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  Los Angeles (AFP) - From real estate, to high-tech firms to entertainment giants, Chinese investments in the United States, notably California, are moving at a dizzying pace and are on course to smash records again this year.

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Anaheim Commission OKs $450M Project Near Angel Stadium
安納罕都市發展委員會同意在天使棒球場旁耗資四億五千萬美金的開發案
By: I-Chun Chen

The Anaheim Planning Commission has unanimously approved plans for a large mixed-use development across from Angel Stadium, despite objections by the baseball team's officials.

The commission on Monday voted 4-0 in favor of the 15-acre development, LT Platinum Center, which includes residences, hotels, retail and office space adjacent to the parking lot controlled by the Angels, reported the Orange County Register.

Plans for the $450 million development, at the northeast corner of State College Boulevard and Orangewood Avenue, include a 30-story residential tower with views of the stadium and an outdoor entertainment center similar to L.A.'s the Grove with places to eat and drink before and after Angels games, reported theLos Angeles Times.

Angels officials, including team Chairman Dennis Kuhl and Senior Vice President Molly Jolly, objected to the project, saying it would harm the Angels' own development plans.

An attorney for the team, in a letter to the city, said the project would "cannibalize the Angels' existing food, beverage and retail operations at Angel Stadium" and "fundamentally undermine the Angels' negotiations to remain in Anaheim over the long term," according to the Times.

The Angels and city officials have been negotiating on how to fund stadium upgrades, which have focused on using potential profits from the team's development of part of the parking lot.

Randy Jefferson, LT Global's executive director of project development, told the Times after the vote Monday that his company wanted to work with the Angels on their share of the stadium parking lot.

The final decision on the project will be made by the Anaheim City Council, which is expected to vote on it in October.

3 Questions All Retail Designers Must Ask
所有零售業商店的設計師都應該問的三個問題
By: Phase Zero Design

The basic principles of retail space design are very clear. Focus falls on location, tenant mix, budget and schedule. To maximize those components, customer experience must be made a priority.

The approach of designing around experiences is often difficult to define, and the intent is not always clear, so Bisnow caught up with Phase Zero Design associate principal Shawn Bland to nail down to perfect approach for retail design.

“A design experience strategy involves uniting as many touchpoints with the brand, both digitally and physically, to create an optimal experience,” Shawn says. He says that to efficiently develop the ideal experience, designers need to ask clients these key questions before beginning to bring their vision to life.

Q: How is your customer interacting with your brand prior to entering the physical store?

Shawn says it’s important to discuss the types of technology customers are using to research and get to know the client’s brand. Are they looking for specific events, deals or product trends? Are there special apps or other types of social media that incorporate brand elements?

“Designers can take away from this discussion the key elements that are important to our client and how technology can be integrated into the design,” he tells us. “Understanding what and how the users are engaging the brand can help the designer seamlessly integrate those key components from the digital to the physical environment. Brand-specific logos, colors, and even the overall feeling they experience can be identified at this stage.”

Q: How is your customer engaged once at your store?

A customer’s first impression of a store is critical. It is also influenced in several ways, whether it be the style of music that greets them or the scent from candles selected to set the mood for shoppers.

“Most clients have an understanding of what they want their customers to experience,” Shawn tells us. “But they might not be able to clearly express those ideas.”

Shawn says to walk clients through broader concepts—such as overall lighting—and simpler concepts—such as where to arrange aspects of furniture or other stations—with the client separately so they better imagine the finished look of the space.

Q: What do you want your customer to experience once inside?

Developing an inviting and pleasing in-store experience is key to all retailers. The strategies they use to generate that experience can significantly impact which types of technology are integrated into the interior design.

“Vignettes—or tiny models of the space—can quickly depict preferred locations of user interaction areas, cash wraps and other featured elements,” Shawn says. “Items to consider showing are lighting, scale, uses and even online pick-up areas.”

Toys "R" Us Plans a New Strategy, Child's Play Included
玩具反斗城的新策略，讓孩子們在購買玩具前先試玩得盡興
By: Donna Mitchell

The *Star Wars* movie franchise wasn't the only business that had a big year in 2015**.** With help from classics like light sabers and the newcomer BB-8, U.S. toy retailers also enjoyed a bonanza, with $19.8 billion in sales in 2015, according to a sampling of the industry from The NPD Group's Retail Tracking Service. That was a 7.0 percent increase in sales over the previous year. NPD Group's findings represent about 80 percent of the U.S. toy industry. When extrapolated to the whole industry, the NPD Group estimated that the U.S. toy market was $25 billion last year.

Toys "R" Us, the big-box toy specialty retailer, walked away with its share of the spoils—a 1.2 percent increase in domestic same-store sales. On a consolidated basis, same-store sales increased 2.3 percent, according to the company.

Results for 2015 were a bright spot in an otherwise extended murky period for Toys "R" Us. But the victory turned out to be bittersweet. That same year Toys "R" Us, once the biggest toy retailer in the U.S., closed two New York City store landmarks. In the summer, it shuttered the F.A.O. Schwarz location on Fifth Avenue, followed by the 110,000-sq.-ft. Times Square Toys "R" Us location right after Christmas.
Now Toys "R" Us is on a mission to reinvent itself—with $1 billion in total liquidity. The latest plans include managing inventory more effectively and dedicating areas to hot-selling items, like Mattel's American Girl collection, the result of Toys "R" Us recently announced partnership with the uber-popular doll brand, according to media reports.

As for those mega-sized store formats that once made it "the biggest toy store there is?" At its peak, the company could brag that it had every game and toy that a child could want, and it was all under one roof. Toys "R" Us is toning down that message. Future stores will operate in much smaller footprints—about a quarter of the current average unit size of 40,000 sq. ft., according to media reports.
"It was the original category killer," says Jim Costello, senior vice president at research firm Real Capital Analytics (RCA).

Now the company is battling on the same fronts as most other retailers—stiff pricing competition from discount department stores like Target and War-Mart, and the bargains and ease of online shopping.
"The challenge is that the category killers are trying to reinvent themselves," Costello says. "Now, cutting back is a good strategy. Retailers will only have the SKUs on hand that trade more frequently." While retailers dedicate valuable shelf space to faster-selling items, other products are shifted to warehouses and sold online, he notes.
Meanwhile, after Toys "R" Us reported positive 2015 results, it returned to reporting underwhelming same-store sales gains. In the first and second quarters of 2016, the company posted gains of 0.9 percent and 0.5 percent, respectively. Before the 2015 bump, Toys "R" Us had reported net sales of $12.4 million, a 0.5 percent increase over the previous year.

Like other retailers challenged with getting consumers to come into their stores and spend money, Toys "R" Us will have to find a way to engage customers through special services and entertainment, says Howard Davidowitz, chairman of Davidowitz & Associates Inc., a national retail consulting & investment banking firm headquartered in New York City.

"An iPad is more important to any kid than any toy," Davidowitz said. "You have a section in the store where the kids all have one and are playing with it. That means you have the mother and the kid in the store."

Davidowitz notes that an expansion strategy that includes smaller stores in urban locations makes sense for the retailer. The only challenge after that is beating Amazon.com and discount retailers like Wal-Mart on pricing.
Toys "R" Us will also have to convince landlords and investors that its real estate strategy makes sense. Cap rates on big-box stores are reflecting the shift in investor preferences. In early 2006, about six months after Toys "R" Us had been acquired, cap rates on big-box and power center properties average about 7.1 percent. Rates ballooned to 8.7 percent during the recession, and have not fully recovered. Rates average 7.5 percent by the second quarter of 2016, according to RCA data.

"Tenants do not need the same space as they did before," Costello says. "It creates a problem for owners of existing big-box centers, who are trying to figure out how to re-tenant or reconfigure the space."

Impact of Large Chain Store Closures on Retail Rents
大型連鎖購物商店陸續關閉造成的衝擊
By: Barbara Byrne Denham and Scott Rappaport

The state of the retail real estate industry has been heavily discussed of late given the rise of e-commerce. Retails sales growth has been tepid throughout the recent recovery, yet e-commerce sales growth has been robust. This has led many a reasonable analyst to think that sales at brick-and-mortar stores have been declining. Indeed, a number of old retail brands have shut down operations across the country.

Few, if any, have analyzed the impact of these store closures on real estate statistics. Having property- level retail real estate data, analysts at Reis have been tracking store closures for the larger, more high-profile brands across the country. In short, the Reis database includes 280 store closures in 59 of the 80 primary retail metros that Reis tracks, totaling 12.8 million sq. ft. of closed stores across the United States. The major brands include Wal-mart, Kohl's, Sports Authority, Pathmark, Superfresh, A&P, Waldbaums, Haggen and Kmart. Many of these closures were concentrated in a handful of metro areas, including Chicago, Central New Jersey, Northern New Jersey, Philadelphia, Long Island, San Diego and Los Angeles—all of which had more than 400,000 sq. ft. of store closures from 2015 through July of this year.

The report looks at the percentage of inventory that store closures account for and the change in rent growth rates by metro. The purpose of this analysis is to see if and how these store closures have affected rent growth rates. In short, the closures may have impacted these metros, but there is no overall conclusion that can be drawn from the data. It should be noted that this detailed data does not include details on whether or not the store spaces have been re-leased to other users. Some may have been in the interim.

To measure the change in rent growth we subtracted the annual rent growth rate of second quarter 2014 to second quarter 2015 from that of second quarter 2015 to second quarter 2016 to measure deceleration (if negative) or acceleration (positive). We then ranked these measures by metro against the percentage of total inventory that the store closures accounted for.

The general conclusion that one would draw from this analysis is that the higher the percentage of closed stores, the lower the decline in rent growth. That is, the two measures should have a strong negative correlation coefficient. However, the correlation coefficient for the two measures is -25 percent, a number that suggests some negative correlation, but not a significant one. Moreover, when you remove the metros that have no store closures of these brands, the correlation coefficient declines to -18.4 percent. This suggests that the same factors that led to the store closures—oversupply, sluggish economic growth—impacted rent growth more than the actual closures themselves.

Looking at the data shows that of the bottom 10 metros with the sharpest decline in rent growth, nine had a store closure of some kind and three metros had closures representing more than 1 percent of total inventory. In contrast, of the top 10 metros with the highest acceleration in rent growth, only six had a store closure and none of these metros had closures representing more than 1 percent of inventory. These metros are highlighted below.

It should be noted that many of the metros ranked in the "bottom 10" are high-end markets that simply had a stronger 2015 rent growth (Portland, Ore., Fort Lauderdale, Fla. and San Jose), while others are markets at the low end of rent levels that have seen very tepid growth (Milwaukee, Wis., Wichita, Kan. and New Haven, Conn.). Likewise, some of the metros that made the "top 10 metros" saw strong growth in 2016, but only in comparison to weak 2015 growth. Metros such as Lexington, Ky. and Hartford, Conn. are improving but still have relatively low rents. Finally, a number of metros that continue to trail others—Rochester, Buffalo and Syracuse, N.Y., St. Louis and Ventura County, Calif.—did not make either list. Rochester, St. Louis and

Ventura County all had a store closure, but Syracuse and Buffalo did not for this group of stores. Meanwhile, other top performing metros such as Miami, Austin, Tampa and San Francisco—all of which had at least one store closure—did not make either the top or bottom list. This suggests that rent growth was steady in these metros for the two-year period. The data suggests that to some extent, the closing of stores may have had a marginal impact on rent growth in a few metros. Although one could argue that an already weak retail climate may have led to the slow rent growth in the first place that then prompted the companies to close these stores. Economists call this an endogeneity problem; that is, the variables studied are connected along with other variables, making it difficult to determine how the causality works. Still, this exercise was worthwhile to see that in some cases, such as in Milwaukee, Charlotte, N.C. and Portland, rent growth rates may have fallen due to the sizable number of stores that closed, while in others such as Central New Jersey and Colorado Springs, there was little if any impact of store closures on rent growth. In sum, it really depends on that clichéd yet critical retail concern: location, location, location.

Co-Working Goes Viral in SoCal
共同辦公室的概念在南加州受到歡迎
By: Barbra Murray

A new co-working space is making its debut in the San Diego market—the San Diego life sciences market, that is. BioLabs, a membership-based network of shared lab facilities, and life sciences industry trade association Biocom recently introduced BioLabs San Diego, a co-working laboratory and office destination for startups in a city that holds the distinction of being one of the country's leading life sciences hubs.

"It's very clear that there's a real need for this kind of premium facility designed specifically to serve the needs of life science entrepreneurs in the Southern California market," Johannes Fruehauf, founder of BioLabs, told *Commercial Property Executive*.

The proof of demand is in the numbers. According to a Cushman & Wakefield report, in San Diego the life sciences sector accounts for a whopping 22 percent of office tenant demand, the largest percentage of all the industries tracked in the report.

"San Diego is home to a growing life science entrepreneurial community, and we continue to need real estate to accommodate that growth," Joe Panetta, CEO of Biocom, told *CPE*. Biocom is acting as founding partner of the San Diego BioLabs site.

"The city is well-known as an engine of early-stage company formation," he continued. "The more we invest in the infrastructure that gives the industry the specialized space it needs, the more it can grow, strengthening San Diego's position as one of the top life science clusters in the country."

Not only is the latest BioLabs location in the right city, it's in the right spot. BioLabs San Diego is located within Phase 3 Real Estate Partners' 300,000-square-foot GENESIS at Campus Point complex in the prominent University Towne Center submarket. BioLabs San Diego has set up shop in the 65,000-square-foot building at 10210 Campus Point Dr., offering an initial 16,000 square feet of co-working space for as many as 15 tenants, with the option of expanding to more than 30,000 square feet.

"Biolabs San Diego will help entrepreneurs in the process of getting started by removing key obstacles that companies face at their inception. Primarily, we remove the need for huge capital expenses while the science is still unproven," Fruehauf said. "Our labs are fully equipped and fully permitted, and scientists can get to work right away. Often times they will run their first experiments on the day after they move into our labs!"
Honing in on the distinctive needs of life sciences startups, BioLabs facilities are amped-up, specialized versions of the traditional co-working destination. After all, it's not every office user that requires microscopes, centrifuges, tissue culture rooms and the like.

In addition to premier office space, state-of-the-art lab accommodations and the typical amenities that come with co-working locations—concierge service, technical and administrative support, collaboration zones, private telephone areas, etc.—BioLabs facilities provide support in the form of industry-specific programming, as well as networking and social events. BioLabs San Diego is open to locally or internationally based companies, but not just any startup will find a home here. Admission to the facility is merit-based and applicants are judged on such criteria as teams, business plan and funding situation. Options for space are flexible, starting with something as simple as a single lab bench to private office and lab suites. However, all occupants will have access to the property's wide array of amenities, including a café area, lap swimming pool and a restaurant.

Cushman & Wakefield is marketing the space at BioLabs San Diego, which will welcome its first tenants in fall 2016. The facility's impact is likely to extend beyond the hungry new companies that will make the facility their first home base. "We believe that BioLabs San Diego will play a key role in further developing the local entrepreneurial eco-system. San Diego is a very productive environment already and one of the hot-spots for developing academic science into viable businesses," Fruehauf noted.

BioLabs also has locations in the life sciences hubs of Cambridge, Mass., New York City and Durham, N.C. Details on a number of projects presently in the works are not yet being disclosed, but what isn't being kept under wraps is the 2017 opening of BioLabs North Carolina's larger interim facility. And there will be more to come. Fruehauf added, "We hope to be making additional announcements by the end of the year."

Tight Market Ensures Rents for Life Sciences Space Keep Climbing
生物科學的蓬勃發展提升高端辦公與實驗室的需求與租金
By: Robert Carr

Today, life sciences tenants face a dilemma—a lack of quality office and laboratory space**,** combined with outsized demand, is pushing rents higher in a sector already struggling with rising labor costs and a bottom line that is only as high as the last well-performing patent.
Life sciences researchers and professionals are in high demand, with an unemployment rate of less than 3.0 percent. As demand for talent goes up, so do payroll costs. Annual wages for life sciences employees have grown 7.6 percent since 2001, with the average salary at almost $80,000 in 2015, according to a recent report by real estate services firm JLL.

Further, the life sciences sector is somewhat of a gamble, as patent expirations hinder profits and drug development costs continue to rise. However, investment into life sciences commercial real estate hasn't slowed down: five of the six markets with the highest life sciences rents have vacancy rates of less than 4.0 percent, according to the JLL report. Boston is the nation's life sciences leader, with the East Cambridge market posting 0.8 percent vacancy and rents at more than $70 per sq. ft. Laboratory space is even tighter than office space there, according to Lisa Strope, director of research in JLL's Boston office.

"In Cambridge, you've got a tenant-to-available-supply ratio of about 9 to 1," she says. "It's a tough market for smaller clients; they're having to negotiate creative deals to find space."
The other top markets are also experiencing tightness and rising rents. The North County sub-market in the San Francisco area has a vacancy rate of 0.5 percent and rent growth of more than 51 percent year-over-year, currently averaging almost $58 per sq. ft. Other high-rent, low-vacancy sub-markets include Torrey Pines in San Diego (3.3 percent vacancy and $427.40 per sq. ft. average rent), Lake Union in Seattle (2.6 percent vacancy and $43.87 per sq. ft. average rent) and Philadelphia's Central Business District (CBD) (1.5 percent vacancy and $28 per sq. ft. average rent).

California is the nation's number two spot for life sciences, with a great deal of activity in San Francisco, San Diego and even Los Angeles, where the California Life Sciences Association recently opened a satellite office. In San Francisco, the largest life sciences project in the country is underway, a 1-million-sq.-ft. campus called the Cove. The project reflects the current trend of appealing to Millennial tastes, with amenities including a fitness center, a bowling alley, bocce ball courts, a café and an amphitheater.

Life sciences tenants tend to cluster in these corridors in order to attract the best talent and amenities. However, Strope says the tightness in these markets has pushed tenants into secondary sub-markets further from the core. In Boston, for example, the spillover is moving into Lexington, which has a new laboratory going up at 115 Hartwell, while in San Francisco Mid-Peninsula is seeing 200,000 sq. ft. of office space being converted into lab space. Owners of under-performing industrial assets are now looking at conversion opportunities, especially in California college sub-markets such as the Sorrento Mesa/Valley, according to a second quarter report by real estate services firm Newmark Grubb Knight Frank.

Investors are pouring into the life sciences sector to buy up buildings and add onto current clusters, and even this activity is pushing rents higher. "A recent trend has been the influx of new capital, investors who haven't been in the space before, but who recognize this as a hot market with good tenants," Strope says. "Even though it's an asset type they might not understand well, they're coming in and hiking up prices."

Old Properties, New Features: Bringing Connectivity to Unusual Spaces
老建築，新風貌: 透過科技的加持來使老舊的建築物滿足新形態生意的需求
By: Arie Barendrecht

The proliferation of tech startups has created a booming demand for office spaces that match these companies' creative personalities. These businesses often seek out uncommon office space, and the real estate industry has been quick to respond; former warehouses and other industrial spaces around the country are being transformed into attractive, open offices.

These historic buildings offer the loft-like spaces, flexible floor plans, and an old-meets-new feel that tech startups want. But how do you distinguish buildings that look the part, but can't deliver the tech specs their tenants need from the cutting-edge spaces that startups require?

It can be tricky, and this is why building owners are increasingly seeking expert recognition of their infrastructure. Here are seven of the best buildings in the country standing out through their top-notch connectivity and looking good doing it:

1. **Atlanta – Ponce City Market**

One of the hottest new properties in Atlanta, Ponce City Market, revitalized the historic Sears, Roebuck & Co. building and created a new community hub. In addition to a food hall and other trendy amenities, the building provides superior internet connectivity to tenants such as Twitter and Mailchimp, and offers a choice of seven internet service providers, which helped it earn Platinum Wired Certification, the highest possible connectivity rating.

2. **Boston – Innovation and Design Building**

The Innovation and Design Building (IDB) was constructed nearly a century ago, originally serving as a waterside storehouse for the South Boston Army Base. Today, some of Boston's most creative local businesses, such as the Boston Beer Co. and MassChallenge, call the Wired Certified Platinum IDB home, taking advantage of the property's public Wi-Fi and flexible floor plans.

3. **Chicago – Fulton Market**

Tenants such as Glassdoor and Google call Fulton Market, one of Chicago's most innovative complexes, home. The property was part of Chicago's bustling meatpacking district in the early 1900s, and it continues to be a source of wholesale food for restaurants and hotels throughout the Chicagoland area.

4. **Los Angeles – ROW DTLA**

Alameda Square is currently undergoing a transformation from being one of the country's largest historic industrial centers into ROW DTLA, a modern innovation hub focused on fashion, tech, and other creative businesses. The complex is home to approximately two million square feet of buildings across 30 acres of gardens and walkable streets.

5. **New York City – Industry City**

Industry City's developers transformed a 100-year-old shipping and warehousing complex in Sunset Park into Brooklyn's newest creative center, offering lightning-fast internet connectivity and other modern amenities that are attracting tenants such as Gap and Time Inc. to the first Wired Certified Platinum property in Brooklyn.

6. **New York City – Falchi Building**

Constructed in 1922 as a warehouse and distribution facility for the Gimbels department store, the Falchi Building now attracts companies seeking an alternative to Manhattan offices, while still remaining close to Midtown and reaping the benefits of renting in a Wired Certified Gold building. The property is fully networked with strong internet connectivity and offers airy loft-like spaces, attracting modern tenants such as Juice Press and Lyft.

7. **Philadelphia – The Navy Yard**

The Navy Yard has been in existence since America's early days in the late 1700s—today it is home to more than 12,000 employees and 152 companies, including GlaxoSmithKline and Urban Outfitters, at the forefront of today's economy. These tenants enjoy the flexibility of public Wi-Fi available on the property's 5-acre park.

These repurposed buildings are a stunning achievement in breathing new life into formerly unusable and undesirable spaces. One of the key ways landlords are modernizing these buildings is by upgrading the tech infrastructure to meet the highest possible standards and provide strong internet connectivity for tenants.

WiredScore makes it easy for companies to identify the office space that best meets their needs by certifying these innovative buildings' best-in-class tech infrastructure. The international standard allows properties to benchmark their achievements against objective criteria.

By modernizing historic properties, landlords can offer tenants the best of both worlds—unique offices with best-in-class connectivity.

U.S. Home Sales Soften Further In August, Says NAR

根據全美房仲協會，今年八月家用住宅銷售減緩

By: Monsef Rachid

According to the National Association of Realtors, U.S. existing-home sales eased up in August 2016 for the second consecutive month despite mortgage rates near record lows as higher home prices and not enough inventory for sale kept some would-be buyers at bay. Only the Northeast region saw a monthly increase in closings in August, where inventory is currently more adequate.

Total existing-home sales, which are completed transactions that include single-family homes, townhomes, condominiums and co-ops, declined 0.9 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.33 million in August from a downwardly revised 5.38 million in July. After last month's decline, sales are at their second-lowest pace of 2016, but are still slightly higher (0.8 percent) than a year ago (5.29 million).

Lawrence Yun, NAR chief economist, says recent job growth is not yielding higher home sales. "Healthy labor markets in most the country should be creating a sustained demand for home purchases," he said. "However, there's no question that after peaking in June, sales in a majority of the country have inched backwards because inventory isn't picking up to tame price growth and replace what's being quickly sold."

Added Yun, "Hopes of a meaningful sales breakthrough as a result of this summer's historically low mortgage rates failed to materialize because supply and affordability restrictions continue to keep too many would-be buyers on the sidelines."

The median existing-home price for all housing types in August was $240,200, up 5.1 percent from August 2015 ($228,500). August's price increase marks the 54th consecutive month of year-over-year gains.

Total housing inventory at the end of August fell 3.3 percent to 2.04 million existing homes available for sale, and is now 10.1 percent lower than a year ago (2.27 million) and has declined year-over-year for 15 straight months. Unsold inventory is at a 4.6-month supply at the current sales pace, which is down from 4.7 months in July.

The share of first-time buyers was 31 percent in August, which is down from 32 percent both in July and a year ago. First-time buyers represented 30 percent of sales in all of 2015.

"It's very concerning to see that inventory conditions not only show no signs of improving but have actually worsened in recent months from their already suppressed levels a year ago," added Yun. "While recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows that household incomes rose strongly last year, home prices are still outpacing incomes in many metro areas because of the persistent shortage of new and existing homes for sale. Without more supply, the U.S. homeownership rate will remain near 50-year lows."

According to Freddie Mac, the average commitment rate for a 30-year, conventional, fixed-rate mortgage was 3.44 percent in August for the second consecutive month and remained at its lowest rate since January 2013 (3.41 percent). The average commitment rate for all of 2015 was 3.85 percent.

Properties typically stayed on the market for 36 days in August, unchanged from July and down considerably from a year ago (47 days). Short sales were on the market the longest at a median of 144 days in August, while foreclosures sold in 42 days and non-distressed homes took 35 days. Forty-six percent of homes sold in August were on the market for less than a month.

Inventory data from Realtor.com reveals that the metropolitan statistical areas where listings stayed on the market the shortest amount of time in August were San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, Calif., San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, Calif., and Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, Wash., all at a median of 33 days; Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, Colo., 36 days; and Vallejo-Fairfield, Calif., at a median of 37 days.

All-cash sales were 22 percent of transactions in August, up from 21 percent in July and unchanged from a year ago. Individual investors, who account for many cash sales, purchased 13 percent of homes in August, up from 11 percent in July and 12 percent a year ago. Sixty-two percent of investors paid in cash in August.

Distressed sales - foreclosures and short sales - were 5 percent of sales in August (lowest since NAR began tracking in October 2008), unchanged from last month and down from 7 percent a year ago. Four percent of August sales were foreclosures and 1 percent were short sales. Foreclosures sold for an average discount of 12 percent below market value in August (18 percent in July), while short sales were discounted 14 percent (16 percent in July).

Single-family and Condo/Co-op Sales

Single-family home sales declined 2.3 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.70 million in August from 4.81 million in July, but are still 0.6 percent above the 4.67 million pace a year ago. The median existing single-family home price was $242,200 in August, up 5.3 percent from August 2015.

Existing condominium and co-op sales leaped 10.5 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 630,000 units in August from 570,000 in July, and are now 1.6 percent above August 2015 (620,000 units). The median existing condo price was $225,100 in August, which is 3.7 percent above a year ago.

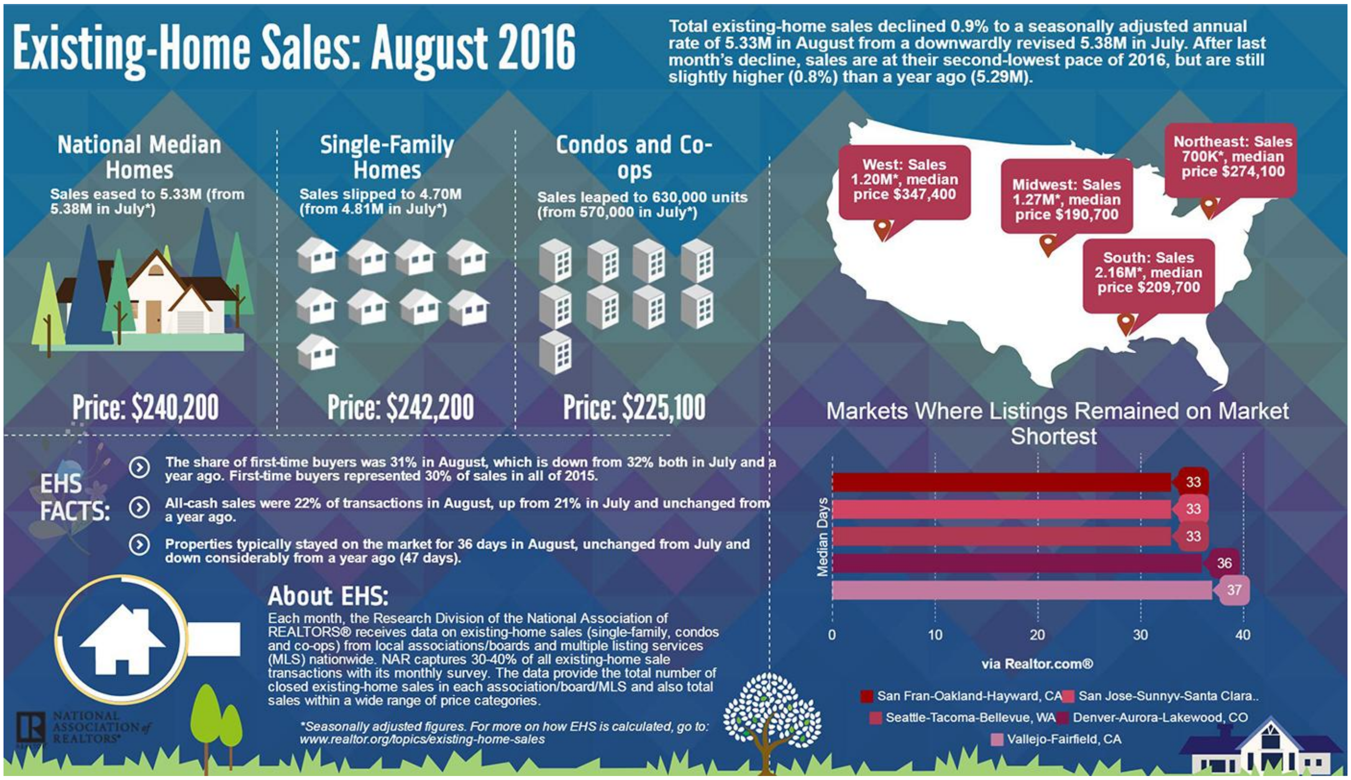
Regional Breakdown

August existing-home sales in the Northeast jumped 6.1 percent to an annual rate of 700,000, which is unchanged from a year ago. The median price in the Northeast was $274,100, which is 0.8 percent above August 2015.

In the Midwest, existing-home sales decreased 0.8 percent to an annual rate of 1.27 million in August, but are still 0.8 percent above a year ago. The median price in the Midwest was $190,700, up 5.5 percent from a year ago.

Existing-home sales in the South in August fell 2.7 percent to an annual rate of 2.16 million, but are still 0.9 percent above August 2015. The median price in the South was $209,700, up 6.7 percent from a year ago.

Existing-home sales in the West lessened 1.6 percent to an annual rate of 1.20 million in August, but are still 0.8 percent higher than a year ago. The median price in the West was $347,400, which is 9.2 percent above August 2015.


Existing-Home Sales: August 2016
Total existing-home sales declined 0.9% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.33M in August from a downwardly revised 5.38M in July. After last month's decline, sales are at their second-lowest pace of 2016, but are still slightly higher (0.8%) than a year ago (5.29M).
National Median Homes
Sales eased to 5.33M (from 5.38M in July*)
Price: $240,200
Single-Family Homes
Sales slipped to 4.70M (from 4.81M in July*)
Price: $242,200
Condos and Co-ops
Sales leaped to 630,000 units (from 570,000 in July*)
Price: $225,100
West: Sales 1.20M*, median price $347,400
Midwest: Sales 1.27M*, median price $190,700
Northeast: Sales 700K*, median price $274,100
South: Sales 2.16M*, median price $209,700
EHS FACTS:
The share of first-time buyers was 31% in August, which is down from 32% both in July and a year ago. First-time buyers represented 30% of sales in all of 2015.
All-cash sales were 22% of transactions in August, up from 21% in July and unchanged from a year ago.
Properties typically stayed on the market for 36 days in August, unchanged from July and down considerably from a year ago (47 days).
About EHS:
Each month, the Research Division of the National Association of REALTORS® receives data on existing-home sales (single-family, condos and co-ops) from local associations/boards and multiple listing services (MLS) nationwide. NAR captures 30-40% of all existing-home sale transactions with its monthly survey. The data provide the total number of closed existing-home sales in each association/board/MLS and also total sales within a wide range of price categories.
*Seasonally adjusted figures. For more on how EHS is calculated, go to: www.realtor.org/topics/existing-home-sales
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of REALTORS®
Markets Where Listings Remained on Market Shortest
Median Days
33
33
33
36
37
0
10
20
30
40
via Realtor.com®
San Fran-Oakland-Hayward, CA
San Jose-Sunnyv-Santa Clara..
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO
Vallejo-Fairfield, CA

National Flood Insurance Changes By ESA to Harm U.S. Home Affordability
全美家用住屋建設協會要求國會反對濫用防洪保險計畫來造成房價高漲
By: Michael Gerrity

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) have urged Congress this week to oppose the inappropriate use of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to change the focus of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) away from protecting lives and property due to flooding loss.

NAHB warned that mandated changes to the NFIP instituted by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will harm housing affordability and economic activity in local communities served by the NFIP. It will force a series of federal protection requirements that restricts states, local governments and private landowners from future development within floodplain areas.

Testifying on behalf of NAHB before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Jon Chandler, CEO of the Oregon Home Builders Association, told lawmakers that such changes to the flood insurance program will "add duplicative, burdensome and costly regulatory barriers that will prevent the development of communities near well-paying jobs, and increase the price of housing beyond the means of many middle-class working American families."

Perhaps worst of all, NFIP-participating communities in Oregon and nationwide will have little choice but to comply with NMFS's required changes to the NFIP. Failure to do so will mean these communities may be forced to drop out of the NFIP. This will restrict many banks and other financial institutions from offering federally-back mortgages in those communities. It is truly a lose-lose proposition for local governments, prospective home buyers and home building alike.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers the NFIP, which was created in 1968 to provide affordable flood insurance to property owners and encourage communities to adopt and enforce floodplain management regulations. Congress did not give FEMA land use authority and the NFIP's purpose is not to protect endangered species.

However, due to a lawsuit from environmental groups, FEMA is now required to consult with the NMFS in many states to ensure the protection of endangered species.

The NMFS recently released its Biological Opinion (BiOp) in Oregon that calls for FEMA to implement the NFIP by imposing severe restrictions and bans on future statewide floodplain development in order to protect ESA-listed anadromous fish species.

Chandler told lawmakers that compelling FEMA to harshly tighten regulations applicable to floodplain standards in Oregon and other parts of the country in order to comply with the NMFS BiOp would severely restrict development options for public and private landowners and harm property values.

"Home buyers should not be subject to increases in cost due to a regulation that not only conflicts with state and local interests, but was not the intent of the original program," he said.

"During the upcoming reauthorization of the NFIP, NAHB urges Congress to use its oversight authority to ensure the potential negative ramifications of the BiOp do not needlessly harm communities and housing affordability," Chandler added. "It is necessary to retain the NFIP's original intent to focus solely on the protection of homes and communities from flooding."

Smaller Schools Draw Student Housing Investors, But Bring Higher Risk
小型學校吸引投資者購入學生住戶投資物業，但卻帶來更高的風險
By: Bendix Anderson

Student housing investors are looking further afield in their hunt for yield—buying and developing student housing properties near smaller schools and even near community and technical colleges.

“People are getting comfortable that they can get returns in tier-3 markets,” says Dorothy Jackman, managing director of student housing services with real estate services firm Colliers International.

But investors should be wary—the reward of higher investment yields always comes with higher risks. Community colleges have suffered from declining enrollment in recent years, for example. Investors and developers should balance advantages like the availability of land or a low purchase price against the strength of the school and potentially unproven demand for student housing.

New development comes to smaller schools

“Especially during the current cycle, we’ve seen an increase in development at smaller schools,” says Gunn. Since 2011, developers have opened more than 4,400 student housing beds near 16 community and technical colleges, according to data research firm Axiometrics. Those schools include two-year colleges and four-year, for-profit institutions like Kaplan University and the University of Phoenix.

The need for housing near community and technical colleges has been relatively weak in recent years. In 2014, just 6.7 million students enrolled in two-year schools—3.65 percent less than the year before, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2015 figures aren’t available yet).

“So if we look at the national growth figure, the negative growth seen in recent years can be partially attributed to the two-year universities and four-year, for-profit universities,” says Gunn.

Investors interested in widening their search for opportunities should also take care to assess the stability of the institution. For example, ITT Tech shut down its 130 campuses in September, leaving its 35,000 students without a degree.

Hungry investors bid high

Investors are hungry for higher yields—even if those yields are only slightly higher than the competition. The yield from student housing investments continues to fall, following the trend in the multifamily sector.

Investors accepted cap rates that averaged just 6.00 percent for student housing properties in the second quarter of 2016. That’s just 21 basis points higher than the 5.79 percent average cap rate for conventional apartment properties, according to data from New York City-based research firm Real Capital Analytics (RCA). Three years earlier, student housing properties sold at cap rates averaging 6.63 percent—46 basis points higher than conventional apartment properties.

Strong demand for student housing

Overall, demand for student housing properties is very healthy. Most properties were already at least 95 percent pre-leased as of August for the new school year beginning this fall, according to Axiometrics. In August, the percentage of student housing beds pre-leased at three-year, same-facility properties was 103 basis points lower than in the record-setting year before, but was still 70 basis points higher than the pre-leasing rate recorded in August 2014.

As of August, effective rents averaged $618 per bed nationally for fall 2016, up 2.3 percent from fall 2015. Most properties are averaging rent growth between 2.0 percent and 4.0 percent, according to Axiometrics. That's significantly higher than the rate of inflation in the economy overall.

California Dreamin' for Chinese Investors in US
加州期待今年有更多來自中國的投 資者帶來資金的挹注
By: Jocelyne Zablit

Los Angeles (AFP) - From real estate, to high-tech firms to entertainment giants, Chinese investments in the United States, notably California, are moving at a dizzying pace and are on course to smash records again this year.

Chinese companies shelled out a record $15 billion last year in the US and that figure could more than double in 2016, according to research firm Rhodium Group and the National Committee on US-China Relations.

California, especially the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, has been at the forefront of China's appetite to invest overseas, with billions of dollars going into the technology, renewable energy and entertainment sectors, and increasingly into real estate.

China has pumped $8 billion into California businesses since 2000, more than in any other state, a recent Rhodium Group study said.

It added that there were 452 Chinese-owned businesses that employed more than 9,500 people in the Golden State as of the end of last year, among them the online commerce giant Alibaba Group and the Internet company Tencent Holdings Ltd.

- Buying Spree -

Cash is also flowing into Hollywood, with the Beijing-based Wanda Group paying $3.5 billion earlier this year to acquire the film studio Legendary Pictures, the largest-ever cultural takeover by China.

The buying spree is showing no signs of abating for the foreseeable future, experts say, despite tumult in China's economy and mounting rhetoric during the US presidential campaign.

"Chinese investment in the US -- and California in particular -- will almost certainly multiply in the coming years," said Matt Sheehan, who consults and writes about Chinese investment in the Golden State and whose forthcoming book is entitled "Chinafornia."

While the political climate isn't helping, cities across America are welcoming Chinese investments with open arms, drowning out the campaign rhetoric and anti-China sentiment in Congress.

"If the domestic Chinese economy continues to boom, firms will have the loose cash to make strategic investments and vanity purchases abroad," said Sheehan.

"If the Chinese economy and RMB currency go into a nosedive, you'll likely see a large capital flight disguised as overseas investment."

One sector increasingly on the Chinese shopping list in the US is real estate, with buyers snapping up expensive homes and high-end commercial properties at a record pace.

Chinese investors pumped nearly $11 billion into US real estate in the first five months of 2016, outpacing last year's total of $4.37 billion, according to a report by real estate firm Cushman & Wakefield.

- Changing Skyline -

The West Coast has proven a major draw with Chinese investments literally changing the skylines of downtown Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Of the four mega development projects currently underway in Los Angeles, three are by Chinese firms, including a $1 billion condominium and hotel development by Beijing-based Oceanwide Holdings and a similar project -- Metropolis -- by Shanghai-based Greenland Holding Group.

Once completed in 2018, Metropolis will be the largest mixed-use complex on the West Coast.

In San Francisco, Oceanwide has acquired land that will house the city's second-tallest tower and several other Chinese-backed developments are on the books.

Residential property is also part of the real estate buying frenzy, with sales more than doubling in the last three years.

"In 2016, we had $27.3 billion in volume of sales to Chinese buyers compared to $7 to $13 billion up until 2013," said Danielle Hale, an analyst with the National Association of Realtors.

She said roughly one third of those buyers found their way to California, more than to any other US state.

Increasingly, however, buyers are no longer purchasing homes purely as investments but rather as primary residences.

"We have seen a shift from people buying vacation or investment type property to people buying more primary residence type properties," Hale said.

She said Chinese buyers purchased $27.3 billion in US residential property in 2016, with roughly one third of those buyers finding their way to California.

"The momentum is clearly in place for there to be a substantial number of Chinese buyers in the market going forward," Hale said.

"And their average purchase prices -- $936,000 -- are much higher than typical average purchase prices ($266,000) of domestic buyers."

Sheehan predicted the US agriculture and food sectors will be next on the shopping list for Chinese investors.

"Years of food scandals in China have really frightened Chinese parents... and Chinese firms know they can charge much higher prices for American imports," he said.

"And this is another area where California is in a prime position."

Consumer Money Rates (Mortgage Rate, Prime Rate, etc.)

消費者市場利率：房貸、基本利率、等等

(Reprinted with Permission of the Wall Street Journal)

	Yield/Rate (%)		52-Week		Change in PCT. PTS	
Interest Rate	Last	Wk Ago	High	Low	52-week	3-yr
Federal-Funds rate target	025-0.5	0.25-0.5	0.25-0.5	0-0.25	0.25	0.25
Prime rate*	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	0.25	0.25
Money market, annual yield	0.28	0.27	0.30	0.22	-0.01	-0.13
Five-year CD, annual yield	1.19	1.17	1.48	1.17	-0.28	-0.15
30-year mortgage, fixed	3.46	3.47	4.08	3.43	-0.32	-0.95
15-year mortgage, fixed	2.72	2.72	3.34	2.70	-0.27	-0.77
Jumbo mortgages, $417,000-plus	4.22	4.29	4.90	4.02	-0.17	-0.42
Five-year adj mortgage (ARM)	3.17	3.22	3.86	2.97	0.01	-0.53
New-car loan, 48-month	3.00	3.01	3.38	2.87	-0.16	0.17