

# City on Fire!

By Michael F. Malinowski, AIA, Vice Chair, Development Oversight Commission, Board Member CVCAIA

*Breathtaking.* That word comes to mind when I play back the progress made by the city of Sacramento in the development arena over the last nine years. It's hard now to remember how bad things got — the front-page headlines of developers pulling projects from the city, high-profile delays, disputes, and general unhappiness and disarray. That nightmare led to the creation of a city task force, which laid the groundwork for the present Development Oversight Commission (DOC), which has been spearheading the reinvention of development processing. Frankly, progress was painful and slow until Ray Kerridge and Bill Thomas joined the city a couple of years ago. With their energy, focus and determination, the initiatives that had been “in the works” for several years crystallized, and they quickly brought their own visionary concepts — such as the MATRIX permitting process — to the table. Ray laid down four platforms toward success: cultural change, improving organizational structure, streamlining process, and promoting an appropriate regulatory environment.

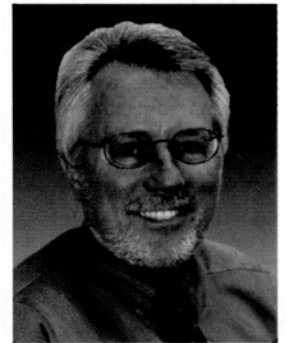
Just a few weeks ago, the DOC made their annual summary report to the city council. Remember that list of 33 critical items that needed to be fixed from five years ago? Now, all but done, and a new list of innovative programs and services have taken center stage. The DOC has moved in the last year from “the source of the ideas and a key force pushing for change” to watching in amazement as city staff, themselves, become the idea generators and change agents. There's still work to be done, but the changes have taken on a magnitude and pace that is self sustaining — and breathtaking!

One key to these successes is the quality of the team we have in place — and the fact we are getting incredible talent and energy in new additions to the city staff. In the last year, we added Carl Hefner, formerly of the city; on a DOC initiative he was lured back from Davis to handle day-to-day building department operations. With the recent loss of Ron Beehler, our former building official to the

private sector, there was some trepidation as to who could best fill that role.

In a revolutionary step, the city recently announced that Bob Chase, AIA, will serve as the city's new Chief Building Official starting June 5. Bob is the first architect to ever serve the city as a building official and brings over 30 years of experience in the development industry as an architect and project manager on many complex projects, including high rises. Having spent much of his career in the private sector, Bob has also been active in the city of Sacramento's Design Review and Preservation Board as past Chair and member, as well as serving on the CADA Board. Bob has received national design awards, has been widely published, has taught at local and national colleges in his field of expertise and is also a LEED accredi-

ed professional and on the U.S. Green Building Council. Prior to joining the city, Bob was a partner and principal architect for LPA Sacramento, Inc. Architects.



**Bob Chase, Building Official, City of Sacramento**

Another recent addition to the city is William Crouch, AIA, who fills the newly created role of Urban Design Manager, which oversees both Historic Preservation and Design Review Programs. Luis Sanchez, AIA, Design Review Director, will be working directly with Bill, who comes to us from 12 years as a practicing architect in Orange County, where he has been on the Huntington Beach Design Review Board; prior to that he hails from Melbourne, Australia.

From the beginning, the AIA has been playing a key role in this evolutionary process, which has built so much momentum of late it has become REVOLUTIONARY. The AIA Central Valley Chapter, through the action and commitment of its members and staff, are right there, at the table, contributing to the dialogue and the action, leading the way toward the vision we share for our community's future. We are excited about the direction of the DOC and Ray Kerridge and his team, as the city moves away from simple “regulator” to its present role as a facilitator and increasingly to where we see the future as “partners” working to shape our world together. It's happening, right now! Those of you standing on the sidelines, waiting and watching, the time is now! Join us.

Mark my words, in 20 years, you'll be telling stories to your children's children about how the city reinvented itself in this decade! ■