

The Mayors' Institute on City Design

The National Endowment for the Arts

The United States Conference of Mayors

The American Architectural Foundation

special session in partnership with

Bank of America

USDA - United States Forest Service

Meeting Summary

MICD 44

Denver, Colorado

July 12 - 14, 2009

The Mayors' Institute on City Design is a program that conducts a series of small, closed-door two-day symposia intended to offer a small group of invited mayors a better understanding of the design of American cities. Participation is limited to eighteen to twenty people: half are mayors and half are urban design experts and other resource people.

The format encourages a high degree of participation and interchange. Each mayor presents a design problem from his or her city, which is analyzed by the mayors and the design professionals who, working together, discuss how an appropriate design process can help solve the problem. The interchange between mayors and the resource team sparks lively debate, opens new perspectives, and leads to creative proposals for solutions.

The resource team also makes presentations on general aspects of urban design. These provide important background for the mayors on planning, urban design, landscape design, and the role of developers. The mayors and designers discuss generic and specific problems facing cities today and explore how the public and private sectors can work together to improve the conditions of our cities. Particular emphasis is placed on how the design process works, and on the importance of the mayor as city designer.

The mayors represent a wide variety of cities, towns and villages and bring a wide variety of design issues to the table. The resource team members range from architects and planners to public policy specialists, developers, preservationists, sociologists, lawyers, and historians. They include practicing professionals and distinguished academics.

The Mayors' Institute on City Design is a program sponsored jointly by the National Endowment for the Arts, the United States Conference of Mayors, and the American Architectural Foundation.

This document is the meeting summary of the 44th National Session of the Mayors' Institute on City Design, which was hosted by Denver Mayor John W. Hickenlooper, on July 22-24, 2009. This summary draws on the background materials prepared for the Institute's Briefing Book as well as on the actual presentations made during the Institute.

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Agenda

Wednesday, July 22, 2009

Throughout the day Arriving participants will be collected by car service from their inbound flights to Denver International Airport (DEN).

5:15 p.m. Meet in the Hotel Teatro lobby to depart by shuttle for Opening Reception

5:30 – 6:30 p.m. Opening Reception and Lecture (public event)
Denver Art Museum, Hamilton Building, Lewis I. Sharp Auditorium
100 W 14th Ave Pkwy

6:30 p.m. Introductions/Moderators:
Tom Cochran, The United States Conference of Mayors
Maurice Cox, National Endowment for the Arts

Panel Discussion: Mayors' Conversations on City Design
The Honorable Oscar B. Goodman, Mayor of the City of Las Vegas
The Honorable John W. Hickenlooper, Mayor of the City of Denver

8:00 p.m. Depart by shuttle for dinner (Institute participants & invited guests only)
Museum of Contemporary Art | Rooftop Terrace
1485 Delgany Street

Welcoming Remarks:
Tom Cochran, The United States Conference of Mayors
Maurice Cox, National Endowment for the Arts
Robert J. Likos, Bank of America
Susan Mockenhaupt, United States Forest Service

Thursday, July 23, 2009

- Before 8:15 a.m. Full breakfast buffet available at Prima Ristorante in the Hotel Teatro (Participants are also welcome to have a full breakfast via room service on their own schedule. Breakfast may be charged to your room.)
- 8:15 a.m. Depart from Hotel Teatro lobby for shuttle to Taxi by Zeppelin
- 8:30 a.m. Light breakfast and coffee available in Taxi II
- 8:45 –9:00 a.m. Introductions and Overview
Nicholas Foster & Paul Brophy
- 9:00 – 9:20 a.m. Resource Team Presentation: **Will Bruder**
- 9:20 – 10:40 a.m. Mayor Case Study Presentation & Discussion: Fresno, California
The Honorable Ashley Swarengin
- 10:40 – 11:00 a.m. Coffee Break
- 11:00 – 11:20 a.m. Resource Team Presentation: **Dena Belzer**
- 11:20 – 12:40 p.m. Mayor Case Study Presentation & Discussion: Las Vegas, Nevada
The Honorable Oscar B. Goodman
- 12:40– 1:45 p.m. Lunch at the FUEL Café
- 1:45 – 2:00 p.m. Tour of Taxi by Zeppelin
Tour Guide: **Will Bruder**
- 2:00 p.m. Group Photograph
- 2:00 – 2:20 p.m. Resource Team Presentation: **James Feild**
- 2:20 – 3:40 p.m. Mayor Case Study Presentation & Discussion: Mesa, Arizona
The Honorable Scott Smith
- 3:40 – 4:00 p.m. Coffee Break
- 4:00 – 4:20 p.m. Resource Team Presentation: **Matt Arnn**
- 4:20 – 5:40 p.m. Mayor Case Study Presentation & Discussion: Sacramento, California
The Honorable Kevin Johnson
- 5:45 p.m. Depart from Taxi by Zeppelin by shuttle to Hotel Teatro
- 6:45 p.m. Meet in Hotel Teatro lobby and depart on foot for dinner
- 7:00 p.m. Dinner at *Tamayo* (Institute participants & invited guests only)
1409 Larimer St
- 9:00 p.m. Return on foot to Hotel Teatro

Friday, July 24, 2009

- Before 8:15 a.m. Full breakfast buffet available at Prima Ristorante in the Hotel Teatro (Participants are also welcome to have a full breakfast via room service on their own schedule. Breakfast may be charged to your room.)
- 8:30 a.m. Depart from Hotel Teatro lobby for shuttle to Taxi by Zeppelin
- 8:45 a.m. Light breakfast and coffee available in the Taxi II
- 9:00 – 9:20 a.m. Resource Team Presentation: **Raymond W. Gastil**
- 9:20 – 10:40 a.m. Mayor Case Study Presentation & Discussion: Boise, Idaho
The Honorable David H. Bieter
- 10:40 – 11:00 a.m. Coffee Break
- 11:00 – 11:20 a.m. Resource Team Presentation: **Elizabeth K. Meyer**
- 11:20 – 12:40 p.m. Mayor Case Study Presentation & Discussion: Santa Fe, New Mexico
The Honorable David Coss
- 12:40– 1:30 p.m. Lunch at the FUEL Café
- 1:30 – 1:50 p.m. Resource Team Presentation: **Aaron M. Nichols Crowell**
- 1:50 – 3:10 p.m. Mayor Case Study Presentation & Discussion: Irvine, California
The Honorable Sukhee Kang
- 3:10 – 3:30 p.m. Resource Team Presentation: **Lucinda Sanders**
- 3:30 – 3:45 p.m. Session evaluation and closing remarks
- 4:00 p.m. Return by shuttle to Hotel Teatro
- 6:45 p.m. Depart from Hotel Teatro lobby on foot for Closing Dinner
- 7:00 p.m. Closing Dinner at *Bistro Vendôme* (Institute participants & invited guests only)
1416 Larimer St # H

Mayors & Cities



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Case Study: Boise, Idaho

The legacy of the late John Richard “Jack or J.R.” Simplot – the entrepreneur extraordinaire who created one of world’s largest agribusiness companies (and subsequently made Idaho known for its “famous potatoes”) – lives on in the City of Boise. The Simplot family’s foundation, the J.R. Simplot Foundation Inc., has introduced plans to finance and develop a large-scale, multi-use complex in the heart of Boise’s central business district.

Jack’s Urban Meeting Place, otherwise referred to as “JUMP,” named in Simplot’s honor, is slated to occupy one parcel – within a predominately vacant four-block area – between Front and Myrtle Streets, and South Ninth and South Eleventh Streets. The plan that has been introduced to City officials, includes a large structure that rings the contours of the existing superblock that would have its base raised approximately 26 feet above the street grid (meaning the development of the structure’s inhabitable floors begin at roughly the fourth floor, creating street-level sightlines into the complex’s interior “courtyard”). The complex itself is planned to include: a 4-acre park; an amphitheater for live events that will have both dinner seating for more than 500, and theaterstyle seating for nearly 1,200; a sculpture garden that is slated to display a collection of antique tractors and other items (which supports J.R. Simplot’s original idea for an agriculture museum); studio space for professional and amateur artists; several helixes that would provide 1,100 parking spaces throughout 4 floors; and variety of outdoor and indoor venues for a variety of outdoor, passive recreational uses. The complex may also house the headquarters of the J.R. Simplot Company, as well as Micron Technology (a company that J.R. Simplot helped finance), occupying roughly 200,000 sq. ft. of office space.

While the Simplot Foundation is the single property owner of two of the three downtown superblocks (parcels “A” and “C”), the

complex is only envisioned to be situated on parcel “C,” which is closest to the city’s central core. Meanwhile, the city’s convention center – which is currently located on Grove Plaza – owns the “B” parcel that is situated between parcels “A” and “C”, and has produced its own development plans to build a new convention center on the “B” parcel. Additionally, the Simplot Foundation has approached the City to propose the development of a section of the JUMP complex that could serve as the new home of the City’s main library, which, is currently located along downtown’s southern edge of the Boise River.

The City’s redevelopment agency, the Capital City Development Corporation (CCDC), has envisioned long-term plans for the area, and would like to build upon the strengths of some of the recent redevelopment efforts that have occurred near the intersections of Broad and South Eighth Streets. The recent community visioning process of the Pioneer Corridor Master Plan has evolved into a large-scale plan that envisions a transition from passive green spaces (including the River Street/Myrtle Street Urban Renewal District – the neighboring parcels along the southwestern edge of the study area) toward a system more integrated with the existing urban development patterns associated with Downtown Boise (including Grove Plaza, and the neighboring parcels along the southeastern and northeastern edge of the study area).

As the Myrtle Street crossing is critical to successfully connecting the downtown area to the River Street/Myrtle Street Urban Renewal District, the City would like to work with the JUMP developers to produce a plan that balances the needs of the Simplot Foundation with those of the greater downtown community – including – incorporating the recommendations of the Pioneer Corridor Master Plan into the overall plan for the study area.

Case Study: Boise, Idaho (continued)

Questions:

- 1) Does the JUMP development concept – as it is currently conceived – complement the existing urban fabric of Downtown Boise?
- 2) Does the concept enhance or diminish the City’s existing plans for the Pioneer Corridor Master Plan?
- 3) While the JUMP development proposal is just one facet of a series of urban redevelopment planning pieces, how should the City knit the varying planning pieces together?
- 4) If the City’s convention center commits to relocating its facilities to the “B” site, how would the new location work with the JUMP proposal and the surrounding blocks?
- 5) If the current site of the City’s main library is not serving the library’s needs, would the relocation to the proposed JUMP site better serve its needs? How could the City finance a relocation of the library?

Discussion and Ideas

Boise Mayor Beiter discussed a series of plans to redevelop several, large parcels located within Downtown Boise. The Mayor explained that the City is eager to work with various stakeholders to produce a plan that balances the needs of private landowners with the needs of the greater downtown community.

Resource team members suggested that the City consider reevaluating the relationship between the existing street grid with the current plans for the various parcels to ensure that whatever development plans do unfold, that the plans are executed in a fashion that connects the various downtown amenities with the adjacent neighborhoods.

The resource team offered the following advice:

The members of the resource team offered a critique of the Jack’s Place project, which is currently being proposed by the development team assembled on behalf of the Simplot Family Foundation. The design team articulated that the current plan resembles something of a resort-type model, which, doesn’t work in an urban environment like that of downtown Boise.

As it stands, there is no rationale for the development the Simplots are proposing, given their stated needs; the size, scale, and massing of this project is simply unwarranted and excessive for the scale of the parcel. Thus, the design team suggested the City press for more for an identity of the project, demanding the Simplots create a solution that showcases more context sensitive design. Resource team members added that the City should not come across as overly critical of the design of the complex, but rather, request that the Simplots work within the parameters of the City’s existing Downtown

Case Study: Boise, Idaho (continued)

Plan. Designers suggested the City reframe this as a communication/articulation issue, enabling the Simplots to create a cultural district that is more of a part of the city (e.g. Pulitzer model in St. Louis).

Designers went on to suggested the City suggest the creation of the “Simplot District”, which is more than just a “Simplot superblock.” This would help move the developers away from the idea of a single building and promote the idea of a district that honors the Simplot family. Ultimately, the designers articulated that the City need not be afraid to say “no” because, to the City’s advantage, where else are the Simplots going to go? The designers suggested the City “play smart ball, not hard ball,” and bring in nationally/internationally renowned urban designers and planners to add some muscle and value rather than fighting the Simplots one-on-one.

Additional ideas:

- Support the Pioneer Corridor Master Plan concept: it’s a good plan and a good framework to help think about uses on this site;
- Consider interim landscape options;
- Do a shadow study on the Simplot’s model, otherwise, the current plan’s edges will likely destroy pedestrian activity;
- Do a build-out study for the area ten blocks in each direction of the project site and then map the results;
- Seek out a national urban design team to propose alternative ideas for the site;
- Do not diminish the civic value of library! (the Library/Art museum as a cultural portal into the city is too valuable to simply remove);
- Maintain the urban grid, trading the east-west street for north-south access if the City is asked to make concessions;
- Address speed and access to the site and do a comprehensive parking study;
- Expand the current convention center’s

footprint, but don’t just build a new one on the project site because the existing one is perceived as aging; and

- The introduction of a street car line is a supported concept, but can it connect to the river/gateway? Look at multiple areas of influence (such as on property value/planning) and not just people moving and maximize the streetcar’s reach as the development area as it will undoubtedly spur new development. Also, increase the proposed return line (widening it beyond 1 block of where the City would like to capture development), as people will walk one additional block.

Case Study: Santa Fe, New Mexico

The headwaters of the Santa Fe River gather east of New Mexico's capital city of Santa Fe, located in the high country of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The river and its watershed are made up of the main course of the Santa Fe River, plus all of the streams and arroyos that flow into it. As the river flows through the developed, urban environments of Santa Fe, the watershed gathers all of the waters that flow from the streets, parking lots, buildings, vacant lots and all of the front and back yards of adjacent landscapes. The entire watershed covers roughly 285 square miles. Everything within this area flows to, and is a part of, the river system.

Historically, the river has provided for wildlife habitat, drinking water, irrigation, recreation and cultural needs, and its flow has been perennial or nearly perennial. In the past century and a half, the river's ecology and social function have changed drastically as Santa Fe has developed. The river is severely entrenched, particularly as it travels westward toward Santa Fe's wastewater treatment plant. Years of sand and gravel extraction are responsible for much of the river channel's deepening west of the City limits. Problems within the watershed have been exacerbated by the increase in stormwater runoff due to the increased area of impermeable surfaces in Downtown Santa Fe. The river channel is the primary cache for rushing storm waters that inundate city streets and storm drains during intense summer rains. In April of 2007, the Santa Fe River was named America's Most Endangered River by American Rivers, a Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group. In June of 2007, the New Mexico Heritage Preservation Alliance named the Santa Fe River as one of the state's twelve most endangered places as a result of its damming and resultant intermittent flows.

The people of Santa Fe – and City leadership – began to realize the damage that has occurred

within the river system. A 1995 Santa Fe River Corridor Master Plan, developed by the Santa Fe River Task Force, was a comprehensive plan to address the river and general concepts and ideas to improve the river corridor. A second 1999 plan (Wilson & Company) essentially supported the 1995 plans and built upon its strengths. Now, with a renewed appreciation of the potential environmental, aesthetic and social benefits of a healthier river system, the City of Santa Fe (with Santa Fe County as an active partner) is now pursuing a broad range of actions to improve the watershed.

In 2008 City residents approved a \$30M bond issue for park improvements and renovations. \$2.3M of the bond is earmarked for the Santa Fe River Parkway. Work along the parkway will include planting new trees and landscaping improvements. New plantings and irrigation will provide cover, breeding areas, and stopover habitat for a wide array of species. There have also been discussions of creating an amphitheater along the corridor to draw people to the corridor – to entice them to spend time walking along the river's edge. Additional streetscape enhancements – including enhancements to the walking trail facilities, and the creation of new amenities such as new pedestrian bridges, picnic areas, sitting walls, and enhanced street lighting along the streets that run both parallel to and bisect the river – should help calm traffic and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment along the corridor.

Additionally, as sections of the downtown area are being revitalized – such as the successful Guadalupe and Railyard Districts, located near the southwestern area of the study area – there exists an opportunity to better establish the river corridor as a conduit that links the Downtown Santa Fe Plaza to these districts and other city landmarks.

Case Study: Santa Fe, New Mexico (continued)

Questions:

- 1) What ways can the City improve people's connection to the Santa Fe River – to better connect with the River as a “slice of nature” in the downtown core, and also as a social space for the community?
- 2) What are ways to improve connectivity – particularly for people walking and biking – along the river corridor and across the river corridor? (Particularly from the historic plaza to the Guadalupe District and Railyard District and Railrunner commuter rail station; also between the plaza and the State Capitol Complex.)
- 3) Understanding that the base level (elevation) of the river channel cannot be significantly altered, what are ways to reduce the distancing and separation caused by the significant differences in grades in the area – from river bottom at the low areas, to streetscape in the higher areas?
- 4) The City of Santa Fe is exploring solutions to reduce the acute, intermittent impacts of stormwater runoff into the river channel from adjacent streets and other surfaces. What are potential solutions to reduce the negative impacts of stormwater pollutants and aggressive flows into the river?
- 5) Critique the Wilson Plan Part I: What are the plan's strengths; weaknesses; and missed opportunities? How can the City: enhance connectivity; enhance aesthetic experience; enhance the social experience of the corridor; and mitigate grade differences between the river and the streetscape? How should the City consider improvements and activities to enliven the spaces?
- 6) Critique the Wilson Plan Part II: How might the City make the project stronger from an ecological and sustainable point of view? For example, how can the City address: urban stormwater management; use of appropriate materials in built improvements; climate change issues; and educational opportunities?

Discussion and Ideas

Mayor Coss of Santa Fe discussed his vision for rehabilitating the underutilized Santa Fe River corridor, which bisects Downtown Santa Fe. As the Mayor explained, there exists a unique opportunity to better establish the river corridor as a conduit that links Downtown Santa Fe Plaza to the sections of the downtown area that are currently being revitalized.

Members of the design team suggested the Mayor anchor the community's vision for a rehabilitated river corridor around beautification efforts to showcase the river as the city's backbone for both passive and active recreational uses.

The resource team offered the following advice:

Designers suggested that as a logical starting point for tackling the Santa Fe River corridor project, the City strengthen its communication with the public for a new vision that can be appreciated from multiple perspectives. Designers stated that any new vision needs to be something that is image-able because the current drawings simply don't engage users to creatively envision a new corridor. By building a constituency for the project, and ultimately for the river itself, the City can create a formal support structure (e.g. “friends of the Santa Fe River”). Identifying the support structure will first require the City to engage stakeholders and property owners along the corridor.

Case Study: Santa Fe, New Mexico (continued)

The resource team became enthusiastic on the concept of developing a “River Ramblas” along the Santa Fe River corridor, which, would create a serene escape from city, allowing users to stroll along the river’s edge. Additionally, by developing a well-lit pathway along the river’s edge, creating a “ribbon of light” along the corridor, the place could become a transformational location that accommodates both daytime and nighttime users. To maximize the concept, designers suggested the City expand the viewsheds beyond the linear surface, to allow views onto the corridor from several blocks away. Designers went on to suggest that the lighting, design, and signage along the “River Ramblas” is absolutely critical to the outcome of such a project; and that the City should make sure that the pathways always engage with the water, no matter the location along the corridor.

Additional design recommendations for the “River Ramblas” concept:

- Create complete streets, including pathways/bikeways/etc.;
- Redevelop the adjacent surface parking lots, as they present a tremendous development opportunity sites;
- Civilize the parking lots with greening, bioswells, etc., to help reduce stormwater runoff into the River;
- Acquire better renderings of site to entice potential supporters (i.e., plans unlike those of the Wilson aerial plans that are geared towards engineers, not regular citizens).

Related to funding for a project of this scale, designers stated that the project is far more than just a river restoration project – it’s infrastructure improvements to the corridor itself, as well as the surrounding neighborhood. Designers suggested the City think of the value that restoration improvements could add to adjacent properties and create a river district that drives/creates future development opportunities. Resource team members went

on to suggest that a bed tax could be levied to help pay for a portion of the needed capital improvements. Other funding sources might include raising City sewer fees (raising them nominally to help pay for restoration efforts), or creating a stormwater tax that is added to utility services. One creative solution could include the City working with the State of New Mexico to add an option on State Income tax forms to allow taxpayers to donate \$1, \$2, or \$3 to a “Santa Fe River Corridor Restoration Fund.” Whatever funding sources the City considers, the designers articulated that the key to successfully raising the necessary funds remains getting the details right for the scope of the project.

Case Study: Las Vegas, Nevada

The development of neighborhood casinos in the 1980's began the decline of downtown Las Vegas. These "local" casinos had the same effect as mall development did in the rest of the country by taking away foot traffic from downtown. It wasn't until the \$70 million dollar Fremont Street Experience (FSE), a seven-block open-air pedestrian mall featuring permanent performance stages, live entertainment and a graphic light show unparalleled for its time was developed that this began to change.

The mall is covered with a four-block long 90-foot canopy that features over 12.5 million LED bulbs that deliver superb picture quality and clarity. The FSE was financed primarily by the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority and the City of Las Vegas. Maintenance is via a contractual agreement with the adjacent casinos. All of the adjacent casinos have undergone extensive rehabilitation since the projects debut culminating in the \$500 million dollar expansion of the Golden Nugget Casino currently underway.

In order to provide incentives, the city adopted the Downtown Centennial Plan in July 2000. In addition to no building height limits or parking requirements, the plan created eight distinct districts, three of which are included in our case study: Casino Core, Office Core, and Downtown South Districts. This area is bounded by the Union Pacific Railroad, US 95, Las Vegas Boulevard and Wyoming Avenue.

At about the same time, an Arts District, known locally as the 18b Las Vegas Arts District began to emerge on the south side of the downtown core. Between these two major redevelopment areas high-rise housing began to emerge including the SOHO Lofts, Newport Lofts and Juhl projects with several others planned. The development community along with this new population base is now asking the city to develop recreation and green space to keep pace with the growth. There are currently no city parks or schools in the study area. The city faces many challenges in developing

the sought after amenities; small lot sizes, high land values, and lack of funds to name a few. To address these challenges the idea of an "Urban Pathway" system was conceived. The objective is to develop small pocket parks, activity nodes and green spaces that are linked to the major redevelopment centers throughout downtown via an enhanced trail system.

An overriding issue that also must be addressed is the large number of homeless individuals that are frequently found wondering throughout downtown. The city must juggle the need to provide public amenities without creating new breeding grounds for the homeless and criminal element to congregate. Grass has been ruled out as a useable source due to these challenges as well as the water shortage.

The City has planned several activity nodes in the Arts District and financed the largest one, Boulder Plaza. Several urban trails have also been planned and financed as well. At this time, there hasn't developed a critical mass of new development to move forward with a large Business Improvement District to assist in building and maintaining these sought after amenities.

Questions:

- 1) How could the city proceed in its goal of creating an "Urban Pathway" system?
- 2) How should the activity nodes be designed to provide the amenities sought without creating an inviting environment for the homeless and criminal element?
- 3) What would be the best way to phase the established goals?
- 4) How could these activity nodes be maintained?
- 5) Could a prototype activity node be developed?

Case Study: Las Vegas, Nevada (continued)

Discussion and Ideas

Mayor Goodman discussed redevelopment efforts that have been proposed for a large tract of land located adjacent the central business district, along the Las Vegas Strip. The Mayor explained that the City is currently evaluating the redevelopment proposals that have been brought forward in a manner that would connect various activity nodes by means of an urban pathway.

Mayor Goodman was met with a variety of design and planning solutions that the resource team offered as a means to contending with the existing, large parcels, while creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment within the study area.

The resource team offered the following advice:

The overwhelming majority of the resource team commented that the proposed developable block sizes were twice as large as ideal. To help alleviate the large block size issue, it was suggested the City extend the grid (east-west, and north-south) to create shorter blocks because, as is, the streets are currently configured in such a manner that it's really tough to find adequate shade. The City should think of any proposed urban pathway system as part of the existing street grid, helping to create natural "shady greenways" from the shadows of buildings and tree canopies.

While financing urban canopies is a legitimate challenge because the results can't simply be replicated the same everywhere, it was suggested that the City phase the development to create a green canopy/temporary landscape to help attract businesses and residents to relocate to the district. The City needs to think of these initiatives as a legacy project, to help generate larger conversations focused on the complexity of the planning issues facing desert cities.

The resource team had some additional concerns about the timing of the planning initiatives as it might be that the nodes of activity are not properly dictating the form of the infrastructure (sidewalks, walkways, etc.). Designers suggested the City perform a more critical assessment of what a node is and what differentiates one from another and where development needs to surround certain nodes. Designers went on to suggest that the City needs to come up with a communicable vision for how a node different than a district. The City could look to Portland's Pearl District, where development is organized around for parks and the neighborhood serves as a district, not just a node.

Additional ideas:

- The City should perform a more critical analysis about the codes in this district to help connect user groups to relevant activities as they're currently not all connected;
- To help alleviate the housing/homeless problem in downtown, the City should review some of the practices established by Rosanne Haggerty and her NYC-based group, Common Ground Community;
- The City needs to take prioritize to the maximum reduction of the heat island effect currently demonstrated on the downtown landscapes. Maybe buildings are not the answer? Any development isn't always a good thing. Perhaps a transitional landscaping for a 5-10 year interim period would help with the heat island effect?

Case Study: Sacramento, California

California's capital city of Sacramento has always had a rich history rooted in America's railroad movement. Today, the city is poised to embark upon an urban redevelopment project that will pay homage to its past while transforming the city's landscape to support a host of environmental, social, and economic forces that are products of the 21st century.

The city's historic train station – which is Amtrak's second-busiest in the state, and seventh-busiest in the nation – is located within blocks of the city's central business district. While the current station is serving the needs of local and regional commuters, the facilities are in need of repair and there exists the capacity to better serve a far greater number of users via new facilities.

The Sacramento Intermodal Transportation Facility (SITF), as it is formally known, is envisioned as a regional transportation hub that incorporates as many transit services as possible to cater to both intercity and commuter passengers. This vision seeks to maximize transit service, connectivity, and patronage. The project is continuing to progress and has been divided up into three distinct phases to allow the different aspects of the project to continue to move forward in-line with funding and local development commitments.

The first of these distinct phases (Phase 1: Track Relocation Project) will be the relocation of the heavy rail tracks and two passenger platforms approximately 500 feet north from their current location. This phase of work – which is expected to begin construction in early 2010 and is expected to be completed by mid 2011 – will separate passenger from freight traffic. New bicycle and pedestrian access along the west side of project area is planned while sections of Fifth and Sixth Streets will be bermed to allow the streets to pass atop the new track alignment along the project area's eastern edge.

The aim of Phase 2 (Sacramento Valley Station Improvements) is to reconfigure the landscape around the Historic Depot to improve transit and passenger access to the terminal. The scope of Phase 2 includes: the relocation of the LRT extension and bus area; the extension of H Street; extensive parking and site improvements; the advent of midblock crossings at Fourth Street; and electrical system upgrades to the Historic Depot. In this concept, the Historic Depot will remain in its current location approximately 800 feet from the new passenger platforms. Phase 3 (Intermodal Improvements) would build upon the new terminal extension, and would be constructed north of the H Street alignment between the relocated tracks and the Historic Depot. This phase will include the creation of an upper concourse over a ground level bus facility immediately adjacent to the local bus facility and the LRT platforms. The Historic Depot is slated to retain transit operations, however the majority of transit-related functions will be located on the concourse level of the new terminal extension.

While the City is planning on retaining several historic structures along the northern boundaries of the project area – including the programming of a Railroad Technology Museum – significant development potential exists along the eastern and southern edges of the Intermodal Study Area, especially along Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Streets. Of the 33 acres located within the immediate project area, roughly 24 of which is developable land – including considerable infill development potential for both new infrastructure as well as open space.

One developer, Thomas Enterprises, Inc. has entered the scene and has negotiated the land rights for sections along the project area's eastern edge. Current development plans constitute the creation of up to 10,000 mixed-use high-density housing units; restaurants; clubs;

Case Study: Sacramento, California (continued)

ground-floor retail space with housing and upper-level office space; a hotel; and structured parking potentially wrapped around a new sports arena – all within walking distance to the new Intermodal Transportation Facility.

While the City is receptive to the various development proposals that have been brought forward, the addition of such large developments – such as a new, downtown arena – would require the City to significantly rework the planned phases for the SITF project, including reshaping the allocations of the parcels themselves. For that reason, City officials are keen on taking the necessary steps to ensuring that the scope of the project mature in a manner that continues to serve the current transit modes while anticipating new transit systems – such as new streetcars that would be added to increase circulation throughout the Downtown core, or the planned California high-speed rail system.

Questions:

- 1) Does the scope of the current project allow for the most long-term, beneficial land uses for the city? What untapped potential exists for this project area?
- 2) Is the scale of the proposed project area adequate to cover the range of land use issues that are to be considered for this site? Is the project area appropriately defined?
- 3) Are the proposed improvements to the intermodal facility – namely the terminal extension – the best use of this project area?
- 4) Does the current plan strike the best balance of meeting regional (and local) transportation needs with local land use needs for such an urban setting?
- 5) Is the proposal to bring a new sports arena to this study area a viable option for the City? If so, at what stage of design/construction would be the point of no return for city to decide yes or no on this location for the arena?

Case Study: Sacramento, California (continued)

Discussion and Ideas

Mayor Johnson presented his City's plans to redevelop a large tract of land located with the existing rail corridor, just blocks from the city's central business district. The Mayor explained that he is seeking to create a grand plan for the corridor that would bring to additional housing units, office space, and open space to the corridor – all of which would be anchored around a new, state of the art, multi-modal transit facility.

Members of the resource team supported the Mayor's vision for thinking of the corridor as an integral component of the city's downtown grid and suggested he think of big and bold plans for the corridor.

The resource team offered the following advice:

The resource team suggested the Mayor and his staff orient their thinking about the totality of the proposed downtown redevelopment project as envisioning cities as laboratories of change. In that, to be a world class city, you have to act like you're already a world class city. Attitude and perception are critical to major change and to have the project prove successful, the Mayor will need to drive the project and demonstrate that it is his legacy to the city. Designers unanimously suggested the City hire world class architects and planners to embrace the downtown core as the lifeline of the city; to bring about the desired results, the City should hire the best firms available.

Designers offered a critique of the current redevelopment proposals, stating that the City needs to make sure the transportation facility (and the entire grounds within the "triangle") are set in place before molding the mixed-use development to the north of the project site. Designers suggested that the High Speed Rail depot be developed as a complex – and compact – project, placed as close to the original depot as possible. Resource team members went on

to articulate that the transit on the current site needs to be consolidated as it seems too spread out. Currently, there exists too much room for parking within the "triangle" and not enough developable parcel. Moreover, it was suggested that the bus depot needs be stacked, and not low rise in form.

Regarding the placement of a proposed, new sports arena on or near the project site, and the connectivity between the Sacramento River and the project site, designers suggested placing the arena on the river, creating "Sacramento's version of the Sydney Opera House." Just as the Sydney Opera House was able to operate on a relatively small parcel, so to could an arena on the parcel located west of I-5, with direct access to the new Sacramento Intermodal Transportation Facility. Doing so would create a far more dramatic connection to the river, enhancing views to the west. In addition to conceptualizing a new ferry building along the river that is connected to an arena, designers were cautious to not over-develop the riverfront, and advised the City to maintain a sizable portion of the developable parcel as open space, connected to part of a north-south multi-use trail system. Additionally, the resource team did not support the concept of placing two, tall, mixed-use towers on the west side of I-5.

Additional ideas:

- Consider relocating the train tracks north of the historical structures to increase the developable pad along the southeastern edge of the project site;
- Utilize the underside of the elevated freeways as promoting connectivity throughout the project area, while creating a more dramatic connection with the riverfront (see best practice examples from San Jose, California);
- Reach out to research groups and universities (e.g. UC Davis) to test the remediation of the site, before having to deal with toxins on the site.

Case Study: Irvine, California

In December 1993, the U.S. Congress decided to close the Marine Corps Air Station at El Toro. This action and subsequent reuse planning efforts for the site, located in the center of Orange County, lead to almost ten years of struggle between the County of Orange and the south County cities. Four County-wide ballot measures affected the reuse plan, initially designating the site for a commercial airport in November 1994 and finally replacing the airport with the Orange County Great Park in March 2002.

In the same month that voters ended plans for an airport at the former MCAS El Toro, the Department of the Navy announced that it would not offer the site to the City of Irvine as a “no cost” economic benefit conveyance but rather auction the property. In response, the City created a reuse plan that envisioned mixed use development surrounding a great metropolitan park. The development plan included an opportunity to vest development rights in return for dedication of approximately 1,350 acres of land, payment of \$200 M in development agreement fees, and commitment to construct \$201 M in backbone infrastructure improvements.

In February 2005, Heritage Fields (a consortium of real estate and financial interests managed by Lennar Corporation) won the Navy’s auction to purchase the entire base with a winning bid of \$ 649.5 M. The sale closed in July 2005 and Heritage Fields signed the development agreement with the City of Irvine.

As the reuse planning effort moved forward, the City of Irvine created the Great Park Corporation (a 501 (c) (3) not for profit corporation) to manage the design, development, operation, and maintenance of the Great Park. The nine-member Board of Directors includes all five City Council members as well as four independent Directors appointed by the Board.

The Corporation technically functions as a separate department of the City of Irvine. The City Council adopted a policy, later ratified by Irvine voters, that the Corporation will rely on the \$200M development agreement fee and not use the General Fund to build the park. The obligation to be a self-sustaining entity is one of the challenges facing the Corporation today.

In June 2005, the Great Park Corporation initiated an international design competition to select a design team to create a Master Plan for the Great Park. In January 2006, Ken Smith and his team of designers were selected and began working on the plan. In October the design team released the Great Park Master Plan. After months of review by the City and the general public, the Master Plan was approved by the Irvine Planning Commission in May 2007.

Concurrent with the Great Park planning efforts, the Board pushed forward the construction of a 27 acre Preview Park to open a piece of the property for public use. The Great Park balloon was launched in July 2007 to celebrate the second anniversary of the signing of the development agreement by Heritage Fields.

The Great Park planning effort has continued to evolve with the completion of a Comprehensive Park Design (schematic design for the whole park) in February 2009. Park activities have also expanded with the addition of numerous programs and activities, including free dances and concerts in the summer as well as a winter ice-skating program. Cirque du Soleil has recently announced that their traveling show will perform at the Great Park in January 2010.

Case Study: Irvine, California (continued)

Questions:

- 1) How should the City finance the construction and maintenance of the park without committing the City's General Fund?
- 2) How should the City respond to the pressures of interest groups with specific park programming requests while retaining their desired balance between nature and recreation and achieving their core value of sustainable design?
- 3) How should the City decide the phasing of park development to maximize park visitation and usage?
- 4) How can the City improve local connections between the park and the neighboring private development without compromising the regional aspect of the park?
- 5) How would MICD 44 participants define "the first great metropolitan park of the 21st Century"?

Case Study: Irvine, California (continued)

Discussion and Ideas

Mayor Kang shared with session participants his City's plans to create the Orange County Great Park, which, is slated to become the first great metropolitan park of the 21st Century. The Mayor provided an overview of the park's comprehensive design plans and asked members of the resource team for feedback on the current plan; including financing of the parks amenities, phasing of construction, and ways to enhance local connections with neighboring private development initiatives.

Design team members expressed their support for the City's vision for the park and suggested the Mayor focus on the phasing of the project to ensure that the park's future will not be hindered by the current, unfavorable, economic conditions.

The resource team offered the following advice:

Resource team members were impressed by the scale of the Orange County Great Park and articulated that, like any great planning endeavor, the outcome will ultimately bank on the attention to details. Designers were somewhat concerned about the current plan's lack of attention to the development surrounding the park itself. Specifically, designers stated that the current plans call for low- to medium-density mixed-used development when the parcels could easily handle higher densities, especially residential. The focus was to promote higher density, not more suburban development surrounding the park.

Like other projects discussed at the Institute, the resource team strongly advised the City break down development into planned parts (disaggregate) to allow development to come online incrementally, as opposed to expecting the entire project to develop simultaneously. Regarding the phasing of the project, several

designers called into question whether or not the construction of the lake was as important as the proposed boulevard that rings the museums for a "front door of museums." As they articulated, which comes first, the museum or the park? To think about the planning in a truly strategic manner, the City needs to evaluate the programming of the various nodes of activity located throughout the park, because from the active fields to the passive pathways, every attention to planning detail matters. Designers suggested bringing the proposed museums online in the early stages to allow users to actual enter the heart of the park, creating increased demand for additional/complimentary park uses. Namely, if there is no market for any one of the park's amenities, the park will prove a failure in the end, despite the best intentions and best landscape master plan. Other designers suggested starting with the playing fields to get people into the park – having users actually using the playing fields, and paying for the use of the park.

To assist with funding the park's ongoing development, designers suggested creating a donor wall, allowing for naming rights (e.g. Millennium Park, Chicago, Illinois).

Case Study: Mesa, Arizona

Mesa, Arizona's third largest city, has experienced very steady growth over the past 20 years. Located approximately 10 miles east of Downtown Phoenix, Mesa is a predominately low-rise, residential community, with several nodes of light industrial and commercial activity scattered throughout the city's 130 square miles. One of the oldest commercial nodes in the city is the Fiesta District, home to one of the largest – and oldest – regional malls located in the greater Phoenix metropolitan area.

The Fiesta District, located in the southwestern section of Mesa, covers approximately 2 square miles. The District is roughly defined by the Tempe Canal on the west, Extension Road on the east, U.S. Highway 60 on the south, and includes the commercial properties just north of Southern Avenue. The District is a hub for the business and financial services, health care and retail industries, as it represents the second largest employment center in the City of Mesa with approximately 16,000 employees. Along the northern boundary of the District exists several neighborhood clusters, representing Mesa's highest residential density.

Throughout the District are several hotels, large retailers, restaurants, and numerous businesses that take advantage of easy access to the U.S. Highway 60 and Arizona Loop 101 freeways. The District is also home to several community and area icons including: a regional medical hospital (The Banner Desert Medical Center); Mesa Community College; a regional mall (The Fiesta Mall); and the Mesa Financial Plaza (also known as the Bank of America Tower).

While the area's excellent accessibility along several, major transportation corridors, produce an considerable volume of daily users who come to work, learn, shop and seek the services of a number of providers located within the Fiesta District, the District's existing physical conditions continue to thwart significant eco-

nomical revitalization efforts to reshape the area into a more aesthetically appealing destination for its users. Much of the existing building stock located within the District is showing its age, including the Fiesta Mall, which was developed in the 1970s. Additionally, several parcels – predominately strip malls – located at the northeastern corner of South Alma School Road and West Southern Avenue are currently vacant, rendering derelict conditions at the crossroads of the District's two, primary thoroughfares. However, these economically-distressed conditions are not uniform across the District; whereas one parcel may have several vacant structures which display unkempt maintenance conditions, adjacent parcels are home to successful businesses.

The City, realizing that the District has a strong foundation with the high daily user traffic – allowing for an opportunity of untapped potential – is seeking to revitalize the economically distressed parcels in the hopes that a successful revitalization of the distressed parcels could be used to leverage upgrades and enhancements to the other parcels within the District. Additionally, City officials are hoping to transform the entire District into a destination location that will, from a revitalization standpoint, create a sense of place for the daily users, as well as attract new businesses and patrons.

One of the driving forces behind this revitalization effort was the knowledge that private interests were preparing and in some cases in the process of making substantial investments in the area. A Revitalization Strategy Report for the Fiesta District done by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) and International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) in March of 2004 identified the need to define a brand and a sense of place for the area as well as improving the aesthetics and the pedestrian flow within the area.

Case Study: Mesa, Arizona (continued)

This Design Project was proposed in response to concerns that businesses would continue to depart this employment center if the District's image and condition did not improve. The Fiesta District Urban Design Principles, which emerged from the public outreach process, are the foundation for the District's vision. The District vision creates a uniquely, identifiable area for Mesa that is an economically vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, and an active, urban destination. The City is optimistic that the revitalization of the Fiesta District will, once again, transform this major City employment center into a significant, destination location within the region.

Questions:

- 1) Which parcel(s) should the City focus its revitalization efforts towards in the coming years? Should efforts be focused on one parcel at a time, or can the revitalization efforts be comprehensive?
- 2) What landscape design practices should the City consider to bring about the desired results; including a more pedestrian-friendly environment complete with an increased amount of green space? How should the City address the abundance of surface parking lots surrounding the Fiesta Mall?
- 3) How can the City better connect the higher-density neighborhoods which are situated along the northern boundary of the District with the businesses that line Southern Avenue, as well as the Fiesta Mall itself?

Case Study: Mesa, Arizona (continued)

Discussion and Ideas

Mayor Smith shared with session participants his vision to revitalize a number of under-performing parcels within the Fiesta District, located in the southwestern section of the city. The Mayor elaborated on how he wished to leverage the success of several of the established businesses – located along the primary arterials of the District – and asked for guidance as to what design mechanisms could be employed to craft a sense of identity for the District.

Numerous design resource team members suggested a variety of city greening techniques to assist the Mayor in his efforts.

The resource team offered the following advice:

Collectively, the resource team suggested the City consider trying something radically different when evaluating redevelopment schemes for the economically-distressed sections of the Fiesta District. As there's presently no market at the site, it's time for the City to try something new, big, and bold here, as "sameness proposals" will result in "sameness results." Designers suggested the City view redevelopment of the Fiesta District as a project that will help the city create a unique urban identity for itself.

Several designers introduced the concept of a "green necklace" that would transform portions of the Fiesta District into an urban forest. To start, designers suggested the City perform a carbon sequestration study and then identify locations for planting numerous, large trees. The adjacent Mesa Community College Campus was considered an ideal location for additional tree plantings. Designers suggested building upon the success of the Rose Garden along the southern edge of West Southern Avenue, and consider temporary/interim

landscape solutions that transition from the Rose Garden east towards the mall.

Additionally, several designers suggested xeriscaping portions around the mall itself. As it was explained, xeriscaping is water-efficient landscaping that's appropriate to the natural environment and its function is to create a visually-attractive landscape that utilizes plants selected for their water efficiency. An established, properly-maintained xeriscape needs about one-third the water of a traditional turf-based landscape. An established xeriscape also requires less maintenance than a traditional landscape.

Additional ideas:

- Consider the medical (Banner Desert Medical Center) /educational (Mesa Community College) anchor as a viable starting point for additional redevelopment efforts as there is significantly greater traffic volumes at this node;
- Support incubator/startup businesses throughout the Fiesta District, and especially along West Southern Avenue;
- Create additional residential components on underutilized sites with better ties to the Mall, targeted towards community college students and professors;
- Create porosity into the surrounding neighborhoods, especially those north of West Southern Avenue;
- Desegregate the existing zoning and land uses, and enforce mixed-use zoning for all new developments;
- Develop a design competition centered around the theme of "reurbia," to help develop a fine arts center on the mall site (see Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art's "Flip a Strip").

Case Study: Fresno, California

Fresno's very own Fulton Street Mall was one of the first downtown pedestrian malls in the nation (and even helped spur many other cities to undertake similar ventures in the 1960's and 1970's). The six block long pedestrian mall – which stretches from Tuolumne Street at the north, to Inyo Street at the south, and occupies the former right-of-way of Fulton Street – was converted to its current configuration as part of an effort to revitalize the Downtown Fresno area, by enhancing the central business district's retail environment and halting declining property values.

The mall was the centerpiece of an urban renewal plan by Victor Gruen and was eventually designed by landscape architect Garrett Eckbo. The pedestrian mall concept, as described by Gruen, was an effort to take back the public space from the automobile, and provide a more pleasant atmosphere for pedestrians. Gruen's plan, which was never fully realized, called for: a perimeter surface street loop; the eventual closure of Fresno and Tulare Streets where they bisect the mall; the creation of a downtown freeway loop; extensive parking garage facilities; and downtown housing. The eventual goal was a street-less "superblock" – an 18 block area free of automobiles, creating a "city of the future." Upon its completion in 1964, the mall was hailed as one of the nation's most innovative – and boldest – efforts of urban renewal and drew worldwide attention.

While the Mall was initially considered a success, capturing a significant share of the City's retail market sales, as Fresno evolved over the following decades, new residential and commercial development was concentrated outside the Downtown area and, as a result, the Mall began to decline in popularity and condition. That persistent decline has continued to the present time.

Over the years, the Mall has been the subject of numerous studies prepared by both public and private sector organizations, with most of the studies focusing on ways to improve the viability and performance of the economic and life-enhancing aspects of the Mall. While some of the studies concentrated on other aspects of the project, many of them addressed the questions related to re-introducing some form of vehicular traffic to some or all of the length of the mall, and many (but not all) concluded that this action could be a key factor in the ultimate economic vitality of the area.

Today, Fulton Mall functions largely as an urban park, characterized by relatively low levels of retail and other economic activity and is (despite the presence of Chukchansi Park, home of the Triple-A minor league Fresno Grizzlies baseball team) largely devoid of any significant activity on weeknights (it's really every night) after 5 PM, when the Downtown area's more than 40,000 daytime workers leave their places of employment. Vacancies are common among the storefronts (and especially in spaces above the ground level) along the Mall, and those outlets that are located on the Mall often cater to small niche markets, including numerous ethnic retailers.

Of the roughly 1,500 acres within the "triangle" of the Fulton Street study area, nearly all of the Mall's right-of-way is owned by property owners. Thus, the property owners are significant stakeholders and participants in the discussion of the evolving plans for the Mall. While several local citizens have lobbied to place the Fulton Mall on The National Register of Historic Places (including the California registry), others in the community, including many adjacent property owners, support more drastic measures on the part of the City to reshape the form and function of the Mall to better serve the community.

Case Study: Fresno, California (continued)

The City is now in the process of developing a downtown specific plan. While City officials are awaiting the results of the issued RFQ/RFPs, they are anticipating the phasing of various planning initiatives to support design and economic enhancements along both the Mall as well as the adjacent downtown neighborhoods. The plans will erase the often complicated, contradictory, and counterproductive provisions of the municipal and zoning code that have hampered development and business activity for decades. The City is hoping to protect some of the cultural integrity of the Mall and re-establish it as the predominant entertainment district that serves the central San Joaquin Valley. Additionally, the City is preparing for the advent of new economic drivers and other future needs – such as the arrival of high-speed rail which may position a new station along the western edge of the project area.

Questions:

- 1) Should the City consider reintroducing vehicular traffic along Fulton Street? And/or, should the City consider reopening traffic along a handful of the cross streets (at Merced, Mariposa, or Kern Streets)?
- 2) What streetscape enhancements or landscaping treatments could help bring about a refreshed sense of place along the Mall?
- 3) What are ways in which the City can support a healthy business climate along the mall – striking a balance of retaining successful establishments while attracting new entertainment district tenants that will help revive the perception that the corridor is business-friendly?
- 4) What immediate steps could the City take to beautify the street wall along the Mall (either by façade improvement subsidies or other means)?

Case Study: Fresno, California (continued)

Discussion and Ideas

Mayor Swearingin discussed revitalization plans for the Fulton Street Mall, located in Downtown Fresno. As the Mayor explained in her presentation, the City is focusing its efforts on the rehabilitation of a handful of underutilized and underperforming parcels along the pedestrian mall in an effort to better serve the greater Fresno community.

The resource team supported the Mayor's vision and encouraged her to further explore how the plans to revitalize the pedestrian mall link with the greater revitalization plans for Downtown Fresno.

The resource team offered the following advice:

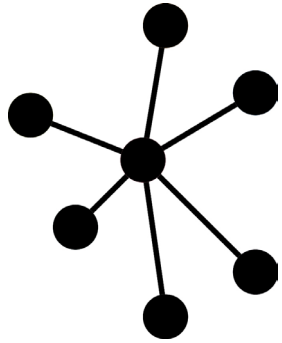
Resource team members suggested the City concentrate all future development plans within the downtown area by creating a tight planning zone to attract more residents (and businesses) to relocate downtown. As several designers suggested, the key to establishing the downtown core as the "mixing bowl" for greater Fresno Area is to place the greatest emphasis on attracting people to live and work downtown. The need for residential development is significant in order to attract quality tenants who will want demonstration that there is a commercial presence in downtown.

As for the phasing of the redevelopment efforts, the resource team suggested the City tackle the initiative one block at a time. Designers suggested that the City not spread out its efforts across a large planning area, but rather select one specific site to fashion reuse and build on that success. As it was suggested, to attempt to overhaul the entire length of the Mall at once will be met with unfavorable results.

Several resource team members suggested the City consider reopening of the Mall to vehicular traffic as a starting point of its efforts. Specifically, it was suggested the City start with one section and then open additional sections of the mall to traffic rather than the entire Mall all at once.

Other ideas:

- Relax the downtown zoning codes to allow for flexible uses; Consider relocating City Hall on the Mall;
- The Mall could serve as a special site for a future main library;
- Don't get sold on one concept alone; specifically, the development of an Entertainment District as the primary driver may not be the complete answer the City is looking for;
- Take advantage of proximity to the US National Parks and Forests (Yosemite, Kings Canyon, and Sequoia); and
- Take advantage of the abundance of mature trees along Mall: the City needs a "tree whisperer" and complimentary nighttime lighting scheme to help support the walkability of the Mall.



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