

LIVINGSTON SDAT REPORT



LIVINGSTON, CA • AUGUST, 2013

AIA Communities by Design

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INTRODUCTION

THE DESIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

With nearly 300 state and local chapters and over 76,000 members, the American Institute of Architects serves as the voice of the architecture profession and the principal way for the profession to give back to society. The AIA has a 46-year history of public service work. Through the Center for Communities by Design, the AIA has engaged over 1,000 professionals from more than 30 disciplines, ultimately providing millions of dollars in professional pro bono services to more than 200 communities across the country, and engaging thousands of participants in community-driven planning processes. Through these processes, the AIA has produced recommendations to improve the design and development of some of the most recognizable places in America. In 2010, the AIA received the *Organization of the Year* Award from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), recognizing its program impact on communities and contributions to the field.



- **Regional and Urban Design Assistance Teams (R/UDAT):** Created in 1967, the AIA's R/UDAT program pioneered the modern charrette process by combining multi-disciplinary teams in dynamic, multi-day grassroots processes to produce community visions, action plans and recommendations.
- **Sustainable Design Assessment Teams (SDAT):** In 2005, in response to growing interest and concern about local sustainability planning, the AIA launched a companion program to the R/UDAT that allowed it to make a major institutional investment in public service work to assist communities in developing policy frameworks and long term sustainability plans. During the first 8 years of the SDAT program, the Center for Communities by Design has worked with over 60 towns, cities and regions.



The Center's Design Assistance Team programs operate with three guiding principles:

- **Multi-disciplinary Expertise.** Each project is designed as a customized approach to community assistance that incorporates local realities and the unique challenges and assets of each community. As a result, each design assistance team includes a multi-disciplinary focus and a systems approach to assessment and recommendations, incorporating and examining cross-cutting topics and relationships between issues. In order to accomplish this task, the Center forms multi-disciplinary teams that combine a range of disciplines and professions in an integrated assessment and design process.
- **Enhanced Objectivity.** The goal of the design assistance team program is to provide communities with a framework for action. Consequently, each project team is constructed with the goal of bringing an objective perspective to the community that is outside of the normal politics of public discussion. Team members are deliberately selected from geographic regions outside of the host community, and national AIA teams are typically representative of a wide range of community settings. Team members all agree to serve pro bono, and do not engage in business development activity in association with their service. They do not serve a particular client. The team's role is to provide an independent analysis and unencumbered technical advice that serves the public interest.
- **Public Participation.** The AIA has a four-decade tradition of designing community-driven processes that incorporate substantial public input through a multi-faceted format that includes public workshops, small group sessions, stakeholder interviews, formal meetings and presentations. This approach allows the national team to build on the substantial local expertise already present and available within the community and leverage the best existing knowledge available in formulating its recommendations.

THE LIVINGSTON SDAT PROJECT

In 2012, the City of Livingston successfully applied to the Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) program of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for a grant to conduct a community process and build a strategy for a cultural arts district. As the application stated, “Civic leaders support this project both for its impact on the community health, particularly that of its youth who through the arts would find positive outlets to channel their creative energies, as well as to develop a sense of place for Livingston; a Cultural Arts district that gives residents a place to gather, visit and shop and especially to interact with townspeople of different cultures, and visitors from nearby towns to find a unique experience where they have reason to spend their money.”

To address the issues surrounding downtown revitalization, design, and the cultural arts district concept, the American Institute of Architects’ (AIA) Communities by Design program assembled a national team of experts in community development, revitalization, public art, cultural district planning, and design. The team included:

Mark Hinshaw, FAIA, FAICP, team leader
Mario Campos, FAIA, ASLA, Urban Design & Landscape
Margarita Cabrera, Public Art & Community Engagement
Liesel Fenner, ASLA, Cultural Arts District Planning
Chris Zahas, AICP, Downtown Revitalization

The following report contains a narrative summary of the team’s findings, with additional information and resources.





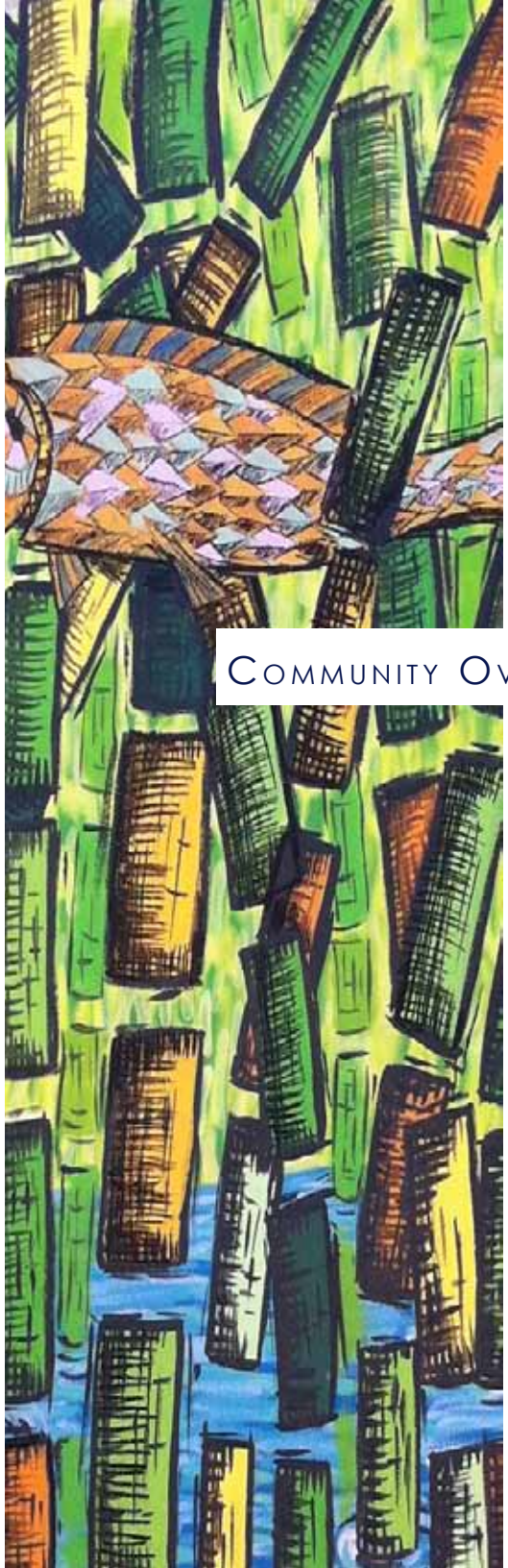
THE LIVINGSTON SDAT PROCESS

Team leader Mark Hinshaw, FAIA, FAICP conducted a preliminary site visit in the spring to meet with civic and project stakeholders. The full team was assembled in Livingston from August 26-28, 2013. In order for the SDAT team to put forward an informed series of recommendations concerning the future of a cultural arts district, a public agenda was developed to include participatory bus and walking tours, site visits, meetings with stakeholders and public workshops.

The SDAT occurred within the context of a series of intensive planning activities. As the SDAT application explained, "Concurrent with the SDAT planning design and charrette process, the city has secured a major grant from CALTRANS to plan the development of two highway interchanges and attract traffic from these entrances to the downtown core, and a commitment from the Northern California Congress for New Urbanism to provide zoning plans and schematic codes for a complete streets and circulation system for a walkable downtown core."



The process drew substantial public participation, and the team's final presentation was made during a formal session of the City Planning Commission on August 28, 2013.



COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION TO PLACE

Creating a vibrant cultural arts district requires some deep thinking about place. For Livingston, there are many strong ingredients that bring meaning to the concept of place and identity. Livingston is a part of the San Joaquin Valley, which produces a climate characterized by dry summers and mild winters. The community is a part of the Merced river watershed, an important ecological system that forms a natural framework. Due to deposits from the river, Livingston's soil is unusually sandy, providing a distinct feature that distinguishes it from the rest of the valley, where soil is more clay-based. The growing season is long, and there is a low risk of mold, drought, or bad weather interfering with crops, which has fueled a strong agricultural economy. The agricultural community has created its own cultural landscape that is a working landscape.

In order to leverage Livingston's unique identity for the production of a strong cultural arts presence and an attractive place, it is important to consider these and other elements within an understanding of who you are as a community, and who creates your sense of place in Livingston:

- How can we bring the entire place to its fullest potential and help it understand what it can be?
- How can you bring others to help you achieve that goal?
- Who are those people that with their work create this landscape?
- What is the physicality of this place?
- What are the characteristics of this place – its unique elements?
- How do you measure place from the standpoint of community?



CONTEXT OF PLACE

From a physical standpoint, it is important to understand Livingston in the context of the Central Valley, but also to know what distinguishes it from Atwater and Merced. It represents a unique place in the valley. There is something special happening here. Citizens express a set of values and have a way of seeing themselves that is different here, that is unique to Livingston. It is important to understand the land and the people's relationship to it, and then to use that in cultural production. Sometimes it is hard to identify, but it is present, and understanding that fabric and mixing the landscape and form with your cultural form leads to an authentic representation of your community identity. Consider that the selection of trees and fauna could feature types native to and significant in the cultures and countries of origin of the Livingston population. They could be labeled as such. This would provide pride to the residents and attract visitors to Livingston especially if the trees were clustered and if there was a signboard narrative and some type of display in the museum. Of course, care has to be taken to plant trees and flora in soils in which they can thrive and provide food and water appropriate to their needs. There should be viewing areas with benches and tables for visitors. It creates a local narrative that is unique and attractive to outsiders who want to learn more about it and experience it in various ways. There is a structure produced by the river, the local landscape, and the local culture that combine to produce an identity. Bringing these elements together in cultural production is important. For instance, integrating a bit of natural wilderness back into the city, through the selection of local trees on streets, helps to bring fauna into the community and create a harmonious and integrated expression of identity. Picking the right trees brings birds; it creates a pathway for understanding your context and understanding the natural systems that bring nature into the community more directly. From a community standpoint, Livingston has made some important progress in establishing a level of trust that is evident in its plans, and was clear in the community dialogue and observations of the team during the process. There is growing community trust and improved outreach that is producing real possibilities for Livingston to express an authentic and interesting story to the rest of the world. Livingston boasts a number of key assets that are nothing short of extraordinary for a jurisdiction of its size.



DEEP AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE

Due to its unique location in the Central Valley, Livingston is at the center of the agriculture industry. All of the city's largest businesses come from this industry. Livingston is home to Foster Farms, the largest poultry producer in the western United States. It is home to A.V. Thomas Product, the major sweet potato producer in the West, and the Gallo Family farms which represent wine and cheese and other products. The 'big three' agriculture businesses were founded and are still operated by local families. They are international in scope. The Livingston Farmers Association represents a huge economic and cultural asset for the the community's agricultural identity as well.

The local Joseph Gallo Farms contain the largest dairy herd in the United States. Livingston is also home to the 'Sweet Potato King', A/V Thomas Product. Over 90 percent of the total sweet potato crop grown west of the Rockies comes from the greater Livingston community, a result of the sandy soil that facilitates ideal growing conditions. The community is also home to substantial grape production for Ernest and Julio Gallo Winery, as well as other uses. Almond orchards and farms that feature alfalfa, corn, soybeans, peaches, melons, berries and other crops all call the Livingston area home. This is an incredibly important and defining feature of the community.

INCREDIBLE ETHNIC & CULURAL DIVERSITY

According to the 2010 Census, Livingston has a population of 13,058. For a jurisdiction of this size, the city boasts an incredible resource of ethnic and cultural diversity. By one count, there are an estimated 75 nationalities represented among the community's ethic composition, including 30 European, 25 Asian, 15 Latin American and 5 Sub-Saharan African nationalities. Most of the recent immigrants are from Mexico, Central America, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and India.

The residents of Livingston are descended from people of many nations, including:

- Mexicans from Michoacán, the Yucatán, Chihuahua, Veracruz, Sinaloa, Jalisco, Oaxaca and other cities.
- Central Americans from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and other countries.
- People from Oklahoma and other parts of the United States of America. About 100 members of the Cherokee Nation live in the town.
- Portuguese from the Azores, Angola, and Brazil. About 10 percent of the population speaks Portuguese.
- Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims from India and Pakistan.
- Japanese, mostly from Wakayama. The Livingston Farmers' Association was founded by Japanese Americans.
- Mennonites from Germany and Russia.
- Armenians from the Middle East.
- Hmong from Laos and Vietnam.
- Cambodians and Vietnamese, Filipinos and Chinese in smaller numbers.



Judged by any standard, Livingston's diversity represents a unique and powerful resource to produce a vibrant and authentic community. There are significant cities in the United States that cannot boast this level of cultural diversity. It is an advantage the community should leverage. This diversity also has an important historical context. As the city's website explains:

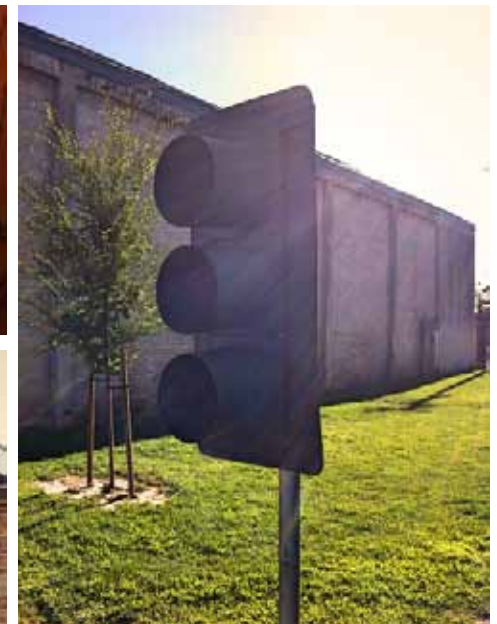
"Diversity of our citizens is a trademark feature. Our Mexican population with its historical presence in the area is the dominant ethnic group. The Yamato colony, the only Japanese colony in America, have become successful land owners. The Portuguese from the Azore Islands are prominent in the dairy industry and in sweet potato farming. Filipinos filled a void for farm labor. Mennonites found a religious haven and remained as family farmers. More recently, Sikhs of India have arrived."

Livingston is also a comparatively young community—almost half the population is age 24 or younger. The community's future is represented in these young people, and they represent a critically important group to involve in the cultural arts production and community narrative moving forward.

SMALL TOWN TRADITION & NARRATIVE

Livingston has a warm and friendly small town tradition. It is a family-friendly town, with almost 60 percent of its households having children under the age of eighteen. The community also has a narrative that is unique to place. The city's origins are explained on the Livingston website:

"On November 4, 1871, the day which preceded the crossing of the Merced river by the Central (now Southern) Pacific Railway, Edward Olds, an ex-member of the railway gang, set up a saloon and clothing "store" on the banks of the Merced river. The only other existing building was a grain warehouse built in 1868 by William Little who owned 2,500 acres of land for grain and grazing. Development into a town site was stimulated by railway gang workers, gold seekers, and farmers. Before there was a town, there was only the railway station of Cressey named after the pioneer family who owned 7,500 acres."





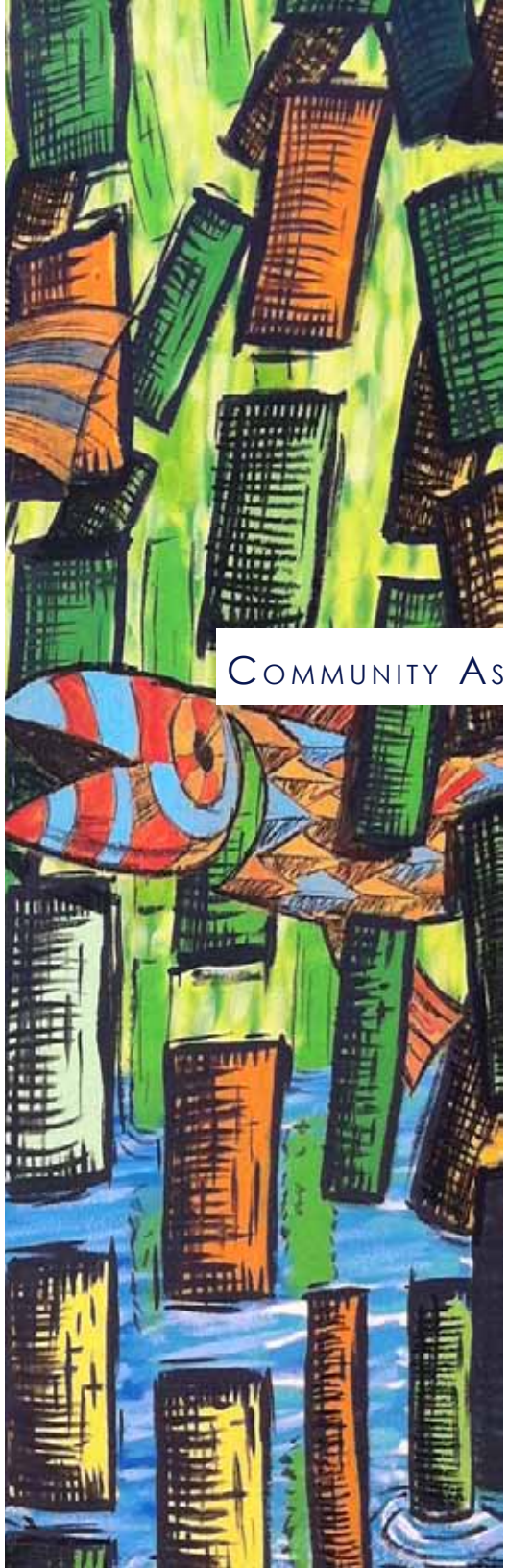
"Originally the town was to be named after the famed African explorer Dr. Livingstone whose disappearance at the time was created world-wide publicity. Mr. Little laid out the town by platting a visionary 80 blocks, 40 blocks on each side of the railroad track. He hoped the large number of blocks would make Livingston the county seat. He offered to sell lots of 25 by 125 feet for \$1.00 if Livingstone were chosen. In 1872, the town lost the election for a new county seat to Merced by 200 votes. In 1873, in a petition for a new post office, the final letter "E" was inadvertently deleted and the town officially became Livingston."

As the city slogan reads, Livingston was traditionally referred to as 'the last stop'. The city museum grounds include the stoplight for which the name is derived. Until 1996, with the installation of the freeway, California State Route 99 (formerly US Route 99) was a part of the city's street network, so it featured the only stoplight on the highway. The 'Last Stop' plaque explains that Livingston historically had the last stoplight on US Route 99 – not only in California, but on the highway trip between Mexico and Canada as well.

This historical context is unique to location and sense of place, and is an important ingredient in Livingston's cultural production as well. The town's agricultural setting provides an important component to the local narrative, as the Foster family, the Gallo family, and the Vieira family were all drawn to Livingston to farm. The early Mexican families, and the Japanese families from Wakayama, and the first Mennonite families all contributed unique cultural components to the narrative.

MAIN STREET FABRIC

Livingston has a strong main street fabric downtown. The scale and character of the existing downtown environment has a lot of potential to develop a walkable, vibrant core. There are significant opportunities to re-invent existing space and facilities, as well as fill current gaps in the downtown fabric, and produce important public gathering places and sources of momentum for further investment. There are several under-utilized properties and areas adjacent or in the public realm that could be put to higher use and catalyze activity in the downtown. There is also new energy and investments in the pipeline that could better connect the downtown and concentrate areas of activity that will serve the whole community better. In short, there is a wealth of good activity to build upon and align for the realization of community aspirations.



COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

A SUMMARY OF THE COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

The SDAT team's assignment was to develop an approach to creating a Cultural Arts District. Although as team members we have all had experiences in many different places, we did not want to presume what people in Livingston might want to see with respect to this concept. We benefitted from hearing about the recent work by others to provide solid planning and transportation concepts. But our subject had as much to do with organizations, groups, families and individuals as any specific physical improvements or projects. We realized that considerable thought had been given to creating a place for performing and visual arts to flourish and wanted to build upon those endeavors. We were not starting at "zero;" clearly there has been lots of good thinking, an exploration of resources and organizational capacity to take on initiatives effecting the community.



So we made sure to spend a considerable amount of time simply listening to people talk about Livingston, their aspirations, dreams, hopes, and ideals. And we heard a lot – both good things that are here and things that are missing. We heard about the wide-ranging ethnic and religious groups that are proud of their faith and the extent to which it builds community. We heard about the excellent schools and the many programs for youth. We heard about the long, rich history in agricultural production and the products exported from the area that are enjoyed by people all over the world.

We heard many positive things about the Medical Center and its plans to expand to better serve the community. In this vein we were impressed with the extent of outreach by the center; each individual who spoke to us from the center expressed passion, excitement and caring for the community. We were amazed by the number of events that occur through the year in various parts of the city and that all of them were inclusive and welcoming to all. Finally, we were taken with the degree to which the growing, production, processing and serving of food is a major social force around which many aspects of the community revolve. Livingston may be a small town with the friendliness often associated with tightly knit places, but its people think globally and are generous with their time and spirit.

On the other hand, we did hear repeated desires for additional choices. The desire for a place to share artistic expressions was a repeated subject of conversation. We heard a desire for more family-oriented restaurants – places to socialize and partake in the agricultural bounty of the valley. We heard requests for greater walkability, for healthy living programs, and expanded health services. We heard multiple requests for places for art, whether sculpture, theater or murals. We heard a desire to expand upon the agricultural heritage with events and festivals that would bring in people from the outside. We heard ideas for building upon the aspects of chicken, cheese, wine and sweet potatoes that already form the foundation of the employment and identity of the community.

Once we felt we knew enough about the opportunities and issues in Livingston, we began to assemble some big ideas. We describe these in the following pages with more detail and some specific proposals.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

Assets

- Great schools
- Safe community
- Parks
- Multiple cultures
- Strong religious communities
- Deep agricultural heritage
- Rich history
- Small town friendliness
- Good place to raise a family
- Lots of events, festivals, parades
- Food!
- Medical Center
- Access to nearby colleges
- Energetic, active young people
- Good arts programs in schools
- Explorer program
- Active social clubs
- Food!

WHAT THE COMMUNITY WOULD LIKE TO SEE

- Places to bring the entire community together
- Places for dance, music, performances
- More family restaurants
- More professional type jobs
- More things for youth to do, especially in the evenings
- More pathways and trails for walking and biking
- More street vending
- More programs for “healthy, active living”
- More locally produced art forms
- More places for cultural expression
- More locally owned businesses
- Expanded health clinic
- More celebration of heritage
- Murals and other art
- Stronger sense of entry for the community
- Identify cultural treasures
- More activity on Main Street
- Celebration of farmers and farm workers
- More food!



An abstract graphic on the right side of the page, featuring bold, stylized shapes in orange, yellow, and black. The shapes are reminiscent of mid-century modern art, with some resembling human figures or limbs. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the graphic, containing the text "TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS".

TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS



Station North Arts District, Baltimore



Wynwood Arts District, Miami, FL



Pittsburgh, PA hosted a duck worth \$10 million in economic impact over 1 month



Station North, Baltimore, MD



THE POWER OF CULTURAL ARTS STRATEGIES

Communities across the United States are embracing the arts in a variety of ways. In struggling neighborhoods and commercial districts, the arts are being seen as a vehicle for revitalization. In small communities, the arts are being used to capture and illustrate local identity, infuse energy and life into small town events, and catalyze significant economic development. Illustrations of the profound power of the arts, and effective programming and implementation strategies for leveraging the existing built environment, can be found in diverse places across the country today. For instance, in 2013 the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust contracted to bring Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman's 40-foot rubber duck to the city's waterfront for one month. The installation attracted over 1 million visitors, "the highest attended event in the trust's history." The park where the installation was housed noted that its visitation rates for park amenities and attractions, as well as revenues and receipts, went up exponentially as a result. The economic impact was estimated at over \$10 million. Other cities have taken a long-term approach to cultural arts districts in struggling areas, to kick-start revitalization.

The Wynwood Arts District - Miami

The Wynwood Arts District is home to over 70 galleries, stores, antique shops, bars, and performance spaces. The district is managed by the Wynwood Arts District Association, which has been legally operating since 2009. The arts district transformed a former warehouse and manufacturing district into a vibrant art-centered commercial area. It is also home to Wynwood Walls, one of the "largest open-air street-art installations in the world." As one local report describes the area:

"The world-class murals and spirit of the project continues to attract thousands of people to the Wynwood Walls each year. Among other things, it is an inspiring model for the revitalization of run-down, abandoned historic communities and a must-see destination for the city. The Wynwood Walls was conceived by the renowned community revitalizer and placemaker, the late Tony Goldman in 2009. He was looking for something big to transform the warehouse district of Wynwood, and he arrived at a simple idea: "Wynwood's large stock of warehouse buildings, all with no windows, would be my giant canvases to bring to them the greatest street art ever seen in one place." Starting with the 25th–26th Street complex of six separate buildings, his goal was to create a center where people could gravitate to and explore, and to develop the area's pedestrian potential."

The district has succeeded in leveraging cultural arts for economic development with robust programming as well. As they report, “With the introduction of the Second Saturday Art Walk in the District and the arrival of the Art Basel fair in 2002, Wynwood has seen some unexpected growth in a relatively short period of time as it gets more and more attention by the locals as the go-to place for an alternative and more cultural nightlife in the City of Miami.” Art Basel is “the Olympics of the art world,” and is hosted in Basel, Switzerland annually. In 2002, Miami became home to its sister exhibition. Over one weekend, over 260 leading galleries from 30 countries across North America, Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa exhibit works by over 2,000 artists of the 20th and 21st centuries. The show attracts over 50,000 attendees. It has had a transformative impact. As one reporter described it, “Art Basel has taken Miami Beach from a resort and tourism destination to a destination for art and culture, which means big business for the city.” The five-day event has an estimated \$500 million in economic impact and “is leading Miami Beach from recession to resurgence.” As one reporter wrote, “Miami seems to have figured out how to embrace the culture and the creativity in a way that has allowed areas like the Miami Design District to become an economic development dream come true.”

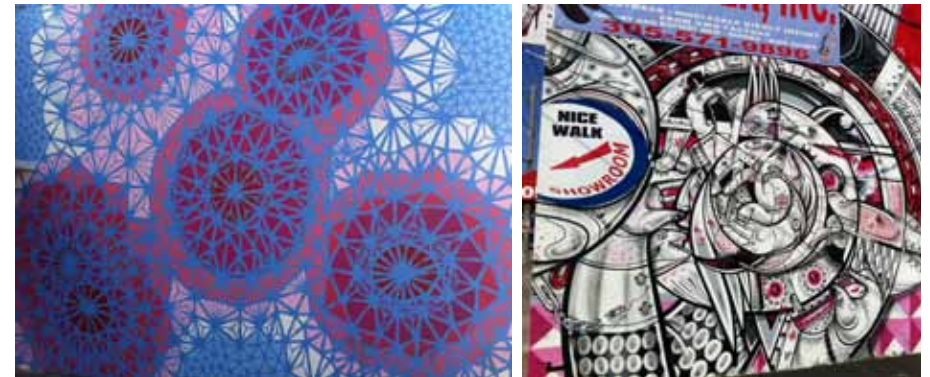
Station North Arts District - Baltimore

Located in the heart of Baltimore, Station North was the first district to receive the Maryland designation as an Arts & Entertainment District in 2002. The district is organized around several neighborhoods and transit. As their website describes the district, “Station North is a diverse collection of artist live-work spaces, galleries, rowhomes, and businesses, all just steps away from Penn Station, Mount Vernon, Charles Village, the Maryland Institute College of Art, the University of Baltimore, and Johns Hopkins University.” It is “marked by a combination of artistically-leaning commercial ventures, such as theaters and museums, as well as formerly abandoned warehouses that have since been converted into loft-style living.” In 2008, a vision was developed for the district, and in 2010, construction began on City Arts, a signature housing development for artists that will include 69 apartments and 8 town houses. Station North has also utilized existing urban fabric as a canvas to highlight murals and catalyze economic development. In 2012, a resident artist prominent in the international street art scene, Gaia, curated “Open Walls Baltimore,” an outdoor exhibition of twenty three murals and installations created by twenty nine street artists across the district.

According to the district association, “The Open Walls murals have enlivened public spaces, stimulated community revitalization and national dialogue, and attracted visitors and investors to Station North. Part public art project, part community revitalization strategy, Open Walls Baltimore has brought increased attention, civic pride, and increased investment to the Station North Arts District, its artists and businesses.” The district has also hosted a conference on Artists and Neighborhood Change, bringing outside experts and local artists and creatives together to discuss community development issues.

GOALS FOR A LIVINGSTON CULTURAL ARTS DISTRICT

- Connect to place and region
- Tap into local energy flows and leverage investments
- Honor the extraordinary diversity of the place and its people
- Embrace artistic expressions of place, poetry, performance, graphics
- Build Community and adapt to place and shared strategies
- Leverage Volunteerism and build civic pride by helping people fall in love with their place



There are two distinctive cultural arts strategies for Livingston to consider. They are not mutually exclusive and likely to have a synergism between them; the first is to attract income to make the district viable. The second is to run projects that expand the creative minds of local young people, and provide them opportunities to explore jobs, careers and businesses other than what is now mainly working on farms, packing houses, local government, blue-collar industries and maintenance, and those who offer non-taxable off the grid income.

Attracting Income to sustain a cultural arts district

Livingston like many of its neighboring farm communities has a population with very limited discretionary dollars to spend. Relying on local families to sustain a district is very problematic. However, there are several readily available groups likely to support a cultural arts district they are:

- Students and faculty from the nearby University of California Merced campus.
- Students and faculty from the nearby Merced College campus
- Allying with other cultural arts programs.
- Drivers and passengers from the more than 60,000 daily vehicles who now drive through town without stopping.
- First and second immigrant families from the same countries and cultures as the people in Livingston.

The University of California Merced has 5,000 students on its way to 30,000 with related growth in faculty, administration and consultant and related professional businesses. The student body lives on campus or nearby apartments. The Arts Department is very small but tripling in size this year. The campus and city have limited arts entertainment either in formal venues or student generated. The students are very diverse in cultural backgrounds and many from immigrant families. The Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities has a professional interest in the Sikh culture and could be a leader in encouraging or supporting programs or venues in nearby Livingston. Merced College is a commuter campus. Students are used to seeking their entertainment elsewhere. Like Livingston, the school's students population relates to the Hispanic culture. The Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities plays in a renowned regional band. He is enthusiastic about an arts district in Livingston. The Merced County Arts Council has concentrated its programs and events in the City of Merced. Its Board and staff director have searched for a rural venue to support their mission as a county-wide association. The Arts Council has a respected public relations and marketing program and a core group of followers. Highway 99 runs through the great Central Valley for hundreds of miles with more than 60,000 vehicles daily passing through Livingston. Until 20 years ago the only stop light on

This brought customers to the restaurants, shops and vehicle related businesses in Livingston. Eliminating the stop light and realigning the highway wrecked havoc on Livingston's small business community. As business declined so did the investments in the buildings and stores. Most noticeable is the pride and upkeep in Livingston residential areas in comparison to that in the downtown business community and simultaneously in the City's investments in streets, sidewalks, lighting and general appearance in its downtown area. The exit in the downtown area was eventually replaced by exits north and south of town. As is typical the businesses that located at the highway exits were national brands offering Livingston residents jobs but not profits or returns on investments. A cultural arts district combined with a thoughtful approach to bringing vehicles from the exits to the district, less than a five minute drive, would virtually double the sales for each one percent of diverted vehicles. While University and College students and staff are likely to support music, dance, theater and literature events on an occasional basis, vehicle traffic would support food events. A food center featuring locally grown products sponsored by Foster Farms, Gallo Cheese, A.V. Thomas organic sweet potatoes has the potential to bring people off the highway to town. Associated with traditional breakfast, lunch and dinner foods could be locally owned restaurants and food carts specializing in traditional foods of community residents – Punjabi, Mexican, and Portuguese and German. The Cultural Arts District can provide impetus to attracting cultural tourism relating to the strong Sikh, Mexican, Portuguese, German Mennonite and other cultural groups in the area. This could involve the Churches and Temples as well as the Public School clubs, and the extensive outdoor park facilities. Cricket and Pehlواني Wrestling tournaments for the large California Sikh communities of California, soccer and traditional dance for the Mexican community, Portuguese Bull Fighting, Mennonite Barn Raisings would all support cultural, retail and hospitality oriented businesses in downtown Livingston. These could be scheduled around existing Holiday events Livingston already schedules.

Exposing Livingston's young adults to career and business opportunities in the arts

Growing up in a small farm town in California's Central Valley too often discourages young people from developing their creative impulses. The most successful students find little of interest to return to Livingston from College or the Universities, finding limited economic opportunities. Young people with creative minds who often do not achieve the high school grades to qualify for scholarships to college too often pursue non-desirable career opportunities or are forced into work that closes down their minds. A vibrant Cultural Arts Community that offers opportunities to build on one's nationalities, religious beliefs, and respect for parents and grandparents. It opens up a wide variety of job, career and business opportunities both in Livingston which reinforces family life while delivering an increased cadre of civic leadership.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the existing community context, ongoing work on zoning and regulatory plans, and the community sentiments expressed during the SDAT process, the team offers the following core recommendations for the Livingston community:

BUILD CIVIC CAPACITY

Leverage the Many Organizations and Institutions that Already Exist

The SDAT application made note that “A major deficiency in the community is the lack of a non-profit organization that pays attention to community needs and interests.” Organizing and aligning community interests around an emerging cultural arts district may provide an opportunity for both enhanced collaboration among existing organizations, and the development of a new organization that can convene the whole community and provide a hub for public voice, partnership, and civic leadership during implementation. One successful model that many communities have used is the formation of a Main Streets organization focused on downtown revitalization. The National Main Streets Center provides resources and technical assistance to communities pursuing this model. Another effective model for Livingston may be a Community Advisory Board made up of representatives from all of the community’s existing organizations, which can serve as a collaborative hub for partnership on implementation efforts.

Implementation will require the efforts of the entire community. The SDAT application noted that the community already has an active civic culture, stating, “Livingston residents are active in their religious affiliations and organizations.” It will be important to activate and align the efforts of all the community’s institutions in order to make investments that build momentum over time. Moreover, both the churches and the schools should be tapped to make contributions to a cultural arts district. Arts programs already exist in the high school that can be expanded into the community. Parks and streets can also be seen as venues for artistic expression.

From a physical standpoint, city government and the Livingston Medical Group serve as obvious cornerstones downtown. Plans for both envision locating close together within the core. Now that the decision has been made to demolish the theater, there is an opportunity to rethink that site both for short term cultural uses, as well as longer term permanent facilities. It may take a while to assemble the funding for a true arts center, but that should not stop the efforts to use the site in the interim.



CULTURAL ARTS DISTRICT PROGRAM

A Program, not a project

A cultural arts district is not a project – it is a program. The program will consist of many projects and has no time line or time limit. It is what the city is and what the city becomes. The residents require agreement in large measure on this vision even through some aspects or projects may have elements that produce opposition. A California Central Valley farm town similar in size and not too dissimilar in ethnicity and income to Livingston faced decline. An outside consultant showed how a mural community might improve the economy and bring hope for the future. The City Council supported a program of quality murals, fine restaurants and antiques. The town's only antique store owner complained to the City Council that he barely had enough customers to pay the heating bills, and that a second store would be sure to cause him to shutter his business. A member of the Council asked how many of his customers drove from out of the area. What a foolish question, why would anyone come here to buy antiques? Of course twenty years later with a dozen antique stores, a half dozen fine restaurants and more than two dozen beautiful historic murals tour busses bring customers from more than 100 miles away, and there are out-of-state and international visitors.

Sunset Magazine runs a story about every third year, the American Paint Manufacturers Association awarded it the designation of the "Prettiest Painted Town in the Southwest beating out Taos, New Mexico and Carmel, California. INC magazine ranked it as one of America's 100 best communities in which to live, and another national magazine chose it as the best small city in California.

City government has largely remained on the sidelines, playing a supportive rather than a guiding role for example maintaining the grounds and the exterior of its museum and art gallery, arranging for street closures and banners, expediting the permitting of antique stores, allowing the Department of Public Works to consult and work on beautifying the area and the police to volunteer security services and cooking for outdoor events.. There have been no state, federal, or major foundation grants or loans. The several millions of dollars needed have been locally raised. Wealthy and multi-generation farm families are proud givers. Annual fund raising dinners are sold out.

There are four non-profit civic organizations involved in the arts community. They include the Chamber of Commerce, the Fall Festival Committee (linked to the Public Schools) the Mural Committee, and the Courthouse Gallery and Museum Association. They are formally linked through the Community Foundation – Exeter-By-Design. Current and former City Council and School Board members are active participants in these non-profits. The local retired judge donates legal services. The Chamber donates accounting services and through the Chamber members donate various maintenance and food services. Board members of the non-profits set the tone for the community through their hundreds of very highly visible volunteer hours and support for projects of the other non-profits. To the extent feasible and legal most contracts are won by local contractors who hire local workers. There are no rules or regulations guiding this by somehow it happens. The murals, art gallery, museum, festivals and concerts help knit together the community.

Civic leaders travel to other communities to learn about their arts projects. They host other communities to tour theirs. They interact with area colleges to bring events to town and help with mural selections.

Now, though, the leadership born in the 1920s and 30s that initiated and guided these activities is no longer active. There is still much left to be done. Are their examples sustainable?

SET THE TABLE FOR INVESTMENT

Create the underpinning for private investment in the Arts District

A very recent study in Livingston examined the exterior and maintenance of every residential property and every commercial building in Livingston. The contrast between residential and commercial properties was stark. Almost every residential property was well maintained. Pride was shown in landscaping, no matter how modest the home. A substantial number of commercial properties in the downtown area, future home of the Arts District, were rundown, needing paint, window replacements, cracked walls, unsightly signs and general neglect. The old timers attribute this to the time when the realignment of Highway 99 through town eliminated the only stop sign on the major highway, which eliminated the customer base. Building owners and merchants disinvested and city government followed suit, having no merchants group to insist in repairing sidewalks, properly trimming and maintaining trees, allowing street striping to fade, and in general treating the merchants in the same fashion as they treated their properties. There are small, “ready-this-year” projects the City could undertake to reverse the psychology of defeat and hopelessness that might very well encourage the type of larger scale investments to create a vibrant beautiful downtown Arts District.

In the recent decade or so Livingston has been uncompetitive in enticing development of major commercial properties. There was scant analysis of why commercial investments at the low end of property values could earn money now, but importantly significantly appreciated in the mid-term. Cities on Highway 99 both to the south and north were more competitive to capture investments. The Cultural Arts District is one chapter of a story that could be a powerful incentive to turn this around. There are a number of sources of capital both public and private who could make such a development feasible. The local families who own the great food corporations now invest in cultural projects - but in other communities – not their own. They could invest individually, with the other families, or with outside developers. The Sikh community has many ties both through family and business interests throughout California. Their large non-agricultural investments and gifts are generally made in the Punjab – not locally. The University of California, Merced College and the Merced Arts Council can and profess interest in applying for Federal grants for the arts and cultural communities through the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, and others. The City of Livingston is an investor to the Northern California Community Loan Fund and the only local government investor in it. NCCLF created the San Francisco Jazz Center among its other investments in the arts.

Create the psychology for investment in the cultural arts district.

There are a plethora of “do-able now” investments that could signify that something can be done and someone is interested in downtown Livingston. There is a tipping point for small projects though to signify that Livingston is a place to invest. A number of these easy to do projects are described below. The larger scale projects require significant capital and a fair number of years to build out. The City could use grant funding from the Federal EPA to prepare land for investment. It could build on the SDAT process to offer the maps, zoning and infrastructure improvements for investors. These projects are also described below.

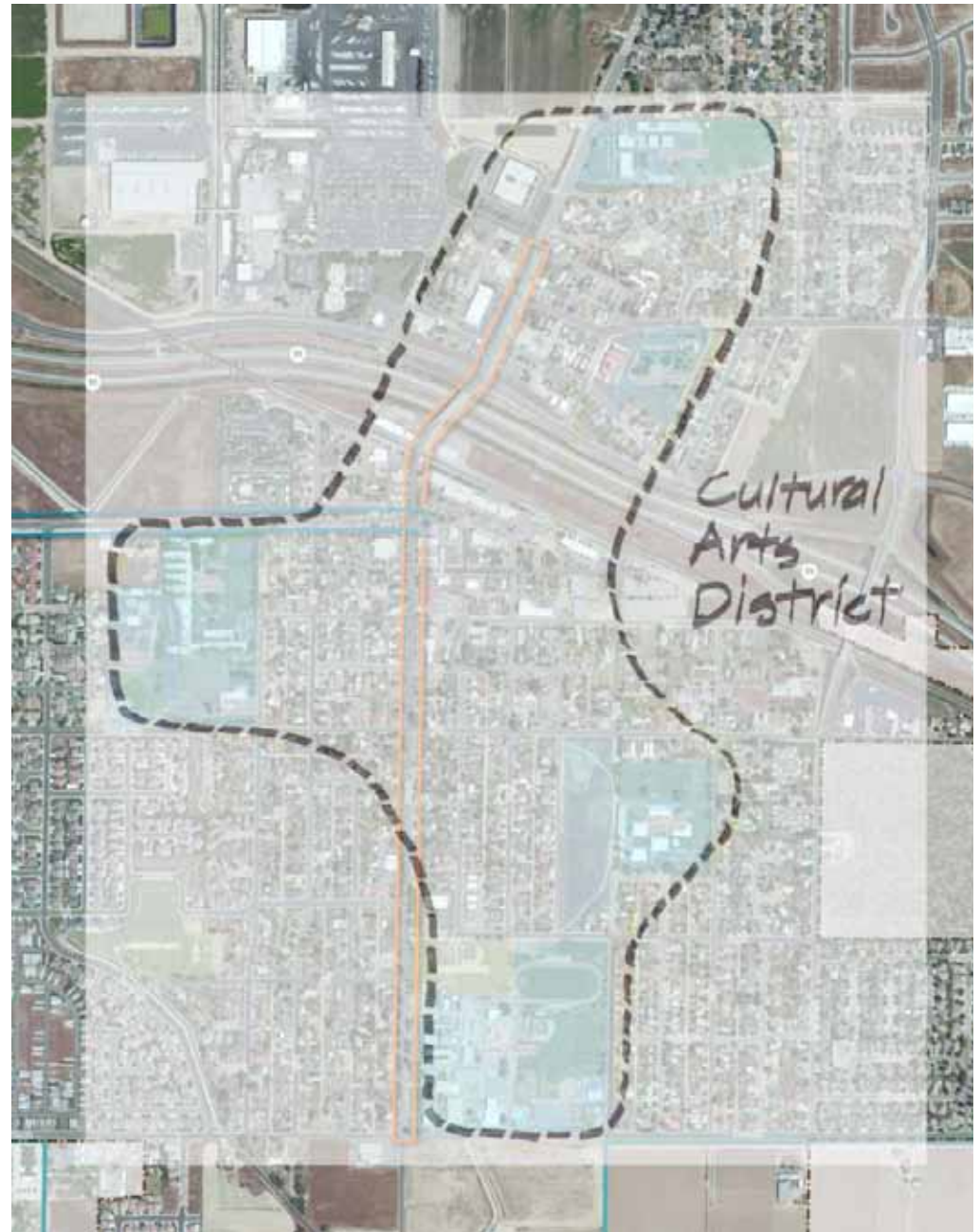
EXPAND THE CULTURAL ARTS DISTRICT CONCEPT

Envision a Cultural Arts District that Embraces all Community Institutions

An arts district should not be just downtown, but reach out to include all the existing and potential participants in fostering cultural celebration and expression. Everywhere people travel within the community, there could be indications of this social collaboration and cultural narrative, providing an authentic experience that represents local life and provides an interesting opportunity for outsiders to learn about and engage in through agricultural and cultural tourism activities.

Ideally, the Cultural Arts District will tie together and serve as a hub for activities across the community, including the schools, civic centers, parks, main street, and religious and civic institutions. In order to function effectively, the district must span both sides of the freeway, connecting the community physically and culturally. There are important opportunities to create pedestrian and bicycle bridges that can serve as an experience unto themselves through art and cultural interpretation. There is also an opportunity to feature art and landscaping along the freeway to act as a gateway feature and announce the community to visitors.

Leverage the great breath of cultural backgrounds in Livingston to position the community for grants and assistance. Agencies and foundations are eager to see this kind of cultural richness solidified and enlivened. Livingston should be able to make a great case for financial assistance.





CAPITALIZE ON THE NEW CIVIC ENERGY DOWNTOWN

Create Synergies between Existing and New Investments

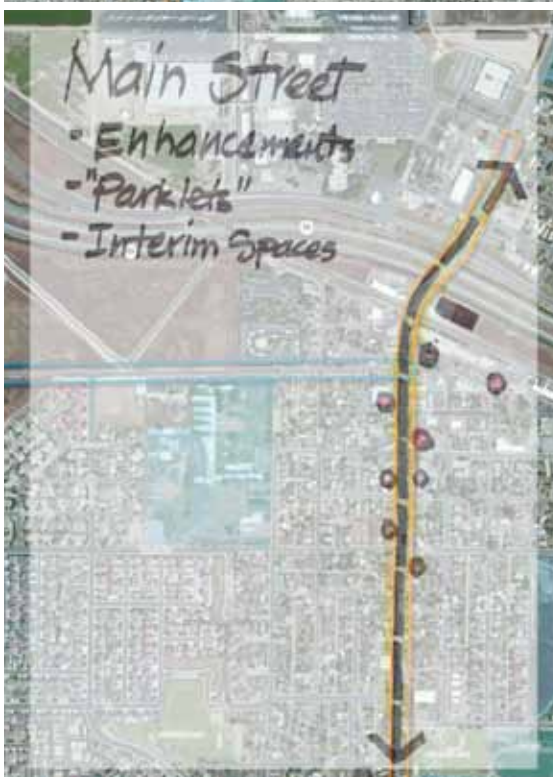
The relocation of City Hall and the Medical Center marks an important opportunity for the community to take advantage of in its pursuit of a cultural arts district. It will concentrate employees and customers into a compact, highly walkable area.

This hub of activity can serve as a catalyst to attract complementary uses. It can serve to attract restaurants, shops and services into the core. The buildings now used by city government on Main Street can be re-purposed for other commercial uses, adding even more people.

The eventual Arts Center on the site of the old theater could further invigorate the downtown by offering activities and events through the week and throughout the year. This is a golden opportunity to create a synergy between three major draws to create something larger than the whole – a collection of shared structures and spaces with a broad community reach.

ENHANCE AND CONNECT MAIN STREET ON BOTH SIDES OF THE HIGHWAY

As other groups suggested, Main Street should be improved to add trees, better lighting and more attractive sidewalks. However, it doesn't have to stop there. The team identified several intersections where there is excess, unused capacity near the corners. These areas can be converted to small plazas and "parklets." These spaces could contain special paving, perhaps artful tile work, along with seating, shade trees and vegetation. We have noted that shade from trees that do exist brings temperatures down in the vicinity and creates a tiny microclimate that is pleasant even in hot sun. These locations could also be ideal for food vendors. There is one location already serving this purpose, providing an important precedent. When it was widened and depressed, Highway 99 divided Main Street into east and west segments. The team recommends street features, such as planting and lighting and other enhancements, be installed to reconnect those separated pieces.



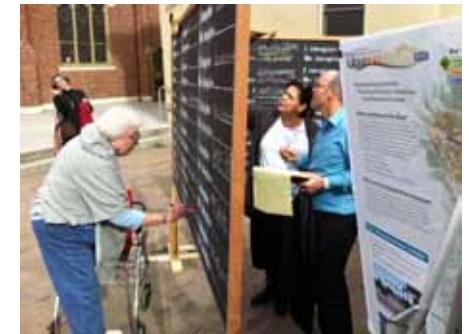
MAKE INVESTMENTS IN TEMPORARY USES THAT CAN CATALYZE ADDITIONAL INTEREST

The realization of Livingston's cultural arts district will require incremental implementation as resources are identified for each component of the program. However, the community should take advantage of opportunities to create temporary spaces and transitional uses that can build momentum and energy for larger investments in permanent spaces and facilities.

It is important to describe and illustrate what is possible in short-term temporary projects that can be completed quickly and garner community participation in the process. These projects should be visible, tangible messages to the community and outside funders and supporters that there is vision and community commitment to the larger aspirations for a cultural district. The community narrative of agricultural life lies at much of the roots of Livingston's history and culture, and the community should consider funding an artist residency to reveal the important stories and make visible representations of what happened, as well as what hopes and aspirations residents have for the future of their community.



Some of these early activities can be focused on participatory art forms. In many communities, volunteers participate in “chair bombing,” which entails turning old warehouse palates into Adirondack chairs and then filling public spaces, sidewalks, and other areas with seating options. In many cases, the chairs can be decorated artistically or help to tell a local story. In Wenatchee, Washington, local leaders installed a participatory project titled, “I Envision” during their SDAT process, and asked citizens to fill in the blanks. The project was bi-lingual to be inclusive of their residents’ languages, and hundreds of people participated in the project, providing a visible reference point for the community’s dreams. This project was based on artist Candy Chang’s “Before I Die,” art, which began on the side of a vacant building in New Orleans and has now been installed in countries all over the world. These kinds of projects help build enthusiasm for volunteer projects at a larger scale.





Pocket Park Opportunity and Mural Opportunity on Museum wall



Opportunities Downtown

BRINGING DOWNTOWN TO LIFE THROUGH THE ARTS

Livingston's downtown and main street are ripe with opportunities for artistic interventions. There are plenty of great opportunities within just a two-block area downtown. The area around the theater and main street includes several empty lots that could form pocket parks and empty walls that could be great mural projects. The community should implement a mural initiative involving youth volunteers and students, who expressed high interest in murals and street art during the SDAT process. Student volunteers could be enlisted to help paint the murals, as well as inform their subject matter. The mural program could include competitions and sponsorships, and could be maintained by a local arts organization. The many blank walls downtown represent a rich palate waiting to happen. In some communities, special areas are set aside in parks for youth expression. In Sebastopol, CA, the local skate park includes a designated graffiti wall where kids may paint. The park enforces strict guidelines for the use of the graffiti wall, and it provides the kids with a safe place for artistic expression. In Livingston, many of the potential pocket parks downtown could include mural projects. There are several opportunities for "parklets" and pocket parks downtown that could be enhanced with public art, including opportunities for both temporary and permanent projects.



The Art Wall in Laguna Skate Park in Sebastopol, CA

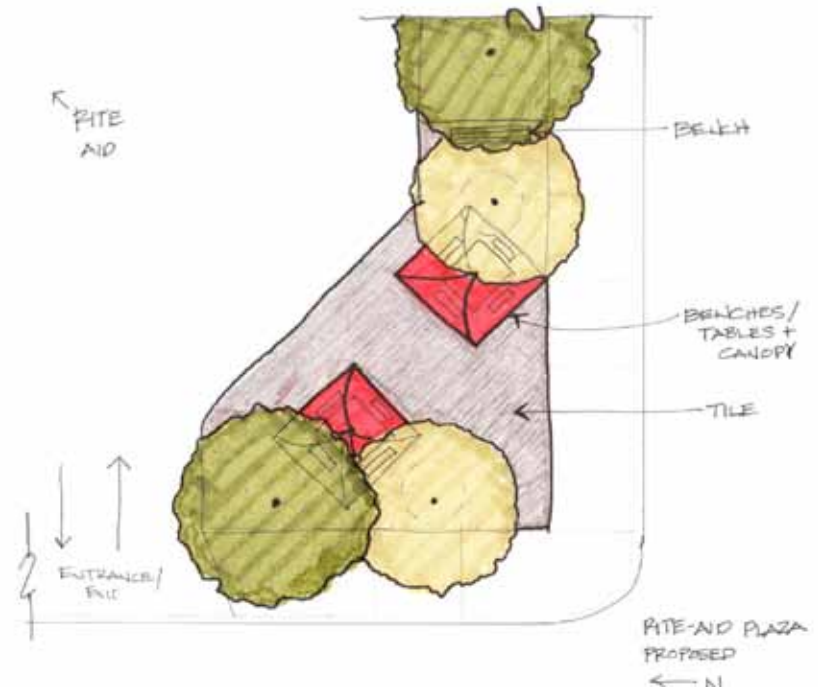


Mural in Houston, TX tells of historic local figures



Sculptural Mural in Bastrop, TX illustrates local history

These projects could be designed simply, with some potted trees and plants, and seating. They could include lighting and shade trees, as well as youth art. More permanent areas could include playgrounds, permanent structures, and places to gather. Temporary spaces could be enhanced with murals, and more permanent areas might include tile work. The Portuguese tradition of waves of tiles flowing across a plaza area could be utilized to celebrate that component of Livingston's heritage in some areas, for instance. There is a new tile business in town, the high school has a kiln, and there are willing volunteers in the community to make these projects happen. One area that would have immediate impact is the current food truck corner, which could be enhanced with a seating area to eat and relax, shade structures, and murals. Other interesting areas to consider are the two corners of the Ride Aid property, which has excess parking supply. The eastern corner of the site has an existing plaza area but there is a sign in the middle of it, posing a barrier. The west side of the side could be converted to provide a second seating area. It would require partnership from Rite Aid and removing a couple of existing parking spaces, adding canopies and benches in a triangular space, and providing artistic enhancements to make it an inviting space for people to gather. The team felt that these areas are high priority areas for the city and provide good visibility and location, and therefore the projects should be prioritized. The community should also seek opportunities to celebrate its agricultural heritage downtown through food. There is a current farmers market, which is a good first step, but additional activities around local food would prove to have impact in attracting both local residents and visitors to downtown. Other communities are taking similar action. In Newport, Vermont, officials created a Regional Tasting Center that highlights local food production from the farms in the surrounding area. The Center draws visitors from around the state and Canada who want to experience fresh local cuisine and food and craft products. Livingston has such a rich local food heritage that this opportunity should be pursued in the downtown area as well.



Existing Conditions at Rite Aid Site



Illustrations of potential parklets



The Sweet Potato Shed in Livingston



Converted Arts Center in Bastrop, TX

Transitional Space: “The Sweet Potato Shed”

An opportunity exists to convert an old metal-sided warehouse into a temporary arts center that could serve community purposes until such time as a totally new venue could be funded and built. The team was fascinated by the structure and history of the old warehouse. Livingston could start a community arts center in that building. The community may even want to keep it after it builds the permanent one as a space for temporary exhibits/events. Implementing a temporary space allows the city to keep from going immediately into an intensive capital program while getting ‘in the game’.

Many cities have re-purposed older industrial buildings into other purposes. It’s possible to imagine the big door being rolled back and the loading dock glassed in. Color and unique lighting could be simple and inexpensive ways to add drama. Even when a permanent center is finally built, the older building could be retained for special events and community arts programs that need basic space. Other communities are taking similar actions to leverage interest for permanent change. In Bastrop, Texas, officials are converting an old warehouse into a transitional arts center and performance space. They used the canvas of the building to participate in the “Inside Out Project,” a global participatory art initiative inspired by street artist JR’s large format black and white portraits in urban settings. The Bastrop project allowed them to visibly celebrate cultural diversity through a collective portrait.



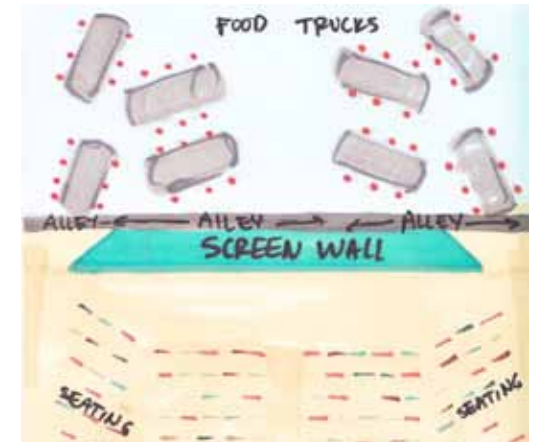
Inside Out Portraits on the Bastrop Arts Center depict portraits of local citizens

Transitional Space: Court Theater Amphitheater

While the decision to demolish the Court Theater to make way for a new arts center has been made, the team recommends preserving the building façade for the future facility. The new arts center represents a major capital project that will take significant resources to realize, but the team recommends use of the site in the interim to both build interest in the long-term project as well as utilize the existing site for performance space. The crude sketch illustrates how the site could be programmed for use in the interim. Other communities are taking similar actions. In Houston, Texas, the Fifth Ward community is home to the historic DeLuxe Theater, which hosted famous names dating back to the 1940s. The community is currently preparing for a \$3.7 million restoration of the theater, but in the interim, a group of local artists worked together to create a complementary amphitheater space down the street. Called the “Fifth Ward Community Jam,” the amphitheater was constructed of reclaimed lumber from condemned housing in the neighborhood. It has since become the focal point for the community, serving as an important location for gatherings and events. Another example exists in Mumbai, where locals were inspired by the Guggenheim in New York City and installed temporary canopies to provide shade and cover, and have now programmed the space for community performances, culinary events, and films. This flexible approach is easily disassembled and reset for a variety of uses.



Maintain Marquee for future use



Potential Temporary Backyard Assembly



Example of Temporary canopy in Mumbai



Fifth Ward ‘Community Jam’, Houston, TX



DeLuxe Theater in Fifth Ward, Houston, TX



*Splashpad in Tremonton, UT
funded 50% by community*

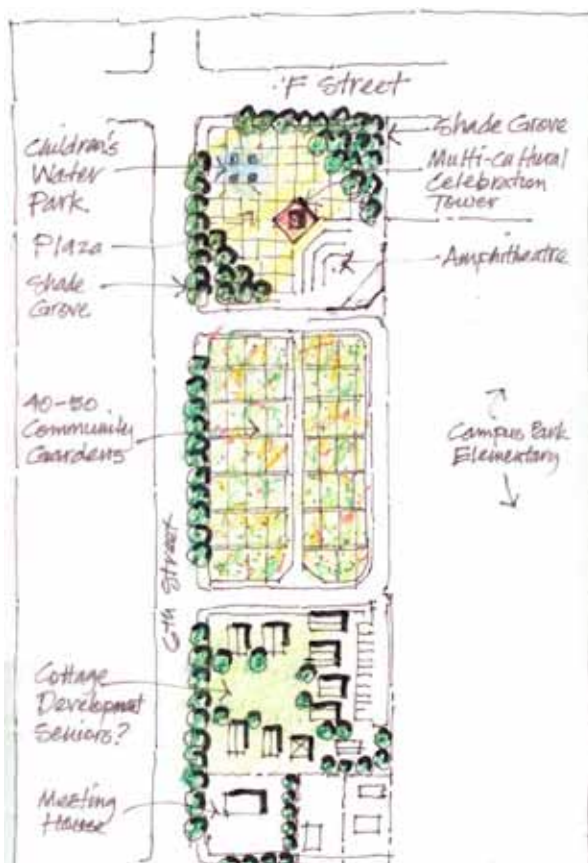


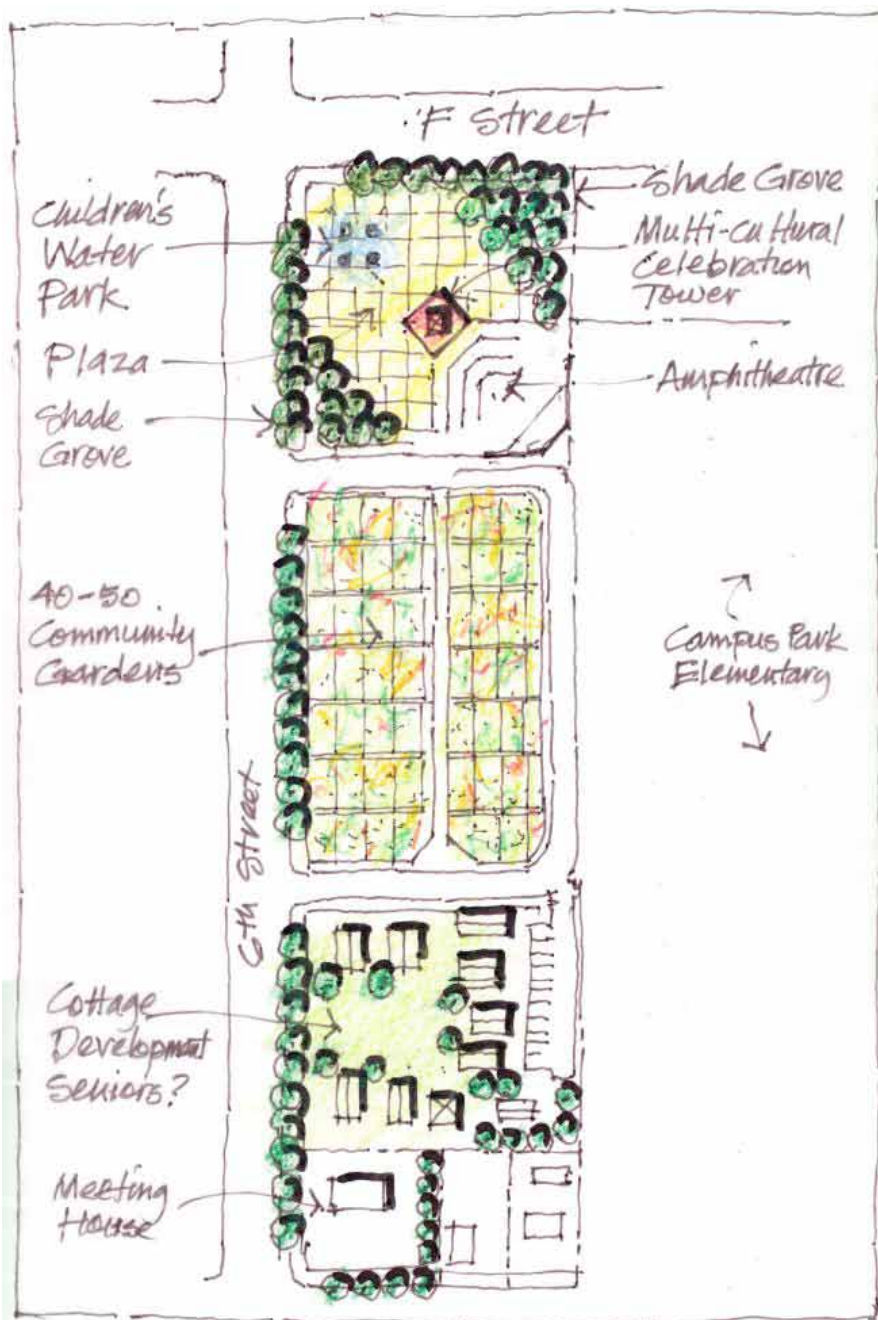
DEVELOP A VACANT BLOCK INTO COMMUNITY GARDEN AND CULTURAL PLAZA

Develop a cultural plaza and community garden park at 6th and F Street, with the following components:

- Commemorative/interpretive art
- Hardscape gathering space
- Outdoor amphitheater
- Community gardening plots
- Walking paths
- Possible senior housing at south end

The long vacant block at 6th and F Street, west of the elementary school, is no longer needed for educational functions. This could be an ideal place for a combination of elements, because it is so large in size. This site has tremendous potential to become a transformational space. It could include a multi-cultural plaza and garden space, an amphitheater, and a gathering place that is a celebration of culture. It could incorporate an iconic art piece that brings groups together. Everyone in the community could work together on the project. It could be combined with community gardens – little plots of land that households can use to grow flowers/vegetables. This is a successful model used elsewhere. The illustrative sketch shows what that combination might look like. The center of the diagram is the community garden space – enough for 40-50 gardens, a central walkway, a celebration of the tapestry of agriculture. On the north end, it might include a water feature for kids, and a central tower or vertical element to celebrate the community. There could also be a large, hard-surfaced plaza that could be available for community events. Shade trees make it comfortable to linger. Combining community gardens, trellises, art pieces, and a cluster of village-like housing next to it provides eyes on the space and a safe place. These projects provide a tremendous opportunity to engage the community in crowdfunding and partnership as well. In Tremonton, Utah, local residents raised donations from the community to cover half the costs of a splash pad for their park, and the city used capital funds to provide resources for the remainder of the project. The plaza could also include an amphitheatre with a stage for small performances. Perhaps this venue





could be aimed at children's performances. The plaza could also be a location for a monument to celebrate the various cultures that live in the community. It could be designed and constructed as a public process, inviting groups and individuals to add inscriptions, objects and materials.

The center portion of the block could be laid out for community gardens, or "p-patches." A grid arrangement of small plots could be rented out for local families to grow fruit and vegetables. Narrow lanes and pathways would allow people to watch this process. At least 40 plots could be located in that area.

The south portion could be sold or leased to a party to develop a small, village-like cluster of "cottage houses." These are houses that do not exceed 1000 square feet and are aimed at singles, young couples, single-parent households or seniors. The detached dwellings are grouped around a shared commons. In cottage housing developments, residents also have access to the space immediately in front of their home for a fenced-in garden. It's an unusual form of development but is gaining popularity for people who want smaller places to live. It would also provide eyes on the community garden to keep it secure.

The park and gardens could be connected to city hall along 6th street and to the rest of the city along F street.



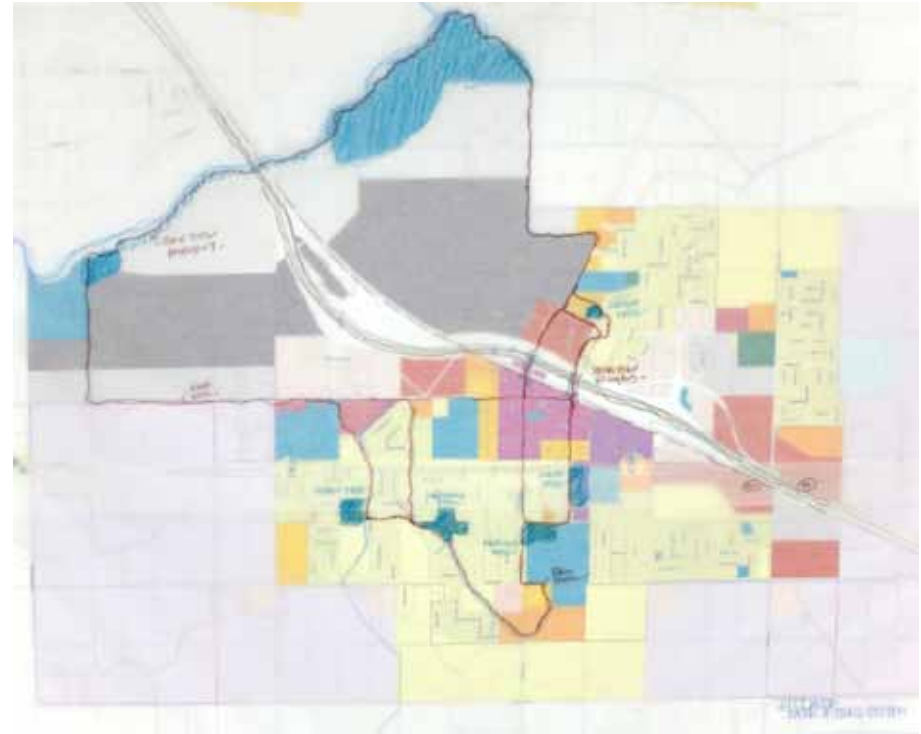


CREATE A NETWORK OF CONNECTED STREETS, PATHWAYS AND SPACES

Over time, the City could accumulate a system of public buildings and spaces that would form the core of a Cultural Arts District. This would include all of the elements described above, plus a new pedestrian bridge over highway 99, where it severs the town fabric. The initial bridge could parallel the Main Street overpass and allow people to walk and bike safely across the highway separated from faster moving vehicular traffic. Eventually a second bridge might be built to make that connection an even stronger one. Given the park infrastructure that Livingston has, plus city-acquired property, the ingredients are in place to development a system of pathways. It is possible from this connectivity to form a continuous bike trail connecting all of the parks, which would provide the community with a tremendous amenity and give visitors an attractive local experience incorporating cultural and agricultural tourism. It is possible to imagine a trail experience that highlights opportunities to view agricultural landscapes including vineyards and sweet potato farms, and experience the Merced river, as well as cultural expressions that celebrate the people of Livingston and the natural setting. Once those amenities are in place and there is tourist demand, the opportunity for hotel development could be enhanced as well. Developing a complete system of parks and trails will likely take upwards of 25 years, but understanding the vision for it now is critical if the community wants to pursue having this resource in the future.

The bridges are an important opportunity for Livingston as well. The Main Street crossing is currently bleak for pedestrians and cyclists. The possibility to have a pedestrian bridge is really exciting. There is enough right of way on both sides to create pathways and allow the bridge to become a celebration of different cultures and an important cultural expression of local identity. They should be designed as an art piece that incorporates color, lighting, unique structural systems and serve as an experience in itself, not just a passageway. The bridge and the sloping highway abutments below it could be lighted and serve as a dramatic gateway into the city. Landscaping and art could also enhance the highway slopes.

The bridges provide the symbolic opportunity to bridge culture and community, restore community connections and the narrative of place with a 'heritage loop' reuniting the two sides of the community that were split by the highway. The team developed a central organizing diagram that brings these things together and illustrates the highway crossing. Adding a pedestrian bridge alongside the cars – giving them their own space and experience that is safe – would be an important development for Livingston. In the long-term future it is possible to add a second bridge to create a powerful loop. Through these developments, it will be possible to express community pride and make visible Livingston's rich agricultural tradition.



NEIGHBORHOOD ART

The establishment of cultural arts programming also allows the Livingston community to incorporate art into neighborhood settings. There are all kinds of opportunities to take advantage of in this context. The photos illustrate an outdoor piano, painted benches, neighborhood festivals, a tile map, and a series of front-yard sculptures depicting favorite subjects of their homeowners, which was developed by a local sculptor in Sebastopol, California for his neighbors.

BUILD A CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

Finally, Livingston should seek to move City Hall to the east end of B Street, incorporating public space and providing a civic symbol visible from the freeway. The current facilities can be freed for higher uses that support the cultural arts and downtown revitalization. The community should build a new Cultural Arts Center on the site of the old Court Theater, incorporating performances space, visual arts spaces, and hands-on art spaces.





IMPLEMENTATION LESSONS

IMPLEMENTATION: WHY ARTS & CULTURE ARE IMPORTANT

More than ever, a community's quality of life is a major driver for economic development. This is particularly true for the knowledge-based industries that will comprise the majority of future job growth in America. Whereas in the past, the presence of a major resource or a major employer attracted workers to a community – and this has certainly been true for Livingston – more and more, it is employers themselves that are on the move, choosing to locate or relocate to places where they can find talented workers. Those workers, in turn, are increasingly drawn to communities with a high quality of life and diverse amenities.

These amenities include community infrastructure such as libraries, quality schools and parks, as well as private-sector resources such as dining, shopping, and entertainment. Community and nonprofit partners that provide opportunities for arts and culture are critical pieces of this puzzle; but economic development is more than just a collection of physical assets and buildings or the attraction of jobs to a community. A vibrant community also fulfills the core values of its citizens. These values are often more than economic security and usually include a sense of personal safety, health and access to health care, the importance of children and family, personal freedom, community and political leadership, and creating more time to enjoy all of those values. These values are universal and apply whether a community is highly urban or in a rural or agricultural setting.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

To successfully revitalize downtown Livingston and capitalize on its cultural and arts opportunities, a multifaceted implementation strategy is needed to ensure that projects are sustained over time. Therefore, Livingston needs more than just a plan. Revitalization must be approached as a business strategy that incorporates organizational, funding, operational, and marketing tasks.

Organization

In today's constrained fiscal environment, cities simply cannot do it alone. Even if money was readily available, Livingston will need partnerships with other levels of government, community organizations, and the private sector to gather together a broad-based panel of leadership that can focus on

downtown. Implementation may incorporate many different elements, ranging from theaters, to retail and restaurants, to trails and open space, to cultural events and venues. Each of these may require pulling in distinct sets of leaders and will involve tailored implementation strategies. Rather than identify a single organization as the sole "leader" of the implementation effort, a coalition or umbrella organization could be formed that provides a venue where many different organizations (existing and new) can meet to collaborate, coordinate, and share. This effort could be organized under the leadership of the city, which could provide the venue, staff support, and impetus for getting it off the ground. By bringing in a diverse set of partner organizations and community leaders, the coalition would provide the ongoing communication and coordination that is necessary to keeping a multi-year implementation effort on track. This work would include coordinating marketing efforts, securing funding through grants and donations, organizing events, and leveraging the leadership present to strengthen existing projects and initiatives.

As mentioned, funding will need to come from a variety of sources. With the elimination of redevelopment agencies in California, it is all the more important that a broad range of public and private resources be explored to assist in implementation. This includes all manner of grant programs, which could include those tailored to the arts as well as those that are tailored to transportation and/or recreation, since streetscape, trails, and other infrastructure projects could be very beneficial to the development of an arts and cultural district. Through the coordination of a leadership organization described above, grant applications would be more competitive and fundraising efforts would be more compelling to potential donors and sponsors.

EARLY SUCCESSES

While implementation of an arts and cultural district and a revitalized downtown are long-term efforts, it is important that some projects begin immediately in order to build momentum and demonstrate Livingston's potential to the community. These "early successes" serve to get the ball rolling, changing perceptions of downtown and setting into motion a "virtuous cycle" of investment, where early projects serve as catalysts for subsequent ones. This implementation strategy should include many, many projects that are big and small as well as those that are public and private.



No one project will single-handedly be responsible for Livingston's revitalization. Rather, it is the combination of many, many small projects over time that will transform the place.

Several ideas were discussed during the workshop and stakeholder outreach that either are short-term opportunities or low-cost strategies that should be implemented early-on in order to generate momentum. These include:

- Health clinic relocation: It was noted that Livingston Medical Group, operators of the community's health clinic, are exploring options to relocate the existing facility to an expanded one in the downtown core. This project would bring upwards of 100 professional jobs to downtown, not to mention the many clients, all of whom would expand the base of possible patrons to downtown businesses. In addition to that, it would serve as a significant statement of confidence by the business community in the potential of downtown.
- Gathering places: Downtown Livingston is mostly devoid of public gathering places where residents can people-watch, eat outside, and meet with their neighbors. Small plazas with shade and seating are essential to creating an environment that encourages socializing. Downtown Livingston has several underutilized corners and lots scattered throughout the downtown that could be converted, very inexpensively, to small plazas. These plazas, in turn, could be combined with food carts, arts displays, and other features to make them active and vibrant contributors to the downtown scene.
- Temporary arts venues: It was clear to the AIA team that Livingston has a rich inventory of organizations that could make use of a facility for special events, arts exhibitions, and community gatherings. Such spaces need not be fancy – the warehouses adjacent to the railroad tracks were seen as one possible opportunity to bring community events into the downtown core where they could be more accessible to the entire community while not requiring the construction of an expensive multipurpose facility. The city should explore discussions with property owners of these and/or other buildings in the downtown core to identify opportunities to bring events directly into the downtown.

- **Murals:** Murals are a cost-effective way to provide opportunities for local artists to practice their art while simultaneously alleviating the blight of vacant walls and celebrating local culture. Work with local property owners and existing arts and cultural groups to identify such opportunities and address any regulatory barriers that might exist to making that possible.

- **Storefront improvements:** The quality of the buildings and storefronts that line downtown's streets are a defining characteristic of a community's center. While some buildings may need significant structural upgrades, often very simple upgrades such as new paint or awnings can have a transformative effect on the look and feel of a main street. Often, a few thousand dollars in new paint can have as much of a transformative effect as many tens of thousands of dollars in other infrastructure. Although the redevelopment agency is no more, the city should explore opportunities to provide grants and loans to downtown property owners to implement low-cost storefront improvements to their buildings.

- **Banners:** Livingston already has downtown streetlight banners in place. These banners provide a great opportunity for local artists and organizations to participate in downtown's revitalization by designing additional banners that can be switched out throughout the year for special events and seasonal changes. With the participation of other organizations, the costs for this work can be spread to many partners, relieving the city of much of the responsibility other than managing the installation and removal of the banners.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

There are a number of resources the community can leverage as it begins implementation work. However, it is important to start with local resources and demonstrate local capacity for partnership to attract outside investment interest.

Local Partners

The Livingston SDAT application outlined a series of important local resources the community is already mobilizing for implementation. As the application states, "The new spirit in Livingston is triggering a number of different community elements to step to the plate and contribute to its future. The Court Theater Committee annually raises funds for the project, and these are likely to continue to support it. The German Mennonite Community has stepped up to contribute labor and materials to the Children's Park and the newly formed Chamber of Commerce offices which the city provided in exchange for one dollar a year." This is exactly the spirit of partnership required for the community to achieve success, and it is exciting to see this capacity already being leveraged in Livingston. The application identified the three major employers in the community as willing partners as well, particularly Manuel Vieira, the President of A.V. Thomas Product.

Regional Partners

The Livingston SDAT application identifies the Northern California Community Load Fund as a willing partner who has offered support through their tax credit allocation for large-scale community projects, as well as their technical assistance.

BUILDING CIVIC MOMENTUM

Enterprise Zone

The entire City of Livingston is within the Merced County Enterprise Zone. This Enterprise Zone is one of the 23 Enterprise Zones in the State of California. The California Enterprise Zone program targets economically distressed areas using special state and local incentives to promote business investment and job creation.

National Endowment for the Arts

The NEA has been an important resource for community arts since the 1960s. It has awarded more than \$4 billion “to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector.” The NEA maintains the “Our Town” program which supports “creative placemaking around the country.” The program “supports projects that contribute toward the livability of communities and help transform sites into lively, beautiful, and sustainable places with the arts at their core.”

National Main Streets Center

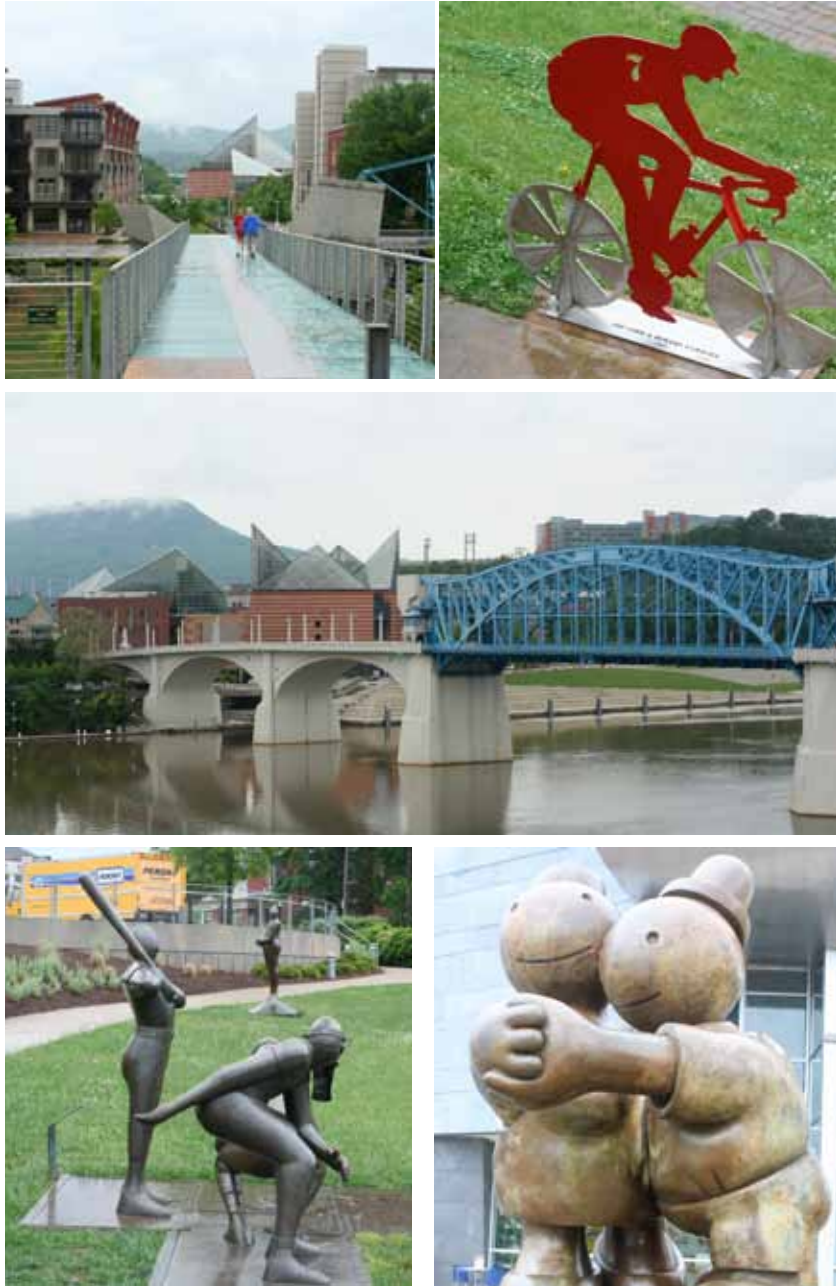
The National Main Street Center provides technical assistance to a network that includes 37 statewide programs and many local programs. Forming a local main street organization and applying their patented 4-point approach that leverages local assets for preservation-based economic development has proven a successful strategy for many communities. More than 2,000 communities have used this model, spurring \$49 billion in reinvestment in traditional commercial districts across the country.

“The initiative for an arts and cultural development at the city core has a history of close to 20 years.” - *Livingston SDAT Application*

Revitalization as a Process

Revitalization is a process. It will involve many investments, both small and large, and they must all link effectively to one another to create an environment that is attractive for more of the same, creating a virtuous cycle that builds continued momentum. It is a complete myth to think that there is a single transformational investment that will change downtown. It will require a process where both small and large investments carry importance. Some communities have a tendency to be dismissive of smaller ideas such as community gardens, bike lanes, and public spaces. Some people will consider these kinds of actions too insignificant to matter, and so unrelated to downtown health as to be unworthy of consideration. However, the experience in other cities provides evidence that each community must follow a process by which sequential actions leverage the following ones, scaling upward and outward to eventually create the desired environment for sustained change. The immediate goal must be focused around creating an environment downtown that is an attractive place for investment.

The preceding report contains innumerable examples of design interventions, policy models, and other suggested strategies that can be applied to many components of the Livingston vision for its future. However, the team felt it would also be instructive to offer comparable case studies from other communities which can help inform the design of an implementation process. Each community has overcome challenges with scarce public resources by engaging the whole community in the process of revitalization to achieve success.



Pedestrian connections undergird the arts system

CHATTANOOGA: THE POWER OF A PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

Chattanooga, Tennessee's Bluff View Art District is a "creative haven that specializes in the visual, culinary and landscape arts." The district is located along the city's riverfront, and is connected to the North Shore by the Walnut Street Bridge, a pedestrian bridge and linear park across the river that has become a central experience for both locals and visitors. The Parks Foundation describes the impact of the pedestrian bridge as follows:

"In only a generation, The Bridge has become the centerpiece and a vital connector of Chattanooga's riverfront renaissance, linking the city's vibrant North Shore with the Bluff View Arts District, the Hunter Museum of American Art, the Tennessee Riverwalk and the Tennessee Aquarium. Like the city's own rebirth, The Bridge's story is also one of decline and revival. Since 1978, when it was closed to traffic for safety reasons after serving Chattanooga for 87 years, the Walnut Street Bridge sat disabled, deteriorating, dormant and yet another reminder of the city's decaying downtown. By the late 1980s, the city had taken steps to demolish the downtrodden bridge, but lacked the funding. Before officials could dismantle the bridge, however, a community campaign comprised of visionary activists, civic leaders and historic preservationists banded together to save the bridge, envisioning it as a vibrant pedestrian bridge that could help propel a downtown renaissance. After nominating the bridge as an historic landmark, work began to raise the millions necessary to restore The Bridge as a pedestrian walkway, partially funded by a U.S. Department of Transportation grant and with the support of hundreds of thousands of dollars from Chattanooga residents. When the restored Walnut Street Bridge opened in 1993 to much fanfare, the "linear park" soon quickly realized the hopes of its restorers as a dynamic symbol of the rebirth of Chattanooga, and became a "bridge" to the revitalized riverfront and downtown. In the years since the original restoration campaign, the Walnut Street Bridge has emerged as a vibrant and dynamic symbol of the spirit of Chattanooga. The Bridge has established itself as not only a highly visible landmark and center of community activity, but as the connecting element between Chattanooga's internationally acclaimed riverfront renaissance and the exciting North Shore, a landmark linking public parks and pedestrian walkways on the revitalized North Shore with the Tennessee Aquarium, the Hunter Museum of American Art, and the Tennessee Riverwalk, which extends some seven miles to the Chickamauga Dam. Besides its near constant daily use, The Bridge has become a favorite venue for events and activities of every kind and description."

FREDERICK, MD: BRIDGING DIVERSITY THROUGH ARTS

One example is Community Bridge by William Cochran in Frederick, Maryland. This community of approximately 66,000 lies about an hour from Baltimore, Maryland and Washington, DC. Its downtown development was stymied by being in a flood plane. A visionary mayor created a flood control project through the downtown meant to also provide a space for economic development along the waterway. Unfortunately, the ebb and flow of resources along with a lack of agreement about the direction of the linear park caused the project to stall at various stages for about 25 years. Abandoned, and sometimes dangerous, the incomplete linear park provided a consistent community flashpoint. By 1993, the City was out of options for funding and couldn't do any more development on its own, and private developers saw nothing of interest in the area. To try to break the stalemate, the City found \$70,000 to clad a very basic concrete bridge near an old empty mill building with cast stone, a type of pigmented cement.

At the moment the plan was to go out to bid, a muralist who had painted three well-received murals in the historic downtown came forward with a plan to:

- Use the City money as seed money for a larger project to transform the entire bridge into an artwork
- Paint the bridge in great detail to look like a hand-laid stone bridge
- Get the community involved at unprecedented levels

Although it was quite controversial, spawning letters to the editor with titles like "Painting Won't Help Carroll Creek Monstrosity" and "Why Paint Ivy When You Can Plant Ivy," the City ultimately agreed. In spite of a near-fatal stabbing under the bridge, robberies and coming to work in the morning to find their scaffolding thrown in the creek, the artist and his team began work to transform the bridge, beginning with a message to the community spelled out in trompe l'oeil ("fool-the-eye") letters: "THIS IS A SHARED VISION."

At the same time, a new nonprofit organization named Shared Vision formed to help the project along, especially by raising the other funds necessary to take the 5-year project to completion. Simultaneously, a "Bridge Builders Guidance Team" of community leaders was brought together to help shape a massive community outreach to get as many people involved in the project as possible.



The artist wanted to ask the community one question — “What object represents the spirit of community to you?” — and to paint some of those objects into the bridge as what looked like stone carvings. The Guidance Team worked for more than a year to come up with a plan, and teams of people fanned out across the county to ask the question in as many ways as possible, including putting up 1,000 posters, creating chalk murals, asking business owners for the use of their electronic signs, handing out brochures in commuter parking lots, talking with the homeless, working with students in classrooms, on sports teams, and in other youth organizations, and many other methods. There was a half hour documentary that aired more than 30 times on the local cable channel and direct mail made its way in to every home in the county.

The symbols started making their way into the painted bridge: the children’s rhyme sequence “This is the church; this is the steeple,” the all-seeing eye of God that is on our money, the symbol for “unity” in sign language, a gyroscope, the sun and the moon together in one symbol. One child said, “We are each of us a piece of the puzzle.” The most often suggested symbol from this town that had most recently been in the national news for embarrassing racial tensions was clasped hands, especially black and white clasped hands.

The larger, “major features” on the bridge represent the common denominators among the community ideas. The story of Community Bridge became a popular topic for newspaper and magazine articles, and for several years, at least one major article was published each month somewhere in the world. The Bridge had a website, which was a brand new way to get information out at that time, and it was named one of the top art sites on the web. Ideas started to flow in from all over the globe, as well, and there are symbols from 48 states and 6 continents on the Bridge. Before the Bridge was completed, there were 50,000 visitors coming to see it each month, walking down those long and expansive concrete strips. There were so many visitors that for the last two years of the projects, they had to give tours all day, every day so that the artist could work uninterrupted. Also before it was finished, the artwork was appraised at \$1 million, but it cost a fraction of that amount.

In 1998, about 10,000 people gathered at the still undeveloped park for a ceremony to honor what they had made together. Over the next decade, about \$300-\$350 million in public and private investment occurred in the immediate vicinity of Community Bridge: the flood control project was completed and the park was developed on top as a public amenity, Class A office space with first floor retail and condos at a variety of price points have sprung up in formerly empty lots and rundown buildings, the library expanded and oriented its most interested architectural features toward the creek instead of toward the street, all the bridges in this part of the park are art bridges.

SEATTLE'S NEIGHBORHOOD POWER MODEL

"The social barrier to the Cultural Arts District is to overcome the habit of leaving town to find something to do, and for others to ignore Livingston as a place to go." - Livingston SDAT Application

Through implementation of a cultural arts initiative, the entire city of Livingston could become a platform for social activity. Seattle presents an illustrative case. Department of Neighborhoods has involved tens of thousands of neighbors in the development of scores of community-driven plans and 3,000 neighborhood self-help projects. In Neighbor Power, Jim Diers recounts the first 14 years of Seattle's Department of Neighborhoods. He describes a series of city programs, including the city's neighborhood matching fund which put up 50 percent of funds for neighborhood-driven projects that citizens had to match and implement. The account also describes the city's P-Patches, neighborhood service centers, and bottom-up neighborhood planning, that transformed and empowered neighborhoods all over the city. This model of community empowerment has been adapted and applied in jurisdictions all over the world now. The public monies used for these programs helped catalyze exponential private investment in revitalization and neighborhood health. The programs also fueled enormous civic pride. Diers describes the program impact as follows:

"More inspiring, though, are the many stories of how Seattle citizens have utilized the department's programs to create their own innovations. For instance, Ballard residents, after planting 1,080 street trees in a single day, went on to build a dozen new parks, including the first "gray to green" project involving the removal of asphalt from a schoolyard. Central Area neighbors were the first to combat graffiti with murals, to create a drug free zone, and to involve youth in documenting the history of their elders. In Delridge, the community successfully lobbied the city for its first library and designed and built it to include low-income housing above. As they have revitalized their neighborhoods, citizens have also been building a stronger sense of community. They have taken lessons from their new Eritrean neighbors, who, knowing the importance of supporting one another--"from the youngest to the most senior"--pooled their meager resources to build a community center in Rainier Valley."

It is this spirit of civic engagement and approach to leveraging the entire community's resources that will be the key to Livingston's success as well.



The world famous Fremont Troll under a bridge in Seattle



Playground designed to showcase local nature



Volunteer Street-Painting project



Before: Neighborhood Visioning Mural



After: fully developed project reflecting their vision

PORT ANGELES, WASHINGTON

Building Community Pride through a Public Revitalization Process

Port Angeles, Washington (pop. 17,000) provides an example of how to inspire pride in change by creating a truly public revitalization process. Their success has been built around involving everyone in the process.

In 2009, Port Angeles hosted an SDAT to focus on downtown revitalization and waterfront development. Port Angeles had suffered declining fortunes as the result of mill closures and reduced productivity from natural resource industries. The three-day charrette process created enormous civic energy to pursue a vision for the city's future. "Just two weeks after the SDAT presented more than 30 recommendations, the Port Angeles Forward committee unanimously agreed to recommend 10 of those items for immediate action," said Nathan West, the City's Director of Community and Economic Development. "Public investment and commitment inspired private investment, and, less than a month later, the community joined together in an effort to revamp the entire downtown, starting with a physical face-lift. Community members donated paint and equipment, and residents picked up their paintbrushes to start the transformation."



Before & After for the waterfront in Port Angeles



Before & After for one Building in Port Angeles, Washington

During the first summer of implementation, over 43 buildings in the downtown received substantial upgrades, including new paint and other improvements. This effort led to a formal façade improvement program that extended the initiative exponentially. The city dedicated \$118,000 in community development block grants (CDBG) for the effort, which catalyzed over \$265,000 in private investment. The city also moved forward with substantial public investment in its waterfront, which had a dramatic impact in inspiring new partnerships and private investment. Three years later, the city had over \$75 million in planned and completed investments and had turned the corner by producing huge civic momentum across the community. In June 2012, Port Angeles was recognized with a state design award for its waterfront master plan, designed by LMN Architects. The city completed the project in 2013, and the award-winning park opened to the public.

As West concluded, "The City of Port Angeles SDAT experience was far more than just a planning exercise. This opportunity for our community was a catalyst for action, implementation and improvement. Three years after the SDAT team arrived, the progress and excitement continue. A primary outcome has been that the process awakened community pride and inspired a "together we can" attitude. Today the inspiration remains and the elements and recommendations of the program continue to be the driver for publicly endorsed capital projects and investments in our community. More importantly this sustainable approach has tapped into the core values and priorities of our citizens to ensure a better and more balanced future for our City."

PADUCAH, KENTUCKY: INVITING THE ARTS

With a population of only 26,000, Paducah used to be known as “a place where culture meant a trip to the one shopping mall or movie theater.” In the 1990s, Paducah focused on revitalizing its downtown through crime prevention, new streetscape projects, restoring historic buildings, and promoting the downtown as a destination. In 2004, the community opened the doors of the state-of-the-art Luther F. Carson Four Rivers Performing Arts Center. The Carson Center brings Broadway shows to Paducah and provides a performance venue for the Paducah Symphony Orchestra. However, a unique incentive program brought artists, more than 70 in all, to the community with a transformative impact.

Local leaders called it the Artist Relocation Project. Through this initiative, the city provides relocation incentives for artists to move to a neighborhood in need of revitalization. The city zoning was altered to that accommodate and easily facilitate proposed new uses for the LowerTown Arts District. To ensure that artists could rehab and convert buildings in the area targeted by the Artist Relocation Program, the LowerTown Arts District has been zoned for live/work space. The city has become a major art and tourist attraction as a result, and is now referred to as the “Soho of the South.” In 2010, Paducah received a Great American Main Street Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. As one local leader described the possibilities of the program, “It could continue to grow and have an amazing effect on this community, and make it an arts and cultural destination for the entire country,”

SAN ANGELO, TEXAS

Building Sustained Civic Momentum

“A lot can change in 20 years.” That was the conclusion reached in 2012 by the *San Angelo Standard-Times* in looking back at twenty years of accomplishments that have followed San Angelo, Texas’ R/UDAT. The paper described a “Snowball Effect” of civic work that was spurred by the process.

Lee Pfluger, who served as the chair of the local R/UDAT Steering Committee, described the conditions twenty years ago: “Back in 1991 you could have shot a cannon in downtown San Angelo on a Saturday night and not hit a soul — it was that dead — not a car in sight. The effort started with Celebration Bridge (with funds raised from the community) and the revitalization of the Paseo de Santa Angela as public space, and each success stimulated new interest in downtown. All the vacant buildings that were underutilized in 1991 have all enhanced their utilization to a higher use.”

These early successes each built more momentum for larger investments. In fact, in the last seven years, the total amount of public and private dollars that have been invested in the downtown has reportedly grown from less than \$1 million to more than \$55 million in combined public and private investment through the third quarter of last year. In 2002, the San Angelo Area Foundation was created. The Foundation exemplifies the partnership and civic engagement that have blossomed across the community. In the past decade, it has received more than \$92 million in donations from more than 3,500 different donors, and has distributed over \$38 million in grants. One of its recent grants, to the Performing Arts Coalition, is part of a larger effort to raise \$13.5 million to convert an old Coca-Cola warehouse into the San Angelo Performing Arts Center.

NEWPORT, VERMONT

The Power of Leveraged Actions

In 2009, Newport, Vermont (pop. 5,000) brought a Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) to town to help build a revitalization strategy. Patricia Sears, the Executive Director of the Newport Renaissance Corporation, described the town's dilemma a few years ago: "We were the last city in Vermont to achieve downtown designation from the state. We had some of the highest unemployment in the state. We decided we were done being last. We decided, 'we are going to be *first*.'" Newport hosted the first R/UDAT in state history. Hundreds of residents and stakeholders participated in the process. As Mayor Paul Monette said, "it wasn't the usual political process. Everyone was heard during the R/UDAT."

Within two years of the project, the R/UDAT had built so much momentum that the town had over \$250 million in new and pending investment, including 2,000 new jobs in a town of just 5,000 – an incredible achievement in the midst of a severe national recession. Like Port Angeles, Newport was able to achieve success through broad partnership and involvement. It also leveraged small actions to build momentum for larger investments. For example, the R/UDAT team included a recommendation to create a community garden, something that has been suggested for Livingston as a potential action. Newport created a community garden with over 32 organizational partners. They took advantage of existing capacity – a downtown parking lot that was donated – and not only created a garden, but programmed it to have a transformational impact. Despite Vermont's reputation as the nation's premier state for local-food production, 32% of Vermonters either cannot afford enough food or enough nutritious food. Out of the community garden, the "Grow a Neighborhood" program was created, teaching neighborhood residents about urban agriculture, providing space for family plots, and engaging local restaurants in a farm to table initiative. Six new restaurants opened in the downtown during the first two years of implementation. The downtown began its first annual food festival. What started as a modest neighborhood garden expanded into a city-wide co-operative farm run by volunteers. Thousands of pounds of vegetables are grown in these gardens. As one local newspaper reported:

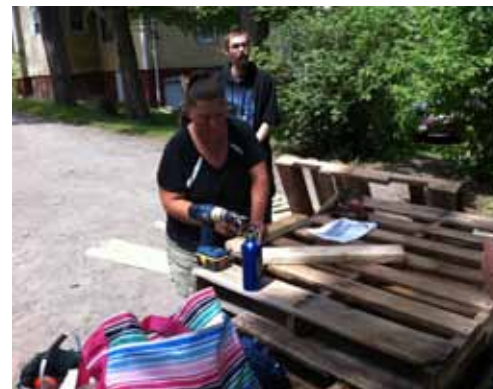
"The benefits of these gardens are immediately obvious -- Bernier said she grew enough and froze enough for her family last summer that she didn't have to buy a vegetable until April. Neighbors partnering together and working outside have had intangible benefits as well. Last year, one garden produced 1,700 pounds of vegetables -- with only volunteers and no chemical fertilizers. The garden plots have been donated by the city and property owners.. The Fresh Start Community Farm grew out of the Summer Street garden, where neighbors claimed small sections and grew their own vegetables. So the neighbor-driven garden grew into a co-operative farm organized under the Newport City Recreation and Parks Department, with a local resident as overall manager and a local manager for each of the gardens.



Construction Kick-Off Party for New Resort Development



Family Garden Plot



'Chairbombing' Volunteers engage in tactical urbanism



New Vibrancy Downtown

Donations have poured in of all kinds of things, fence sections and limbs for pole beans, and even some clay pots that youngsters have painted for décor. Along with Summer Street and the convent, there are gardens on Broadview, Gardner Park near the band stand, and on land next to Numia Medical on Lake Road. There is a community garden behind Dailey Memorial Library in Derby Center and there will be a garden at the mobile home park owned by Rural Edge on Shattuck Hill Road in Derby. Youngsters have participated in the gardens, including school groups like Turning Point and grade school students. Seniors from The Meeting Place on Second Street are now involved in the Summer Street garden nearby.”

A couple of years into implementation, the city opened a regional tasting center, which highlights local produce from the region and draws locals and visitors. Newport also took advantage of widespread community participation in the R/UDAT to engage citizens in code changes, designing a participatory process to create the first form-based code in the state. New investments include boutique hotels, a tasting center featuring regional agriculture, and a waterfront resort. The city also created the state’s first foreign trade zone, attracting a Korean biotechnology firm and other businesses.

The City has undergone a fundamental shift in its thinking since the R/UDAT process. In 2009, the public dialogue was dominated by nostalgia about the city’s past. As one resident exclaimed, “I’ve seen Newport come, and I’ve seen it go.” Two years later, the R/UDAT team conducted a follow up visit to assess progress in the community. As the Mayor stated, “I attribute our success to the successful R/UDAT in 2009 followed by the great public/private partnerships which have developed.” The sense of change reaches all levels of the community. A citizen described the civic “attitude adjustment” that had occurred: “When you have people working together, things can happen and do happen. That’s the most important change that has occurred – a change in attitude. All of a sudden, nothing is impossible.” Today, communities across New England are visiting Newport to learn the ‘secrets’ of its success.





CONCLUSION

LIVINGSTON: A CITY ON THE MOVE

“The Livingston project offers the SDAT program an opportunity to demonstrate how visioning, design, and development programs can offer a model for an immigrant agricultural community a path to sustainability and a healthier environment for its families. Livingston looks forward to implementing and building on a partnership with SDAT. The pieces are in place for smart growth and sustainability: transportation planning to attract visitors to town, complete streets, circulation planning and zoning to make a Cultural Arts District viable, and planning, technical assistance and as described below preliminary commitments for financing to implement the project when the planning is complete, based on a sustainable business plan.” - *Livingston SDAT Application*

As the SDAT application noted, “Livingston is a city on the move and is in a period of transition and transformation due to new residential and commercial development.”

The SDAT team observed many favorable conditions in the community during its three-day process. We believe that the necessary conditions for success are present in Livingston. If the community can come together around a shared vision for its cultural arts district, and form the necessary partnerships and collaborations to move implementation forward, we believe that Livingston can experience significant progress toward the realization of its aspirations. The community has demonstrated its collective capacity to conceive of a desired future and work together to achieve it. In the cultural arts realm, this community has a powerful and authentic narrative to share with the world, and the team is confident that through partnerships, Livingston can realize its vision for the future.

ESSENTIAL NEXT STEPS

The City needs to identify a leader or a small leadership group to develop and sustain this development. The leader(s) need a vehicle to work through. The vehicle would best be independent of the city administration as it should not be subject to annual budgets or to personal politics and loyalties as city council membership changes with elections. The vehicle will have some operational expenses including communications, travel, printing and the like. An annual contribution from the City could cover these and it would be best if it came from a dedicated source. Depending on the financial position of the leader this could be a paid position or a volunteer position. For example if it was filled from one of the great agricultural interests it could be a volunteer position. The leader(s) would call on local government or others to prepare grant or loan applications, land use or economic studies.

The leader would be the point of contact for developers, government and foundation staff, and local groups. The role would be to assure that plans met with the priorities of City Government and to nudge the, modify them, expand them, or discourage them before becoming formal agenda items. The Mayor, School Board President, Superintendent or City Manager would be included from the outside in the discussions as would local civic and business leaders. The structure of the development vehicle is best suited to the position in the community of its leadership and the relationships with elected officials and major economic and community interests. It could range from a decision making corporation with formal by-laws, to an advisory council with an established membership, to a very informal support group who get together over coffee.

Each will have its advantages and each its problem. They will sort themselves out as development is accomplished or not. The capacity exists to achieve success - it is up to the community to take the lead in implementing its vision.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgements

The SDAT Team would like to extend its gratitude to the citizens of Livingston for hosting this process. It is our sincere hope the SDAT conversations will lead to greater collaboration and future success for the community. We would like to extend special thanks to the following organizations and individuals for their leadership of this process:

City Council: Jim Soria, Gurpal Samra, Mayor Rodrigo Espinoza, Arturo Sicaños, and David Mendoza

Members of the Planning Commission

Jose Antonio Ramirez, City Manager

Livingston City Staff

Josh Meyers, Local Government Commission

Steve Coyle, AIA, LEED AP, Northern CA Congress for New Urbanism

Ruben Chavez, Chief of Police

Joan Mires, Court Theater Committee

Barbara Ratzlaff, Livingston Historical Society

Alex McCabe, Livingston Chamber of Commerce

Leslie McGowan, Livingston Health Clinic

Atsuko Michael, Livingston Lions Club

Jeff Runyon, Livingston Rotary Club

Through the SDAT process, the team came away with a understanding of Livingston's community narrative and the generosity of its people. The Livingston community has our deep gratitude.





THE SDAT TEAM

THE SDAT TEAM



Mark Hinshaw, FAIA, FAICP - Team Leader

Mark is an architect and the director of urban design and principal at LMN Architects. He has had an influential career spanning architecture, planning, and journalism. His consulting practice at LMN Architects spans design and planning. For 35 years, Mark has combined his background as an architect with his skills as a city planner to help communities understand growth and development choices. He has gained increasing prominence and regard as a speaker and writer, in a variety of local, national, and international media. While his popular column in *The Seattle Times* has brought Seattleites a fresh look at the phenomena of their own city, designers from around the nation and the world have gained their impressions of Seattle's urban achievements from his writings in *Architecture*, *Architectural Record*, *Landscape Architecture*, and other professional journals. Mark has described the influences that have shaped his unique way of looking at cities, as observer and problem-solver, in a wide-ranging view that spans the urban horizon "from public policy to social psychology." Mark holds Bachelors in Architecture from the University of Oklahoma and a Masters in Urban Planning from Hunter College/CUNY. Mark was inducted into the AIA College of Fellows in 1994. He was inducted into the AICP College of Fellows in 2000. He served as AIA Seattle President 1992-93.



Mario Campos, FAIA, ASLA

Mario Campos, a senior partner of Jones & Jones, has directed the design of large multi-disciplinary projects focusing on the integration of landscape architecture, architecture, urban design and planning to promote community development and environmental conservation. His approach to planning and architecture emerges from strong regional, cultural, and traditional sources, closely rooted to the land, the environment, and the community.

Based in his own multi-cultural heritage, education and professional practice, Campos' projects visibly reflect their roots and inspiration in indigenous community and cultural values, as well as a profound respect for the environment. His design and planning work is continually evolving in manifesting a "landscape culture" and "a culture of place."

Campos' practice is rooted in a deep commitment to nature, culture and community. Through broadly inclusive design processes, combined with pragmatism, he has successfully interwoven cultural and environmental values to achieve an authentic sense of place, and to empower communities to express their identity and heritage through design. In so doing, he has helped to establish and lead today's practice of culturally and environmentally sensitive design.

Campos has also shared his knowledge and commitments through active engagement and professional leadership as a speaker at professional organizations and universities, and as advisor to educational and civic groups.

His professional experience includes planning and design of cultural and public facilities including zoological and botanical gardens, museums, public places, parks, and cultural centers. Campos' design leadership, expressed in his exemplary projects worldwide and knowledge-sharing, continues to advance interdisciplinary, culturally sensitive, and environmentally responsible practice.





Liesel Fenner, ASLA

Liesel Fenner is the public art program manager at Americans for the Arts in Washington, DC, and develops national programs and services advocating for excellence in public art and design. She builds partnerships and cultivates field leadership through the Public Art Network (PAN) which has membership of more than 1,000 art and design professionals. Liesel has planned the last five annual public art conference proceedings.

Liesel was formerly with the New England Foundation for the Arts for eight years as its public art program manager, where she developed Art & Community Landscapes, a partnership between the National Park Service and the National Endowment for the Arts. She worked on public art projects throughout the New England region and nationally. She has organized artist selection jury panels, facilitated community visioning workshops, and curated gallery exhibitions.

Liesel is a licensed landscape architect and practiced landscape architecture and urban design in the San Francisco Bay Area. She attended the Rhode Island School of Design and received a Masters of Landscape Architecture degree with a specialization in public art. She also received a Bachelors of Landscape Architecture from the University of California, Davis. She has taught courses on public art and placemaking and served on board's of nonprofit art organizations.



Margarita Cabrera

Margarita Cabrera was born in 1973 in Monterrey, Mexico. She lived in Mexico City for ten years and then immigrated to the U.S. with her family. She received an MFA from Hunter College in New York, NY. Cabrera currently lives and works in El Paso, TX. Her most recent exhibitions include a solo show entitled Pulso y Martillo at UC Riverside Sweeney Art Gallery, Riverside, CA, during which she debuted two performance works. Her work was also included in New Image Sculpture at the McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX and the Trans/Action at Guadalupe Cultural Art Center, San Antonio, TX. Her work has been included in Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, TX; El Museo del Barrio, New York, NY; Sun Valley Center for the Arts, Ketchum, ID and San Jose Museum of Art, CA. In 2008 she was a resident artist at ArtPace, San Antonio, TX. Cabrera is the recipient of a Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant and was a finalist for the Texas Prize in 2007. Cabrera is represented by Walter Maciel Gallery in Los Angeles, CA.



Chris Zahas, AICP

Chris Zahas is Managing Principal of Leland Consulting Group. He works with LCG's private and public sector clients to prepare strategies to develop and revitalize downtowns and main streets.

As a principal with LCG, he manages complex projects and multidisciplinary teams with an emphasis on downtown revitalization, effective public-private partnership strategies, and mixed-use developments. Chris carefully weaves together smart growth principles, economic and market realities, and the human relationships that lead to successful, innovative projects. He holds a master's degree in urban and regional planning from Portland State University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in international affairs from Lewis and Clark College. Chris is a member of the American Planning Association, American Institute of Certified Planners. A fair weather cyclist, you can find Chris riding to work across the Hawthorne Bridge during Portland's warm summers.

Erin Simmons- Director, AIA Design Assistance

Erin Simmons is the Director of Design Assistance at the Center for Communities by Design at the American Institute of Architects in Washington, DC. Her primary role at the AIA is to provide process expertise, facilitation and support for the Center's Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) and Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) programs. In this capacity, she works with AIA components, members, partner organizations and community members to provide technical design assistance to communities across the country. Through its design assistance programs, the AIA has worked in 200 communities across 47 states. In 2010, the Center was named Organization of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for its impact on communities and contributions to the field.

Erin is a leading practitioner of the design assistance process. Her portfolio includes work in over 60 communities across the United States. A frequent lecturer on the subject of creating livable communities and sustainability, Erin contributed to the recent publication *Assessing Sustainability: A guide for Local Governments*. Prior to joining the AIA, Erin worked as historic preservationist and architectural historian for an environmental and engineering firm in Georgia, where she practiced preservation planning, created historic district design guidelines and zoning ordinances, conducted historic resource surveys, and wrote property nominations for the National Register of Historic Places. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Florida State University and a Master's degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Georgia.

Joel Mills - Director, Center for Communities by Design

Joel Mills is Director of the American Institute for Architects' Center for Communities by Design. The Center is a leading provider of pro bono technical assistance and participatory planning for community sustainability. Its processes have been modeled successfully in the United States and across Europe. In 2010, the Center was named Organization of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for its impact on communities and contributions to the field.

Joel's 20-year career has been focused on strengthening civic capacity and civic institutions around the world. This work has helped millions of people participate in democratic processes, visioning efforts, and community planning initiatives. In the United States, Joel has worked with over 100 communities, leading participatory initiatives and collaborative processes that have facilitated community-generated strategies on a host of issues. During the past five years, this work has catalyzed over \$1 billion in new investment. His past work has been featured in over 1,000 media stories, including *ABC World News Tonight*, *Nightline*, *CNN*, *The Next American City*, *Smart City Radio*, *The National Civic Review*, *Ecostructure Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, and dozens of other sources. He has served on numerous expert working groups, boards, juries, and panels focused on civic discourse and participation, sustainability, and design. He has also spoken at dozens of national and international conferences and events, including the World Eco-City Summit, the Global Democracy Conference, the National Conference on Citizenship, and many others.

