

## **What if We Had a Big, Hairy, Audacious Vision for Rosemont?**

*Few things in life are accomplished without first having an idea. Maybe it seems impossible at first or even just crazy. But if it starts a buzz and gets people thinking, watch out! There's no telling where it might end up and what might actually get done. The result may not look much like the original idea, but there is a result, something new and usually better than before. And that's what this series is all about: creating a big hairy, crazy, audacious vision for our Rosemont community.*

### **Background and Context**

By way of background, Rosemont is an unincorporated community (i.e. not a city) of some 22,000 people in about 4 square miles between the cities of Sacramento and Rancho Cordova. While this area began developing as agricultural land in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was not until the late 1950's that residential development began in earnest, largely driven by employment at Mather AFB and Aerojet Corporation, as well as the Army Depot, McClellan AFB, and the State of California. It was seen as a very appealing development in which to buy and live. Since then the Rosemont community has continued to grow with a number of individual housing developments, nearly all individually planned and almost none with effective CC&Rs or Homeowners Associations. In 1959 the Rosemont Home Owners Association was established by developers at the time, but it was not transferred the authority to enforce CC&Rs established by those developers, who subsequently went out of business. Later, in the 1980s, the RHOA changed its name to the Rosemont Community Association when state laws began to more strictly govern home owners associations; RCA was never an HOA as described in the new laws.

Our public services come from several agencies: law enforcement, code enforcement, planning, streets, roads, sewer, storm drainage, social services all come from the County of Sacramento; fire protection is by the Sacramento Metro Fire District; Park and Recreation Services are by the Cordova Recreation and Parks District; our water service is provided by a private company, California American Water Co.; schools are provided by the Sacramento city Unified School District; and then there are a number of smaller special districts providing other services like mosquito abatement, vector control, etc. Each of the public agencies has its own elected governing body and staff, and collects various levels of taxes and fees to pay for the services it provides to us.

Effectively, Rosemont is dependent on the County of Sacramento for most of its municipal type services. And while generally the County does a good job, counties are not set up normally to provide municipal services like cities are. If the people of Rosemont ever want to strengthen their ability to have higher levels of public services in order to make their community more appealing and safer and enhance their property values, they will need to work together to accomplish some kinds of changes. And before any change might take place, they will need to develop some kind of a sufficiently shared and accepted vision for what they want the community to look like, to be.

And that is the purpose of this paper: to begin the conversation that might lead someday to a vision that will be the basis for whatever actions may be needed to realize that vision.

How it achieves the vision is another question that follows the vision itself. There are usually many options for action to realize a vision; but first we need the vision and the motivation. Then we can talk about the how.

Here are some examples of what might be in that vision. These vision scenarios are written as if they have come true. We invite you to create and share your visions for Rosemont.

### **VISION: Rosemont Recognizes Our Resources and Features**



The people of Rosemont have a greater understanding of and appreciation for all the resources and features we have here in our community, and begin to consider how we could take better advantage of them. They also begin to actively think of new resources and features we can bring into our Rosemont community. Some of our present features include:

- An established and generally well-functioning community, with opportunities to be even better
- A typical, well-educated population
- 6 excellent public schools, plus several more private schools
- Nearby excellent institutions of high education
- 6 excellent parks with good facilities
- Excellent transportation access, including a major freeway through the community
- Freight rail access
- A good variety of housing stock across moderate price ranges
- A well-qualified work force
- 2 fire stations
- 4 light rail stations and RT bus routes
- A variety of shopping
- Several restaurants
- An active scouting movement
- An active youth sports program
- Some dozen churches
- A generous population that leads the area in philanthropy
- High quality office space
- A golf course and driving range

- Lots of industrial and commercial space
- A nearby airport
- Service by nearby Sacramento International Airport and Amtrak
- Proximity to the State Capitol and agencies
- Proximity to many job opportunities both in Rosemont and nearby
- Good quality public services and utilities
- An active community association that works to promote and enhance the community
- Available land for development

With assets as broad and significant as these, Rosemont is a well-kept secret that needs to get the attention it deserves, starting within itself. As people here become more aware of all we have to offer, excitement builds and people begin to act to capitalize on our assets.

### **VISION: Rosemont is Organized for Prompt Action**



The people of Rosemont created an organization by which they were able to provide for whatever enhanced levels of services they wanted in order to make their community even better, by approving a structure and entity that at least provides for the means to make their community safer, cleaner and more attractive. This structure or entity has the talent and the financial resources to take action as the people desire, for example for increased police or code enforcement services, for better streets and roads, for better trash removal or lot cleanup, for expanded recreational services for youth, etc. The needs for such services are determined in the community, and resources are allocated locally and promptly to address problems before they get out of hand. The entity is directly responsible to the people of Rosemont, who have determined and agreed to a means by which they will fund these services.

### **VISION: Rosemont Has Developed Mini parks and Gardens**



The people of Rosemont have found a way to turn the several small parcels of vacant land in the community into attractive mini-parks that feature low-water plantings, simple play structures, quiet retreats, and educational features that are enjoyed by all ages here. Some of these mini-parks are working food gardens sponsored by different organizations

and ethnic communities here, and include programs to inform the wider community about the various plants and how to prepare them for eating. Schools take advantage of these mini-gardens as instructional opportunities for students, including using the products in culinary programs. Senior members of the community help sponsor these sites and work with students to learn about the plants and how to maintain them. The ethnic gardens are used to expand appreciation in the community, especially among young people, about the various cultures and their histories represented in the gardens. Rosemont is famous for these mini-parks and gardens.

### **VISION: A Rosemont Has a Community Center**



The people of Rosemont have decided to create their own unique community center in which they can hold gatherings and events that help promote and enhance Rosemont. The facility is home for educational programs of benefit to all ages and backgrounds here, and is available for residents to rent for private gatherings as well (parties, receptions, memorials, etc.). It has space for local groups and organizations to have work space and perhaps storage space as may be needed. If desired, it can have some recreational facilities (perhaps someday even a swimming pool). It becomes a well-used and desired place for young people, families, and seniors to gather and participate in community oriented activities. Local sports and service organizations use it for meetings and celebrations. It is well-managed and supports itself. It has excellent kitchen and catering facilities that support all food activities there. It quickly becomes the center of the community and its activities, and serves to bring focus and energy to Rosemont.

### **VISION: Rosemont Has a Business and Economic Development Program**



The people of Rosemont have chosen to create their own organization that works to create a business friendly climate here by helping reduce barriers to bringing business to the community, provide services that help improve the chances of success for businesses, and actively promote Rosemont businesses here and throughout the larger area. Such services includes working with public agencies to streamline permits and approvals, enhancing telecommunications services that support businesses, providing educational opportunities to businesses so they can better manage their business, offering joint marketing or purchase programs, arranging advantageous financial services for businesses, etc. The program would also work to assure property owners both well-maintain their properties, and also work aggressively to bring businesses into their

commercial or industrial property so that Rosemont has a full range of services and a strong economic base.

**VISION: Rosemont Has a More Effective Law Enforcement Program**



The people of Rosemont have decided to expand the level of law enforcement in their community by arranging for more patrols and POP officer time, including more time that officers interact with our students both at school and in an activities league program. This expanded attention has not only improved the understanding and appreciation of our youth about law enforcement, but also has enabled officers to develop a better and more effective relationship with the people in the community. This has led to a marked reduction in crimes (which was not unusually high in the first place) and has helped make Rosemont a more appealing community for both young families and seniors to buy and live in. It has also led to a better understanding and inclination by residents and businesses to take preventive actions around their property and in the community. This was accomplished by assigning the equivalent of one full time officer to the community. Businesses also supported the arrangement because they realized the benefit to them as well.

**VISION: Rosemont Has an Enhanced Code Enforcement Program**



The people of Rosemont decided to arrange for enhanced code enforcement services so that residential and business property owners who let their property become an eyesore or a danger are promptly contacted and a strict plan is adopted to make needed corrections. Absent such corrections, enforcement action begins and is increased until the corrections are made. This ultimately may be done by County contractors and a lien placed on the property. This enforcement covers the condition of lots, structures, vehicles, and fences, and includes safety issues and attractive nuisances that could injure someone. The result has been a marked decline in such properties and a noticeable improvement in the appearance of and pride in the community. This began by arranging for the equivalent of one full time code enforcement officer for one day per week for several months. Soon that staffing reduced to .5 officers per week as problems were cleaned up.

**VISION: Rosemont Has a Dedicated Community Cleanup Crew**



The people of Rosemont, when they chose to increase the code enforcement efforts here, also arranged for a crew of two people to do weekly patrols of the community picking up trash and removing graffiti. These people were volunteers supplied with the needed equipment and vehicles. As needs required, work-release persons with the SSD and occasionally out-of-work people were hired on a temporary basis, trained, and assigned to augment the work force. The result was that even small litter was quickly removed and the general appearance of the community greatly enhanced, making it more appealing for both new residents and businesses.

### **VISION: Rosemont Plaza is Revitalized and Thrives**



After many years of decline, leaving a void in the center of our community, newly motivated ownership has revitalized our Rosemont Plaza. It now sports a new fresh look with many new businesses catering to the needs of this community. Some of those businesses are owned by Rosemont residents sensitive to what the community wants and needs. The area has become the “go-to” place for not just needed supplies, but also for information, entertainment, recreation, education, and of course a variety of foods. Buildings have been remodeled, the vast space in the rear of the old center has been repurposed, and freight loading and services have been rearranged, all done with the direct advice and approval of nearby residents to assure they are not adversely impacted by the changes. Traffic patterns and lines of sight have been improved making the center safer. The center now is a magnet for people of all ages. CRPD programs are conducted there. Space is available for educational programs and social gatherings. Festivals and “farmer’s market” type events are held there. Entertainment events fitting to the community are scheduled that bring a wide variety of ethnic groups together to share food and cultures. The center has developed a unique reputation as a model for what a community can do to seriously revitalize itself with an effective business-community partnership.

### **VISION: Rosemont Schools are Properly Recognized as Exemplary and Desirable**





The people of Rosemont have worked closely with their six public schools and several private schools to support their steady improvement and widespread recognition as first-rate education programs to which families and students are drawn because of their renowned programs, their campus cultures, and their community service orientation. Working together, the community and all our schools promote and celebrate their mutual successes, and arrange for appropriate publicity so the entire Sacramento area is aware of their features. This recognition has had the effect of boosting interest in Rosemont, both as a place to live and a place to have a business. In turn, this has resulted in higher property values, though not so high that families of all income levels can't live here. In turn, the community recognition supports the schools as they work to ever enhance their academic and extra-curricular programs. Of course, with this effort, the schools' reputations are also enhanced. One of the most beneficial effects of our strong school programs and close school-community relationship is that students feel and demonstrate a strong sense of pride and ownership in the overall community, an attitude they take with them when they move on to other communities. To them, "Rosemont Pride" is real.

**VISION: Rosemont is Known for Its Novel and Creative Artistic Events**



The people of Rosemont chose to begin a program of arts of all types, knowing that the arts and other creative endeavors bring a special vitality to a community. There has grown here a culture of supporting individual artistic talents among all interested people and in all media, from performing arts, to music, to painting, dance, culinary arts, sculpture, and even arts using a variety of traditional trades. These artistic works are regularly celebrated in shows and festivals and exhibitions, all themselves presented in novel and creative manners. These programs help to draw further attention to our community and bring it recognition as a desirable community in which to live and work.

**VISION: Rosemont Has Effective Means of Communicating with the Community**



As the people of Rosemont began to realize all that they had and all that their community could become, they developed a simple yet effective system of communicating with each other so they could keep informed of what was happening, what opportunities existed, what talents were available, what problems might be emerging, what concerns others have, and how they could better work together to achieve their visions and goals. In this era of ever changing and improving communications systems, they continue to devise means of reaching all Rosemont residents and businesses so they are kept informed and involved and can have their voices heard. This system has become a model for other communities. It includes use of traditional media so that those in the community who are not online also stay informed and participate equally well in the community deliberations. It was strongly supported by students in the community who, as part of their studies and extra-curricular activities, gathered news, wrote and produced programs and videos and graphics, and produced the internet-based and even print based products that keeps people in Rosemont connected with each other. These activities help the students learn valuable skills that will prepare them for careers in not just the media of tomorrow, but also the ever growing fields of technology, design, graphic arts and communications. These programs also serve to make our Rosemont schools even more attractive to families and students.

**VISION: Rosemont Wins Awards for Its Success as a Community that has Brought Itself to New Heights Largely by its Own Efforts**



The people of Rosemont, as a result of their successes, are widely recognized as a model of what a community can do largely by itself, to rise to new and impressive heights. This attention has made Rosemont attractive to new investors, grant-makers, and others who want to be part of our success. Rosemont is known widely as a model and very desirable community, while retaining its diverse and affordable character – the features that made it attractive and successful in the beginning.