



Is CEQA hurting the chance for sustainability in The Baylands project?

Charla Gomez, AICP

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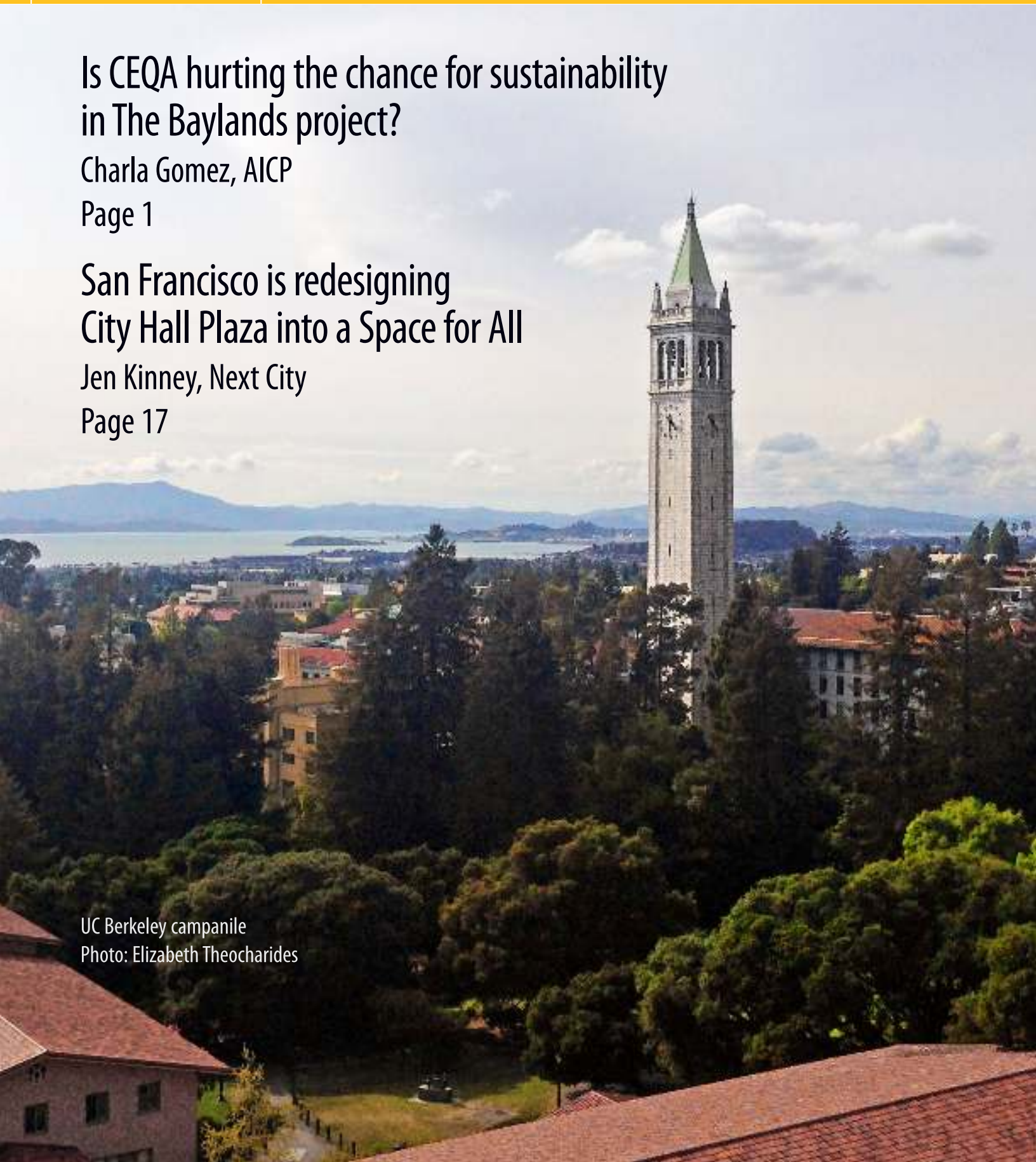
San Francisco is redesigning City Hall Plaza into a Space for All

Jen Kinney, Next City

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UC Berkeley campanile

Photo: Elizabeth Theocharides





Is CEQA hurting the chance for sustainability in *The Baylands* project?

And can a massive development be sustainable if it doesn't include housing?

Charla Gomez, AICP

The Baylands is a 684-acre Specific Plan proposal for one of the largest undeveloped sites on the east side of the San Francisco Peninsula. The proposal was prepared by developer Universal Paragon Corporation and presented to the city of Brisbane in February 2011 (<http://bit.ly/2nJpbqg>). The applicant's proposal was one of several site development alternatives evaluated in a Draft Environmental Impact Report released in June 2013. The proposal, and *The Baylands'* Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR, <http://bit.ly/2nJsCgH>) are currently being reviewed by the city council. Public meetings began last year and will continue through at least June 2017 (<http://bit.ly/2nWu67G>).

At stake is whether a truly sustainable development will proceed on a major site near the Bay Area's urban core or whether a job-generating nonresidential development with a large solar photovoltaic farm will be built. *The Baylands* offers a unique opportunity to redevelop a well-located brownfield site — a precious commodity in the Bay Area — into a world-class sustainable and “regenerative” community.

The developer proposes a sustainable “compact, mixed-use, transit-friendly environment that features an ecologically rich open space network ... served by a low-impact infrastructure system which seeks to minimize carbon production,” according to the Specific Plan prepared by WRT for the developer.

The city of Brisbane embraced *The Baylands* as a new model for community planning anchored in the sustainability principles of One Planet Living (OPL), the highly aspirational framework created by Bioregional in the UK. Inspired by Sonoma Mountain Village, the only certified One Planet Living community in California, the city's planning commission approved in 2015



Looking south toward SFO (upper right). Air photo by Juan Borrelli, AICP

a “Sustainability Framework” for the Baylands aligned with OPL principles and goals. This framework will be part of the project entitlements and must be implemented by the developer.

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Event honoring the late Fran Violich

Professor Violich taught in UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design until his retirement in 1976.

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Two downtown panels at BAPDA's Spring Meeting Friday

\$45 fee includes breakfast and lunch. AICP | CM 3.0.

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Speed Networking 2017 with ULI and AIA

San Francisco meet-up with members of ULI and the American Institute of Architects.

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San Francisco is redesigning City Hall Plaza into a Space for All

Jen Kinney, *Next City*. Engaging all users of the space with compassion and understanding, with inclusivity as a specific goal. *Republished with permission.*

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JOBS and EVENTS CALENDAR at www.norcalapa.org

New AV policy guide available. "The National League of Cities has released a new guide to help cities prepare for the roll out of autonomous vehicles (AV) in their communities. The report, 'Autonomous Vehicles: A Policy Preparation Guide,' provides an overview of AV technology and answers frequently asked questions around AV manufacturers, public policy considerations, municipal coordination, and infrastructure investment." You can download the 16-page guide at <http://bit.ly/2o8OE1v>. —NLC, <http://bit.ly/2o8HA4V>



Director's note

Sharon Grewal, AICP

National Bike Month

Thursday, May 11th, is the 23rd annual **Bike to Work Day**. More than 100,000 people are expected to participate across the nine Bay Area counties. In addition, more than 490 energizer stations will refuel riders with refreshments along their commute routes. You can find more information regarding bike routes, maps, and energizer stations on the Bike to Work Day website (<http://bit.ly/2o1QMlx>) or on your local bike coalition website.

It's official! Caltrans is opening the **Bay Bridge Bicycle and Pedestrian Path** on weekdays in time for National Bike Month. Join the opening celebration on Tuesday, May 2nd, at 10 am on the East Span Path. Now the weekday path hours will be the same as the weekend hours, 6 am to 8 pm. Visit the official Bay Bridge Path website for more information and updates, <http://bit.ly/2o1Rl5c>.

Connections

On May 16th, our Northern Section is joining ULI San Francisco for its fourth annual **Speed Networking** event. It's your chance to meet a number of your fellow APA, ULI, and AIA members one-on-one through a series of short, organized introductions. If you feel you never have enough time at industry events or in your professional life to expand your network in the planning, design, development, and investment communities, this event offers a great way to meet future business associates and friends from across the real estate spectrum. More information can be found at <http://bit.ly/LtpX2X>. APA members, use the code **SPEED17** to get 10 percent off the non-member

price. And while you are checking our calendar, I encourage you to check out all the events being offered in the coming weeks.

Our Section continues to pursue partnerships with public agencies and local organizations to promote planning and to build strong connections for our membership. If you would like to get involved, or want to provide feedback, ideas, or names of organizations that would be interested in partnering with APA, please contact me at director@norcalapa.org. Your involvement is invaluable.

Plaudits

Northern Section is hosting our **Annual Awards Gala** on June 2nd at Preservation Park. The Awards Co-Directors and Committee have revamped the awards program and have added a walking tour of Preservation Park prior to the event. Mark your calendars for a fulfilling evening and celebrate the planning work of devoted professionals throughout the region. For details, see [page 4](#), and stay tuned!

APA California has just announced that the **City of Lafayette** will receive the **2017 Great Places in California Award**. The jury was highly impressed with the city's efforts to concentrate growth in its increasingly vibrant downtown area and to preserve the surrounding hillsides as a natural, sustainable, multi-purpose resource that defines the city's character. This is one of three Great Places Awards to be presented by the chapter in 2017, and Lafayette is the first Northern Section recipient of a Great Places in California award. Congratulations to Niroop K. Srivatsa, City of Lafayette Planning & Building Director, and to the staff and residents of the city of Lafayette! ■

2015 American Housing Survey now available. "With the January release of the summary tables, as well as the March release of the National and Metropolitan Public Use File (PUF) microdata, the 2015 American Housing Survey is now fully available for the public to view and extract data on a broad range of topics for the nation and 25 metro areas across the country." —HUD USER News. See AHS, <http://bit.ly/2oqWaRC>

Join us

APA CA Northern Awards Gala

FRI, JUNE 2, 2017, 6:30 PM – 9:30 PM

••••• Nile Hall
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5:30PM Preservation Park
Walking Tour
6:30PM Networking Reception
7:30PM Presentation of
Awards
9:30PM Close

Join us on this special night to honor innovative plans and projects, distinguished APA members, and future planners of the Northern Section.

INFO & TICKETS: APACAnorthern.eventbrite.com



For questions or to SPONSOR: Florentina Craciun @ 510-213 7915 or awards@norcalapa.org

Who's where



Gary Chao is the Planning and Development Manager at Apple Inc. He previously was the assistant community development director for Cupertino, where he served for more than 14 years. His public sector experience includes earlier planning positions with the cities of San Jose, Livermore, and Los Gatos.

Chao earned his bachelor's degree in environmental policy analysis and planning at UC Davis.



Adam Foster recently joined Michael Baker International as an associate planner. He previously was an assistant planner/code enforcement officer for the city of Lafayette. Foster began his public sector career as a code enforcement officer for Danville. He volunteers on the Caltrans District 4 bicycle advisory committee and is

a co-founder of Bike Concord. He also volunteered as a member of Concord's downtown specific plan steering committee. Foster earned his bachelor's degree in environmental policy analysis and planning at UC Davis. ■

Where in the world



Photo: Chandler Lee (Answer on [page 16](#).)

“Dealing with the city Planning Department, which doesn’t understand architecture, is a very slow process,’ [San Francisco architect Stanley] Saitowitz says in the book [Michael Webb, ‘Building Community: New Apartment Architecture,’ 2017 Thames & Hudson]. ‘We have a lot of trouble with the preservationist spirit in that department, now that almost every district of San Francisco is considered historic and every new building has to comply with its character. We firmly believe in respecting scale; Planning wants textbook replicas.’ ” —John King, *San Francisco Chronicle*, <http://bit.ly/2nPBbre>

Meet a local planner

By Siân Llewellyn, AICP

Paul Jensen, AICP, is Community Development Director for the City of San Rafael.

Tell us how you came to planning

I was born and raised in San Francisco. As a kid, I was interested in architecture and urban neighborhoods. I went to a public college-prep high school — Lowell. Since they were preparing you for a university education, I spent three years learning about architecture. I had all intentions of being an architect.

This was at the beginning of the environmental movement. There was so much concern about the environment and the way we choose to live. I was introduced to Ian McHarg through his book, *Design with Nature*, as a multi-layered way of looking at our natural and built environments.

That changed my focus and I shifted to city planning — first at San Francisco State, then San Jose State. Had I gone to Cal Poly as once planned, I probably would have been an architect. Instead, I got an undergraduate degree in geography and urban planning.

My first internship was at the City of Pacifica in the late 70s. Their planning department was super-small, a great opportunity for an intern because it gave exposure to everything. I was a quick study and enjoyed the breadth of work: CEQA, coastal planning, the planning desk, and more.

They later hired me as a planning technician while I was at grad school. I stayed with Pacifica for three years and learned a lot about a lot.

What came next in your career?

In 1980, I started as an associate planner for the City of San Rafael. I was there for eight or nine years, then left to go to work for a land developer for three years. That gave me experience from the private side.

I started my own consulting business as a contract planner in 1991. A planner for hire around the Bay Area, I worked with 15 or 20 different cities. And I loved the



variety in geography and project size. I managed everything from large, complicated projects for the cities of Palo Alto, Oakland, Vallejo, and San Rafael to smaller assignments in North Bay communities, and almost everything in between. I had a great time and a wonderful run for about 16 years, until 2007.

The recession was the impetus for re-inventing myself. I decided to go back to the public sector and started applying for positions. The City of San Rafael, my one-time employer, had an opening and

wanted me to come back. I did. It was wonderful to go back. I am fortunate and humble that they hired me during a difficult time in our economy.

Is it difficult to live and work in the same community?

No. I've lived here for 30 years. I like being a part of the community. I have a passion for this city. I'm fine with working and living in the same place. I love coming to work on Mondays.

I've seen the city change over time; some changes I like and some I don't, like the cost of housing and the traffic. But I suppose that's part of progress — you have to take the good with the bad and work to reduce the impact of the bad. I visit other places, but I never wanted to live anywhere else.

Tell us about your department and the challenges you face

The San Rafael Community Development Department includes City Planning, Building, and Code enforcement. We have 20–22 employees and a stable staff with fairly low turnover. Even with the often-brutal commute into San Rafael, most of the staff have been here seven to eight years. I sometimes worry about being able to recruit into the department with the cost of housing and the traffic, but so far we are fine.

(continued on next page)

Marin County has a no growth reputation. The housing issue is hot. Much of the county is preserved, largely due to the West Marin agricultural protection efforts, good planning in the 1970s, and the general opposition to extensive growth. One challenge is the reflexive “no-growth” faction. We do a lot of public outreach to garner input from a well-educated and well-informed public.

I can’t fault the guardedness in the community facing change. But it can make projects difficult. I worked on one development project for San Rafael when I was a consultant, and there were more than 25 public meetings on that project alone. It was approved 10 years ago, but is only now getting built.

We are about to start our General Plan Update for 2040. Commuter Rail is coming to us; SMART rail services start in 2017: Santa Rosa to San Rafael in the first phase, with a second phase of service to follow. Some long-range planning challenges come with the new service. San Rafael is an old city, one of the 21 California missions in a trail north. Our downtown is a priority development area within ABAG’s Plan Bay Area. Downtown, with its historic grid, offers opportunities for residential and jobs, but they must be carefully planned within the historic framework.

Downtown San Rafael is a working downtown; it has not been pushed into exclusive high-end retail as have some others. It has a local draw and offers local services. It’s very important to keep that local focus as the new rail service catalyzes increased housing and commercial opportunities. So our General Plan update for 2040 is well timed.

Sustainability is another issue we face. Our climate action plan was completed in 2009. In 2011, we folded it into our General Plan as the sustainability element. We are teaming with other Marin communities to address sea level rise and are actively part of the BayWAVE

Vulnerability Assessment headed by Marin County. This will be a priority in our General Plan Update.

Now I sit on the Bay Area Planning Directors Association Board, a great opportunity to learn with others from across our region.

What advice do you have for planners starting out?

First, if there’s an opportunity for an internship, grab it. You can have all the education in the world, but real world planning experience is the best way to learn. The best planners I know started with internships.

Second — and this is specifically for planners coming out of school with tremendous digital and technical skills — remember to get out from behind your screens. Yes, Google Earth and other mapping and databases programs bring a terrific amount to us sitting at our desks, but seeing the real thing cannot be duplicated. Going out to the site in the real world is completely different from accessing the information digitally. We need to ground our decisions in the real world.

What are your top three cities?

San Francisco — I’m a biased native. It’s a concentrated space and very urban, but the location is beautiful. It is an urban treasure next to natural recreation opportunities.

Vancouver, BC, for reasons similar to San Francisco: a beautiful city that blends with natural surroundings.

Barcelona, Spain — a beautiful city and magnificent urban design. Its streets are beautiful and safe for pedestrians, but they also allow vehicular traffic in a good way. An old city, but modern enough!

All interviews are edited. Interviewer Siân Llewellyn, AICP, lives in San Francisco and is Director of Urban Development at Hatch. ■

New housing on public land in Santa Rosa? “Sonoma County Supervisors have embarked on a concerted push to expand housing supply, with a plan to sell 82 acres of county-owned land in the northeast Santa Rosa hills to a developer who wants to build as many as 800 housing units there. Sale of the Chanate Road land, site of the former Sutter Medical Center, is expected to close within a few months, after which the project will need to pass through the city of Santa Rosa’s planning process. Other public sites that may eventually host housing include the county’s administrative complex in northern Santa Rosa and land on College Avenue owned by the Sonoma County Water Agency. The latter site may soon come before supervisors for ‘new and exciting opportunities’ for redevelopment, said Margaret Van Vliet, executive director of the county’s Community Development Commission.”

—J.D. Morris, *The Press democrat*, <http://bit.ly/2oqWBOF>

U.S. planning news

Excerpts (250 words maximum) linked to the original articles

Skyscrapers: Tech's towering status symbol

Wired, April 14, 2017

Henri Gendreau, <http://bit.ly/2oF3115> • “San Francisco used to host few actual tech companies. Plenty of techies lived there, but each morning they boarded luxury buses and commuted south to Silicon Valley’s sprawling, lush campuses.

“Now the city is growing up — literally.

“When Salesforce Tower is completed later this year, it will be the tallest in the US with a tech firm as its anchor tenant.

“For a century, downtown skyscrapers were primarily the domain of banks, insurance companies, and airlines. These old buildings were never conducive to fostering the tech companies’ special ‘culture.’

“While Salesforce is San Francisco born and bred, tech companies across Silicon Valley are establishing beachheads in the city. In 2012, Pinterest became one of the first major brand-name tech companies to ditch Palo Alto. In 2014, Google gobbled up 250,000 square feet of a 42-story tower in downtown SF. Two years later, LinkedIn moved into a new 26-story building. Uber expects to open its two-building campus in the city by 2018. For [many] tech firms, large corporate campuses in Silicon Valley towns aren’t enough.

“Part of what’s driving this inflow to the city is the drive — a brutal going back and forth despite fancy buses.

“Still, location, location, location is not enough. Tech firms must also vie for the best talent through workspace perks. A gleaming new office tower in the heart of a bustling city? No juicebar in the world can compete with that.”



Salesforce Tower looking east from Post and Gough Streets, March 1, 2017. Photo: Naphtali H. Knox, FAICP

Why America's richest cities keep getting richer

The Atlantic, April 12, 2017

Richard Florida, <http://theatlantic.com/2pEHD4P> • “Just as the economy confers disproportionate rewards to superstar talent, superstar cities tower above the rest. They generate the greatest levels of innovation, control and attract the largest shares of global capital and investment, have huge concentrations of leading-edge finance, media, entertainment, and tech industries, and are home to a disproportionate share of the world’s talent. They are ... where the most ambitious and most talented people ... feel they need to be.

“Superstar cities’ ... economies spur demand for more and better restaurants, theaters, nightclubs, galleries, and other amenities. ... Their ... tax revenues [go to] new and better schools, more transit, better libraries, [and] better parks, which ... perpetuates their advantages.

“I tracked housing prices in more than 11,000 zip codes ... for which ... Zillow has data. There are just 160 zip codes where the median home price was \$1 million or more; 80 percent of them were located in the New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco metro areas. All but four of the 28 zip codes where median home values were more than \$2 million were located in or around these three cities: 11 in the San Francisco Bay Area, seven in LA, and six in New York. Meanwhile, 56 percent of the zip codes for which data are available have median home values of less than \$200,000, and roughly 15 percent have median home values of less than \$100,000.”

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Planning news from abroad

Excerpts (250 words maximum) linked to the original articles

Google quits Sydney's 'Silicon harbour' redevelopment

ArchitectureAU, April 18, 2017

Patrick Hunn, <http://bit.ly/2oGoJLQ> • “In 2015, the New South Wales (NSW) state government announced its intention to transform Sydney's Bays precinct into an innovation and technology hub that has been dubbed Australia's ‘Silicon harbour’ with its plans based on Silicon Valley and tech hubs like London's ‘Silicon Roundabout.’

“Those plans suffered a setback after technology company Google walked away from negotiations to move its Australian headquarters from Pyrmont to the currently disused White Bay Power Station in Rozelle.

“The *Sydney Morning Herald* reports that ‘the failure to provide public transport upgrades to the Bays Precinct in Rozelle was cited as a reason for Google's decision to withdraw from negotiations.’

“In 2015, then-Urban Growth NSW chief executive David Pitchford acknowledged, ‘There is nowhere near the transport infrastructure that needs to be there. We've got to address that really important question of mass transit; without that, it will be a disaster.’

“NSW Opposition leader Luke Foley told the ABC, ‘You won't get companies like Google and their talented mobile workforce to relocate to a precinct unless that precinct has public transport, accessibility, and open space.’

“Since Google announced its decision to abandon negotiations, the City of Sydney's lord mayor Clover Moore has called for the Glebe Island Bridge, an unused swing bridge over Rozelle Bay, to be reopened and used as the basis for light rail. The heritage-listed bridge, constructed in 1903 to a design by civil engineer Percy Allen, closed in 1995.”



Project site, White Bay Power Station. Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney Opera House are at top right of map. Base image: Google.

(Continued on [page 22](#))

But last year, the planning commission denied both the FEIR and the Specific Plan and recommended that the project instead be certified as part of a General Plan Update recommendation that includes Light Industrial, Research and Development, Office, Retail, Commercial Recreation, and Open Space. The commission's recommendation excludes housing — a key component of sustainable communities. The 2016 recommendation also allows a one-to-two million square-foot net increase in building area and a utility-scale renewable energy generation area to make *The Baylands* net energy positive.

At this point the final outcome of the development program is unknown. What is known is that the type and intensity of certain land uses may change given the intensity of public discussion. In any case, the city council will need to certify the Final EIR before taking any discretionary action on the project, and the final land use mix will be crucial to that action.

CEQA's role and limitations

Though CEQA and sustainability planning considerations overlap, CEQA thresholds of significance are not necessarily consistent with performance indicators of a project's sustainability goals. While a CEQA analysis addresses significant impacts on the environment, an EIR does not typically offer a sufficiently comprehensive analysis or framework to address sustainability principles, particularly when those principles are fundamentally attached to the project vision. According to *The Baylands'* Final EIR, Chapter 7, Sustainability:

"CEQA has notable shortcomings as a tool to further a community's sustainability. The intent of CEQA is to reduce or mitigate the adverse impacts of a project with the extent of mitigation proportional to the extent of the Project Site development's impacts, while many sustainability goals reflect community aspirations and are proactive in nature, exceeding CEQA's ability to mitigate adverse impacts."

In fact, the EIR seems to defer to the planning framework the opportunity to advance sustainability in the project. The same Chapter 7 also states:



Brisbane Baylands Specific Plan, Universal Paragon Corporation.
4.2A Land Use – Base Variant. WRT, February 2011.

"In a traditional view of 'sustainability' as consisting of environmental quality, economic vitality, and social equity, CEQA addresses only environmental quality. Thus, many sustainability issues become part of a project's planning process, rather than its environmental review."

That said, a project's EIR and its recommendations have a powerful effect on decision-makers because meeting

(continued on next page)

CEQA requirements comes across as imperative. *The Baylands'* Final EIR supports an environmentally superior alternative that mitigates significant unavoidable impacts in accordance with thresholds established by CEQA; however, the FEIR creates distortions in land use in respect to sustainability planning, in particular to how the project meets its energy goals.

The environmentally superior alternative — the Renewable Energy Alternative in the EIR analysis — was formulated around the need for renewable energy generation, in part to meet the “Carbon Neutral Buildings” energy goal of One Planet Living, and in part to satisfy renewable energy generation needs outside *The Baylands* (including from City facilities). The result? The environmentally superior alternative includes 170 acres — about 23 percent of *The Baylands'* total land area — for community-scale solar as a renewable energy generation facility.

Sustainability is undermined

The recommendation to dedicate such a large area exclusively for renewable energy generation has counterintuitive effects on sustainability. Given a preoccupation to reduce the project's impacts to “less than significant,” the land use mix in this alternative complies with CEQA requirements (170 acres is obviously a huge carbon sink), but at the cost of recommending a land use mix that does not foster true community sustainability. The result — a solar farm surrounded by commercial uses — is more of an eco-industrial park, and less a neighborhood or group of districts with a 24/7 live-work-play environment that can shape the character of the Specific Plan area.

Can *The Baylands* develop a land use mix that truly supports community sustainability in alignment with One Planet Living and be CEQA-compliant at the same time? The answer is that such alignment may not be necessary. CEQA allows a lead agency to issue a “Statement of Overriding Considerations” through which the city can approve a project that advances *The Baylands'* overall goals, especially those involving sustainability, which are so embedded in the project's vision.

A creative approach to land use planning and building-scale sustainability could offer a win-win solution. A study I completed for my consulting firm, Pristis Sustainability Advisors, in March 2017, found that *The Baylands* can meet its Carbon Neutral Building goal in the Developer

Sponsored Plan (DSP) by allocating only 66 acres to renewable energy generation for the EIR's basic DSP alternative, which corresponds to the proposed Specific Plan. The peer-reviewed study concluded that residential land use is “carbon neutral” for planning purposes, challenging the perception that residential use would create a need for this project to generate large amounts of renewable energy.

The Baylands' EIR recommendation is not helping the project

Even though current legislation requires CEQA analysis to be conducted consistent with sustainability and regional climate change laws (including SB 375, Sustainable Communities Strategy, and AB 32, Global Warming Solutions Act), the existing methodologies for analyzing project impacts under CEQA often contradict sustainability principles. Despite current legislative efforts to address this issue,¹ a project like *The Baylands* is handicapped in its ability to use its EIR to effectively inform its land use planning process.

A further complication is that *The Baylands* is a Priority Development Area (PDA) identified in Plan Bay Area, the regional transportation plan that aims to integrate land use and transportation on specific sites that have the capacity to mitigate climate change and foster sustainable development. Only 57 percent of the permits needed to meet the Bay Area's Regional Housing Need Allocation were approved as of 2014, thus ensuring housing is a key component in transit-rich PDAs.

The Bay Area is experiencing one of the most critical housing crises in recent memory. It is hard to understand how the environmentally superior alternative in *The Baylands'* EIR does not include even a portion of the 4,400 residential units proposed by the developer.

One reason is the concern regarding existing land contamination (the site is a brownfield). However, the Specific Plan proposes housing on only about one-quarter of the developable area — land that can be safely remediated. Once the remediation is accomplished and approved, a number of state agencies will verify compliance with safety standards, providing clearance for housing development.

Another reason for excluding housing was the city's 1994 General Plan land use designation for the site, which shows no housing. But the General Plan is being updated, and it is unclear why the proposed General Plan

¹ For example, SB 743 enacted in 2013 eliminates auto delay (LOS) and other similar measures of traffic congestion as a basis for determining significant CEQA impacts. While the final implementing regulations of SB 743 have not been issued, the intent of this legislation is to more appropriately balance the needs of congestion management with statewide goals related to infill development, promote public health through active transportation, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

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

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Is CEQA hurting the chance for sustainability in The Baylands project? *(continued from previous page)*

Amendment — contained in and part of the Specific Plan, and which includes housing on the site — was not highlighted in the final EIR as critical to accomplishing project sustainability objectives.

Housing is, after all, crucial to meeting the overall goals of One Planet Living and sustainable development in the Bay Area and in general.

[Ed. note. A special city council hearing will be held May 4 for land use, planning, aesthetics, housing and population, and related policy issues.]



Charla Gomez, AICP, LEED ND, EcoDistricts AP, holds an MS in urban planning/sustainable development, an M.Arch in energy efficiency/sustainable design from the University of Arizona, and a bachelor's in architecture and urban design from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá, Colombia. She most recently was project manager at Brightworks Sustainability, San Francisco. Among previous positions, Gomez was a Planner III with the City and County of San Francisco and a planner and sustainability specialist with Ecology and Environment, New York, New York. Gomez founded and operates a consulting firm, Pristis Sustainability Advisors. Her specialty practice area is district-scale sustainability planning and project implementation. You can reach her at charla.gomez@pristisadvisors.com. ■



Dana Hoffman, AICP, left, one of two East Bay Regional Activity Co-coordinators (RACs), expresses her feelings about the Berkeley Historic Stairways hike she co-led on Thursday evening, March 30. Photo by **Sarah Allen, AICP**, the other co-leader/East Bay Regional Activity Co-coordinator (RAC).



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Event honoring the late Fran Violich



Francis Violich.

Photo: UC Berkeley
Press release, Sept. 2005

Almost 12 years have passed since the September 2005 death of Francis Violich, a professor emeritus in city and regional planning and in landscape architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. Now, DCRP grads and friends of Fran are being invited to the dedication of a plaque in his honor in Codornices Park, 1201 Euclid Ave, Berkeley, on Sunday, May 21st, at 3 pm.

“Violich joined the landscape architecture and city and regional planning faculties at UC Berkeley in 1941,” according to a UC Berkeley press release at the time of his death

(<http://bit.ly/2oon7p5>). “He served as chair of the department of landscape architecture and environmental planning from 1962–1964.”

“When Violich retired from UC Berkeley in 1976, Donald Foley, then chair of the city and regional planning department, recognized his contribution to promoting interest in Latin American planning and his influence on the character of urban planning and environmental design. Foley also noted Violich’s effectiveness in attracting and advising Latin American students to the College of Environmental Design.”

For information on the event, please contact Emily Benner at Ehbenner@gmail.com

“Why aren’t more small apartment projects built?” A new report calls attention to Small and Medium Multifamily Housing (SMMF), emphasizing the formidable size of this segment of the market. SMMF properties with two to 49 units account for more than 54 percent of all rental housing in the United States. SMMF accounted for more than a quarter of all units built in the 1970s and 1980s, but since 1990 it has represented only about 15 percent of new construction, according to the report. The regulatory environment is one of the major impediments to SMMF development. Securing the necessary city approvals and entitlements can be more time consuming and complex. Many cities also have new energy codes, parking fees, and higher standards related to exterior finishes — all of which can add time and cost to a project and affect rental rates. The smaller size of a property does not automatically dictate affordability.” —*Beth Mattson-teig, Urban Land*
<http://bit.ly/2op4mBX>

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Hurry: Monday, May 1, is the deadline to apply for a 2017 CPF Scholarship

Are you enrolled in an eligible professional planning degree program in California?

Based on an **application and selection process**, CPF Scholarships are awarded to students seeking to enter the planning profession. The scholarships are designed for continuing students entering their final year of an eligible undergraduate or graduate degree program. For a list of eligible degree programs, visit the CPF website at <http://bit.ly/2cnYypI>.

Scholarship criteria include academic performance, financial need, increasing diversity in the planning profession, and a commitment to serve the planning profession in California after graduation. Students are eligible to receive more than one scholarship. Separate applications for specific scholarships are not required; only a single application is needed. You can download the application form at <http://bit.ly/2nKSKwQ>.

Questions?

Contact Kelly Main, Ph.D. at cpfapplications@nullgmail.com or Hilary Nixon, Ph.D. at hilary.nixon@nullsjsu.edu. ■

National conference 'heads up': misprints happen

Going to NYC for NPC17?

Carefully check the event tickets that arrived in your U.S. Mail. They likely show a start time of one hour earlier than the time shown on the APA website and on your digital schedule (the APA app). APA assures us that the online schedule is correct, irrespective of the time marked on your ticket. ■



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Two downtown panels at BAPDA's Spring Meeting Friday

\$45 fee includes breakfast and lunch. AICP | CM 3.0

The Bay Area Planning Directors Association will learn about "Rediscovering Main Street: Strategies for a Thriving Downtown," on April 28th from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm at Nile Hall, Preservation Park, 668 13th Street, Oakland.

A downtown panel moderated by **Miriam Chion**, ABAG's Planning and Research Director, will discuss "What is unique about the 'Main Street' character." Panelists include **Aaron Akinin**, assistant city manager and community development director, Redwood City; **Scott Duivan**, senior planner, Petaluma; **Rosalynn Hughey**, assistant planning director, San Jose; and **Kwame Reed**, senior analyst, Brentwood.

Following a short break, an "economic positioning and strategy" panel moderated by **Cynthia Kroll**, ABAG's Chief Economist, will discuss "How do we enhance and maintain downtown vibrancy and competitiveness?" and "What do current market forces tell us about developing long-term solutions?" Panelists include **Christine Firstenberg**, senior vice president, JLL; **Mike Ghielmetti**, founder and president, Signature Development Group; **David Greensfelder**, managing principal, Greensfelder Commercial Real Estate; and **Jason Moody**, managing principal, Economic & Planning Systems.

All planners are invited. You can find detailed program information at <http://bit.ly/2ooLT8g>.

Paying by credit card? Use the secure online registration at <http://bit.ly/2ooV52i>.

Paying by check? Download the registration form at <http://bit.ly/2ooRs6G> and mail the completed form with a check payable to BAPDA.

Questions? Contact Wally Charles, wallyc@abag.ca.gov or (415) 820-7993. ■

"The retail apocalypse is suburban. ... The retail sectors in which recent job loss is concentrated belong largely to American suburbs. ... And if there's a lesson [that suburbs can learn] from [the deaths of downtowns in] the cities [50 years ago], it's that the broader systems changing how people shop cannot be overturned with tax breaks for new developments. The sooner they begin to think of alternate ways to create community and jobs — and to reuse and rebuild the vacated space of the mall — the better off they'll be." —*Henry Grabar, Slate*, <http://slate.me/2ooVf94>



Calling card advertisements support the *Northern News*. For more information on placing a calling card announcement and to receive format specifications, contact advertising@norcalapa.org

Answer to Where in the world (Page 5)

Prague. Moldau River; west towers of Charles Bridge (left); and St. Nicholas Church towers (right).

Photo: Chandler Lee

Speed Networking 2017 with ULI and AIA

If you feel you never have enough time at industry events or in your professional life to expand your network in the planning, design, development, and investment communities, this event is a great way to meet future business associates and friends from across the real estate spectrum.

Join ULI San Francisco for its fourth annual Speed Networking event, your chance to meet a number of ULI members one-on-one through a series of short organized introductions. This year, ULI is inviting local chapters from the **American Institute of Architects** and the **American Planning Association** to join the group.

The event will take place at **The Hall** on Market Street in San Francisco and space will be limited. Hosted appetizers and drinks will be available during the networking portion. A reception will follow.

When: May 16, 2017, 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm.

Where: The Hall, 1028 Market Street (Between 6th and 7th), San Francisco.

Register at <http://bit.ly/2omIU6>.

Fees (Member/Non Member): Private Sector \$40/\$55; Public and nonprofit \$35/\$50; YLG and YPG \$30/\$45; Students \$25/\$40.

All APA members: use the code **SPEED17** to get 10 percent off the non-member prices above. ■

The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake as never before seen. Thousands of photographs of the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake, provided by an anonymous private collector and pegged to where they likely were taken, are now available to view via an interactive map of San Francisco. —Via John Metcalfe at CityLab, <http://opensfhistory.org/maps/1906>



Alamo Square, April 1906. View down Hayes Street.

Source: OpenSFHistory/wnp27.1410.jpg

San Francisco is redesigning City Hall Plaza into a Space for All

Jen Kinney, *Next City*

San Francisco's Civic Center neighborhood serves as the city's front porch, both its seat of government and a microcosm for the booms and busts of a city in the throes of an identity crisis. Here is City Hall, the opera house, the main public library, Twitter's headquarters, and a weekly farmer's market on United Nations Plaza.

Here too, in the stark expanses between imposing buildings, are scores of unhoused people, sleeping on the ground — a former mayor thought removing benches would shoo the homeless away. Here is a thriving drug trade, with 12,000 hypodermic needles removed from the site just last year.

Now a slate of new initiatives may transform UN and Civic Center Plazas, and the spaces between them, this time with inclusivity as a specific goal. The city met with bidders for a redesign project in January, after Mayor Ed Lee's office published a proposal that acknowledges past administrations' failure to make the space safer and more enjoyable for all.

"Design alone cannot be expected to solve social problems, but thoughtful design can be a part of the solution," reads the proposal. Regarding the removal of benches (<http://nyti.ms/2pbrgxi>) from both plazas in the 1990s and early 2000s, the document acknowledges, "The result of this stripped environment is spaces that are unwelcoming to everyone, and have achieved minimal reduction in illicit or undesirable behaviors."

While larger transformations are still a few years away (<http://bit.ly/2pGVEzg>), pop-up exhibitions by the Exploratorium aim to enliven the space today, and partnerships with nonprofits are demonstrating how diverse populations might share the space in peace. In UN Plaza, the Exploratorium has installed four large interactive pieces called the Sound Commons (<http://bit.ly/2pH5Gjx>). One challenges visitors to walk across a bed of gravel as quietly as possible. Giant chimes and xylophones let anyone make music, or at least noise.



San Francisco City Hall and Plaza. Image: Google.

But what's really unique about the installations are the monitors minding them. Staff from the nonprofit Hunters Point Family have been hired by the city to talk to visitors, guide them through the installations, and keep the area safe and clean. Nearly all of them were formerly incarcerated, serving life sentences, and are now living in a halfway house.

"They have been really an ideal population to staff these areas because of their emotional intelligence that people usually have to develop if you're on the prison yard for twenty plus years and you're not sure that you're getting out," says Lena Miller, co-executive director of Hunters Point Family. "You really need to know how to deal with all kinds of people."

The nonprofit got the contract because of their successful work with Public Works' Pit Stop program (<http://bit.ly/2o1OWXS>), which provides public toilets, sharps containers, and dog waste stations around San Francisco. Hunters Point Family staff serve as attendants for those toilets, both keeping the peace and collecting data.

A tremendous amount of data, says Miller: the demographics of those using the facilities, how long they're in there, how many flushes. Monitors at UN Plaza are also asked to track many data points for the city: which exhibits are being used and which aren't, the genders

(continued on next page)

and ages of visitors, reports of graffiti or feces, how many hypodermic needles are collected a day.

Right now they're keeping notes on a paper spread-sheet, but the nonprofit is collaborating with Public Works to make an app. Like a McDonald's register, says Miller, but instead of pressing buttons for Big Macs and French fries, they'll tap feces and needles.

That data helps with both quality control and accountability. It can help point out what's working and what isn't, and justify spending public money on the project. City staff walk through the space every day on their way to City Hall, says Miller, and they want to know the project is having an impact. Last month, library officials raised concerns about contributing \$100,000 to the Civic Center Commons project (<http://bit.ly/2pH6l4v>). Miller says the data should speak for itself.

The Hunters Point Family monitors are clustered around the Exploratorium exhibits. In the rest of the space, team members from the Downtown Streets Team are keeping the space clean and reaching out to the unhoused. Another nonprofit, Downtown Streets Team engages homeless people to volunteer their time on janitorial and hospitality projects in exchange for case management and a stipend toward basic needs like groceries and rent.

The 11-year-old nonprofit only began operating in San Francisco last year, and the Civic Center was its first site. They'd considered the Mission, the Castro, and the Tenderloin, neighborhoods more notoriously associated with homelessness in the public imagination, "but it really felt like being in Civic Center/UN Plaza was a good idea for us because there was an extreme need from an unhoused population there, but there was also a need to change the face of homelessness in the community," says Brandon Davis, project director for the San Francisco team. "Because tech exists there, government exists there, because small business

exists there, and then a very large unsheltered population lives there as well."

Most of the team members are themselves from the Civic Center/UN Plaza community. In addition to picking up debris, they recruit other homeless people to join the team. Davis says the city has done a good job of treating them as stakeholders, including them in conversations around the civic center redesign.

"It's been truly uplifting for the city to come to our team members and our participants and show them potential plans for the project area and ask them what they think and what their input is on it," he says. "That's been very cool for our folks, who often feel they're on the outskirts of society."

Both Miller and Davis stress that these staff are uniquely capable of engaging with all users of the space with compassion and understanding. The city has also fixed up streetlights around the plaza and increased foot patrols by the San Francisco Police Department, but it's no small contribution the homeless and formerly incarcerated staff make, "which is to keep the peace without a gun, or a badge, or authority," says Miller. Davis suspects other homeless folks in the plaza are wary of wronging streets

team staff that they know are in the same position as them.

"One message that has been clear from all project partners is, we're all a community here, and regardless of tech worker or homeless or whatever, we will just not allow unsafe things to happen in the project area," he says.

More installations and exhibits are planned for the plazas while the more permanent designs take shape.

A version of this article appeared in *Next City*, April 7, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2pbtf4L>. Republished with permission. Jen Kinney is a freelance writer and documentary photographer. Her work has also appeared in *Satellite Magazine*, *High Country News* online, and the *Anchorage Press*. See her work at jakinney.com. ■



SF residential rents drop slightly from last year

"More new rental units came on market than at any time since WWII"

In their April 2017 report on San Francisco Real Estate (<http://bit.ly/2nSTj7M>), Paragon Real Estate Group writes:

"As new condos and new rental apartments came on the market in greater numbers in the past year, it cooled those two market segments, much more so than the house segment, of which hardly any are built new in the city anymore. (The more affordable house market in the city has remained remarkably hot.) The rental market was affected most as more new rental units came on market than at any time since WWII: Though SF still has the highest rents in the country, they have dropped from their peak in 2015."



"Ikea introduces solar powered prefab house. The inexpensive 'Better Shelter' is quite utilitarian in design. But the fact remains that Ikea has developed a mass-produced, modular structure at scale that can be assembled on-site without the need for a general contractor or specialized tools. It would seem reasonable to expect that the team behind these shelters could apply these same principals and develop a flat-pack product that offers affordable housing applications on US soil." —*Modern Cities*, <http://bit.ly/2nPhfv>

(Continued on next page)

A graphic urban planning novel for Chicago teens

CityLab, April 5, 2017

Mimi Kirk, <http://bit.ly/2pbiv5y> • “Two years ago, Gabrielle Lyon, vice president of education and experience at the Chicago Architecture Foundation, started using *Wacker’s Manual*, a 1911 textbook fashioned from Daniel Burnham’s 1909 plan of Chicago, with local high school students. ‘And it was immediately clear to me that [urban] teens are already urban planners. They know what works and what doesn’t,’ [she said. The] students were quick to assess neighborhood features such as walkability, or critique unequal distribution of public transport.

“*Wacker’s Manual* was taught in Chicago’s eighth-grade civics classes until the late 1930s. Lyon decided to bring structure to young urbanites’ planning instincts through a graphic novel. Dubbed *No Small Plans*, the beautifully drawn, three-part volume chronicles young people’s adventures in the Chicago of 1928, 2017, and 2211. Like *Wacker’s Manual*, it will also be taught in the city’s public schools.

“In the first section, 1928, three friends of different races and classes encounter discrimination downtown. The second section, 2017, addresses gentrification, affordable housing, and zoning as a girl is evicted from her home. Five teenagers work on Chicago’s City Planning Council in the third section, 2211.

“*Wacker’s Manual* and *No Small Plans* are both driven by questions of what makes a city or neighborhood livable, and they are similarly interested in fostering a sense of guardianship of Chicago among young readers. ‘Our novel is about who decides to build, and how decisions get made,’ says Lyon.”

A revival of pre-recession migrations

Brookings, March 30, 2017

William H. Frey, <http://brook.gs/2pc16K4> • “Recently released census population estimates for U.S. counties and metropolitan areas emphasize the re-emergence of earlier migration trends. From Snow Belt to Sun Belt, from large metros to small, from urban cores to suburbs — migration flows are rising, perhaps for the foreseeable future. Long distance migration of Millennials also is picking up.

“In the early 2000s, these migration flows were propped up by Sun Belt economic growth and affordable housing in suburbs and smaller communities. The late decade recession, financial crisis, and mortgage meltdown braked these flows, leading to population growth slowdowns in their destination areas.

“These complementary flows can have important impacts, both negative and positive, on different parts of the country. For example, the new trends increased migration declines for large Snow Belt metropolitan areas. Led by New York (199,000 out-migrants) and Chicago (89,000), 22 of these 28 areas showed larger out-migration than in 2012–2013. Of the 64 large metropolitan areas in the Sun Belt, only 20 registered net out migration, dominated by Los Angeles (87,000), <http://brook.gs/2pb172b>.

“Another nationwide trend is rising long-distance migration rates for those age 25–34. While Millennials are notorious for their low mobility, Current Population Survey (CPS) migration data for 2015–2016 show a small uptick in inter-county movement for this group. Though their shorter distance within-county migration still stands at historically low levels, this rise in longer distance movement among Millennials could power even bigger migration flows in the future.”

(Continued on next page)

POPS: “A ‘members only’ public space in Manhattan. Privately owned public spaces, or POPS, are areas that developers have agreed to provide the public in exchange for leniency on certain zoning requirements. A quirk of the New York landscape since the 1960s, they were pioneered before spreading to other cities. And they are plentiful in Manhattan, where they have been a popular mechanism for developers to build taller, more valuable buildings. [But] landlords often do not maintain the public spaces as initially designed. An audit by the comptroller’s office [shows that] 41 of 58 locations inspected in the past four years [— Trump Tower and Trump International Hotel included —] were noncompliant. Only 10 were issued violations. The City Planning Department said it would continue to work to ‘ensure that these spaces provide their required and valuable amenities.’ The report recommended the City Planning Department better inform the public about the plazas through an advertising campaign and better signs around the plazas.”

—Eli Rosenberg, *The New York Times*, <http://nyti.ms/2or0Mar>

Another blow for Banning Ranch

Los Angeles Times, March 30, 2017

Maura Dolan, <http://lat.ms/2nPjM20> • “Newport Beach officials failed to adequately review a large proposed development on the coastal Banning Ranch oil field before approving it, the California Supreme Court ruled.

“The unanimous decision, (<http://bit.ly/2nPFVgB>, 32 pp.), was another blow for the developers whose project was rejected last year by the California Coastal Commission. (See *Northern News*, Oct. 2016, page 23, <http://bit.ly/2p7WTqS>.)

“The 401-acre Banning Ranch is one of the largest parcels of undeveloped coastal property in Southern California. Developers want to build hundreds of houses, a hotel, and shops on the property, which is now pockmarked by drilling equipment and hundreds of abandoned wells from decades of oil extraction.

“The ruling stemmed from a lawsuit by the Banning Ranch Conservancy, a group that wants to buy the property and keep it as open space. An appellate court in Orange County sided with Newport Beach, and the conservancy appealed the decision to the state Supreme Court. Those Justices decided that Newport Beach ‘suppressed’ information about environmentally sensitive habitat on the property.

“Deborah Sivas, a Stanford University professor of environmental law, said the decision affirmed

standing legal doctrine. She added that the Banning Ranch decision signaled that the Supreme Court ‘is going to be pretty sympathetic in interpreting’ requirements under the California Environmental Quality Act, the state’s key environmental law.”



Base map: Google maps

How do we construct stronger housing messages?

Sightline Institute, April 5, 2017. *Hat tip to H. Pike Oliver, Seattle.*

Anna Fahey, <http://bit.ly/2oRgrDf> • “FrameWorks Institute (Washington, DC), a go-to shop for evidence-based messaging recommendations, conducted research for nonprofit affordable housing developer Enterprise Community Partners and found six common ways housing messages can backfire.” (*You Don’t Have to Live Here: Why housing messages are backfiring and 10 things we can do about it*. Frameworks Institute, October 2016, 20 pp., <http://bit.ly/2oRmN5H>.)

In discussing why there’s a shortage and how community rules can encourage more affordable homes, Fahey writes: “FrameWorks found that a short, clear explanation of the cause and effect of housing insecurity increases support for policies and programs aimed at housing affordability.” She

then cited the following as an example of a “constructive reframe” of a housing message. [Bracketed words added by *Northern News*]:

“We make community rules together, and those rules shape our neighborhoods and what [kinds of] homes are available. When our policies make affordable homes scarce, competition makes what is available more expensive. But [many] people [who already live or want to live here] aren’t [likely to be] getting higher wages. That means they spend bigger portions of their earnings on housing, leaving less for things like childcare, food, and healthcare. Our community can make sure the rules we set encourage a variety of housing choices in all shapes and sizes and price points so that people [who want to stay or come here] can afford to live here.” ■

Addressing congestion impacts of deliveries

Mobility Lab, April 13, 2017

Angela Urban, <http://bit.ly/2pEQPGp>

- “The U.S. Freight Transportation Forecast (2016, <http://bit.ly/2pEGRoq>) predicts a truck freight increase by roughly 27 percent between 2016 and 2027. Trucks waste time and fuel delivering during rush hour, all while increasing existing congestion, especially through double parking. They occupy curb space, bicycle lanes, and segments of traffic lanes, causing congestion and dangerous circumstances for people walking and biking.

“Here’s what’s happening in delivery management:

“Cargo bikes are gaining traction as a way to provide deliveries in a less disruptive manner. One model can be found in Freewheel Cargo (<http://freewheelcargo.com>), a Seattle-based delivery company that uses cargo bikes.

“In Bologna, Italy, a Van Sharing Consortium manages deliveries for companies through a van-sharing system. [And the city’s] Urban Freight Delivery Plan piloted an electronic parking-slot booking service to optimize goods delivery.

“In London, Shutl (<https://shutl.com/uk>) links companies with the optimal delivery option (bicycle, motorcycle, car, van) to provide the fastest, most effective delivery.

“In central Leuven, Belgium, population 100,000, UPS is testing deliveries by bikes (<http://bit.ly/2pEGCtQ>), and in Hamburg’s city center it is experimenting with trike and electric vehicle deliveries from designated containers.

“In the District of Columbia, DDOT launched an effort in 2015 to encourage deliveries overnight (<http://wapo.st/2pECIq3>), offering financial incentives for companies that do. And Postmates and Starship are test-running delivery robots (<http://n.pr/2pEMZNL>) that provide quick hyper-local deliveries via sidewalks. The issues that may arise with human interactions are yet to be answered.”

Rising waters threaten Chinese cities

The New York Times, April 7, 2017

Michael Kimmelman, <http://nyti.ms/2pbIEkC>

- “Flooding has been a plague for centuries in southern China’s Pearl River Delta. A generation ago, this was mostly farmland. Three vital rivers leading to the South China Sea made the low-lying delta a fertile plain, famous for rice. Guangzhou, formerly Canton, had a million people. But China built a gargantuan collection of cities, and today the region’s population exceeds 42 million.

“Here, as elsewhere, breakneck development comes up against the growing threat of climate change. Economically, Guangzhou has more to lose from climate change than any other world city, according to a 2013 World Bank report, <http://bit.ly/2pbJX38>, that measured risk as a percentage of GDP. Nearby Shenzhen ranked 10th on that list.

“And climate change not only poses a menace to those who live and work here, it is also a threat to a world that has grown dependent on everything produced in the area’s factories.

“The rising South China Sea and the overstressed Pearl River network lie just a meter or so below much of this new multitrillion-dollar development — and they are poised to drown decades of progress, scrambling global supply chains and raising prices on smartphones, T-shirts, biopharmaceuticals, and the springs inside ballpoint pens.

“Flooding is not an insurmountable hurdle. The Chinese can build smarter and less car-dependent cities, with restored waterways and waterfronts, flood-proof buildings, wide-reaching air-pollution controls, earlier warning systems, levees that double as parks, and retention ponds that provide recreation.”

(Continued on next page)

Palo Alto compromises on ADU criteria. “After much debate, the city council approved a modified version of the [city’s original] ordinance, restoring some restrictions scrapped last month and eliminating others. The winning motion restricts accessory-dwelling units to lots greater than 5,000 square feet — a March 7 revision had eliminated any lot-size requirement — and restores language prohibiting homeowners from orienting the doors of the ADU’s in the same alignment as those of the main house. The council declined to reverse its March decision to eliminate all parking requirements for accessory-dwelling units and rejected a council member’s proposal to require that the smaller units resemble the main house in design.” —Gennady Sheyner, *Palo Alto Online*, <http://bit.ly/2opjuPD>

Indonesia to study moving capital from Jakarta

The Sydney Morning Herald, April 13, 2017

Jewel Topsfield and Karuni Rompies,

<http://bit.ly/2nWGkSB> • “In 1957, President Sukarno, Indonesia’s founding father, first floated the idea of moving the capital to Palangkaraya on the island of Borneo (population 250,000 in 2014).

“Now President Joko Widodo has asked the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) to study the feasibility of relocating the capital city. ‘It is not automatically Palangkaraya, but we will look at several alternatives and set criteria,’ said Bappenas chief Bambang Brodjonegoro. ‘We want economic growth to spread. If we move, it will be outside Java. It is not possible that the center of government will be on Java island.’

“Jakarta is 40 per cent below sea level and sinking at between three and 20 centimeters a year due to groundwater extraction.

“Greater Jakarta has a population of 30 million. Limited public transport and millions of commuters from satellite cities have led to teeth-grinding gridlock (<https://youtu.be/R8v9WApY5Xs>). The concrete jungle and rubbish-clogged waterways mean Jakarta floods every time there is torrential rain. The great flood of 2007 killed 80 people, displaced 500,000, and led to an outbreak of dengue fever.

“‘Palangkaraya is one of the few cities in Indonesia established for a specific purpose, much the same way that Canberra and Ottawa were chosen,’ Jakarta Globe columnist Johannes Nugroho wrote in 2015. ‘Most of our officials and public servants in Jakarta reside in Java. Would they be expected to live permanently in Central Kalimantan?’”

Rotterdam criticized over affordable housing teardown plan

Next City, April 5, 2017

Ashley Renders, <http://bit.ly/2p7RmQX> • “Rotterdam is still the poorest major city in the Netherlands, and while it has seen a surge in popularity, it’s still trying to lure investors and create jobs.

“That’s part of the reason the city is planning to demolish 20,000 dwellings currently affordable to poor residents and replace them with 36,000 houses aimed at those with middle and high incomes.

“City officials say they hope this will help to create a stronger economy with a healthier mix of incomes, but others see it as a thinly veiled attempt to push poor people out.

“While destroying 20,000 affordable homes may seem startling to many across the world, Emile Klep, director of

urban planning with the city of Rotterdam, says he is concerned about middle-income families.

“The point isn’t to densify the city, it’s to make it more attractive. Michiel Koorenhof, communications manager with the city of Rotterdam, says it is simply replacing ‘obsolete housing blocks with ... new and larger dwellings of higher quality.’ People in social housing can stay in the neighborhoods once they ‘get a job, earn a better income, and start a family,’ says Koorenhof. It also contributes to a more diverse neighborhood, he says.

“Klep says the city’s housing strategy is consistent with its commitment to inclusivity, but acknowledges the disconnect between the city’s working-class roots and its new image as a destination for high-income people.” ■

“Fixing a Fractured Paris. The real war on cars will be waged in the banlieues, the sprawling and surprisingly diverse suburbs of Greater Paris. Plans to transform the Boulevard Périphérique and expand mass transit deep into these politically fragmented areas require sign-off from more political bodies and demand a coordinated approach to the entire region’s mobility needs. If they work, they could help correct a planning mistake that has led to social segregation and a sense of disconnect between different communities in the city that is unparalleled elsewhere in Europe. If they fail? Expect worse traffic, more angry suburban drivers, and continued political fragmentation.”

—Feargus O’Sullivan, *CityLab*, <http://bit.ly/2nWAcda>

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