

Today's News - Thursday, April 12, 2012

- Transportation consultant Cox claims California has declared a "war on suburbia": "Planners want to herd millions into densely packed urban corridors" that would "make traffic even worse."
- Stephens begs to differ with a (great) point-by-point rebuttal of Cox's "falsehoods and half-truths."
- Yglesias bluntly and succinctly explains why it makes sense to "build stuff near train stations."
- Vanderbilt x 2 tackles Americans' seeming aversion to walking; even in "pedestrian-friendly" cities "one was always in danger of being relegated to a footnote."
- RMI's Gallagher Adams has high hopes for the GSA Deep Retrofit Challenge that raises the bar on design excellence and energy efficiency (lots of useful links).
- Finalists in the National Mall Design Competition offer proposals filled with "elegant, exciting, innovative ideas" - the jury will have a tough time choosing (public input welcome!).
- Birnbaum bemoans "fuzzy math, bad information and false choices" that is causing "a particularly high mortality rate" for Modernist architecture and landscape architecture icons.
- After years of being "embroiled in controversy" (and three designs), the Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia in Sydney is ready for its close-up: a pity the SANAA plan didn't fly, but "best not to dwell on what might have been...as a building for viewing contemporary art, this project is a resounding success" (great pix).
- Moore marvels at Mies's revived Villa Tugendhat: "To say that this has two glass walls, an open plan and clean, modernist style is like saying that Chartres cathedral has pointed arches and big windows."
- Q&A with Graves re: tea kettles and skylines: "There isn't much for me to look at in New York skyline, or any other skyline" (since "about 1940").
- Eliasson goes back to the drawing board after London Olympics reject his "Take a Deep Breath" art project because it "no longer met its criteria."
- NYC's LowLine surpasses its fundraising target, with high hopes it can become reality "within the next five years if we can."
- We couldn't resist: Carlson considers life in "bunker-like 'condo' complexes for wealthy survivalists" carved out of decommissioned missile silos: "It's subterranean living at its finest, in the ultimate gated community," but is the project "misguided - even dangerous?"

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California Declares War on Suburbia: Planners want to herd millions into densely packed urban corridors. It won't save the planet but will make traffic even worse...The love affair urban planners have for a future ruled by mass transit will be obscenely expensive and would not reduce traffic congestion. By Wendell Cox - Wall Street Journal

Wendell Cox Launches Attack On Regional Planning, Common Sense: ...takes aim at Senate Bill 375, California's landmark law promoting compact development patterns for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions...spreading falsehoods and half-truths about it will not help. By Josh Stephens - California Planning & Development Report

Build Stuff Near Train Stations: Will replacing garages with transit-oriented development reduce ridership on the train? It seems unlikely...rail transportation is expensive to build. But it often can drastically increase the value of station-proximate land. It's important to use that land for its most valuable purpose. That will likely include parking...but reserving the land exclusively for parking is the real sell-out to private interests. By Matthew Yglesias - Slate

The Crisis in American Walking: How we got off the pedestrian path: Even in one of America's most "pedestrian-friendly" cities...one was always in danger of being relegated to a footnote. Which is what walking in America has become: An act dwelling in the margins... + Sidewalk Science: The peculiar habits of the pedestrian, explained. By Tom Vanderbilt [images, links] - Slate

U.S. Government Driving Deep Energy Efficiency in Federal Buildings, Raising the Bar on Design Excellence: ...sowing the seeds of a building energy efficiency revolution for the 21st century...the GSA Deep Retrofit Challenge...advocating imagination and technical creativity. By Elaine Gallagher Adams, AIA [links] - Rocky Mountain Institute

National Mall Design Competition Will Be Fierce: ...proposals offer elegant, exciting, innovative ideas for solving sticky ecological, security, and public space design challenges. -- Andropogon + Bohlin Cywinski Jackson; Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects + Paul Murdoch Architects; OLIN + Weiss/Manfredi; Rogers Marvel Architects + PWP Landscape Architecture; Diller, Scofidio + Renfro/Hood Design; Gustafson Guthrie Nichol + David Brody Bond; Workshop: Ken Smith Landscape Architect + Pei Cobb Freed & Partners; Snohetta + AECOM; Balmori Associates + Work Architecture Company (WORKac); Michael Maltzan Architecture + Tom Leader Studio- The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Killing Modernism with Fuzzy Math, Bad Information and False Choices: Iconic works of architecture and landscape architecture from the 1960s and 1970s have a particularly high mortality rate...Paul Rudolph-designed Orange County Government Center in Goshen, New York...In Minneapolis, the M. Paul Friedberg-designed Peavey Plaza is also slated for demolition because the city says the site is in poor condition and restoration would cost too much money. By Charles A. Birnbaum [images, links] - Huffington Post

The reimagined Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia: Like many Sydney projects, the building has been embroiled in controversy right from the beginning. Sam Marshall's design is the third for the museum...But best not to dwell on what might have been...as a building for viewing contemporary art, this project is a resounding success. -- Architect Marshall; SANAA; Sauerbruch Hutton [slide show] - ArchitectureAU (Australia)

Villa Tugendhat, Brno, Czech Republic: ...a paragon of light and spacious living and the inspiration for Simon Mawer's 2009 novel The Glass Room, has been restored to its 1930s glory and is now open to all: To say that this has two glass walls, an open plan and clean, modernist style is like saying that Chartres cathedral has pointed arches and big windows...It is a bubble made of straight lines and right angles...a miraculous union of art and life. By Rowan Moore -- Mies van der Rohe [slide show] - Guardian (UK)

"Frank Gehry Made a Kettle That Didn't Work": Michael Graves on the Pitfalls of Product Design: ...talks about the differences between designing buildings and tea kettles, his Etruscan influences, and why the New York skyline doesn't do anything for him...Is there a point in history where you just lose interest? " About 1940." [slide show] - Artinfo

Olafur Eliasson art project rejected by Olympics bosses: Olympic Lottery Distributor refused the grant saying "Take a Deep Breath" no longer met its criteria. Eliasson is now working on a new idea, to be funded from other sources. - BBC

High hopes for LowLine as funding deadline is reached: Plans for the world's first underground park, in New York, move a step closer with the funding target easily surpassed: Dan Barasch and James Ramsey will then be able to get to work on the first stage...a scale model of the park..."The High Line took ten years. We're hoping we can move much more quickly, and even do this within the next five years if we can." [images, links] - Guardian (UK)

Get your subterranean doomsday condo — while supplies last! You can get a piece of this paradise for anywhere from \$1 million to \$2 million...It's subterranean living at its finest, in the ultimate gated community...Is Larry Hall's bunker building...misguided — even dangerous? By Scott Carlson - Grist Magazine

[Book Review: Advancing Windswept Design: Pointers from Art Nouveau, Zaha Hadid, and Charles Sowers: New books and installation art highlight breezy refinements in wind-inspired design. By Norman Weinstein - ArchNewsNow](#)

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