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A Metro Revolution: Cities, Suburbs Do What Washington Can't: Q&A with Bruce Katz/Brookings Institution...says that many American cities show promising signs of renewal...local leaders are more likely to take on the nation's big challenges than politicians in Washington. [+ link to excerpt from "The Metropolitan Revolution: How Cities and Metros Are Fixing Our Broken Politics and Fragile Economy" by Katz and Jennifer Bradley]- National Public Radio (NPR)

How Better Urban Design Makes Us Healthier, Happier, and Sexier: Cities have policies that make sound good on paper, calling for mixed-use development and walkable neighborhoods, but they also have detailed technical design requirements that don't let that happen. Instead, we end up with typical sprawl: it's actually illegal to build anything else. By Jeffrey Tumlin/Nelson\Nygaard- GOOD Magazine

Sustainability consortium seeks public response to alternatives to sprawl in Northeast Ohio; faces a grim future if it continues sprawling as usual. But it has options... if channels development back toward cities that are hollowing out today... final six months of a three-year effort to help... fashion a rational vision for the future... abandoning cities and filling new acres with suburban development is simply not smart public policy. By Steven Litt [images]- Cleveland Plain Dealer

Toronto needs to put its money where the Don's mouth is: ...new plan to "renaturalize" the Don River, an unfunded priority in the age of climate change... unprecedented storm of July 8... a reminder of why 21st-century infrastructure will look a lot more like the past than the future. There will be no high-tech solutions to problems such as flooding; only the restoration of the natural processes we so assiduously destroyed. By Christopher Hume- Toronto Star

Letter from San Francisco: On Being an Urban Planner in the Tech World: Tech is moving into the urban realm. Why aren't more trained urban planners moving into tech?... tech innovators and planners have much to learn from each other... We're already seeing our profession's adaptation with the emergence of new planning trends like "tactical urbanism..." By Molly Turner - Next City (formerly Next American City)

Ink Blot or Bird Sh**? Museum Design Tests L.A.'s Urban Psyche: Buried beneath the breathless enthusiasm that's accompanied the unveiling of Peter Zumthor's design for a remade Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) is one important criteria by which the $650 million endeavor should be evaluated: how does it contribute to the urban environment? By Jonathan Nettler [images]- PLANetizen

Challenge on the Schuylkill: Dranoff's proposed 21-story waterfront tower has appeal, but the location in a little urban paradise presents problems...has the potential to raise the bar for all waterfront design in Philadelphia. Or not. We don't know crucial details...the tower's profile is svete enough, and its architect good enough...Then again... By Inga Saffron - Cecil Baker + Partners [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

Tower news overshadowed by Stage Center debate: The Downtown Design Review Committee...may face its toughest challenge when they are asked to approve or deny an application to destroy Stage Center... "Foundation went through an exhaustive process to find a purchaser... only two groups were interested in pursuing, and they were unsuccessful..." By Steve Lackmeyer -- John Johnson (1970)- The Oklahoman

Oklahoma City's changing skyline often will require loss of older buildings: The threatened Stage Center theater sits on a block where buildings were leveled decades ago to make room for the theater. Now the architecturally significant building could make way for a new tower... this won't be the last demolition sought to make way for a new tower. By Steve Lackmeyer -- John Johnson (1970)- The Oklahoman

Melbourne's iconic Palace Theatre to be demolished for luxury hotel and apartment complex: The National Trust has raised concerns... Melbourne Heritage Group also plans to oppose the project..."- Bates Smart [images]- Architecture & Design (Australia)

Raising the glass: Crystal Palace to come back from the dead: Shanghai-based company to create an exact replica of Joseph Paxton's iron and glass halls in Crystal Palace park: ...might be rebuilt in south London as a complex of exhibition spaces, shops and cafes... By Oliver Wainwright -- Arup - Guardian (UK)
Plans to recreate the Crystal Palace are as jingoistic as a Gove history lesson: Rebuilding monuments of the past fails to meet the challenge of building for today’s London, and today’s Londoners: “...the most vast — and probably the least likely — of a smaller but still significant series of proposed reconstructions. This says something increasingly unnerving about the city...It will, chances are, enclose a chunk of park and turn it into a private, paying attraction. By Owen Hatherley — Joseph Paxton (1851) — Guardian (UK)

Block Party: Is ‘Party Wall’ at MoMA P.S.1 too much party and not enough wall? The goal of the Warm-Up parties is pretty simple, and even noble...being hip and with-it does, after all, seem more like the point of this year’s design than most. Last year’s..."Wendy," designed by HWKN, at least boasted a structure with an innovative feature... By Michelle Dean -- Caroline O'Donnell/Coda [images] — Architect Magazine

The new FRAC Centre, Orléans + the 9th ArchiLab exhibition, ‘Naturalizing Architecture’: ...easily the most precocious contemporary building in Orléans...a place of debate, creation and research...ArchiLab 9 highlights the intriguingly diverse ways in which architects today...are producing speculative projects evolving according to principles similar to those found in nature, simulating its formation and growth. By Lucy Bullivant — Jakob + Macfarlane; nuedupros; Junya Ishigami; Gramazio & Kohler; Kokkugia; ecoLogicStudio; Biothing; Matsys; Michael Hansmayer; Plasma Studio; Minimaforms; EZCT; MAD Architects; Neri Oxman; servo; Achim Menges; SJet; Marc Fornes & TheVeryMany; MarcosandMarjan [images] — Urbanista.org

Scale Lane Bridge: Built to connect Hull city centre with a development across the river that has yet to materialise, the bridge has become a destination in its own right: As well as being a place, it’s an event...often compared to a pinball flipper...It has been called the Bridge to Nowhere...Yet people are using it, and passing there, and inhabiting it, as intended. By Rowan Moore — McDowell+Benedetti Architects [image] — Observer (UK)

Van Alen Institute Announces GroundWork Competition Finalists: Three emerging design teams to develop proposals for the Institute’s street-level space — Collective-LOK; EFGH; Of Possible Architectures — Van Alen Institute

The Architecture Of Copyright: ...as long as design elements are determined by functional considerations, they are not copyrightable...this severability problem is embedded in the same type of architecture that the Pacific Standard Time initiative is celebrating: modern architecture...Strict application...will deny protection to successfully modern buildings...pose one of the greatest threats to innovation in architecture... — Mondaq (UK)

Zoë Ryan appointed curator of the second Istanbul Design Biennial; ...2014 theme will be announced by Ryan, chair and curator of architecture and design at the Art Institute of Chicago, in November. — Dezeen