

Public Spaces and Linkages

Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency

“Experience Del Paso Boulevard” Streetscape Project



On July 14, 2007, hundreds of Sacramento area residents and business owners celebrated the completion of the “Experience Del Paso Boulevard” Streetscape Project – a complete transformation of a struggling eight block stretch of Del Paso Boulevard in the North Sacramento Redevelopment Project Area. Among the dignitaries attending day-long festivities were State Assembly Member Dave Jones, State Senator Darrell Steinberg, and City of Sacramento Councilmember Sandy Sheedy. The “Experience Del Paso Boulevard” Streetscape Project recently won the local chapter of the American Public Works Association’s Transportation Award for its major focus on increasing public safety for pedestrians, creating a sense of community and revitalizing Del Paso Boulevard’s entire commercial corridor by:

- removing two travel lanes to calm traffic and provide for diagonal parking;
- widening and beautifying the landscaped median to create protected pedestrian crosswalk refuges;
- commissioning and installing 10 pieces of public artwork;
- installing new bulb outs, retaining seat walls, and pedestrian-scale lighting; and,
- enhancing existing and adding new crosswalks with a stamped pattern.

The “Experience Del Paso Boulevard” Streetscape Project is an outgrowth of the Streetscape Improvement and Beautification Master Plan, which was completed by the

City of Sacramento Redevelopment Agency in November 2002 and outlined a blueprint for investments to Del Paso Boulevard, the “Main Street” of North Sacramento, one of Sacramento’s first developments outside of the Central City. Historically, the corridor has been a major arterial connecting vehicular traffic to Downtown Sacramento. However, with its total transformation, the Boulevard is becoming a regional draw with a shopping experience that is unparalleled in the rest of Sacramento.

Project “Quick Facts”

The “Experience Del Paso Boulevard” Streetscape Project required considerable time and materials to complete. The particular highlights of which include:

- increasing on-street parking from approximately 89 spaces to 144 spaces;
- installing 24 character elements in the medians—especially designed for the Boulevard with blue glass tiles that are lit at night;
- replacing 57 City standard street lights and poles;
- constructing 8, 805 square feet of driveway;
- using a total of 829 tons of asphalt for the Project;
- applying 31,450 square yards of slurry seal on the Boulevard;
- constructing 5,000 linear feet of curb and gutter;
- installing 44 truncated domes in the ADA compliant ramps;
- constructing 35, 264 square feet of sidewalk;
- installing 9, 400 square feet of pavement markings;
- planting 23 new trees; and
- installing new public art fabricated by local artists:
 - three new monument signs,
 - one new Clock Tower, and
 - six art sculptures.

Making the Most of the Boulevard

With the goal of revitalizing the corridor, the Redevelopment Agency embarked on the “Experience Del Paso Boulevard” streetscape project to create a unique street experience which was pedestrian-friendly and would remove undesirable activity on the Boulevard and encourage private investment in properties along the corridor.

Del Paso Boulevard is home to a close-knit community of artists, small independent business owners, long time residents, and cutting-edge developers. There is an eclectic commercial mix of art studios and galleries, interior design stores, historic landmark

businesses, and specialty restaurants including the Supper Club and Enotria. With its burgeoning arts community, the Boulevard has developed into an edgy business environment that invites investment in the arts such as the Musician's Hall, the Building on the Boulevard, Surreal Estates Ink, 1001 Del Paso Works, and Artisan Square.

The energy of these businesses and the Boulevard really comes to life on "Second Saturday", a local arts celebration that takes place monthly and is sponsored by the North Sacramento Chamber of Commerce. At this event, the community comes out to celebrate the arts, tour galleries, explore this exclusive shopping district and socialize. With its major emphasis on public art, outdoor seating areas, new landscaping and public safety, the "Experience Del Paso Boulevard" streetscape project has become a vehicle for linking the local arts community to revitalization efforts in the area, and ushering in a new look and feel on the Boulevard and enhancing its monthly "Second Saturday" celebration. The renaissance of the Boulevard has made it a regional destination with emerging independent businesses focused on the arts and the most public art work on the shortest stretch of roadway in Sacramento.

With three local developers working in the area, there is considerable new development occurring along the Boulevard that will benefit from the "Experience Del Paso Boulevard" streetscape project. In particular, New Faze Development, headquartered on the Boulevard, has been working in North Sacramento area since 1990 specializing in urban infill development. Currently, New Faze has received approval for plans and financing for a six-story development that will bring 22 residential condominiums, five live-work lofts, 14,000 square feet of office space, and 5,000 square feet of restaurant/retail area to the central Boulevard.

In addition to infill developments, the streetscape improvements help to promote adaptive reuse of the Boulevard's vacant and underutilized buildings making it possible to attract such high profile businesses as Sacramento News and Review, which is moving to the Boulevard in 2008. Other adaptive reuse efforts include New Faze Development's rehabilitation of the historic Grand Theater. Like the Boulevard, the theater is being transformed from an underused resource with a drab, run down exterior back into an active theater and restaurant. The Supper Club, Fran's Café and Article (clothes store and hair salon) are all housed in the same recently renovated mixed reuse building—another example of adaptive reuse.

Building on North Sacramento's historic and geographic significance, public artwork was commissioned and installed on Del Paso Boulevard to reflect North Sacramento's

distinctive past and create a sense of community identity and character. Continuing with the theme of keeping the Boulevard local and independent, the public art was designed and fabricated by North Sacramento artists who live and work in the immediate area.

The angled parking was installed to support commercial investment and improve parking conditions for existing businesses. The landscaping was planned to encourage complementary vegetation treatments as the redevelopment of private properties occurred on the Boulevard. All these features along with an increased number of crosswalks, new bulb outs, larger medians, and wider sidewalks has transformed the Boulevard into a pedestrian-friendly environment ripe for continued private investment.

The streetscape Project has not only resulted in a unique regional demonstration project, it also implements the best smart growth principles of the Sacramento Area Council of Government's (SACOG) Blueprint Project by:

- encouraging distinctive, attractive communities with quality design;
- ensuring sufficient on-street parking to promote commercial and retail development;
- promoting reuse and mixed land uses;
- supporting compact development; and
- using existing assets.

Challenges and Opportunities

Prior to the start of the "Experience Del Paso Boulevard" Streetscape Project, the Boulevard was plagued for years by several blighting conditions including numerous empty buildings and vacant lots, a number of liquor and adult stores, high rates of crime and prostitution, a lack of pedestrian scale street lighting, narrow sidewalks that were non-compliant with the ADA, and a shortage of protected pedestrian crosswalks.

In order to address these conditions, one of the goals of the "Experience Del Paso Boulevard" Streetscape Project was to implement an urban design plan that would promote the Boulevard's economy and remove undesirable activity. This was accomplished by tackling the inadequate on-street parking and public right-of-way infrastructure, unsafe pedestrian street crossing, deficient pedestrian lighting, and lack of a unique "sense of place."

With that in mind, the Project's design team began working with the community to expand and further define the details of the streetscape improvement Project. City staff held one large public open house design meeting to receive input on the Project and attended numerous neighborhood group meetings including: the North Sacramento Chamber of Commerce, Del Paso Boulevard Partnership, North Sacramento Redevelopment Advisory Committee (RAC), and the neighborhoods monthly Cops and Coffee, a partnership effort with the Sacramento Police Department. Additionally, the Project Manager held several individual meetings with the Boulevard business owners to discuss the potential impacts of the Project on daily business operations. The design team also prepared and distributed two newsletters to residences and businesses within a 500-foot radius of the Project Area and kept the community apprised of construction activity via local and community media sources.

Once the vision for the Boulevard was clearly defined, the design team began working through the plan and immediately faced one major challenge: overcoming the City's traffic and engineering objectives for the Boulevard in order to implement the Agency's long range planning goals. The City's Department of Transportation (DOT) engineering and planning objectives were focused on satisfying and maintaining the Boulevard's levels of service. At approximately 12,000 cars per day, the Boulevard was "on the bubble" in terms of daily traffic capacity on this four-lane major thoroughfare. As is often the case with large transportation projects that might adversely impact traffic, there is a creative tension between traffic engineers' desire to minimize wait times and ensure a steady flow of traffic and planners' desire to create an aesthetically pleasing urban design plan with great community gathering spaces, high quality architecture, and opportunities for economic growth. The "Experience Del Paso Boulevard" Streetscape Project was no different and presented these same challenges. However, by outlining the community's long range economic goals and objectives, the Agency was able to make the persuasive case for reducing the road from four to two lanes and establishing angled parking on the Boulevard.

After just a few months of its completion, the "Experience Del Paso Boulevard" Streetscape Project has enhanced the corridor's vibrancy. This is evidenced by the number of business owners who have painted, landscaped and spruced up the facades of their businesses. In addition, several businesses have inquired about and/or applied to upgrade their facades through the Agency's Exterior Rebate Program.

Project Involvement and Agency Profile

The "Experience Del Paso Boulevard" Streetscape Project took more than five years to complete at an expense of \$4.7 million. The Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment

Agency was the lead in planning and assembling the financing for the Project with the City of Sacramento's Department of Transportation leading the construction of the Project.

The Agency invested \$4.7 million in the "Experience Del Paso Boulevard" Streetscape Project including:

- Phase I (Design): \$1.2 Million (80 percent Tax Increment)
- Phase II (Construction): \$3 Million (I-Bank Loan/Agency—to be repaid with 80 percent Tax Increment)
- Art in Public Places (Art Installation): \$0.5 Million (80 percent Tax Increment)

SHRA, a joint powers authority of the City and County of Sacramento, administers 13 redevelopment Project Areas within and, in some cases, across the two jurisdictions. The Agency was created in 1973, and serves as the Redevelopment Agency and Housing Authority for both the City and County. Agency staff also report to the Housing and Redevelopment Commission, a 10-member advisory board appointed by the City Council and the Board of Supervisors. [SHRA has a FY 2007 budget](#) of \$233.8 million and approximately 302 employees.

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