

April 19, 2005

Leadership Council *update*

QUARTERLY NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS
OF THE VALLEY VISION LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Diverse Slate of Projects Keeps Staff, Volunteers Working Hard

The remainder of 2005 is shaping up to be a busy time for Valley Vision's staff and its many dedicated volunteers. The organization is committed to five major projects through the end of the year, along with continuing follow-up work on the Blueprint Project. Projects include:

- **Partnership for Prosperity.** Valley Vision is a sponsoring partner of this effort to layer economic detail into the Blueprint vision and develop specific deliverables for the multiple agencies involved in the region's economic future. The project represents the first time the region has had a coordinated approach to economic strategy involving universities and schools, key infrastructure agencies, workforce development agencies, and economic development and business organizations. The other convening partners are the Sacramento Metro Chamber and the Sacramento Area Commerce and Trade Organization (SACTO).
- **Quality-of-Life Report.** Through May, Valley Vision will continue marketing and outreach efforts for the 2004 edition of the *Sacramento Region Quality-of-Life Report*. After May, they will shift their attention to determining the focus of the 2006 edition and raising funds to make it happen.
- **City of Sacramento General Plan.** Sacramento's general plan update process is one of the most significant long-term land use planning activities currently going on in the region. Throughout the process, the city wants to hear from residents about future
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Upcoming Events

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Leadership Council Meeting
 Date: May 23, 2005
 Time: 4:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m.
 Place: Valley Vision
An inside look at the regional economic development strategy.

Clean Air Awards Luncheon
 Date: May 5, 2005
 Time: 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
 Place: Sacramento Memorial Auditorium
Valley Vision will be receiving an award along with SACOG for the Blueprint Project.

Multi-Cultural Business Forum
 Date: October 11, 2005
 Time: TBA
 Place: TBA
The second annual event.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: William Ishmael

For each issue of the Leadership Council Update, Valley Vision interviews a member of the Leadership Council. This month we talked with William Ishmael. Below are some of his thoughts in response to the questions: What do you see as the most challenging issue facing the region? How do you define regional leadership? How do you see your role as a regional leader?

The growing number of jurisdictions in our region has made and will continue to make it more difficult to reach consensus and forge resolutions on complex regional issues. Take Sacramento County, for example. Back in the old days—the not-that-long-ago "old days"—there were Sacramento city and county and the three cities affectionately know as FIG—Folsom, Isleton, and Galt. Now we also have Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, and Rancho Cordova, and potentially others to come. Each new jurisdiction formed for its own good reasons and, commitment to the Blueprint Project notwithstanding, their own self interests come before a regional commitment. It is thus up

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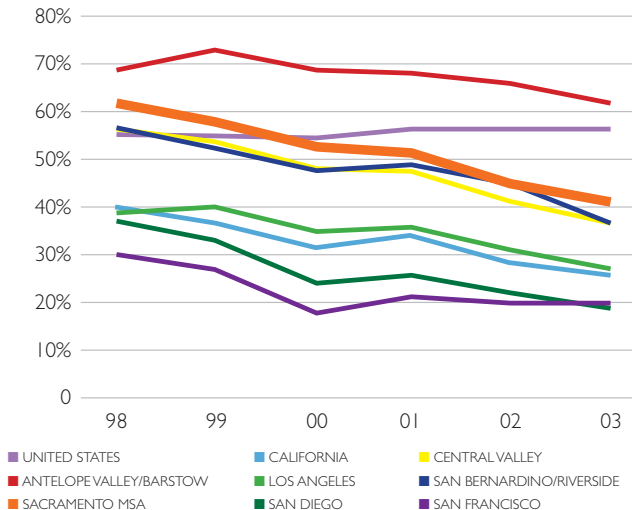
Regional Indicators

The text and chart below are from the 2004 Sacramento Region Quality-of-Life Report.

The Housing Affordability Index measures the percentage of households that can afford the median-priced home. The index data is available only for the Sacramento Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA—Sacramento, El Dorado and Placer Counties).

In 2003, 38% of households in the MSA could afford to buy a median-priced home—better than the State rate of 29%, but a large decline from 62% in 1998. The MSA surpassed the Inland Empire in affordability, where high levels of growth have increased the cost of housing. Strong demand, decreases in the number of houses for sale, and increases in the cost of land and building materials are pushing up the cost of housing, even with low interest rates and increases in housing construction. The high cost of housing in certain counties may push growth into Sutter and Yuba counties and further into foothill areas, or deter business locations or expansions.

Housing Affordability Index Percent of Households That Can Afford a Median-Priced Single-Family Home 1998–2003



Source: California Association of Realtors

to “regional leaders” to be out in front preaching the gospel of why a regional approach to issues needs to stay on the agenda.

This brings us to the next problem facing the region—regional leader fatigue. With the exception of a few folks who have managed to make it their “day job” to have the region as their primary focus (those at Valley Vision, SACOG, and some of the air quality and transportation agencies), the rest of us committed to a regional focus have our own commitments to our businesses and our lives that have to take precedence on a day-to-day basis. People can’t commit their personal resources on a continuous basis to getting the job done. They have to put their energy into establishing and participating in Valley Vision and leave it to others to carry the ball.

Speaking for myself, I have been putting my energies into making a difference where I can while maintaining my substantial commitment to running a busy client service engineering office. In addition to supporting Valley Vision, I have chosen ULI (the Urban Land Institute) and CADA (the Capitol Area Development Authority). I was ULI program chair or co-chair for several years, organizing and putting on programs that brought local and national experts on planning and development together to discuss and debate issues and presented great examples of projects well done to Sacramento for us to see and dissect.

My work on the CADA Board involves increasing infill development in the Capitol area. Our aim is not only to implement the kind of development that accomplishes the goal of increasing infill as a regional strategy, but also to set an example for the region of what can be done to produce great infill projects.

William Ishmael is a senior vice president for Nolte Associates, a civil engineering, planning, and surveying company. He is former chair of the Sacramento City Planning Commission and of Sacramento Heritage. He is currently vice-chair of CADA and on the executive committees of Nolte Associates and the ULI District Council. In his spare time, he paints large abstracts and exhibits and sells them at the Pamela Skinner Gallery on R Street in Sacramento. He has donated two of his pieces to the Crocker for their art auction this June. You can view his work at www.iamishmael.com.

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- growth options. Acting as a sub-contractor to the city’s primary consultant on the project, Valley Vision will be providing strategic advice on public outreach during the general plan process, which is scheduled to end in March of 2006.
- **Agriculture Workshops.** Part of the ongoing Valuing Agricultural Initiative, these workshops, scheduled for the fall, will be a follow-up to the recent Regional Agricultural Summit. They will provide farmers and ranchers an opportunity for on-site learning about best practices from around the region, including eco-tourism, specialty farming, and expanding use of existing economic tools. Valley Vision is the project lead, with the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a partner.
- **Hmong Convenings and Events.** In perhaps its most unique project, Valley Vision is working to help newly arrived Hmong refugees in the region better meet their health-related needs. A number of California Endowment grantees have been given resources to assist in the resettlement of Hmong refugees, but the groups are not coordinated. To assure that the grant money is spent as effectively as possible and to the greatest benefit of the refugees, Valley Vision has taken on the role of helping the various Hmong-serving and health advocacy organizations collaborate on a regional scale. The project will also focus on strengthening the individual organizations through trainings on a variety of topics, from board development to priority setting.

Information on all of Valley Vision’s work, including these projects, is available online at www.valleyvision.org.