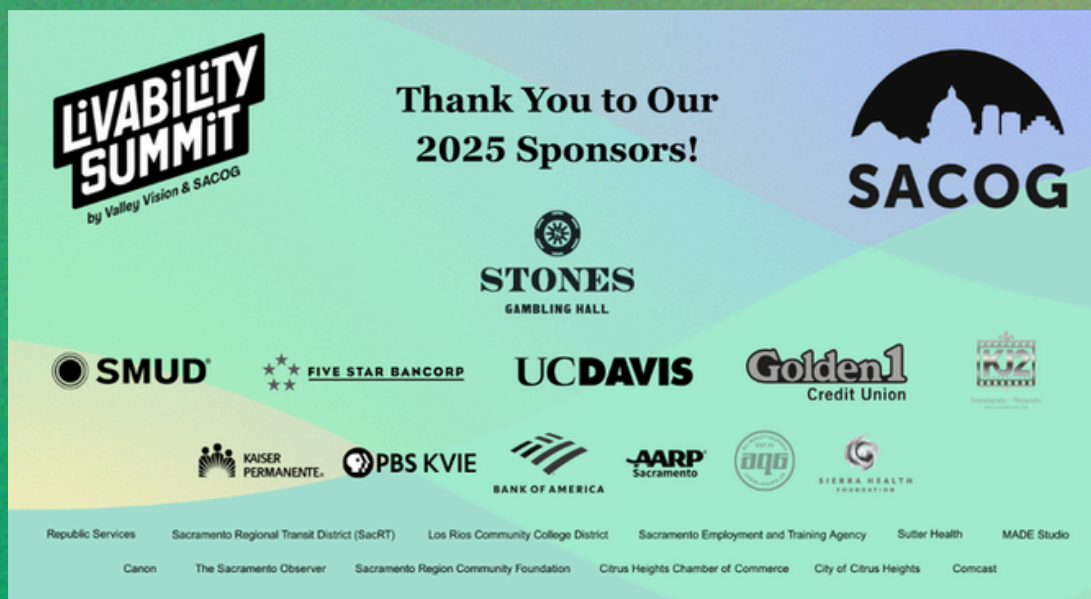


Recap: 2025 Livability Summit



Thank you to everyone who joined us on October 1st for the 2025 Livability Summit presented by Valley Vision & SACOG! Nearly 350 leaders attended the event, which was held in Citrus Heights this year. We are so grateful for the connections and collaboration that this event is propelling in communities across the Capital Region.



Exploring the State of Our Region

State of Our Region: The Livability Poll

Valley Vision CEO, Evan Schmidt, highlighted the key findings of the **2025 Livability Poll**, the latest of more than a dozen scientifically sound surveys that Valley Vision has conducted since 2017 to drive data-informed policy and action. In comparison with our most recent Livability Poll in 2023, the 2025 results reveal a region that remains hopeful but is also under strain. Affordable housing once again tops the list of residents' priorities, with the majority saying it's getting harder to purchase a home or imagine retiring here. Access to healthcare rose to the second-highest priority this year, reflecting growing concern about affordability and policy uncertainty. Livable wages ranked third, with residents expressing mixed confidence in job security and career mobility – especially as artificial intelligence reshapes the labor market. Education remains a key concern, rounding out the top four, and as always, perspectives and experiences differ greatly according to geography, race and ethnicity, income, and other factors.



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State of Our Region: 2025 Blueprint

James Corless, Executive Director of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), projects that the Capital Region will grow by **600,000 people** over the next 25 years. He used Denver, Colorado as an example of a metro area that 25 years ago was similar in size to today's Capital Region. Denver leaned into its strengths and invested in the quality of life of its residents, and is now considered an economic powerhouse. Today, SACOG and its partners are helping cities in our region build safer streets, revitalize distressed downtowns, connect communities, and plan for innovation centers. Our communities are reinventing themselves with residents at the helm, to grow sustainably while preserving what we love about our region.



Words of Insight and Inspiration

Capital Caucus Panel

Two of the founding members of the Capital Caucus, Califo State Senator Roger Niello and Assemblymember Maggy Krell, discussed how this new collaboration is fostering **bipartisan collaboration across a range of critical issues**, many of them consistent with the findings of the 2025 Livability Poll. Niello, a Republican, and Krell, a Democrat, discussed their vision for regional infrastructure, health care, climate initiatives, economic development, and education, and committed to continued action via the new caucus.



Media Matters Panel

Panelists discussed the state of regional media and the need for new business models, under the backdrop of the 2025 Federal government shutdown and the defunding of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Declining trust and widespread misinformation from such entities as the 916 Times (which has a far higher reach in 2025 than any other local news source) continue to necessitate that journalists turn to **community-driven coverage**. The James B. McClatchy Foundation is actively funding locally-driven journalism in the Capital Region and beyond, The Sacramento Observer continues to tell award-winning stories that elevate Sacramento's African-American community, and PBS KVIE just launched their innovative "Abridged" nonprofit news platform. In the face of great challenges, the Capital Region's local news ecosystem continues to innovate.

Radical Collaboration

Katie McCleary, the CEO of LQ Listening Intelligence, led a workshop about the power of collaboration. She shared insights about how collaboration falls apart and offered a **simple roadmap for effective collaboration** (Alignment - Structure - Activation). True progress in our region depends not just on bold ideas, but on the tools, mindsets, and relationships that allow us to align and act collectively. Katie's workshop helped attendees build the capacity to take bold action together.

Paving the Path to the Future

SACOG's Rosie Ramos moderated a panel of three youth participants in SACOG's Youth Leadership Academy, which helps local high schoolers build leadership skills, understand government processes, and learn about equity in land use and planning spaces. The panelists emphasized the importance of **including young people in decision-making** to ensure long-term stewardship and buy-in of initiatives to grow livability.

Propelling Bold Action

Citrus Heights: The Story of Sunrise Tomorrow

The Citrus Heights community helped define the plan to transform a 50-year-old failing mall into a 21st-century destination where residents and visitors can shop, live, work, and play. Leaders from the City of Citrus Heights shared history of the Sunrise Tomorrow project and insights for community leaders interested in their own efforts to grow innovative economic development opportunities.

Connected by Climate: Solutions for a Thriving Region

Participants in the Connected by Climate breakout emphasized that climate action is more than just a necessity for environmental health; it is a powerful avenue for advancing innovative solutions that advance community resilience, economic prosperity, and equity. Achieving meaningful climate adaptation requires creativity, collaboration, and cultural change. Participants acknowledged that meaningful progress often occurs in spaces of controversy and discomfort, where tough questions are asked about who benefits from policies and investments. The group emphasized the critical importance of centering communities of color and frontline populations most impacted by climate impacts, with a call to ensure climate action remains a central, funded, and shared priority for the region.

Getting it Right: Building Effective Pathways to Quality Jobs

This breakout session highlighted successful initiatives that have connected community members to quality jobs, and explored what made those efforts work. This included collaboration between industry, education, and community organizations and partnerships that directly aligned training program design with evolving industry needs, directly leading to employment opportunities and upskilling for current workers. Key takeaways and calls to action included:

- Employer driven training programs are a must: Training programs must begin with and be directly aligned to employer needs and employment opportunities to maximize outcomes.
- Regional focused sector strategies will get us farther: Focusing workforce development in sectors directly aligned to our region's competitive advantages and key priority sectors will achieve better results.
- Collaboration benefits everyone, especially disinvested communities: Duplicative or overlapping efforts can confuse community members. Collaborative aligned approaches between nonprofits, training providers and employers can help our region improve better results for everyone, including and especially under resourced individuals.

Housing that Boosts Livability and Affordability

The Capital Region continues to grow faster than almost any other place in California. The City of Sacramento is leading the nation with innovative strategies to plan for housing that boosts affordability and livability. Speakers discussed data-driven interventions to address our housing needs from missing middle and infill housing opportunities to accessory dwelling units (ADUs), with attendees inspired to boost housing affordability and supply in their own communities.

Our Region's Response to Federal Policy Changes

Leaders representing different sectors across the Capital region shared information about how their staff, services, and programs were affected by recent federal policy changes and funding cuts. Despite the challenges they present, our speakers reiterated the importance of collaboration in this time and they provided some recommendations on short term actions that organizations can take to cope with funding uncertainties. These included: building staff capacity in fundraising and grant writing; collaborating with other organizations with similar goals to continue delivering services amidst budget cuts; identifying organizational priorities and focusing on core competencies to maintain; and communicating organizational/community needs and loss of funds to support fundraising efforts. Marginalized communities may be losing visibility at this time due to the federal government's stance on diversity and equity, so we are focusing on relationship building and leaning into collaboration to ensure that our diverse communities still have access to the resources and services they need.