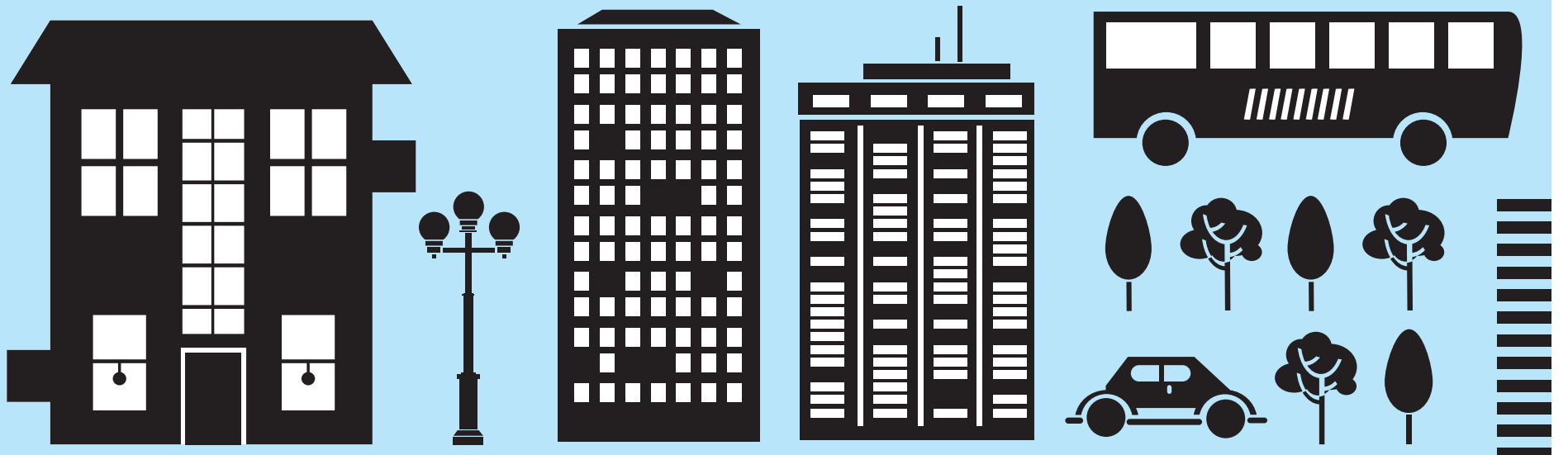
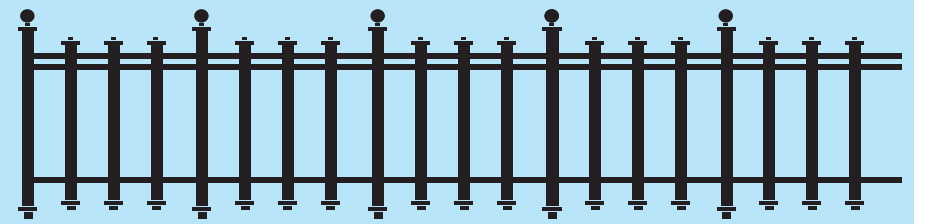
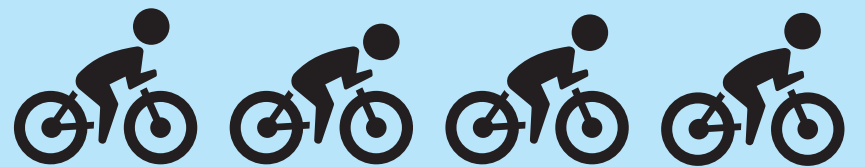




BUILDING OUR CITY

PLANNING FOR A VIBRANT AND EXCITING SACRAMENTO





WILLIAM BURG
Sacramento historian



CLEANING UP THE CODE

SEEING SACRAMENTO TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

BY **MIKE BLOUNT**

Making Sacramento more sustainable and livable is a goal shared by residents and city officials moving into the future.

According to the city's 2030 General Plan — a policy guide for the next 20 to 25 years — Sacramento will work toward becoming the most livable city in America. But in order to achieve that vision, the City of Sacramento Community Development Department is making necessary adjustments to the city's 50-year-old zoning code. These adjustments are careful to preserve existing neighborhoods, while also promoting inward growth and sustainability.

When Sacramento's zoning code was last updated in 1962, it embraced a different philosophy for planning and development. At the time, residents relied heavily on cars for transportation, so housing and industry were developed away from each other. But in the 50 years since, city planners and policy makers recognized that some of the most livable neighborhoods in Sacramento were developed with mixed land uses, where housing, commercial and offices were built in close proximity to each other.

In 1950, there were about 50,000 people living in the central city, according to Sacramento historian William Burg. Today, there are about 35,000. Burg attributes the decrease to the zoning code. "Housing was actively demolished and never replaced in the central city. ... People want to live in these neighborhoods, but we're not supplying the demand."

A survey conducted by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments came to the same conclusion. More people are choosing to live in smaller environments — these areas offer more diversity and are close to offices, schools, child care centers,

shops, restaurants and other neighborhood-service providers. With high gas prices and a struggling economy, many residents want the option to take public transit, ride a bicycle or walk to their destinations.

In the Planning and Development Code project, the city will synchronize the vision set out in the 2030 General Plan. The city's goal is to grow organically through infill development to not only become more sustainable, but also to spur economic growth with increased residents, retail shops and jobs in the city.

"PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE IN THESE NEIGHBORHOODS, BUT WE'RE NOT SUPPLYING THE DEMAND."

William Burg
Sacramento historian

Downtown Sacramento Partnership Policy Manager Kevin Greene says these changes reflect the desires of community members and grow the economy. "It gets people out of the automobile, so they are more human-oriented, and it encourages public transportation and more modes that are environmental from an energy standpoint," says Greene.

Sacramento Community Development Department Senior Planner Jim McDonald believes that "[continuing to develop in outlying areas] consumes our open space, our agricultural space and it costs more per acre to serve people there," McDonald says, "Letting the zoning code allow for a range of uses allows us to take advantage of our existing infrastructure and promote infill growth."

WHAT WILL UPDATING THE CODE ACHIEVE?

- More infill development of vacant and underutilized land
- New development along commercial corridors
- Economic development, including jobs, shopping and housing
- A vibrant downtown
- Adaptive reuse of historic buildings
- Preservation of wildlife habitats, open space and agriculture
- More complete neighborhoods
- More housing near schools, parks and recreational areas for a variety of income types
- Streamline the development process



PROVIDING CHOICES

UPDATED CITY CODE GIVES MORE HOUSING OPTIONS FOR AREA RESIDENTS

BY KENDALL FIELDS

The new Planning and Development Code accommodates the vision of Sacramento as a metropolis, realizing Sacramento communities are shifting from outlying suburban communities to more densely-populated urban areas.

The suburban sprawl that was once so desirable is an inefficient use of land. Not only is the small number of inhabitants per acre (the density) inefficient for a nation with a booming population, but also the commutes for these residents increases the carbon footprints of each.

The revised code aims to increase the density of key areas in Sacramento, to support more residents, improve land use and overall efficiency, and reduce pollution associated with high levels of automobile commuters.

The paradigm shift of recreating classic neighborhoods like Land Park or Midtown will help with the idea of building complete neighborhoods in urban areas. In turn, it will allow developers to create neighborhoods with houses for people to live in and stores and restaurants for shopping and dining, improving the quality of life for all ages. Having the ability to walk to shops and restaurants builds a sense of community and flexibility for someone who doesn't want to use a car. It also builds a much healthier and more sustainable lifestyle.

Seventy-four-year-old Marlene McDonald appreciates the City's efforts to create options for a healthier, more sustainable lifestyle for people like her. About a year and a half ago, McDonald moved from the foothills of Ione, Calif. to a Sacramento apartment near 6th & I streets, right next to the train station and K Street. McDonald, who took up walking 21 years ago when her husband died, was looking for a more walkable community. She decided to move downtown and sold her brand new car to create a healthier lifestyle for herself.

Growing up in the foothills, she says she misses the expansive area, but relishes being so close to everything that she wants to do. She says when she lived in Ione, she was making a 100-mile round trip twice a week just to visit her doctor's office or go shopping at McClellan Park. It was a 20-mile trip to exercise at Curves and a 40-mile trip to go shopping in town. Today, McDonald says she is either a short walk — if the weather permits — or a bus ride away from anything. "I'm in the right place for me. I'll tell anybody how much I love where I live because there are so many things to do — so many things that I can just walk to."

"I'M IN THE RIGHT PLACE FOR ME. I'LL TELL ANYBODY HOW MUCH I LOVE WHERE I LIVE BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS TO DO — SO MANY THINGS THAT I CAN JUST WALK TO."

*Marlene McDonald
Downtown resident*

She purchased a bus and light rail pass and enjoys going to the farmers market on Sundays and taking swimming, Tai Chi and yoga classes at the YMCA. McDonald even takes the train down to San Francisco some weekends. She is also glad to live only a mile away from her son, whom she says always offers to come pick her up or drop her off for errands. "I turn him down. I really just prefer walking," McDonald says. "I like to walk and be independent and where I'm at allows me to do that."

TERMS TO KNOW

COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS

A complete neighborhood is a place where residents have access to the things they need in daily life — housing, schools, restaurants, shops, office buildings, etc.

SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT

A suburban development is a low density residential area with homogenous land-use patterns that either exists as part of a city or as a separate residential community away from the city core.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

As populations grow, so does the demand for housing. To accommodate these increases, cities begin to expand into existing infill areas.





LISA MARTINEZ

Director of Marketing and Outreach
Downtown Sacramento Partnership



ELIZABETH STUDEBAKER
Executive Director
Midtown Business Association

A BLUEPRINT FOR A BETTER ECONOMY

CITY PLANNERS AIM TO UPDATE DEVELOPMENT CODE TO IMPROVE AREA

BY **KENDALL FIELDS**

Over the past 15 years, many urbanized areas in the city have begun a renaissance, burgeoning into thriving and bustling areas that offer an eclectic mix of uses for residents and visitors. To spur further economic vitality, the new zoning code will help revitalize existing neighborhoods and make it easier to do business in the city.

Executive Director of the Midtown Business Association Elizabeth Studebaker points out that an updated code decreases some of the paperwork process for developers and encourages them to take on projects that use existing properties in the urban core and revitalize them in an effort to preserve historic neighborhoods. “The update to the City of Sacramento zoning code presents an opportunity to spur economic development, and welcome new projects to Midtown,” Studebaker says. The Planning and Development Code will allow developers to build inward to make the most effective use of city space.

Part of growing inward is making areas in Sacramento include a higher density of residences per area — for example, continuing to build apartments and condominiums like the La Valentina complex on 12th Street. Another key goal is revitalizing neglected areas and replicating traditional neighborhoods. The Broadway Triangle Project in Oak Park is one such project taken on by Vrilakas Architects, bringing a mixed-use development into the neighborhood. The project, located at 35th Street and Broadway, will include restaurants and at least 10 homes for sale.

Increasing the number of residences in an area of mixed use — where housing intersects with restaurants, offices and shopping — reduces commuting time to various locations, which could spur an increase in

visits to these places and generate more revenue. The more people you have living on a street, the more vibrant a community — and the more people, the greater the market will be for restaurants, corner grocery stores, child care, doctors’ offices and other neighborhood-serving businesses.

Downtown Sacramento Partnership Director of Marketing and Outreach Lisa Martinez is encouraged to see that the City is committed to streamlining infill and mixed-use development with the new zoning code changes. Martinez, who has lived downtown for the last six years, hopes the update results in some positive changes for her neighborhood. “[I] love being able to walk to work, to my favorite restaurants, and to local boutiques — basically live my life on the Grid,” Martinez says.

“WHILE THE NEIGHBORHOOD HAS CHANGED DRAMATICALLY, WE STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO. THERE ARE STILL VACANT BUILDINGS AND LOTS OF POSSIBILITIES.”

Lisa Martinez
Director of Marketing and Outreach
Downtown Sacramento Partnership

The code seeks to achieve greater mixed-use opportunities by streamlining the permitting process for businesses, requiring only one flexible permit. The general plan emphasizes complete neighborhoods and the replication of traditional neighborhoods.

“While the neighborhood has changed dramatically, we still have a long way to go,” Martinez says. “There are still vacant buildings and lots of possibilities.”

FLEXIBILITY BRINGS GROWTH

When Meea Kang, president of Domus Development, was building La Valentina Apartments at 12th and E streets in Sacramento, she had to file 13 special permits with the City of Sacramento during the process because of the inflexible nature of the current zoning code. Her project could have been completed several months earlier if the proposed zoning changes were implemented.

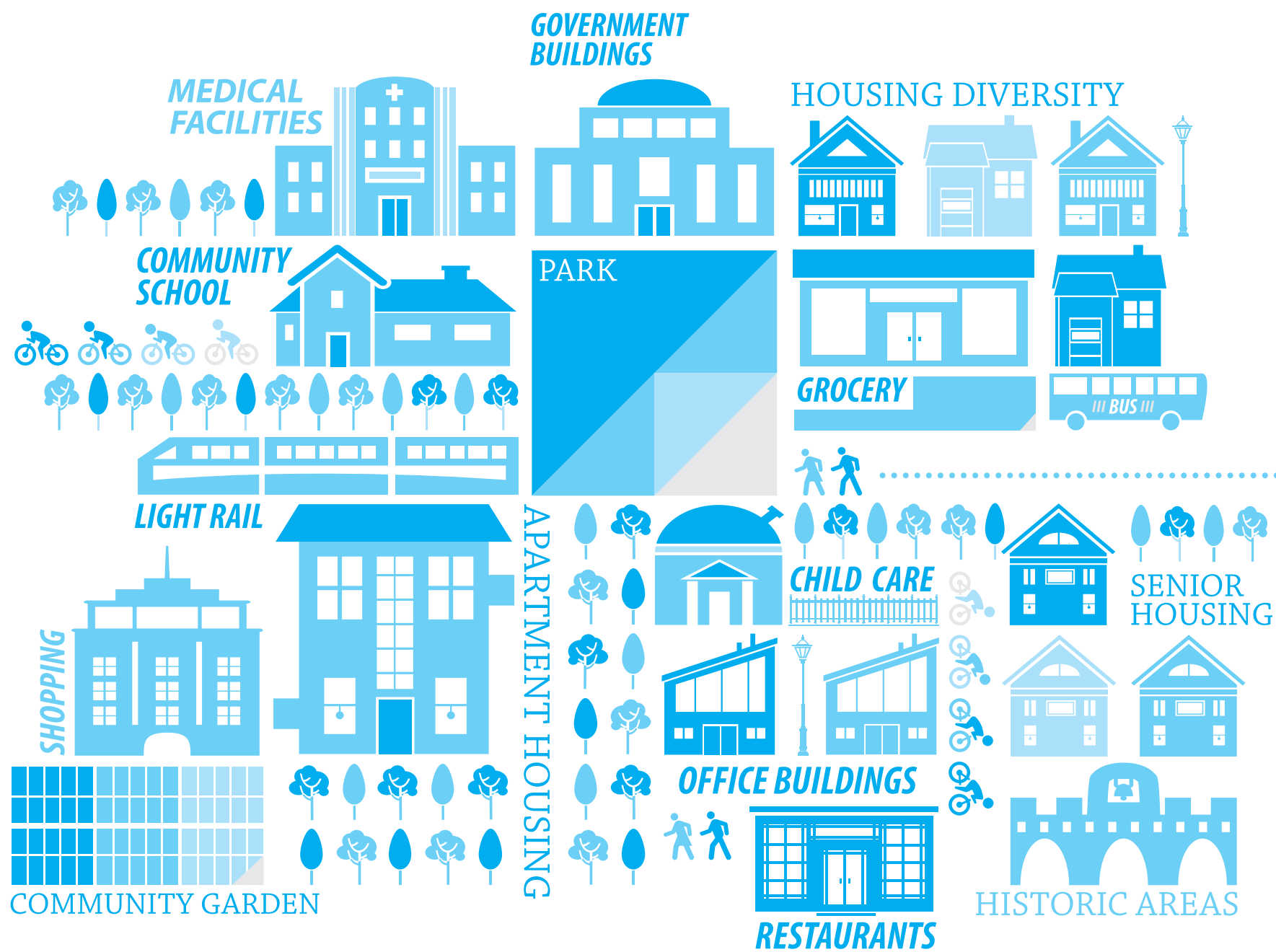
With the proposed changes to the code, Kang says projects like hers will go much faster and are more economical due to the greater flexibility it allows.

“The city is taking excellent steps towards encouraging developments like La Valentina,” Kang says. “And by allowing certainty in the process, it will encourage more people to look at their properties and see what they can do with them, and submit applications for new developments.”



BUILDING COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS

The updated zoning code aims to create a better community in Sacramento by building more complete neighborhoods. A complete neighborhood is a place where people have access to everything from housing to offices to public transportation to restaurants. Complete neighborhoods are built on bikeable, walkable scales and improve quality of life for all residents.



TERMS TO KNOW

MIXED USE

A mixed-use development refers to any urban, suburban or village development, or even a single building, that blends residential, commercial, cultural, institutional or industrial uses.

INFILL

Infill is the use of land within a built-up area for further construction, especially as part of a community redevelopment. It focuses on the reuse of obsolete or underused buildings and land.

REVITALIZATION

Revitalization is the process of improving the economic, physical and social well-being of a community by creating an enjoyable area with desired housing and popular amenities to strengthen local business and encourage investment by building and property owners. Revitalization is key for infill development and preservation of historic areas.

DESIGN REVIEW

Design review is a process where City of Sacramento design review staff reviews and takes action on applications submitted by developers on projects they are proposing. The review is based on the aesthetics of the proposed project.



BROADWAY
TRIANGLE PROJECT
AND RON VRILAKAS
Architect



RECREATING TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS

UPDATED PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CODE HOPEFUL AND HEALTHY FOR SACRAMENTO BY CORRIE PELC

Architect Ron Vrilakas of Vrilakas Architects knows about building in Sacramento. For 20 years, he has built housing and restaurants and has overseen rehabilitation of historic buildings.

Although all of his projects were ones the City of Sacramento wanted built, strangely, none of them ever met the standards of the city's current zoning code, causing projects to be costlier and take more time to be completed.

This is because the current code, which was last significantly updated in the 1960s, takes a one-size-fits-all approach to development. The current code has steadfast rules — called development standards — on things like building height, parking size, and whether a site can have a mix of building types, such as residential and commercial. If a builder wishes to do something different, they need to request a special permit and have it approved by the Planning and Design Commission, which can take time and money.

Revamping the code will give builders the flexibility to take advantage of public transportation and fill in vacant and underutilized space, allowing for more complete neighborhoods by adding housing, shopping and job opportunities. Bay Miry, a local developer at D & S Development, says bringing mixed-use development into the city is a symbol of the future.

Like Vrilakas, Miry and his peers focus on urban infill projects, rehabilitating historic buildings in an effort to bring vibrancy to underdeveloped areas.

The R Street Corridor renovation at 14th and R streets is a notable project for D & S. Miry says the buildings that now house Shady Lady Saloon, Ace of Spades, R15 and Burgers &

Brew were once a deserted Wonder Bread factory. D & S took on the project to stimulate the economy and revamp the area, creating retail space on the lower level and 13 lofts on the upper level. He says the biggest impact of these types of projects is an increase in activity in the rehabilitated area. "The activity increased tenfold — all of a sudden four businesses opened at one time and there were 15 to 20 people living in a half-block radius, bringing their families and friends."

Miry says rehabilitations like these are what will sustain the future of Sacramento — taking what we have and making it more economical, greener and more efficient. The Planning and Development Code will only help increase efficiency in the development process, he says, explaining that the updated code would simplify the permitting process for D & S and other developers.

For developers like Vrilakas and Miry, who will be helping Sacramento reach its vision, the new code will be positive and helpful, and will help change the current code to one that offers possibilities and fast results. "Speed is everything in the development world and the faster you can turn things around, the faster you can build and get tenants and grow the economy."

"The fact that the code is starting to look and understand better what makes good urban places, is a really hopeful and healthy thing for Sacramento," Vrilakas says.

Miry adds he is excited for a more expedited permitting process and says he looks at it as the city working to improve itself and rising to the growing needs of local development. "The [revised] code will only allow for continued growth and rehabilitation," Miry says. "I see Sacramento going into a much more diversified, greener and sustainable sector."

"THE [REVISED] CODE WILL ONLY ALLOW FOR CONTINUED GROWTH AND REHABILITATION. I SEE SACRAMENTO GOING INTO A MUCH MORE DIVERSIFIED, GREENER AND SUSTAINABLE SECTOR."

*Bay Miry
Developer, D & S Developers*



R STREET CORRIDOR
AND BAY MIRY
Developer

BY **SUKHI BRAR**

YOUR VOICE FOR SMARTER GROWTH

Photos courtesy of City of Sacramento

MAKING SACRAMENTO ONE OF THE MOST LIVABLE CITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Sacramento's updated zoning code will allow for more flexibility, a cleaner, healthier environment and smarter growth in the city overall, improving the quality of life for all residents. Interested in learning more? You can find current information on the Planning and Developing Code Update at www.sacgp.org/pdc.html. A list of current planning and development projects are also available on the City of Sacramento Community Development Department's website at www.cityofsacramento.org/dsd/. Here are some more ways you can get connected:

- ▶ If you have questions or comments or want to get on the Planning and Development Code Update mailing list, please email sacpdc@cityofsacramento.org.
- ▶ To speak with someone about the Planning and Development Code Update, please call Associate Planner Teresa Haenggi at (916) 808-7554 or email her at thaenggi@cityofsacramento.org.

TAKE OUR SURVEY!

We want to hear how you envision Sacramento's future. Scan the QR code or visit <http://tiny.cc/blzwqw>. Your input will enter you to win a \$25 gift card! Please provide comments by February 18.



YOU CAN HELP MAKE THE NEW PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CODE WORK BY CHANGING YOUR LIFESTYLE TO BUILD A BETTER, MORE VIBRANT SACRAMENTO.

- Walk, bike or take transit
- Shop locally
- Attend community events
- Walk for your health
- Work locally
- Give up your car
- Enjoy a park
- Know your neighbors
- Attend workshops, hearings

