



Planning for Civic Amenities in the Sacramento Region

ULI Community Action Grant Report, January 2009

Prepared by ULI Sacramento District Council

A region-wide conversation on planning and sustained economic growth has been underway in the Sacramento Region for decades. Acting primarily through civic, professional and nonprofit organizations, business and community leaders have achieved significant milestones in regional land use and transportation planning. Recently, the conversation turned to the subject of civic amenities and the value that museums, arts venues, sports, and recreation opportunities bring to creating place and stimulating a regional economy. ULI Sacramento District Council was among the champions of the first effort aimed at developing a coherent civic infrastructure for the Region.

The Sacramento Region Blueprint

Thousands of people participated in creating the Sacramento Region Blueprint through a two-year long process that defined a preferred land use and transportation plan for the Region, which is expected to grow by more than 1.7 million people and one million new jobs in the next 50 years. The award-winning Blueprint was adopted in December 2004 by the six counties and 22 cities that comprise the Region. Blueprint now drives smart-growth land use decisions and provides a framework to prioritize public investment and private development. ULI Sacramento District Council was deeply engaged in the regional conversation, convening programs on urban growth issues and investigating ways to implement the Blueprint.

Immediately following adoption of the Blueprint, regional leaders created the Partnership for Prosperity (Partnership) to

prepare a coordinated, regional economic development strategy to support the Blueprint's land use and transportation plan. The Partnership is a coalition of 34 major business and civic organizations working together to enhance the Region's business climate, workforce and quality of life. Leaders of the overall Partnership effort were the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce (Metro Chamber), Sacramento Area Commerce & Trade Organization (SACTO), Sacramento Convention & Visitors Bureau, and Valley Vision, a nonpartisan "action-tank" founded in 1994 to foster regional problem-solving and sponsor impartial research for sound decision-making.

The Partnership released a Business Plan for the Sacramento Region in spring 2006, aimed at enabling the regional economy to keep pace with population growth, while ensuring that sustainable land use planning principles are maintained and quality of life continues to improve. Action teams of business, community and elected leaders were formed to advance the

Above: The Powerhouse Science Center is an adaptive reuse of a Pacific Gas & Electric power plant that has stood empty for nearly 50 years. The elegant, decaying hulk on the banks of the Sacramento River is being adapted by Dreyfuss & Blackford Architects into a riverfront complex that includes four floors of exhibit space within the historic building, a new digital 150-seat planetarium theater, science laboratories and classrooms, Challenger Learning Center, riverfront restaurant, and special events center. The design preserves the facade of the original 1912 Willis Polk-designed structure while adding modern building elements. Aiming for Gold-level LEED certification, the Science Center, slated for completion in 2011, will have several cutting-edge alternative-energy demonstration features. Illustration courtesy of Dreyfuss & Blackford Architects.

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Partnership's priority areas: clean energy technology, education and workforce, civic amenities, and business development.

The Civic Amenities Action Team focused on engaging the public and regional leaders to identify and prioritize regional civic amenity projects, determine potential funding sources, and develop an appropriate organizational structure to accomplish civic amenity goals. The champions of the Civic Amenities Action Team were the Sacramento Metro Chamber, the Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) and ULI Sacramento.

Civic amenities are proven to contribute to economic vitality by making a city or region an attractive business center, sparking urban redevelopment, increasing property values, improving public safety, raising the visibility of a city or region as a convention destination, and generating millions of dollars through tourism. While the Region enjoys many attractive quality of life features, noteworthy civic amenities are scattered and developed in isolation. There never has been a cohesive effort to maximize the benefits of civic amenities in the Region.

Yet civic amenities are increasingly essential to a strong regional business climate. By some estimates, two-thirds of college-educated adults aged 25 to 34 (the "creative class") decide first where to live, then where to work. Civic amenities – entertainment, the arts, sports, science, recreation and cultural attractions such as parks and museums – play an important role in the desire to live in a given area. By creating a strong, cohesive civic amenities infrastructure, the Partnership hopes to retain a higher percentage of educated people graduating from the region's extensive university system. The Partnership's leaders also aspire to a regional civic amenities infrastructure that reflects the importance of Sacramento's role as California's economic and government center, and demonstrates the Region's shift toward a more cosmopolitan identity.

ULI Community Action Grant Funds Civic Amenities Project

As part of its leadership role in the Civic Amenities Action Team, ULI Sacramento obtained a \$20,000 Community Action Grant from the Urban Land Institute, based on a proposal prepared by Tim Youmans, principal of Economic & Planning Systems and former ULI Sacramento president. The proposal focused on identifying civic amenity infrastructure projects needed to improve quality of life and attract business development to the Region, and creating a regional civic amenity infrastructure investment strategy. The ULI-funded Civic Amenities Project supported collaboration among ULI Sacramento and other champion organizations, local citizens and community leaders to create a unified funding strategy for civic infrastructure. The Project attracted an additional \$10,000 "Blueprint for America" grant from The American Institute of Architects.

The overarching purpose of the Civic Amenities Project was to assist regional leaders in creating a proactive, realistic vision for the region's next generation of arts, culture, sports and

entertainment venues, parks, museums and other civic amenities. The initial strategy was to identify a group of projects and initiatives everyone could galvanize behind, launch a major bond issue, and propose an organizational structure to disperse money raised for civic amenity projects throughout the region. Ultimately, realizing that strategy proved to be as easy as nailing Jell-O to a tree.

Components of the Civic Amenities Project supported by the ULI and AIA grants included:

1. Gathering Baseline Information
2. Listening to the Region
3. Analyzing Funding Strategies
4. Sharing Project Outcomes

Voters Nix Idea for Public Funding of Sports Arena

The ULI grant was received three weeks before the general election in 2006, which changed the focus of the Civic Amenities Project. When the grant application was written, the focus was on funding and organizational structure. But the Sacramento Kings stole the ball, when Sacramento County Measures Q and R suddenly were placed on the ballot, igniting a fire storm of opposition to public funding for a professional sports venue. In order to gain public support, the Measures also included approximately \$500 million for other, unspecified civic amenities.

The measures proposed that the County of Sacramento would levy a 1/4 percent county sales tax to generate \$1.2 billion over 15 years to pay for a new, community-funded sports and entertainment complex for the Kings. The NBA team, which moved to Sacramento in 1986, currently is owned by Las Vegas-based Maloof Sports and Entertainment Corporation. Taxpayers were asked to fund most of the construction costs and any cost overruns for a new, \$500 million arena to be located within the Railyards, an urban redevelopment of the 240-acre former Union Pacific rail yard at the western terminus of the 1869 Transcontinental Railroad. Thomas Enterprises is in the midst of transforming the blighted downtown rail yard into a vibrant new city center featuring shops, restaurants, housing, entertainment and a regional transportation hub.

Measures Q and R were hastily added to the ballot during a time of heated negotiations between the City of Sacramento and Maloof Sports and Entertainment. The Measures were seen as providing \$500 million in corporate welfare to the Maloof organization and were roundly defeated. Measure Q, an advisory vote indicating whether any new sales tax revenues approved by the voters should be used to fund a new sports and entertainment facility, received 71.43% No votes. Measure R, to levy the sales tax and use the funds for a publically funded arena, received 80.38% No votes.

Discouraged by the loss of Measures Q and R, the Metro Chamber, Convention & Visitors Bureau, and SACOG headed to the locker room, withdrawing from their champion roles on

the Civic Amenity Action Team. Since the public had clearly rejected the idea of public funding for a major sports arena and economic conditions were beginning to soften, it was apparent that proposing funding measures for other civic amenities was an idea whose time had not yet come.

At this point, the focus of the Civic Amenities effort changed to generating enthusiasm for existing and proposed individual projects, with an eye to creating a civic amenities master plan that could be implemented when economic conditions improved. With its new focus, the Civic Amenities Action Team continued to pursue its goals.

Gathering Baseline Information. The first inventory of all existing and planned civic amenities was compiled, revealing a stunning number of amenities existing throughout the Region. The inventory, compiled by the Sacramento Regional Research Institute, showed the Region to have 31 sports venues, 20 fine and performing arts venues, 43 museums, and 124 recreation facilities. An amenities map has yet to be completed, but the list of amenities enables leaders to identify areas of overlap or gaps in the amenities at the regional, local and sub-regional levels.

An inclusive, ground-up survey of residents and stakeholder groups across the six county Region was implemented to develop a proactive, realistic "wish list" for the next generation of amenities. When the community was surveyed, people were surprised to learn how many amenities already were in place. To many people, the idea of pursuing new amenities seemed less important than promoting the amenities already available to residents and visitors alike.

Listening to the Region. The Civic Amenities Action Team convened a series of forums with community leaders, ULI members, university experts, organizations, and local citizens to envision and prioritize future amenities, based on their personal preferences. Listening to the Region, the Partnership heard a cacophony of viewpoints. While valuable information emerged from the arts, sports and community stakeholders—which had never before met to discuss a shared vision—no comprehensive vision or approach emerged. Priorities changed depending on which stakeholders attended which meetings. Collaborative efforts proved difficult, the outreach process was slow, leadership from a broad spectrum of the community was absent, and, ultimately, stakeholders did not coalesce on broader issues.

Listening to the public proved to be more productive. "Experiences," a 380 s.f. interactive traveling exhibit, was created to raise awareness of the Region's amenities and to obtain community input on how people would prioritize future investment in civic amenities. Residents in the Sacramento Region were asked to share what they love about their home, and help shape the area's future by deciding what attractions are still needed. In focused conversations, people were asked:

1. Which civic amenities in the Sacramento Region do you currently enjoy?

EXPERIENCES home
 about
 tour dates
 supporters
 newsroom

Vote now.

What does your Sacramento Region look like?

SEE THE RESULTS SO FAR!

where? (the map)

NEXT TOUR DATE:
 May 7, 10am-4pm
 Radisson Hotel
 (in the Grove)

complete list of amenities

your home. your priorities. your vote.

agri-tourism
 recreation
 performing arts
 museums and art galleries
 kid-friendly destinations
 sports and entertainment
 river walk
 town square



2. Do you feel these amenities are adequate?
3. What's missing?
4. What needs to be improved?

A new model for civic engagement—“Vote With Your Dollars!”—was introduced as an interactive way for people to weigh in on the civic amenities that were important to them. Visitors to the exhibit were given 10 ticket stubs to use as “dollars” to vote for where they would like to see future investments made. Civic amenities were organized into eight categories: Agri-tourism, River Walk, Recreation, Performing Arts, Kid-Friendly Destinations, Sports & Entertainment, Museums and Art Galleries, and Town Square. From April 10 through May 10, 2008, the exhibit was displayed at 10 locations throughout the Sacramento Region, including shopping malls, arts events, entertainment venues, farmer’s markets, hotels and parks. More than 1,600 people participated in the exhibit. A comprehensive website, www.pfpexperiences.com, was created so residents unable to visit the exhibit could vote. The website continues to accept votes and display ongoing results of public preference. Both the exhibit and the results from “Vote With Your Dollars!” will become part of an education campaign if and when public funding is sought for future civic amenities.

Analyzing Funding Strategies. Before Measures Q and R blew the notion of public funding out of the water, public financing research conducted by the University of California Davis Center for the Study of Regional Change was undertaken to investigate public funding sources and explore how the Region could obtain the biggest bang for the bucks generated by property, sales, hotel and car taxes. A series of revenue estimates showed that an increase of the sales tax by 0.1% would generate \$200 million over 30 years; a 0.25% increase would yield \$500 million; and a 0.5% tax hike would bring in \$1 billion. General Obligations Bonds supported by a property tax override from 0.1% to 0.5% were estimated to generate between \$400 million and \$2 billion over 30 years. While this research was not deep enough to support a tax-change ballot initiative, it offered an order-of-magnitude understanding that can inform decision makers as they move forward.

Sharing Project Outcomes. ULI and Valley Vision convened two regional conferences intended to further the dialogue on regional

amenities, report on opportunity sites, study best practices in regions with successfully implemented civic amenities districts, and explore proposed arts, cultural, sports and recreation facilities planned or in construction in the Sacramento Region. After the first conference, the original intent to develop regional funding strategies for civic amenities was tabled and the focus of the Civic Amenities Infrastructure Project switched to a discussion on the value of creating a civic amenity master plan.

“Civic Amenities and Economic Prosperity: The Role of Arts, Culture, and Recreation in Regional Economies and Place Making,” held on September 28, 2007, was attended by 150 people. The linkage between civic amenities and great places was discussed by Christopher Cabaldon, mayor of West Sacramento and co-chair of the Partnership for Prosperity. Jim Williams, AIA, principal of Williams + Paddon, Architects + Planners and the Partnership’s co-chair, gave an overview of initiatives taken by the Civic Amenities Action Team. An interactive “Vote With Your Dollars!” exercise enlivened the program. Finally, the program provided insight on how other regions have worked together to provide funding and organizational support for the development of arts, culture, entertainment and recreation facilities, as well as on-going funding for activities on a regional scale. (Presentations from both conferences can be found at www.ulisacramento.org under programs/past programs.)

John Hickenlooper, mayor of Denver, Colorado spoke via video about the common sense business attitude that can eliminate political barriers to allow the creation of a civic amenities district. He introduced a case study of the Denver Science and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), which was further detailed by Floyd Ciruli, founder of Ciruli & Associates, a Denver-based research and consulting firm. SCFD was created in 1988, when the Colorado Legislature and metropolitan voters approved a one-tenth of a cent sales tax, collected in the seven-county Denver metropolitan area, to help fund financially struggling regional and local scientific and cultural organizations. Since the legislation was enacted, about \$40 million per year has been distributed to more than 300 organizations. When the Legislature reviewed the economic impact of SCFD in 2001, it found that metropolitan Denver’s cultural organizations generated more than \$1 billion in economic impact: \$648 million in organization spending and \$435 million in event-related spending by cultural audiences.

Vote with Your Dollars	
\$110	▪ Market or improve existing assets
\$96	▪ Public Markets
\$50	▪ Capitol Mall
\$69	▪ State-of-the-Art Community/Civic Center
\$77	▪ Town Center
\$11	▪ Olympic Facilities
\$211	▪ River Walk
\$82	▪ Arts Incubator
\$6	▪ Wellness Center
\$78	▪ Central Park
\$57	▪ Nationally-known Festivals
\$57	▪ Large Zoo
\$95	▪ Theater Venues
\$136	▪ Sports & Entertainment Complex
\$86	▪ Major Museums
\$65	▪ Kid-friendly Destinations
\$51	▪ Themed Districts
\$53	▪ Other:

- | Top 7 Breakdown 9/28 |
|--------------------------------------|
| 1. River Walk |
| 2. Sports and Entertainment Complex |
| 3. Market or improve existing assets |
| 4. Public Markets |
| 5. Theatre Venues |
| 6. Major Museums |
| 7. Arts Incubator |

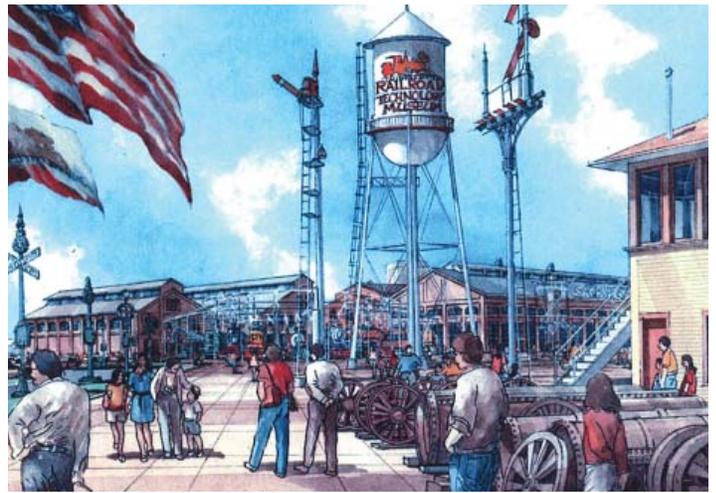
In 2001, cultural organizations employed nearly 7,700 people, making the SCFD's cultural institutions the 6th largest non-government employer in the Denver area.

A series of fascinating case studies was presented by Myra Millinger, executive director of Maricopa Partnership for Arts and Culture (MPAC), a regional non-profit organization established in 2004 to identify and secure dedicated funding for non-profit arts and culture organizations in the Phoenix area. In 2007, MPAC undertook comparative research on dedicated public funding models for arts and culture that focused primarily on sales tax initiatives to support Denver's Scientific and Cultural Facilities District; Salt Lake City's Zoo, Arts and Parks; Albuquerque's Quality of Life Initiative; and the Allegheny Regional Asset District in Pittsburgh. In addition to analyzing how the various sales tax mechanisms were structured, the study showed how funds were distributed.

A local panel completed the conference with diverse perspectives on civic amenities. David Hosley, president & general manager of public television station KVIE moderated comments by Jeff von Kaenel, president/CEO of the Sacramento News & Review; Oleg Kaganovich, principal of DFJ Frontier; Mary Healy, director of the Sacramento Zoo; John McCassey, executive director of the Sacramento Sports Commission; and Christopher McSwain, community affairs director for the California Musical Theatre.

“Civic Amenities and Economic Prosperity: Developing a Strategy to Expand Arts, Culture and Recreation in the Sacramento Region,” held on November 6, 2008, was attended by 100 people. By the time this second ULI Policy Program rolled around, the national economy had worsened, further dampening thought of funding for civic amenities. Instead, the conference focused on the civic amenities master plans developed by the cities of Indianapolis and Dallas to guide in the construction of zoos, museums, theater complexes and other major civic amenities. Although the Sacramento Region lacks a cohesive civic amenities master plan, some significant regional civic amenity projects were reviewed. The program concluded with a discussion of whether the Region would benefit from developing a master plan for civic amenities by Bruce Starkweather, AIA, managing partner of Lionakis, a multi-disciplinary firm of architects, planners, engineers and interior designers; Mark Truscott, ASLA, principal of Quadriga Landscape Architecture and Planning; Jim Williams, AIA, managing partner of Williams + Paddon Architects + Planners; and Robert Whit, executive director of White River State Park in Indianapolis.

Owen Lang, FASLA, principal of Sasaki Associates, discussed how the Dallas Arts District Master Plan resulted from discussions with cultural entities and city officials on where to locate a civic amenity district to best benefit the region. Since the urban form of Dallas at that time (1977) had no central gathering place, the city determined to invest \$10 million in seed money to create a master plan for what was to become the 16-block Arts District. The urban redevelopment concept centered on designing a great walking street within which a retail and commercial environment could be created. Ground level spaces were planned for



Rail Technology Museum, courtesy of California District State Museums & Historic Parks, West Office Exhibit Design and Thomas Enterprises.

activities to enliven the street, and office space was limited to a maximum of 25% of the space in each block. Lang detailed how a consortium of property owners participated with the city in paying for maintenance operations and programming use of public spaces.

Robert Whitt, executive director of White River State Park, described how Indianapolis was able to achieve extensive urban redevelopment and realize a strong return on its economic investment through the determined leadership of two mayors and the dedicated commitment of that region's business and cultural leaders. In 1968, Mayor Mike Lugar set up inclusionary commission of people from various socio-economic and racial backgrounds and interest groups, which became known as the “crazy dreamers.” The dreamers informally visualized what was to become the Indianapolis Regional Center Plan. Jim Morris, then a corporate CEO and now president of the Indiana Pacers NBA team, brought together a group of banking, insurance, utilities and other business interests, including Eli Lilly and the Lilly Endowment, to help fund the master plan. When William Hudnutt succeeded Lugar as mayor, he led a committed group of civic leaders to achieve a remarkable series of catalyst projects that transformed an empty, mile-square patch of urban blight into one of the most successful arts, sports and entertainment centers in the country.

Some significant civic amenity projects planned or under construction in the Sacramento Region brought a local perspective to the conference. Cathy Taylor, Capitol District superintendent of the California District State Museums & Historic Parks, described two proposed additions to the extensive network of parks and historic parks in the Region: the Rail Technology Museum and California Indian Heritage Center. These projects are anticipated to bolster the regional economy by raising the visibility of Sacramento as a destination for conventions and cultural/heritage tourism.

The Rail Technology Museum is planned to preserve and occupy the Central Shops, notable historic brick structures built beginning in 1868 at the Union Pacific rail yard, now part of a

massive urban redevelopment project by Thomas Enterprise that will virtually double the size of downtown Sacramento. One historic building will be transformed into a public marketplace that will host a farmers' market, live entertainment and other amenities, becoming a regional gathering place. Two historic buildings, the Boiler Shop and the Erecting Shop, will be transferred to State Parks for use as a Rail Technology Museum. About \$13 million in funding approved by voters through Proposition 40 and Proposition 116 has been designated to rehabilitate the buildings. The Boiler Shop will house a proposed "working museum" where the public can watch and interact with craftsmen and artisans as they restore locomotives and rail cars. The Erecting Shop will become a more formal museum, funded largely by State Parks and its nonprofit supporter the California State Railroad Museum Foundation.

The California Indian Heritage Center (CIHC) is planned for a 43 acre site overlooking the confluence of the American and Sacramento rivers in the City of West Sacramento. CIHC will house the state's largest collection of American Indian artifacts, including more than 3,000 California Indian baskets and priceless regalia. The design for CIHC will reflect Indian values in form, materials and the Center's placement on the land. Plans for the facility include formal exhibit galleries, a research center, meeting rooms, museum store and food service. The grounds will be restored to their natural state and will accommodate seasonal outdoor programs and ceremonial areas for special events and traditional gatherings.

An ambitious plan to expand exhibit and research space and integrate revenue-generating facilities into a new Sacramento Zoo was presented by Mary Healy, director and CEO of the Sacramento Zoological Society. Open since 1927, the Sacramento Zoo is home to more than 140 native, rare and endangered species. In the early 1960s, the zoo was enlarged to its current 14.3 acres and new habitats were built. Expansion plans for the zoo include adding an upscale restaurant and winery; visitors lodge, possibly with safari-style accommodations; and a conference center with amphitheater. Education activities will be encouraged with the planned addition of a children's zoo, classrooms and an organic garden. Expanding the idea of the zoo as a recreation area, the new facility may include a bike path, tubing ring, interactive adult/kid playground, and rock climbing wall. A feasibility study is anticipated within a year to evaluate whether an opportunity site at Sutter's Landing Regional Park is an appropriate location for the new zoo.

An equally impressive plan for the "California Garden: A World Class Showcase of Horticulture and California Culture" was presented by Jeff Townsend, a principal and Sacramento operations manager for Jacobs and vice president of the Central California Valley Horticultural Foundation. The ambitious conceptual site plan for a 200 acre botanical garden proposes a diverse range of experiences intended to celebrate the diverse immigrant and indigenous groups that form California's heritage and the exceptional range of landscapes found in the state. The

botanical garden is envisioned to house an Exhibit Hall; five-acre Conservatory; California Environments Garden; Children's Discovery Garden; series of Classic Gardens reflecting the ancient cultures of Central and South America, Europe, Asia and Africa; various theme gardens; a Commons for outdoor festivals and shows; and Community Gardens where people can rent space to plant their own gardens.

Bill Blake, managing director of the B Street Theater, presented an overview of performing arts centers in various states of development in Sacramento, including the New B Street Theatre Complex, a Performing Arts Center at the Railyards, and the E. Claire Raley Studios for the Performing Arts.

Bob Chase, AIA, Chief Building Official for the City of Sacramento, reported on a proposed Capital Mall Design Competition. The Capital Mall is a simple boulevard with a wide grass median that connects the Sacramento River to the State Capitol. As California's ceremonial "front door," the Mall leaves much to be desired. The City of Sacramento is investigating how best to transform a stretch of lawn into a grand urban space. The City is engaged in discussions with stakeholders, the State government and private property owners along the Mall to determine whether to proceed with a design competition or to release a focused RFP/RFQ for improvements to this important civic boulevard. A decision on how to move forward is anticipated in the first quarter of 2009.



California Botanical Garden, illustration by Ron Allison, courtesy of the Central California Valley Horticultural Foundation.

Lessons Learned

1. Perhaps the biggest benefit of this civic conversation was the enhanced awareness of the role civic amenities play in the health of the Region. A heightened awareness of the Region's civic assets was augmented by research information readily made available to the public at the Partnership for Prosperity link at www.valleyvision.org. The effort brought together many groups from the arts, sports, and museums communities into direct contact with the land use and business communities.

2. An equally important benefit was the collaboration forged among The American Institute of Architects, American Society of Landscape Architects, Urban Land Institute and Valley Vision to move forward with "next step" projects. These groups are now collaborating in several areas.

3. This first attempt to coalesce a leadership group to guide the development of regional civic amenities revealed the difficulty of bringing together and sustaining an effort to develop regional priorities and funding programs for civic amenities. Attempts to prioritize the project(s) that would be the most significant and deserve regional support were unsuccessful. Each group or sub-region tended to be too committed to its specific interests. Changing mind sets and promoting cooperation will require a long timeframe and sustained efforts. After the initial funding was raised to kick off the Civic Amenities process, no additional funding was provided beyond the initial grants received from ULI and AIA.

4. It became quite clear that the champions of a regional civic amenities process will have to be in it for the long haul. While participation is likely from arts, sports and cultural organizations, it also is necessary for leadership to come from organizations that provide a region-wide and comprehensive perspective.

5. The champions of the Civic Amenities Action Team can serve as catalysts to convert a project-oriented approach to developing civic amenities into a larger context, possibly through creating a conceptual civic amenity infrastructure master plan. Case studies from Dallas and Indianapolis make a convincing case for the importance of identifying opportunity sites and forming dedicated districts in which to cluster civic amenities. A conceptual civic amenity master plan can serve as a vehicle to enlist the support of stakeholders and political entities.

6. Like most areas, local governments within the Sacramento Region tend to be parochial. However, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments is making headway educating local political leadership to think more regionally. As California's capital city, Sacramento has tended to let government—the region's largest employer—dominate regional planning. The result often is turf battles that have local cities competing for state facilities, rather than cooperating to site amenities where they would best benefit the Region. The parochial and competitive focus has led to regional nonprofit organizations providing strong leadership in land use, transportation and civic amenity planning in recent years.



The New B Street Theatre Complex, located on 38,000 s.f. of land donated by Sutter Health as part of the expansion of its urban medical campus, is in the process of securing \$1 million in private and public funding. The theater, designed by Akroum Moisian Architects, is intended to be part of a mixed use project that proposes condominium housing placed over the theater. The theater lobby is planned to serve as a community living room, with a bar and bistro.



The E. Claire Raley Studios for the Performing Arts is the Region's most collaborative civic amenity. Four of the city's highest profile nonprofit performing arts groups will occupy the professional and administration center: the Sacramento Ballet, Philharmonic, Opera Company and the California Musical Theater. The Studios, a \$18.1 million four-story complex designed by Dreyfuss & Blackford Architects, provides rehearsal and classroom spaces, as well as physical therapy, lockers, changing rooms, costume/sewing studio and sound/video production areas. The City of Sacramento committed \$9 million to the project as part of its Community Reinvestment Capital Improvement Program bond issue approved in February 2006, and has extended a \$5 million bridge loan. Philanthropist Joyce Raley Teel—whose father, Tom Raley, founded the Raley's, Bel Air and Nob Hill grocery company in 1935—donated \$5 million to the Studios, which are named in honor of her mother.



Performing Arts Center at the Railyards, a conceptual part of the 240 acre Railyards development that features a performing arts and education center surrounded by art galleries, jazz clubs and outdoor restaurants, is tentatively planned in the historic Central Shops area. Illustration courtesy of Stantec (formerly Chong Partners) and Thomas Enterprises.

7. The Civic Amenities Infrastructure Project increased the awareness of what ULI Sacramento can achieve in the community. ULI members have found new ways to volunteer their expertise to improve regional quality of life. Many new groups were made aware of ULI Sacramento's efforts to improve the quality of life in the Region. As a result of the civic amenities efforts, as well as many other District Council activities, ULI Sacramento was designated the Organization of the Year by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments.

Follow-Up Efforts

At the end of the second civic amenities conference, regional leaders were invigorated with renewed enthusiasm to keep the civic amenities flame burning.

The Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce recently formed a Capital Region Core Task Force to encourage the cities of Sacramento and West Sacramento to collaborate, rather than compete, for state building projects. The Task Force is encouraging the State of California Department of General Services to consider how the placement of state projects within the Sacramento Region could serve as a development catalyst to achieve regional planning goals. The Task Force may expand its efforts to identify a regional consensus on which civic amenities should go into the urban core and which should be located throughout the various sub-regions.

ULI and AIA Central Valley Chapter have invited champions of the Partnership for Prosperity's Civic Amenities Action Team to participate in a brainstorming session to assist in the creation of a visionary concept for a civic amenities infrastructure throughout the Sacramento Region. The goals:

- Develop a map showing existing and proposed civic amenities in the Region, identify opportunity sites for future amenities to increase synergies, and provide a document to further the development of a Civic Amenities Master Plan.
- Create a PowerPoint presentation that provides a framework for the creation of a vision for civic amenities in the Sacramento Region. The framework would emphasize the integrative potential for amenities; identify large opportunity sites with the potential to house major civic amenities, with an eye to preserving these parcels; and consider transportation links to those sites. The PowerPoint will be available for use by organizations throughout the Region.
- Suggest a process to staff and fund the creation of a strategy to implement the civic amenities vision through a Civic Amenities Master Plan that emphasizes alignments and efficiencies to maximize scarce resources and support critical investments to get things moving.

Despite a gloomy economic outlook for the next few years, the region-wide conversation on planning and sustained economic growth will continue to focus on civic amenities and the value they offer to a growing region. When bears turn into bulls, the region's nonprofits will be poised to implement a coherent civic amenities infrastructure plan that furthers the quality of life in California's Capital Region.

For more information on the Civic Amenities Infrastructure Project, contact Mary Sater, ULI Sacramento District Council executive director at marysater@comcast.net or Tim Youmans at tyoumans@epsac.com. Report written by Janice Fillip.