving an alley in downtown San Jose, California.

Building more successful cities

Last June, I landed in Toronto, visiting our neighbor to the north for the first time. I was part of the first class of “K880 Emerging City Champions,” a fellowship program led by 8 80 Cities, a Canada-based nonprofit dedicated to transforming cities, and supported by the Knight Foundation. Through a competitive application process, 8 80 Cities and the Knight Foundation selected 25 young civic innovators to participate in the program. The champions each received \$5,000 in funding, professional mentorship, and an invitation to attend the workshop in Toronto to support them in

implementing high-impact urban projects that will strengthen mobility, improve public spaces, and enhance civic engagement in their cities.

The four-day program in Toronto facilitated a series of learning opportunities for civic innovators, urbanists, and city builders from communities where the Knight brothers once owned newspapers: Akron, Ohio; Charlotte, N.C.; Detroit; Macon, Ga.; Miami; San Jose, Calif.; St. Paul, Minn., and others. The champions came from diverse backgrounds: education, community development, youth leadership, design, advocacy, planning, and more.

I have always considered planning to be closely aligned with placemaking and civic engagement, but participating in this fellowship highlighted for me where they differ, and where they complement the overall goal of promoting good city building.



Together with the downtown community, San Jose State “Design for All” students, <http://bit.ly/2o2vOvD>, host a co-design workshop for a reimagined alleyway. Photo: Jason Su

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Planners respond to new take on driving habits and density

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Find JOBS and EVENTS at www.norcalapa.org

"Denver more expensive than SF for tech workers. Denver's tech workers now get a worse deal living there than in the Bay Area, as demand for housing has shot up amid limited supply, according to Zillow. San Francisco has long held the top spot as one of the world's most expensive markets in which to live, with its tech workers pocketing much less after paying taxes and living expenses than in other tech-heavy markets like Seattle or Austin — but in Denver, they now take home even less. 'That doesn't mean workers in San Francisco have it easy. Even well-paid finance professionals who own homes there keep only about 32 percent of their incomes after paying rent and taxes, compared with workers in Chicago and Charlotte who pocket about 60 percent,' Zillow reports." —Riley McDermid, *San Francisco Business Times*, <http://bit.ly/2nnRVsh>



Director's note

Sharon Grewal, AICP

Chapter/Section collaboration

The Section Directors within the California Chapter have revived our monthly calls to discuss and share ways the Chapter can help local Sections succeed. We're discussing ways to pool Section resources and information, including webinars hosted jointly by several Sections, job announcements, and technical assistance; and provide a framework to share information about workshops, speakers, and other programs so Sections don't have to reinvent a program that another Section has already developed and tried.

Our Chapter Legislative team continues to monitor and influence the drafting of state planning legislation and regulations, inform the planning community of the impacts of new planning legislation and regulations, and actively participate in APA's National Policy and Legislative Programs. Our Chapter Board is striving to build strong partnerships to strengthen our voices when advocating for statewide legislation. Please contact me at director@norcalapa.org if you would like to serve on the Northern Section Advocacy Committee.

Around our Section

Join us for an **Urban Hike** on Thursday, **March 30**, to celebrate National Walk in the Park Day. Enjoy the longer daylight hours and meander through the **Berkeley Hills** as we tread historic staircases, then head to the Golden Squirrel for post-hike refreshments. Meet at the intersection of Ashby and Claremont at 5:30 pm, or just skip the exercise and meet at the pub, 5490 College Avenue, at 6:30 pm. For more information, contact Dana Hoffman, AICP, or Sarah Allen, AICP, at eastbayrac@norcalapa.org.

AICP members, earn your required CM ethics and law credits. Mark your calendars for Saturday, **April 8**, 8:30 am, when Northern Section hosts its Annual Ethics and Law Session at Bay Area Metro Center in San Francisco. Details on [page 8](#). APA members pay \$15 per

session or \$25 for both sessions. To register, go to <http://bit.ly/2nDbUQy>. For more information, contact Colette Meunier, Colette.Meunier@mindspring.com.

We continue our **Speaker Series** on Monday, **April 10**, with a noontime session on Planning for Healthy, Resilient, and Vibrant Communities. Michael McCormick, MSP, AICP, and Elizabeth Baca, MD, MPA, both from the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), will discuss the new **General Plan Guidelines** with a focus on Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience (SB 379), Environmental Justice (SB1000), and Healthy Communities in General Plans. Local and statewide examples will be shared. Earn 1.5 AICP | CM credits. Register at <http://bit.ly/2o6FrCu> or RSVP to Kristine Gaspar, kristine.gaspar@ghd.com. Free to APA and AEP members; \$10 for non-members.

Our Section also continues to pursue **partnerships with other agencies and local organizations** to promote planning and build strong connections for our membership. If you would like to provide feedback, ideas, or names of organizations that might be interested in partnering with your local APA, please contact me at director@norcalapa.org. Your involvement is invaluable, and I encourage you to visit our calendar, <http://bit.ly/LtpX2X>, to see what's being offered in the coming weeks.

We have two new "RAC"s. At our March 16th meeting, the Northern Section Board appointed **Cherise Orange** as South Bay Regional Activity Coordinator and **Jeremy D. Battis, AICP**, as San Francisco Regional Activity Co-Coordinator. We enthusiastically welcome them to the Board. See [page 10](#) for photos and brief bios.

If you would like more information regarding our committees and vacant board positions, or if you're ready to get involved, please contact me at director@norcalapa.org. ■

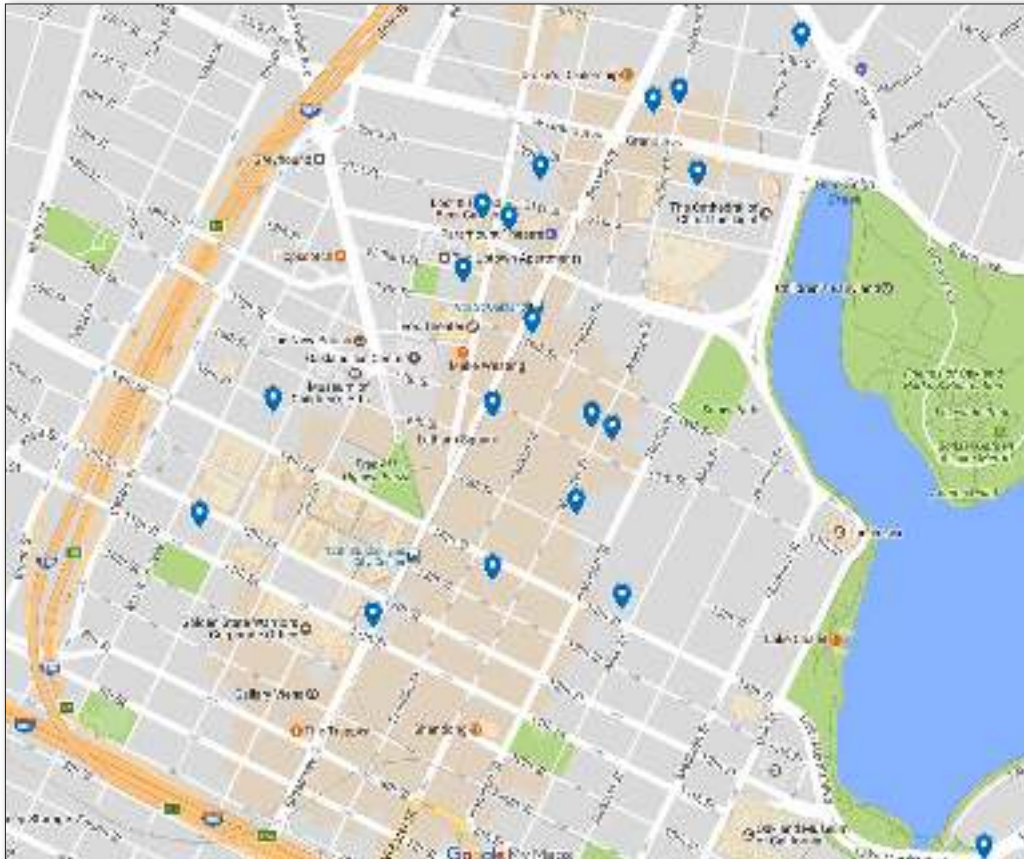
Norcal planning news

Excerpts (250 words maximum) linked to the original articles

20 new towers rising in Oakland

San Francisco Business Times, March 16, 2017

Roland Li, <http://bit.ly/2mYO4Bq> • Slideshow at <http://bit.ly/2mYQq3f>.



Paying people to not ride crowded trains kind of works

CityLab, March 13, 2017

John Metcalfe, <http://bit.ly/2n3zf18> • “Last year the San Francisco Bay Area became the first laboratory in North America for a mass-transit incentives program, with BART offering rewards to commuters who shifted their morning commutes away from the peak rush.

“The six-month trial program concluded in February, and the results are either great or mixed, depending on your definition of success. On the plus side, about 18,000 people jumped at the opportunity to participate in *BART Perks*.

“On the negative, an average of 250 people a day actually switched their commute to avoid the packed 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. rush hour — only 10 percent of the total number of *Perks* participants who rode to work in the morning.

“Transit incentives have shown decent results outside of the U.S., reducing system crowding in Singapore and Bangalore. Whether the Bay Area will revive its *Perks* program, which was mostly funded by a Federal Highway Administration grant, is unknown.”

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Planning news from near and far

Excerpts (250 words maximum) linked to the original articles

'The end of urban planning as we know it'

The Boston Globe, March 16, 2017

Matthew Kiefer, <http://bit.ly/2nn1Wqc>

"When Boston's mayor proposed a new master plan two years ago, many might have expected it to alter the very look of the city.

"In practice, 'Imagine Boston 2030' is shaping up very differently. Instead of promoting a vision for physical transformation, planners began with extensive outreach through neighborhood open houses, community workshops, visioning kits, and online and on-street surveys. An engaging, jargon-free draft was released in November; the final plan is expected shortly. It's both more ambitious and less specific than the land-use plans of the past. While it captures aspirations not just for housing but education, energy, the environment, and the arts, it's less a plan than a set of guiding principles for equitable growth.

"Like Boston's last citywide plan, released in 1965, *Imagine Boston 2030* proclaims Boston a 'City of Ideas.' But virtually everything else about the new plan is different, because so much has changed in Boston, in cities generally, and in the way planning addresses urban challenges. The last Boston plan was completed at the peak of urban renewal, an era of city-making and un-making fueled by federal programs for highway building and 'slum clearance.' That muscular approach to city-making didn't end well.

"Contemporary urban challenges require coordinated public and private investments for major improvements like housing, transit, storm water management, and smart utilities. This rewards advance planning, and planners are pioneering new ways to respond."

Light rail brings Twin Cities together again

Politico Magazine, March 16, 2017

Erick Trickey and **Michael Crowley**, <http://politi.co/2nmDtRX>

"Across St. Paul and Minneapolis, public officials were touting the economic benefits of light rail, predicting transit-oriented development would spring up near station stops and residents would get to jobs faster. But opposition came from major institutions. The University of Minnesota pushed for the Green Line to go around its massive campus in Minneapolis, not through it. Campus officials feared vibrations from the light rail would upset sensitive lab work, including chemistry-lab laser experiments. After long negotiations, transit officials agreed to pay for various mitigations to address the complaints.

"The Green Line, which opened in June 2014, is the most popular of the Twin Cities' two light-rail lines, carrying 40,000 people on weekdays — college students and immigrants, professional and retail workers — between college campuses, hospitals, the Minnesota state Capitol (in St. Paul), and both downtowns.

"In less than three years, it has helped revitalize stretches of University Avenue, an aging, formerly car-dominated thoroughfare, as new businesses open near the stations and longtime businesses attract new customers. Transit-dependent low-income and working-class people are commuting to jobs across the metro area, while new housing for professionals is springing up in an old industrial area.

"The Green Line — which costs \$1.75 to ride, \$2.25 during rush hour — is bringing new customers to University Avenue businesses. Now, the concern is gentrification. Anecdotal evidence suggests rents are rising for University Avenue storefronts and for housing nearby."



The Green Line now crosses the Mississippi River on the center lanes of the lower deck of the Washington Avenue Bridge between the East Bank and West Bank campuses of the University of Minnesota. 2009 photo by Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP.

(Continued on [page 17](#))

Silicon Valley has a plan for building a “stress-free” bike network

Rachel Dovey, *Next City*

Silicon Valley has given us social media, the iPhone, Elon Musk (and a bunch of not-so-great things, too), but when it comes to the region’s car-dependent transportation network, “innovation” isn’t exactly the first word to come to mind. The roads are clogged, transit has been crippled by years of sprawl, and bike infrastructure is fragmented and inefficient.

Sounds like a problem. But in Silicon Valley, problems don’t exist, right? Only opportunities. Thus, in true tech form, a new report lays out a detailed vision for improving the region’s bike network — fixing the “discontinuities in the bikeway network that compromise the user experience.” The 44-page report, *Silicon Valley Bike Vision*, <http://bit.ly/2o3dIIh>, comes from a number of organizations and heavy-hitters: Joint Venture Silicon Valley, the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition and Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, with “generous” funding from Google and additional funding from Facebook and Stanford.

It lays out some of the main obstacles to a more seamless cycling experience. Only 1.7 percent of Silicon Valley residents bike to work, which is still more than the national average, but, the report argues, far less than the number could be, given the region’s mild climate and flat topography. After all, Davis and Mountain View aren’t that far apart.

But one of the problems is, actually, Silicon Valley’s geography. It’s not a single entity, but a collection of cities across two counties, each with its own government. And though some progress has been made in inter-jurisdictional partnerships around bike infrastructure (the report points to the “Managers Mobility Partnership” with participation from Redwood City, Menlo Park, Palo Alto,



Looking northeast over downtown San Jose. Photo: Jonathan Schuppert, AICP

Mountain View and Stanford) many of the intersections with a high concentration of bicycle-involved collisions are on the borders between cities.

“The existing networks of low-stress bikeways in Silicon Valley are disjointed by high-stress barriers, including intersections, high-speed arterials, and freeway and expressway overcrossings, leaving islands of low-stress bikeways as stranded investments,” the report states. “Oftentimes, like the patterns of collisions, these barriers occur at city boundaries where bicycle network improvements would require inter-jurisdictional, county, or state collaboration.”

The report makes a number of suggestions for cities that want to help improve the region’s bike network, including fostering partnerships, hiring staffers, updating bicycle master plans, and adopting Vision Zero-like goals. One particularly interesting one involves pursuing grant funding. The report states that grant funding and planning

(continued on next page)

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Silicon Valley has a plan for building a “stress-free” bike network (continued from previous page)

efforts that “are regional rather than city-specific would unlock stranded investments in Silicon Valley and create a superior bicycle network.” It proposes modifying grant criteria to prioritize connecting the various “low-stress” sections of the area’s network.

Of course, many of the suggested improvements will require money, and beyond the mention of grants and the acknowledgment that upgrading the network will require funding, the report isn’t too detailed on how that financing should be obtained. But it reads more like a first step, with the policy suggestions to be used by Joint Venture Silicon Valley and Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition as a “framework” moving forward.

It’s perhaps significant, on that front, that Google provided such generous funding for the report itself.

“Creating a connected, stress-free network of bike lanes is a key part of Google’s vision for the future of transportation,” Google’s transportation planning program manager, Jeral Poskey, said, according to a release about the report.

As *Next City* has previously covered, the tech giant has offered infrastructure upgrades like parks and bike lanes to the city of Mountain View, where the company headquarters is located. And it’s not alone.

“Where cities once ran on tax dollars, selective corporate philanthropy has emerged as a significant driving force of urban policy,” Susie Cagle wrote in 2015. “Tech companies are reengineering city streets, building city police stations and parks, and even helping cities cover the salaries of the public servants they rely on.”

Perhaps, for better or worse, Silicon Valley’s bike network will get the cash it needs from the companies driving its economy.



Rachel Dovey is an award-winning freelance writer and former USC Annenberg fellow living at the northern tip of California’s Bay Area. She writes about infrastructure, water, and climate change and has been published by Bust, Wired, Paste, SF Weekly, the East Bay Express and the North Bay Bohemian. A version of this article appeared in *Next City*, March 21, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2o2YAVU>. Republished with permission. ■

“Defenseless against overwhelming market forces. The populations most reliant on public transit are often the ones pushed aside as it expands. L.A. Metro is in the midst of a massive transit-building spree. New light rail and subway lines are spreading throughout the region. Neighborhoods along these new and emerging transit corridors are seeing shifts in their community makeup and neighborhood character. Some communities have experienced enhanced mobility and economic opportunities, while others have seen displacement amid changing market conditions and gentrification. Most of those consequences have centered on rail stations.” —Nate Berg, *UCLA Magazine*, <http://bit.ly/2o31VV5>



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2017 Annual Law and Ethics Sessions

Northern Section's 2017 Annual Law and Ethics Sessions will be held **April 8th** at the Bay Area Metro Center, 375 Beale Street, San Francisco, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. The Ethics Session will focus on the AICP 2016-17 Case of the Year, and the Law session will provide a broad land use overview.

The 2016-17 Ethics case is not a single 'case,' but a series of ethical scenarios based on real-life events from the past year. Developed by the AICP Ethics Committee with the assistance of Ethics Officer James Peters, FAICP, it includes eight different 'cases' on topics that include gifts, inaccurate information, conflicts of interest, and misuse of the AICP credential.

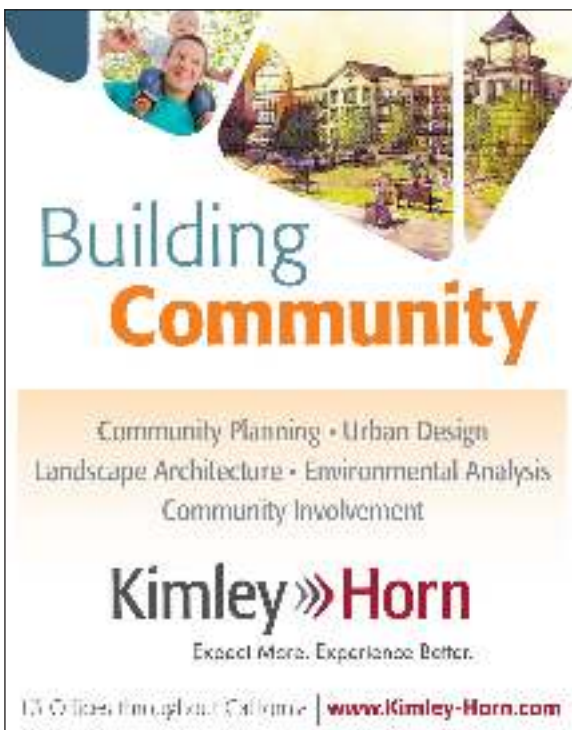
The Law session will provide an overview of land use topics including police power, general plans, specific plans, zoning regulations, subdivisions, CEQA, vested rights/Development Agreements, findings, takings, exactions, affordable housing, and public rights.

APA members pay \$15 per session or \$25 for both sessions. Non-members pay \$20 per session or \$35 for both sessions. To register, go to <http://bit.ly/2nDbUQy>. AICP | CM 1.5 Ethics and 1.5 Law will be credited to AICP participants. For more information, contact Colette Meunier at Colette.Meunier@mindspring.com. ■

"2017 is shaping up as the year of housing in Sacramento.

Gov. Jerry Brown's idea of by-right approval of certain affordable housing projects may have gone by the wayside, but the Legislature is teeing up a whole range of carrots and sticks to local governments to allow affordable housing. Two bills getting the most attention in Sacramento are part of Senate Pro Tem Kevin de León's 'infrastructure package': SB 2 (Atkins), which would create a \$300 million permanent source of funding for affordable housing by creating a \$75 recording fee on real estate transactions, and SB 3 (Bell), a \$3 billion housing bond that would go on the 2018 ballot. Brown is receptive to the first bill but hostile to the second because it would affect the state general fund. But there are more than 100 bills on housing floating around Sacramento, and a lot of them would either induce or pressure local governments to allow more housing generally and affordable housing in particular." —William Fulton, CP&DR, <http://bit.ly/2n7ozPh>

If you must finger-point. "While it's easy to blame powerful entities including developers and city councilmembers for changes we don't like in our neighborhoods, the people with the most power are the homeowners who don't want their neighborhoods to change." —Alissa Walker, CurbedLA, <http://bit.ly/2mVFSTM>



Where in the world



Photo: Christopher Corbett (Answer on [page 11](#).)

Some Canadian planning students won't field trip here anymore.

"Ryerson University's School of Urban and Regional Planning, Toronto, has cancelled its annual trips to the U.S. in response to President Trump's travel ban. According to an email sent to urban planning students last month, the school made the decision to limit its field trips to Canadian destinations in 2017 to 'ensure that no one in our community would face the barriers to participation that could result from shifting American travel policies.'" —*Luke Galati, Ryersonian*, <http://bit.ly/2nYXTNt>

What's in a micro-unit? In our March issue, page 7, *Northern News* excerpted from John Metcalfe's Feb. 17 CityLab article about the stackable 160-square-foot micro-units for homeless being proposed in Berkeley. Would you like to see very good interior photos?

"Business Insider toured a prototype MicroPad in 2016. The module was small, but it contained all the necessities." —*Melia Robinson, Business Insider*, <http://read.bi/2nmUU4w>

What old cities can teach new ones. "Living in a time-tested neighborhood, with all sorts of locational and functional advantages, more than compensates for the limitations of living in a centuries-old building. For the future of cities to thrive, people need to re-examine and evaluate the benefits of such advantages." —*James A. Moore, ArchDaily*, <http://bit.ly/2nYP5qD>





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Who's where



Brendan Hurley is the new UC Berkeley Student Representative on Northern Section's board of directors. Hurley, who is an urban design intern at the Port of San Francisco, holds a bachelor's in environmental design with a focus on urban planning from the University of Colorado, Boulder. Before coming to Berkeley, he served two years on the board of Emerging Planning Professionals for APA Colorado.



Cherise Orange, an associate planner with Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation since August, is the new South Bay Regional Activity Coordinator (RAC) for Northern Section. She previously was a community planner with the U.S. Army Reserve 63rd Regional Support Command, Mountain View. Orange holds a master's in city and regional planning from Morgan State University,

Baltimore, and a BS in finance and international business and economics from Mount Saint Mary's University (Maryland).



Jonathan Schuppert, AICP, is the new Bike, Pedestrian, and Circulation Manager at Facebook. He was previously a planning associate with Alta Planning + Design in San Jose, and he has been a lecturer at San Jose State University. Schuppert holds a bachelor of science in city and regional planning from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. He has served on the Northern Section

Board in several roles, including South Bay Regional Activities Coordinator, Professional Development Director and, currently, Treasurer. In his free time, Schuppert enjoys traveling, photography, bicycling, food, and coffee. ■

Needed: a shift in views about housing. "Convincing Californians that a large increase in home building — one that often would change the character of communities — could substantially better the lives of future residents and future generations necessitates difficult conversations led by elected officials and other community leaders interested in those goals. Unless Californians are convinced of the benefits of more home building — targeted at meeting housing demand at every income level — the ability of the state to alter local planning decisions is limited." —Legislative Analyst's Office, "Do Communities Adequately Plan for Housing?" <http://bit.ly/2n7mpPu>



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Answer to Where in the world (Page 9)

Nuremberg Castle, which dates from 1027 to 1254, occupies a ridge above the historical center of Nuremberg in Bavaria, Germany. A post-World War II restoration returned the castle to its historical form. Photo: Christopher Corbett.

Diversity program goes to school

Cindy Ma, Northern Section Diversity Committee Co-Chair

APA California Northern Section's Ambassador Program is a hybrid of National APA's Ambassador Program and the Urban Land Institute's InterPlan program.

National APA's Ambassador Program provides information to university students about careers in urban planning. The ULI InterPlan program consists of a three-week course in which high school students perform an exercise that involves responding to an RFP for development of a depressed area.

The Diversity Committee has enlisted local planners to engage and talk with students from elementary through high school in Northern Section's area. Activities with the students range from "What is planning?" presentations, to Career Day involvement, to project assistance and reviews.

On May 5th, our committee will be conducting a James Rojas-based *Place It!* activity at Los Medanos Elementary School in Pittsburg, California. In 2016, Los Medanos had 747 students, of whom 68 percent were Hispanic, 13 percent were African American, and 9 percent were Asian. Eighty percent of the students received free or discounted lunches (<http://bit.ly/2nIJndo>).

Look for an update in the June issue of *Northern News*, online May 23rd. ■

Letters

You have been very accommodating and helpful to me and the APA Sacramento Valley Section. Thank you for subscribing me and including me on your Section's news and information.

Caleb Brock

Information Director, Sacramento Valley Section ■

Seeking balance in the general plan. "Councilmember Eric Filseth, who voted with the majority, said Palo Alto has historically done a good job in finding a balance between a purely residential suburb and an urban setting. The city, he said, boasts residential neighborhoods, trees, a vibrant downtown, and a strong tech-innovation economy. The new Comprehensive Plan should aim to preserve these characteristics. 'Most people don't want Atherton, and they don't want the Mission District either,' Filseth said." —Gennady Sheyner, *Palo Alto Weekly*
<http://bit.ly/2njrjbK>

The four-day event touched on placemaking, storytelling, equitable access, and other concepts essential to creating opportunities for engagement and building cities for people. The fellows left the program with networks, friendships, and a renewed sense that change, if desired, needs to come “from you.”

My focus

I work primarily in downtown San Jose. As the San Jose Downtown Association’s street life manager, I implement a number of capital and public art projects to improve downtown’s visual vibrancy and pedestrian experience while maintaining the existing urban tree canopy and landscaping. As in many cities across the nation, downtown San Jose has places you showcase to others, and places where additional work is needed. One of the latter is downtown San Jose’s Fountain Alley.

Fountain Alley lies in the heart of downtown’s historic district. It runs parallel to and just south of E. Santa Clara St. between S. 1st St. and S. 2nd St. Surrounded by light rail stations, restaurants, nightlife, homes, and downtown’s most iconic building — the Bank of America tower — the alley has the basic ingredients for a great place. In addition, the east end of Fountain Alley is a potential Bay Area Rapid Transit station entrance to downtown San Jose, putting pressure on the alley to serve as downtown’s gateway to the BART network. But the alley is underutilized and plagued by poor public perception, drug use, and other antisocial behavior.

‘Open Gallery Alley’

Art, activation, and community collaboration can bring new life to a neglected but cherished place. I presented the idea of “Open Gallery Alley” — a pop-up art gallery in Fountain Alley — to the fellowship, and came back with “risk capital” funding and strategies on how to implement change inclusively and recruit community allies to support the work. “Open Gallery Alley” aims to turn Fountain Alley into a community asset through a pop-up gallery showcasing local artists and talent.



Children paint on a community mural hosted by Exhibition District during the pop-up art gallery. Photo: Jason Su

The four-day conference was refreshing in its characterization of “community change agent.” While labels like planners, architects, and advocates imbue a level of expertise and trust, they also create a subconscious barrier to entry. Having a planning background while “placemaking” showed me how truly difficult public space activation can be, but how immediate and necessary change is for the affected communities.



Local residents repaint walls and planters in Fountain Alley. Photo: Ellina Yin

(continued on next page)

Back home, and after two community meetings, a design charrette, and an alleyway cleanup, we were ready to prototype Fountain Alley. Our first event was held on November 11, Veterans Day, and November 12, a Saturday, in 2016. We had music, performances, games, artists live painting, and a community “mural paint” hosted by Exhibition District, a local artists collaborative. We borrowed crates and turf from San Jose’s Tech Museum, and brought out Adirondack chairs to bring ‘green’ lounging to the space. Over the two days, between 1,200 and 1,500 people walked through or paused in the space. The reception was positive, and led to inquiries about future placemaking and investment efforts — and to conversations about larger issues, such as how to increase retail and promote safety, and how to make a space usable for everyone.

A second phase

The project’s second iteration is a collaboration with San Jose State University’s industrial design studio and CommUniverCity, a collaborative launched in 2005 as a way to engage San Jose State University students in solving real-life neighborhood issues.

On March 1, 2017, a co-design workshop of 50 students and community members was hosted at Local Color, a former Ross store repurposed into an affordable art studio. The students broke into teams based on four “street life” concepts: parklets and stages; planters, wind chimes, and birdhouses; seating; and lighting and mobile solar hubs. After feedback from the community, the students will be creating cardboard mock-ups to be displayed on March 22 (the news deadline for this article). A final functional prototype of the concept is planned for early May.

By the end of the fellowship term in June 2017, we will have a year’s worth of community outreach, design charrettes, prototype interventions, and a structure for “alleyway activation.”

Takeaways

It will take more than a few events and meetings to truly transform Fountain Alley. Still, in one year, local perception of the space has improved, and general community engagement has increased, leading to others projecting what they want to see in the alley. Project for Public Spaces, founded in 1975 to expand on the work of William (Holly) Whyte, author of *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, has defined placemaking as a process. By opening the alleyway as a platform for all to influence, the alley can be reimaged under public stewardship.

Needing to see the Fountain Alley project from start to finish — to find funding, meet with community members, design flyers, load and unload equipment, and do it all over again — gave me an extra level of appreciation for placemaking. Planning is essential to good city building, but it needs and relies on related activities like placemaking, advocacy, and economics for its success. As a planner, I feel fortunate to be part of this fellowship.

Jason Su is the Street Life Manager for the San Jose Downtown Association. His degrees include master of urban planning, San Jose State University; BA in economics and sociology, UC Irvine; and certificate in landscape architecture, UC Berkeley Extension. You can reach him at jsu@sjdowntown.com, or visit the Fountain Alley website at www.opengalleryalley.com ■

Sense and the city. “In the grand scheme of history, it’s relatively new to have millions of people living in the same space. As we have adjusted to these new social forms, we have also adjusted our sensory expectations. We have developed new cultural expectations for what constitutes acceptable noise limits, space boundaries, and odors. If you were plopped down in an 18th-century city, much of it would feel foreign. The particular smells, sounds, and patterns of movement would likely perplex you. But on a fundamental level, many of the conundrums of living in an 18th-century city were the same as those in cities today: how to build community in the midst of an immense population; how to live as comfortably as possible; how to balance the public and private aspects of life; how to be entertained; how to find one’s way in crowded spaces; and how to deal with the simultaneous chaos and order of urban life, which can be, in turns, frustrating and inspiring.” —Historian Carolyn Purnell, author of *The Sensational Past: How the Enlightenment Changed the Way We Use Our Sense*, as told to Jessica Leigh Hester of CityLab <http://bit.ly/2mrNJYa>

Planners respond to new take on driving habits and density

Kelsey E. Thomas, Next City

Creating denser urban centers is at the heart of many cities' long-term development and climate goals, from San Diego to Buffalo to Atlanta. But a recent study on compact development and driving has sparked an energetic debate among planners over whether or not increasing density actually pays off by getting people out of their cars.

In "Does Compact Development Make People Drive Less?," in a recent *Journal of the American Planning Association*, <http://bit.ly/2mrFpr5>, Mark R. Stevens of the University of British Columbia argues that dense development doesn't have much of an impact in reducing driving. Stevens uses meta-regression analysis to look at 37 studies published in the past 20 years on the impacts of changing compact development. He concludes:

Planners who wish to reduce driving in their communities should probably not automatically assume that compact development will be very effective at achieving that goal ... At minimum, planners and municipal decision makers should not rely on compact development as their only strategy for reducing VMT (vehicle miles traveled) unless their goals for reduced driving are very modest and can be clearly achieved at a low cost.

A number of planning experts have pushed back on Stevens' analysis, saying he overreached, or that his conclusion is beside the point altogether.

In a published response to the article, <http://bit.ly/2mrGUWx>, Susan Handy, a professor at the University of California, said the murky language around compact development makes it difficult to draw such stark conclusions, adding that Stevens' finding misses a big point.

"Compact development cannot reduce driving very much on its own, but we cannot reduce driving very

much without it," she writes. "If we are going to get people to drive less, as California has set out to do, we first need to make it possible to drive less. Compact development does that."

Reid Ewing and Robert Cervero, professors at the University of Utah and the University of California, Berkeley, point out the many benefits of compact development beyond that of reduced driving, including increased walking and transit use, increased physical activity, reduced household transportation costs, increased upward social and economic mobility, and increased social interaction and neighborliness. (<http://bit.ly/2mruVbu>)

"From Stevens' article, you might conclude that the sole benefit of compact development is a reduction in driving, while the costs of compact development are substantial," they write. "Only in one brief reference does he acknowledge other benefits of compact development. This reflects the kind of reductionist trap that planning academics all too frequently fall into: framing the world from the lens of a single field or sector, whether transportation, housing, or the like."

Still other planners argue that the conversation should shift from compact development altogether. Michael Manville, assistant professor at UCLA Luskin

School of Public Affairs, says planners should instead focus on the copious amounts of free land provided to cars.

"Travel's influence on the built environment is a function of the built environment designed for travel," he comments. "We should stop pretending otherwise." (<http://bit.ly/2mrDR0z>)

Kelsey E. Thomas is Next City's assistant editor. A version of this article appeared in Next City, March 1, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2mrJpYW>. Republished with permission. ■



Google's canopied campus approved in Mountain View

Silicon Valley Business Journal, March 8, 2017

Janice Bitters, <http://bit.ly/2nnjceL> • “The Mountain View City Council unanimously approved Google’s new canopied campus in North Bayshore. Called Charleston East, the 595,000-square-foot project will include walking trails, a public park and plaza, and ground-floor retail. The tent-like roof will capture water for reuse and its solar paneled roof will create about four megawatts of power.

“Construction on the two-story project is expected to begin as early as April and wrap up by the end of 2019.

“Google will aggressively encourage its employees to choose transit, biking, and walking to get to work to reduce road traffic. Company leaders have said its new office building won’t push area traffic over the city’s current ‘trip cap’

of 19,500 cars per day during the morning rush hour for key roadways and intersections.

“Council members were impressed by how much the company plans to open the new campus to residents and visitors. Even non-Googlers will have access to a two-acre public outdoor plaza on the site and an indoor ‘green loop’ walking path with art installations inside the building.

“Separately, the city released an updated environmental impact report that considers allowing up to 9,850 housing units — mostly studio and one-bedroom apartments — to rise in North Bayshore, a 650-acre area that is home to Google and other tech giants including Intuit, Microsoft, and LinkedIn.”

The changing face of San Francisco's Bayview District

KPIX 5 News, March 8, 2017

<http://cbsloc.al/2n3gZVz> • “A trend of soaring real estate prices and a surge of new residents has already changed the city’s Mission District, and now it has long-time Bayview residents concerned about their future.

“Matt Fuller, who is the president of the San Francisco Association of Realtors, calls the Bayview ‘the last frontier in San Francisco real estate.’

“The pace of change has been accelerated by a combination of home prices, location, construction of a light rail line down the 3rd St. Corridor, and the advent of the tech bus transit system.

“‘Part of it has been the shift south in the center of gravity of San Francisco real estate,’ Fuller said. ‘People used to want to be in our central or north central neighborhoods as their first choice. Now, because of Silicon Valley, people prefer to be on the south side of the city because it will save them 30 minutes on their commute.’

“The median price of a Bayview home has jumped from \$360,000 to \$750,000 today — the latter still considered affordable in the pricey San Francisco real estate market.”

Ed. Note: Follow the link to watch a 6:17 KPIX News clip to see how this change in the Bayview is “just a small piece of a long, complicated story.”

An index of inclusive economic growth in 100 largest U.S. metro areas

Brookings, March 2, 2017

<http://brook.gs/2m1uhxy> • “After years of slow but steady recovery following the Great Recession, the United States is poised to continue one of its longest economic expansions on record. The nation has added jobs and output faster than most advanced economies since the recession, the unemployment rate has fallen to near its pre-recession level, and middle-class wage growth is gaining momentum.

“[Brookings’ Metro Monitor 2017] provides leaders across metropolitan America with a set of objective metrics to guide their efforts in shaping advanced regional economies that work for all.

“It tracks the economic performance of the nation’s 100 largest metropolitan areas along three dimensions: growth, prosperity, and inclusion. These represent the pillars of successful economic development which should encourage robust long-run growth (growth) by improving the productivity of individuals and firms in order to raise local standards of living (prosperity) for all people (inclusion). The Metro Monitor tracks the three indicators and the rate of change during the most recent one-year, five-year, and 10-year periods.”

For 2014–2015, the **San Jose** metro area scored 3rd in growth among the nation’s 100 largest metro areas, 1st in prosperity, and 56th in inclusion. For the same period, the **San Francisco** metro area scored 5th in growth, 14th in prosperity, and 28th in inclusion.

For the methodology and to explore the data, download Metro Monitor 2017 at <http://brook.gs/2m1p7kZ>, or try the interactive dashboard at <http://brook.gs/2m1uW1U>.

(Continued on next page)

SMART deal could lead to second Petaluma station

Argus-Courier, March 2, 2017

Matt Brown, <http://bit.ly/2mrXM4c> • “A deal struck in February between commuter and freight rail agencies could lead to the development of an east Petaluma rail station and a downtown mixed-use project.

“The Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit authority, which is preparing to launch commuter train service from Santa Rosa to San Rafael later this year, reached the deal with the North Coast Railroad Authority, which operates freight trains on the same stretch of tracks.

“As part of the sweeping operating agreement, the NCRA agreed to vacate the downtown rail yard adjacent to the train station on Lakeville Street. NCRA had an easement to park freight trains on the property, complicating SMART’s efforts to develop the land.

“With NCRA ceding its interest in the property, SMART is now free to pursue a deal with a developer to sell the downtown land in exchange for construction of a second Petaluma commuter rail platform at Corona Road. The long envisioned second station was promised to voters who approved the commuter rail agency in 2008, but was removed from the initial plans as the agency faced budget uncertainty during the recession.”

SF planners approve plan to curb gentrification, extend interim controls

Mission Local, March 3, 2017

Laura Wenus, <http://bit.ly/2mWheSJ> • “San Francisco Planning Commissioners on March 2nd approved a land use and policy plan designed to mitigate the effects of gentrification and displacement in the Mission District.

“The commissioners also agreed to a nine-month extension of 14-month-old restrictions that require some projects to undergo more stringent review.

“The policy plan, called the Mission Action Plan 2020, <http://bit.ly/2mWiKUW>, is the product of a two-year collaborative effort between the city and an array of neighborhood nonprofits and advocacy organizations.

“The plan will go next to the Board of Supervisors [this summer]. Its objective is to keep the Mission’s cultural diversity from evaporating by the year 2020 [through] efforts to improve tenant protections, preserve single-room occupancy, preserve affordable housing, build new affordable housing, support existing community-serving businesses, improve community access to the city’s planning processes, and address homelessness.

“The Planning Department and community organizations remain divided on the effects of adding market-rate housing.

“The Board of Supervisors delayed a 157-unit project planned for 1515 South Van Ness Avenue for further study of its gentrification impacts. A similar project on Folsom Street has also been delayed for more study.

“The interim controls extended, which were to expire in April, require additional authorizations for projects larger than 25 units, with even more scrutiny of those 75 units or larger. Any development with more than a third of its units below-market-rate was deemed exempt from these controls.”

Oakland’s first pedestrian safety czar wants to rethink city streets

Next City, February 27, 2017

Josh Cohen, <http://bit.ly/2mrAjvi> • “Nicole Ferrara, who until recently was executive director of Walk San Francisco, is leaving Walk SF [in April] to lead pedestrian safety efforts at the newly formed Oakland Department of Transportation. The department published its guiding strategic plan in October.

“Ferrara says her role will be to develop policies and projects that prioritize safety of people walking, and bring those to the mayor and city council. She recognizes that in

doing so, ‘it’ll be really important to engage communities that are historically underrepresented. ... Under the framework of the strategic plan [are] a lot of goals around building authentic community engagement.’

“‘I’m excited to shift from advocacy to city government and see the impact we’re able to achieve,’ she says. ‘Advocacy has given me a lot of freedom. I welcome the opportunity to actually implement strategies that follow the lead of a mayor and city council with these shared values I support.’” ■

Malls and cities are becoming indistinguishable

The Guardian, March 16, 2017

Stefan Al, <http://bit.ly/2nbJCj4> • “Suburban malls may be a dying breed, but in cities from New York to Hong Kong, new malls are thriving by seamlessly blending into the urban fabric. [Calatrava’s Manhattan] Oculus, named after the eye-like opening at the apex that lets in light, is more than a piece of striking architecture. It exists as a mall with more than a hundred stores, and as a hub connecting office buildings in Brookfield Place and One World Trade Center with 11 subway lines and Path trains.

“Michael Sorkin, professor of architecture at City College of New York, sees it as an example of a kind of global urbanism. ‘The Westfield mall is virtually indistinguishable from Dubai duty-free.’

“A new breed of shopping center is integrating so seamlessly into its urban surroundings that it can be difficult to

draw any line between city and mall whatsoever. London’s Boxpark, <http://bit.ly/2nbThX7>; Las Vegas’s Downtown Container Park, <http://bit.ly/2nbON2q>; and Miami’s Brickell City Centre, <http://bit.ly/2nbLb0z>, are examples of mall-like environments that try to weave into city street life.

“Developers in China are experimenting even more radically, with new mall configurations catering to the rapid rise of domestic consumerism and quickly evolving tastes. Hong Kong weaves malls into the very urban fabric above subway stations and underneath skyscrapers. And Friedrich Ludewig’s suburban mall extension at Eastland Melbourne, <http://bit.ly/2nbUn4V>, is designed around a town square with a public library at its center, not an anchor store.”

Los Angeles votes down ‘Neighborhood Integrity Initiative’

Next City, March 8, 2017

Rachel Dovey, <http://bit.ly/2m4WK5w> • “Los Angeles voters on March 7 reelected Mayor Eric Garcetti and voted down an anti-development measure that could have halted the creation of more multiunit housing. But voter turnout was remarkably low despite the somewhat high profile of what was on the ballot.

“Garcetti won reelection with 80.9 percent of the vote according to the Los Angeles Times — but he received only about 200,000 votes. The Times estimates voter turnout to have been at about 11 percent.

“Voter turnout in city elections is notoriously sparse, of course, but according to the Knight Foundation, roughly 1 in 5 voters tends to show up for mayoral elections — a figure that suggests the primary [election] was particularly poorly attended.

“Measure S was the other hot item on the ticket — in as much as local zoning measures can be hot. It was voted down by a wide margin, with roughly 69 percent voting no.

“That’s a promising figure for L.A.’s pro-development community, as Josh Stephens wrote for *Next City* in February, <http://bit.ly/2m51pEx>. The measure, also called the ‘Neighborhood Integrity Initiative’ would have ‘vaporized’ the city’s current planning and development process, he wrote, and effectively favored the ‘lower-density, sleepy Los Angeles of decades ago instead of the denser, more dynamic metropolis that is trying to molt out of its 20th-century skin.’”

More density around Sydney area rail stations. “The NSW government will ramp up a program of encouraging major housing development near rail stations in Sydney, as well as pushing for new schemes that make it easier for renters to buy their own property. The program of fostering developments near rail stations will take place through an expanded ‘priority precincts’ program — an existing scheme under which areas such as those around stations on the new rail line to Sydney’s northwest have been rezoned for new housing.”

—Jacob Saulwick, *Sydney Morning Herald*, <http://bit.ly/2nYRmSK>

(Continued on next page)

Cities need 'gentle density' to address housing crunch

Toronto Metro, March 7, 2017

Brent Toderian, <http://bit.ly/2n3tKQj> • “Most cities are struggling with significant housing challenges, and recognize their existing planning rules and approaches aren’t going to solve them.

“These difficult and complicated challenges include building more complete and resilient communities, addressing politically explosive debates about neighborhood change, and improving affordability. There’s also the challenge — as some neighborhoods lose population — of preserving community ‘building blocks,’ such as local schools and shopping, and the clear connections between public health and building communities.

“As I defined it in 2007, ‘gentle density’ is attached, ground-oriented housing that’s more dense than a detached house, but with a similar scale and character. Think duplexes, semi-detached homes, row houses, or even stacked townhouses.

“Many people don’t mind sharing a common wall to cut their costs and carbon footprint, but still appreciate a direct relationship with the ground. In most cities though, deliberate zoning decisions have made this kind of housing illegal.

“That’s a problem, because from a planning and design perspective, there’s nothing fundamentally incompatible about all sorts of gentle density in a well-designed neighborhood.”

The quest to grow cities from scratch

FastCoDesign, March 7, 2017

Meg Miller, <http://bit.ly/2mWeHrH> • “The year is 2050. The global average temperature has risen by two degrees Celsius since 2017, the effects of which have displaced hundreds of millions of people, as scientists had warned. Our environments are profoundly impacted but we’ve avoided human extinction, so we focus on relocating and rebuilding. Advancements in algorithmic building technologies and toxic-free, natural biomaterials have paved the way for automated ‘City Kits’ that build replicas of decimated cities in alternate locations.

“In this futuristic scenario, the kits drop from the sky, unfold into a temporary habitat, and deploy a fleet of insect-like robots to turn traditionally inhospitable environments into sparkling new metropolises. After witnessing the devastating effects of climate change, we are finally serious about building sustainably, using organic materials that won’t negatively impact our ecosystems. In fact, these new cities will not only be kind to living things, but will be living things themselves: built from organisms like bacteria and fungus, the buildings of the future will grow on their own.

“This new world sounds like it sprung from the mind of H.G. Wells or Jules Verne, but in fact it’s the basis for part of an exhibit called Reimagining Climate Change. It was an installation of the annual Museum of the Future event during the World Government Summit in Dubai in February — a lead-up to a physical museum of the same name that is scheduled to be completed in 2018.”

Key drivers of the distribution of population

LSE Business Review, March 6, 2017

Vernon Henderson, <http://bit.ly/2mW93pN>

“Economists point to three factors to explain how population is distributed. First, differences in geographical characteristics — often referred to as ‘first nature’ — make some places more amenable for living or producing output than others. This explains why mountainous regions, deserts, tundra, and so on tend to have low population density — and why much of the world’s population is situated in places where it is relatively easy to produce food.

“The second factor is agglomeration. Because of economies of scale and gains from trade, we often find it efficient to gather in small areas. Of course, many industries, notably food production, don’t benefit from concentration, and are instead spread out in accord with the

availability of first-nature resources. What’s more, there are limits to the benefits of agglomeration: because of congestion and transport costs, the urban population is spread among many cities, which are in turn spatially dispersed.

“[Third] is history. Once established, cities have a very strong tendency to stay put. This persistence results from many factors, often described as ‘second nature’ (Cronon, 1992). Among these factors are long-lived capital, political power, and the fact that once agglomeration has started in a particular place, it will be a natural focus for future development. This persistence can be important even when the reasons that a city has been established in a particular location are no longer important (Bleakley and Lin, 2012; Michaels and Rauch, 2013).”

(Continued on next page)

California exports its poor

The Sacramento Bee, March 5, 2017

Phillip Reese, <http://bit.ly/2n3oVGE> • “Every year from 2000 through 2015, more people left California than moved in from other states. This migration was not spread evenly across all income groups, a Sacramento Bee review of U.S. Census Bureau data found. The people leaving tend to be relatively poor, and many lack college degrees. Move higher up the income spectrum, and slightly more people are coming than going.

“About 2.5 million people living close to the official poverty line left California for other states from 2005 through 2015, while 1.7 million people at that income level moved in from other states — a net loss of 800,000. During the same period, the state experienced a net gain of about 20,000 residents earning at least five times the poverty rate — or \$100,000 for a family of three.

“Not surprisingly, the state’s exodus of poor people is notable in Los Angeles and San Francisco counties, which combined experienced a net loss of 250,000 such residents from 2005 through 2015.

“The leading destination for those leaving California is Texas, with about 293,000 economically disadvantaged residents leaving and about 137,000 coming, for a net loss of 156,000 from 2005 through 2015.

“All told, California lost about 260,000 economically disadvantaged residents to the 10 states with the lowest cost of living during that time period, compared to a net gain of about 40,000 from the 10 states (other than California) with the highest cost of living.”

How LA taught me to love density

Curbed LA, March 3, 2017

Alissa Walker, <http://bit.ly/2mVFSTM> • “The Hollywood street where I first lived when I moved to Los Angeles 16 years ago didn’t look all that different from the suburban St. Louis neighborhood where I had grown up.

“But after six months, I learned there was a subway running practically beneath the house I shared with three roommates. A few months after that, I realized I could walk to the farmers market that I had dutifully driven to every Sunday. Soon, instead of driving across town, I would spend afternoons wandering the streets of Hollywood, marveling that such a different-looking place with so many interesting people to talk to was such a short distance from my own quiet street.

“By the time I decided to find my own apartment, I was hooked on Hollywood’s energy. I moved even closer to the action, renting a bungalow on the hillside just behind Hollywood and Highland. I rarely considered driving anymore and eventually got rid of my car — I could walk to almost everything I needed, and I had my new friend the subway.

“From my tiny new perch, I saw my neighbors heading to work, heard the loudspeakers on double-decker tour buses, smelled bacon-wrapped hot dogs sizzling on vendor carts after the Hollywood Bowl let out. I watched dozens of cranes erecting new stores, offices, bars, restaurants, apartments, and what I hoped would somewhere, someday, be a grocery store.” ...

Australia: New planning controls for Yarra River

ArchitectureAU, February 28, 2017

Editorial desk, <http://bit.ly/2mrwPsB> • “The Victorian government has introduced new planning controls for a 42-kilometre stretch of the Yarra River corridor, running from Richmond in Melbourne’s inner-east to Warrandyte in the city’s north-east.

“The new planning controls will replace the existing but inconsistent overlays in the various municipalities and are intended to protect the Yarra River and its banks ‘against inappropriate development,’ the government said in a statement.

“The controls include two new overlays. A Design Development Overlay will be applied to specific areas of private land immediately adjacent to the river and will set out mandatory building heights, development setbacks, and

overshadowing controls. A Significant Landscape Overlay will be applied to the wider landscape setting of the Yarra corridor and will manage the siting and design of buildings and the removal of trees and earthworks.

“The new planning controls are part of the Yarra River Action Plan, which will also see the creation of a new independent body called the Birrarung Council. The council will include the traditional owners of the land and representatives from environment, farming, and community groups. The council will provide independent advice to the government on all matters concerning the Yarra River.

“The Yarra River Action Plan follows the Victorian government’s introduction of interim planning controls in January 2016.” ■

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- Provide an arena for communication and exchange of information about planning related activities;
- Raise member awareness and involvement in APA affairs;
- Increase public awareness of the importance of planning;
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APA California Northern publishes *Northern News* 10 times each year in PDF for the exchange of planning ideas and information. Current and back issues are available for download at <http://bit.ly/JOV1Kn>. Entirely the effort of volunteers, the News is written and produced by and for urban planners in Northern California. Circulation (downloads per issue) 4,000.

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