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## Park it here, stay awhile

### Roseville's downtown redevelopment plans are on a roll with a new parking garage

By Jennifer K. Morita - [jmorita@sacbee.com](mailto:jmorita@sacbee.com)

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As far as development goes, a parking garage isn't as sexy as, say, a trendy lifestyle center with high-end stores and fancy eateries.

But that didn't stop Roseville leaders from bringing in the big brass band and swinging dancers to celebrate the opening of downtown's first parking garage last week.

The grand opening fete was held in conjunction with the Downtown Merchants Association's Family Fun Night the night before Halloween and drew roughly 4,000 people to Vernon Street.

"The night was magical," Planning and Redevelopment Manager Jan Shellito said. "It was so spectacular that people have not stopped talking about it. There was just an excitement in the air because this facility has been a long time coming."

The city's redevelopment agency financed the \$8.3 million parking garage that was developed by Kobra Properties.

In addition to 550 free parking spots, the five-level garage includes a 5,000-square-foot space on the first floor that will serve as a new headquarters for Roseville Arts!

Crews mounted electronic signs for the nonprofit's new Blue Line Gallery last week, and the gallery's grand opening is scheduled for Feb. 2.

Kobra also is building a \$12 million, four-story office building with 56,000 square feet next to the garage.

City officials said the joint venture is the first multimillion-dollar, public-private investment in downtown Roseville since revitalization efforts began several years ago.

The city has poured nearly \$57 million into Roseville's older commercial areas with the construction of a new civic center, streetscape projects along Vernon Street and Riverside Avenue and improvements to the Washington Boulevard pedestrian underpass.

Another revitalization project in historic Old Roseville is scheduled to be completed early next

year, Shellito said.

"The parking garage will allow for future growth and reinvestment in downtown because it will be able to meet the parking demands for new projects," said Shellito.

It also will allow the merchants association and city to stage large-scale events, she added.

The Downtown Roseville Merchants Association asked the city to build the parking garage about eight years ago, according to last week's event organizer John Javidan, owner of Roseville Auto Smog.

"Downtown Roseville doesn't really need a parking garage," Javidan said. "You can almost always park very close to any store you need to go to ... . But if you ask people why they don't go downtown, they say it's because there's no parking."

The merchants group commissioned a study that showed it takes nearly three times as many steps to reach a store in the mall as it does in downtown Roseville.

"Even if you have to park a block or two away, it's still shorter than parking in the mall," Javidan said. "But it's a perception people have. Hopefully, this garage will fix that problem."

But if the city's ambitious redevelopment plans are successful, it will need every space in the new garage.

Last year, the City Council approved a 158-acre downtown specific plan that included Vernon Street, historic Roseville, Royer Park, Dry Creek and the Oak Street-Douglas Boulevard corridor.

In addition to homes, retail shops and businesses, the plan includes outdoor plazas, an amphitheater and walking paths along Dry Creek.

"The parking garage isn't going to fill up for a while, but that's what we're looking to do," Javidan said.

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