

Today's News - Wednesday, May 30, 2012

- A news day for urbanistas: Gisolfi makes the case that "architecture should be concerned primarily with place-making, not object-making."
- Goldhagen at her eloquent best re: the arrival of the megalopolis: "can a high-rise, high-density residential tower ever become more than an oversized packing crate for people?" (policymakers and architects better figure that out now, before it's too late).
- King on the "most troubling aspect" overshadowing San Francisco's Transbay plan: the project's "far-reaching" shadows - though "planners make a strong case that the overall benefits outweigh the impact."
- Hume takes on a new report showing people want to live in downtowns - the challenge is rediscovering how to build them: "No kidding...everything else we have built is sprawl."
- Florida takes on his critics and what they get wrong about creative cities, and the "squabbling" going on that "misses the point."
- Doig outlines "the dangers of NIMBYism," and "how tiny bands of refuseniks and wealthy obstructionists" (a.k.a. the 1%) "absorbed so much power" to shape urban landscapes - and how some cities are trying to rein them in.
- Badger looks at new data that explains the "economic power of walkable neighborhoods" that should sway "skeptics of walkability."
- Hinshaw adds to the argument in favor of urban walkability: "Something quite transformational is going on here. A high regard for the public realm is now the hallmark of healthy and successful cities."
- Davidson offers up a thoughtful (and amusing) defense of driving in NYC: perhaps it's time for "an auto-temperance movement."
- Kamin x 2: he cheers the Chicago Transit Authority's newest station as "a new jewel in the West Loop's crown" that "succeeds as urban design and architecture...elevating construction to art."
- He points out a few of the hurdles that must be overcome if Pelli's three-tower plan for a Wolf Point riverfront complex is to move forward.
- Safdie selected to design a 68-story condo tower in Colombo, Sri Lanka, that "will set a benchmark for future development" and "maintain the delicacy of the skyline" (a bit of leaning included).
- Hopes are high that a "colorful, smooth, shiny and sparkling" new theater will bring Soweto, South Africa, its own Bilbao effect.
- An eye-ful of the 2012 AIA Housing Awards for Architecture (great presentation).
- Call for entries (a few deadlines loom): Session proposals for the 12th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth Conference + ENR Best Projects 2012 Awards + 2012 Healthcare Design Remodel/Renovation Competition + AIA's Architecture at Zero international competition to design a zero net energy building for UC Merced.

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INSIGHT: Let's Quiet Down: The Case for Places, Regionalism, and Sustainability: Architecture should be concerned primarily with place-making, not object-making. By Peter Gisolfi, AIA, ASLA, LEED AP - ArchNewsNow

Living High: ...the megalopolis has arrived...We can do this badly, or we can try to do it well...policymakers, publics, and architects...need to figure out, now, how to make the most habitable and humane hyper-dense cities they can...can a high-rise, high-density residential tower ever become more than an oversized packing crate for people? By Sarah Williams Goldhagen -- Congress for the New Urbanism/CNU; Edward Glaeser; Robert Moses; Jane Jacobs; Jeanne Gang; Frank Gehry; Jean Nouvel; WOHA; Mass Studies; Amateur Architecture Studio/Wang Shu/ Steven Holl - The New Republic

Transbay plan - is new skyline worth more shadows? San Francisco has never seen a neighborhood plan...that so audaciously seeks to fit 21st century urban values into a 20th century frame...far-reaching shadows are the most troubling aspect of a proposal that in many ways deserves to be embraced...planners make a strong case that the overall benefits outweigh the impact... By John King -- Pelli Clarke Pelli [slide show] - San Francisco Chronicle

Toronto's downtown is GTA's [Greater Toronto Area] downtown: A new report by the Canadian Urban Institute tells us what we already know: People want to be downtown..."The Value of Investing in Canadian Downtowns" extols the virtues thereof..."The huge challenge for Canada is to rediscover how to build a downtown"...No kidding...everything else we have built is sprawl. By Christopher Hume - Toronto Star

What Critics Get Wrong About Creative Cities: Economic development, innovation and creativity are undoubtedly connected. Squabbling about which comes first misses the point...Cities themselves power economic progress, driving artistic, technological, and overall economic growth at one and the same time. By Richard Florida [links] - The Atlantic Cities

When the 1 percent say no: Cities need public transit and affordable housing...How tiny bands of refuseniks and wealthy obstructionists absorbed so much power provides instructive lessons for how they might be stopped...For now...endless public hearings, lawsuits, and stalling tactics disguised as environmental reviews continue to shape the urban landscape. By Will Doig - Salon

Why We Pay More for Walkable Neighborhoods: New data points to the economic power of walkable neighborhoods -- and the high cost of living in them...hoping that urban planners and business leaders will bring this hard data to their arguments with skeptics of walkability -- and why we need much more of it. By Emily Badger -- Christopher Leinberger/Mariela Alfonzo/Brookings Institution - The Atlantic Cities

Urban walkability: the new driver in real estate values: The desire for urban density, walkability, and access to parks has now tilted values decisively in city neighborhoods' favor...Something quite transformational is going on here...the value that Americans have been placing on the public realm...A high regard for the public realm is now the hallmark of healthy and successful cities. By Mark Hinshaw -- Christopher Leinberger/Brookings Institute; Walk Score; parkscore - Crosscut (Seattle)

Why I Drive: They pollute. They're noisy. They run people over. But cars are not necessarily New York's enemy: Driving has been demoted to a form of depravity, especially in the city...The only remedy is abstinence. Park. Walk. Repent. This is no way to conduct a debate on how to get around...Our city would seem like fertile ground for an auto-temperance movement. By Justin Davidson -- Taras Grescoe; Janette Sadik-Khan - New York Magazine

CTA's new gem comes at quite a price; \$38 million Morgan Station in the West Loop is dazzling to the eye and the pocketbook...The outcome succeeds as urban design and architecture...elevating construction to art...reminds us that good design must remain part of the equation as [the city] grapples with the enormous task of bringing its antiquated transit system into the 21st century. By Blair Kamin -- Carol Ross Barney/Ross Barney Architects [images] - Chicago Tribune

Kennedys and Pelli's firm unveil plans for three-tower Wolf Point riverfront complex: ...plan must overcome several hurdles, including what is expected to be strong opposition from residents...whose views...would be blocked...impact on already-congested downtown streets is also expected to be a big issue. By Blair Kamin -- Pelli Clarke Pelli; bKL Architecture [image] - Chicago Tribune

Moshe Safdie Selected to Design Tallest Residential Building in Colombo, Sri Lanka: ..."a project that will set a benchmark for future development...landmark high density urban housing...one tower or half the building leaning and connecting to a vertical tower...So even though it's quite a large building it maintains the delicacy of the skyline." [image] - Lanka Business Today (Sri Lanka)

Soweto's inspiring theatrical spot: They wanted something colourful...something smooth, shiny and sparkling. That's exactly what they got, a building that inspires and invites creativity – a magical theatrical space. -- Afritecs; Lewis Levin; Denis Hutchinson [image]- Independent Online/IOL (South Africa)

2012 AIA Housing Awards for Architecture: ...recognized 10 projects in four award categories... -- Dirk Denison Architects; Robert M. Gurney, FAIA; XTEN Architecture; Olson Kundig Architects; DCHGlobal; Cook + Fox Architects; David Baker + Partners; David Hovey & Associates Architect; Gray Organschi Architecture; Hanbury Evans Wright Mattas + Company/Hopkins Architects [link to images, info]- American Institute of Architects (AIA)

Call for Session Proposals: 12th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth Conference: Building Safe, Healthy and Livable Communities, February 7-9, 2013, in Kansas City, Missouri; deadline: June 30- Local Government Commission (LGC)

Call for entries: ENR Best Projects 2012 Awards honoring the best construction projects in the U.S. and Puerto Rico; deadline: July 2- Engineering News-Record (ENR)

Call for entries: 2012 HEALTHCARE DESIGN Remodel/Renovation Competition: Pediatric Environments and Facility Art Programs (no fee); deadline: July 27- Healthcare Design magazine

Call for entries: Architecture at Zero competition (international): design zero net energy (ZNE) student housing or administrative office building for the University of California Merced; open to professionals and students; cash prizes and exhibitions; deadline: October 1- AIA San Francisco / PG&E / UC Merced



Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects: The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania -- Olin; Ballinger; Fisher Marantz Stone

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