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A DECADE LATER: EXTENSION OF NORTH 7th STREET BUILDS BUSINESS

The top transportation project for the City of Sacramento 10 years ago was to extend 7th Street from downtown to Richards Boulevard. A decade later, this \$24 million project has delivered on its goal to spur economic revitalization in the River District.

Before the 7th Street connection, the River District, which is located north of the Railyards, south of the American River, east of the Sacramento River and west of Sutter's Landing Park, was an isolated commercial area. It is now evolving into an eclectic, mixed-use, central city neighborhood.

"The River District is riding the wave of urban development that is growing in popularity as people look to move closer to employment centers and as warehouse living spaces become more in vogue," said Steve Goodwin, president of The River District Property and Business Improvement District board of directors and developer of Township Nine.

"Connections are important to bring people to the area and give locals easy access to their jobs and other amenities."

The improved connection to downtown offered by the 7th Street extension, coupled with convenient transit access from the new Green Line light rail station at Richards Boulevard, has prompted new development and expansion of existing projects in the area. In addition to providing a connection to downtown, the extension of North 7th Street allows a direct route to the American River Parkway and Two Rivers Bike Trail from downtown. The path through Township Nine features a well-lit, landscaped promenade that travels the length of the

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EXTENSION OF NORTH 7TH STREET

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development from Richards Boulevard to the river.

Several significant projects have been built since the completion of 7th Street and can name the extension as a contributing factor in the decision made to locate in the River District. In 2009, the California Highway Patrol moved its headquarters -- home to the department's director, Commissioner Joe Farrow; its executive management, and more than 1,000 of the statewide law enforcement agency's employees -- to a new, 285,000 square foot campus adjacent to the Township Nine site on North 7th Street. These offices have statewide oversight of administrative services, enforcement and planning, information management, air operations, and emergency operations.

"The location gives us easy access to downtown, the Capitol, and other state offices, and is conveniently located close to multiple freeways and to the new light rail station," said Fran Clader, spokeswoman for the CHP who said the agency's current lease on the property runs until 2029.

The new California Lottery headquarters has been a catalyst for growth and has provided retail and restaurant opportunities on the ground floor.

"The headquarters has been located on North 10th street for nearly 30 years," said Paula LaBrie, acting director of the lottery. "When it became apparent that our old building needed replacement, we researched other options but chose to build at this location in the River District. The North 7th Street connection allows fast access to other state agencies located in the downtown core and the new light rail station provides nearby transit for our employees."

Krush Burger, a business that has expanded from a popular food truck to a successful chain of restaurants with three locations in Northern California and one in Dubai, opened its first brick-and-mortar location in the lottery's new building in 2012. Davin Vculek, founder of Krush Burger, said its central location and ease of access to popular markets were primary

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reasons for establishing his first restaurant in the River District, saying it allows him to serve the most customers.

Owners of The Party Concierge, now located adjacent to the lottery headquarters on North 10th Street, chose to stay in the area rather than relocate after a five-alarm fire destroyed their previous office, warehouse and store in 2012. “We wanted to stay in the River District because of its central location,” said Susan Crane, owner of The Party Concierge. “With the 7th Street connection to downtown, our location in the River District makes it easier to connect with clients, customers and other businesses in the area.”

Another business that has experienced the effects of improved connection to downtown is Sacramento Theatrical Lighting, a 68-year-old purveyor of services and supplies to theatrical events, live concerts and trade shows throughout the region. “Our location in the River District gives us quick access to Sacramento’s meeting and entertainment venues, allowing us to better serve our clients,” said John Cox, president of Sacramento Theatrical Lighting. “We have been here since 1989 and the extension of 7th Street 10 years ago was a major step to link the River District to the downtown area. The future is even brighter with the connection to the Sacramento Entertainment and Sports Center opening next year and the abundant opportunities in the Railyards project, our neighbors to the south. This is a great location for our business.”

The City of Sacramento’s police and community development departments also made the move to the River District in what is perhaps the most telling example of the benefits of easy access to downtown and city hall made possible by the extension of North 7th Street.

“The extension of North 7th Street was a game-changer that unleashed opportunity for the River District,” said Jerry Way, the city’s public works director. “It allowed the successful addition of light rail into the area and the system’s eventual extension to the airport.”

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EXTENSION OF NORTH 7TH STREET

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Way said the city worked with the River District board of directors, property owners and stakeholders to develop a capital project plan and secure the funding for the extension.

“We can now see how the River District, with all its new synergy, is developing into another attractive focal point for the city,” he said.

The 7th Street project, as well as the light rail station on Richards Boulevard and light rail’s planned extension to the airport, is part of the City of Sacramento’s “Sacramento Grid 2.0” plan that integrates a number of planned transportation improvements and programs. The projects are intended to improve connections between neighborhoods and the downtown core, especially for biking, walking and transit, while improving circulation and enhancing residential and commercial areas.

As the River District continues to develop, extensions of 5th and 6th Streets are expected to create additional connections through the planned Railyards project and into downtown, all making way for growth expected in the coming years.

“Since completion of the extension of North 7th Street, there has been a variety of public and private sector investment in the district,” said urban planner Wendy Hoyt, who consulted for the city on the extension of North 7th Street. “We’re going to see unprecedented growth and new opportunity in the River District to the point that it will look completely different 10 years from now.”

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ABOUT THE RIVER DISTRICT

The River District, an 830 acre central city district, is quickly transitioning from a light industrial, low intensity commercial area into one of Sacramento’s up and coming vibrant, mixed use, transit oriented communities. The historic commercial area will combine an eclectic mix of residential, office and commercial land uses designed to take advantage of multimodal transportation options, riverfront views and open space.

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