March 17, 2015

TODAY’S NEWS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

PENINSULA PRESS: Renters struggle to keep up in Menlo Park’s Belle Haven neighborhood
By Farida Jhabvala Romero // Silicon Valley’s technology-fueled economy is exacerbating a regional housing deficit that is pushing low-income residents particularly to move out of the region to more affordable cities or stay put in tough living conditions.

SACRAMENTO BEE: Passion for affordable housing drives California Assembly speaker
By Jeremy B. White // California’s shortage of affordable housing has become a crisis, elected officials and housing experts say. Median housing costs in California sit well above the national average, both for renters and for owners. The state is home to four of the six least affordable housing markets in the country, according to a recent Public Policy Institute of California report.

LAND USE / PLANNING / REGULATION

SANTA BARBARA INDEPENDENT: Housing and growth in Goleta
By Margaret Connell // The first council (of which I was a member) supported “managed growth,” which required that traffic, infrastructure impacts, and environmental protection had to be addressed before approval of a project. But under state law, the city was required to zone sites to accommodate the housing needs of people of all income levels, ages, and special needs.

HOUSING MARKETS / REAL ESTATE

THE BUSINESS JOURNAL: Realtors: California housing market bounces back in February
Slowing home price appreciation and improving inventory combined to boost California’s housing market in February as existing home sales and median home prices increased from both the previous month and year, according to a California Association of Realtors report issued today. In Fresno County, according to the C.A.R. report, the median home price in February was $210,320, down 0.5 percent from the previous month’s $211,470, but still up 15.4 percent from Feb. 2014.

LOS ANGELES TIMES: Housing starts fall in February as home builders hit the brakes
By Tim Logan // Home builders hibernated in February as bad winter weather hit much of the country, but there are signs of spring. Housing starts fell 17% from January to 890,000, their lowest level in a year and well below analysts’ expectations, according to data out Tuesday from the Commerce Department.

LA WEEKLY: L.A. leads the nation in the number of years it takes just to buy a home
By Dennis Romero // The different ways you can describe Los Angeles’ craptastic housing market are almost infinite. We have it all—high rents, relatively low income, and stratospheric real estate prices. The folks at the Martin Prosperity Institute, via The Atlantic’s CityLab, have found yet another way to tell us the bad news.

WHITTIER DAILY NEWS: Southern California home sales still sliding, prices still rising
By Gregory J. Wilcox // Southern California’s home sales slide moderated in February while prices continued trending up, a market tracker said Tuesday. Last month, sales of new and previously owned houses and condominiums in the six-county region fell 3 percent from a year earlier to 13,650 properties, according to CoreLogic DataQuick.

FRESNO BEE: How much income do you need to afford a home in the Central Valley?
By BoNhia Lee // Home prices are up, but mortgage interest rates have remained low. What does that mean for affordability? The Bee’s sister paper, The Sacramento Bee, has a nifty interactive graphic that shows you how much you need to make to afford a median-priced house, assuming a 20% downpayment.

MORTGAGE & FORECLOSURE ISSUES
PRESS ENTERPRISE: Pilot program to help seniors struggling with reverse mortgages
By Debra Gruszecki // Keep Your Home California has launched a pilot program to help low- and moderate-income senior homeowners avoid foreclosure on their reverse mortgage.

DAILY RECORD: Home sharing helps ease financial burden for some homeowners, renters
By Lorraine Ash // Home sharing, a practice started a few decades ago, is picking up steam in the post-recession economy, especially in high-cost pockets of the country, such as Morris County. All age groups are helped — from millennials looking for an affordable first pad to 96-year-olds who need to rent space in their homes for extra income, according to agencies that screen for the best candidates.

HOMELESSNESS
ALJAZEERA AMERICA: Ending veteran homelessness by year-end may come at cost
By Haya El Nasser // The race to house every homeless veteran by the end of 2015 is raising concern among homeless advocates that meeting the deadline is becoming more important than doing it right. Since Barack Obama’s administration set the ambitious goal of getting the estimated more than 50,000 homeless veterans in the U.S. off the streets, the rush to meet the challenge is leaving some wondering if it’s happening at the expense of homeless nonmilitary families and children.

SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS: Fewer homeless sticking around Santa Monica
By David Mark Simpson // …“Homelessness is a lagging indicator of what’s going on in the economy,” he said. “We’ve come out of the great recession so it’s not the immediate loss of jobs and housing — it’s ongoing economic pressures for just finding a place to live that continues to be a challenge anywhere else in Los Angeles.”

**ECONOMY / EMPLOYMENT**

_SACRAMENTO MAGAZINE: Going hungry_
by Sasha Abramsky // In many ways, the Sacramento of 2015 is a world away from the Sacramento of 2008 and 2009. Six years ago, the region was trapped in what seemed to be a death spiral: Housing prices were collapsing, taking with them jobs and economic security, government revenues were plummeting, and everything that could be cut was being cut—to the bone and then some. Sacramentans woke up daily to a drumbeat of cataclysmic economic news: businesses going belly up, unemployment ticking north into double digits, construction sites abandoned pretty much overnight. By mid-2009, at the depth of the crisis, more than 25 percent of Sacramentans were living in poverty.

**LOS ANGELES TIMES: After 31 years in Echo Park, victims of displacement by gentrification**
By Steve Lopez // Jose and Ana Sanchez ran for their lives during El Salvador’s civil war, resettled in Los Angeles and joined the working class. They landed minimum-wage jobs in the garment district, then started Ana’s Ice Cream, motoring through the city to peddle frozen treats. Together, they brought in just enough money to pay the rent and raise two kids. But now, after 31 years in the same modest house in the hills of Echo Park, they and their daughter are being forced out by gentrification.

**TRANSPORTATION / TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT**

_SAN GABRIEL VALLEY TRIBUNE: Transportation upgrades called one of the biggest challenges facing California_
Southern California officials joined state lawmakers in Los Angeles on Friday to talk about ways to tackle billions of dollars in delayed maintenance on highways, bridges, streets and other transportation infrastructure. The cost of making necessary transportation improvements in Southern California is estimated at about $525 billion over more than 20 years, according to estimates by the Southern California Association of Governments, or SCAG, a regional group made up of 191 local cities.

**ENVIRONMENT / CLIMATE CHANGE**

_SAN DIEGO UNION TRIBUNE: Case could set climate change precedent_
By Maureen Magee and Deborah Sullivan Brennan // Two major lawsuits over how to address climate change while managing San Diego County’s growth and development are poised to pave statewide precedents because of the California Supreme Court’s decision this week to review one case and dismiss the other.

**COVERAGE INFORMATION:**
California Department of Housing & Community Development WEB NEWS service coverage:

Tuesdays and Thursdays each week includes electronic format articles retrieved from newspapers or news services that report housing and community development news in California and some national services. Coverage is for California newspapers that are available electronically via the Internet – and any significant related breaking news.