



Imagine

Conceptual Walk-Throughs toward the design of

The CEAV Project's 'Expo Green'

a World's Fair and Nexus
for showcasing our planetary environment

Introductory Note: The descriptions features and events that might be included in a world stage for presenting the 21st century concerns about our environment and the advanced tools that may be needed to restore and sustain the health of our planet are entirely imaginary. Were the project to be implemented, there is no doubt those with experience and knowledge in the various areas of concern would suggest far superior ideas on its content. The ones found in this document are merely to provide an illustration and provoke the imagination of others.

It should be mentioned that the exercise did establish one important element of creative design. All of the verbal walk-throughs here, were imagined quickly and with little effort. They seemed to flow naturally from the overall concept. In terms of general design, this generally is the case when a concept is sufficiently drawn to and ready for the embellishment and refinement that will follow. Such seems to be the case with 'Expo Green' and it is hoped these fragments of imagination will encourage others to envision even better ones in the future. —Red Slider, 2015

"IMAGINE" - A GREEN EXPOSITION FOR THE 21st CENTURY

A series of imaginative 'walk-through' descriptions of what the 'EXPO GREEN' of the future might look like under a CEAV-like concept. These are simply illustrative of the kinds of the venues and offerings designers of a future might be thinking about were they guided by CEAV Project concepts. It is, by no means, an anticipated list of offerings, nor is it exclusive of what might actually be built over time. CEAV is envisioned to encourage and advance the imagination of future generations about what might be if we all work to make it so.

The Imagine page is presented in three sections:

- [Imagine Index](#): Brief descriptions and links to the individual CEAV walk-throughs.
- [Preface](#): General Remarks on the design of venues consistent with the mission and concept of a CEAV envisioned Cal-Expo.
- ['Imagine'](#) The walk-throughs. A brief verbal tour of the fair of the future. Enjoy a few of the sights and wonders that a real world-class fair might offer to inspire and excite the generations of the 21st century.

Index of Imaginings:

Preface - Concept of an 'open-ended' development proposal.

[Imagine #1 - "Going to the Fair"](#). A design solution that addresses some of the most perplexing problems of traffic, congestion, access, parking, community impacts and environmental concerns.

[Imagine #2 - "Old Fairground, New Communities."](#) - presents ways in which the proposed design may not only reduce impacts on surrounding communities, but may actually enhance or create benefits unavailable with traditional design concepts. Standard examples of CBA mitigation are discussed. Examples of how "Green Village" may actually enhance retail business in the surrounding communities, rather than competing with it are offered. The provision of a Community Affairs Center facility is described in which the object is not only to respond to community problems as they arise, but to actively engage surrounding communities in the discovery of ways in which both jurisdictions can be improved to their mutual benefit.

[Imagine #3 - "The Impossible Dream - Major Facilities"](#) offers descriptions of the main facilities of the transformed Cal Expo of the future. A 'Knowledge Transfer Center', U.C. 'School of Green Design' and 'The California Culture Pavillion' are briefly envisioned.

[Imagine #4 - "Water Works!"](#) - is an extensive collection of interactive and educational exhibits demonstrating California's water resources, water management, applications and the reclamation/conservation efforts to maintain them - hands-on activities and demonstration

models.

Imagine #5 - "EnergyScapes" is visualized as an entire venue of alternative energy exhibits, demonstration areas and a mix of retail shops entirely devoted alternative energy products and systems.

Imagine #6 - "The Biosphere" includes numerous indoor and outdoor exhibits of living, applied demonstrations of habitat reclamation and preservation, research facilities and other ongoing activities that not only present visitors with the efforts and technologies of good environmental management, but illustrates them in projects applied directly to the on-site environment. River, xeroscape, wetland, sustainable forest, native plant preservers and other interesting biological theaters offer year-round natural performances to Fair visitors and their guides.

Imagine #7 - "Dining Out" Agriculture plays a front and center role in the 21st century CEAV Project, showcased as one of its central performers for creating a healthy and sustainable planet. Advanced methods of sustainable food production, soil health and replenishment, organic farming, aquaculture, local distribution, seed banking, diversity, genetics research and other critical elements of balancing our growing need for healthy food with finite resources will all be on abundant display. Experimental farms, best farming technologies and practices and other aspects of advanced food production and supply will occupy several large venues on the site.

California's remarkably successful and important "Master Gardener Program" is due for a major boost in visibility and facility as one of California's most vital links in maintaining the State's international reputation as 'the place where things grow'. Located close by the Cal-Expo "Wine-Cellar" (at their own request we might add - see Imagine#11), California's Master Gardeners continues doing what they do best - translating the latest and most valuable of agricultural and horticultural knowledge into practical advice for production farmer and home gardener alike.

Imagine #8 - "Welcome To The California Game!" Quick wits, and steady hands will determine if California survives long enough to solve its mounting environmental problems, meet its energy needs, deliver ample water, and keep it all clean and healthy for generations to come.

Imagine #9 - "Not Our Parent's Cal Expo" Traditional fair activities, `19th and 20th century ones, need to be reviewed in terms of 21st century needs and interests. Do they really serve the mission of the California Exposition and State Fair of the Future? Adjustments, undoubtedly, will need to be made. Who will make them? How will they be made?

Imagine #10 - Imagination is a Public Thing" Commerce, industry and investment are essential components in building a sustainable future. Still, the nature of that future, what is to be fashioned in the commercial forges of the future, depends entirely on the restoration and reclamation of the public vision of the world.

Imagine #11 - Cal Expo, The Realization. Introduces concepts of 'evolving design' and 'evolving realizations', and the relationship between these aspects of the project throughout its

development and, indeed, throughout the future history of Cal Expo, itself.

Imagine #12 - Virtual Cal Expo. The online version of the same, bringing Cal Expo to the world; putting Cal Expo on the map. The Cal Expo “Wine Cellar” test the limits of ‘virtuality’.

Imagine #13 - Where the Rubber Meets the Road. Cal Expo is given an active voice in the future of California’s technology and commerce. A Technology Transfer Center, helps apply the fundamental mission of the Exposition & State Fair to real-time, application. The Prize: actual acceleration of the invention, application and market introduction of advanced products and technology.

Imagine #14 - The Cal Expo Game. The mechanism that provides for the continuing evolution of Cal Expo well into the future. One of the Virtual Cal Expo venues that will not be found at the actual Cal Expo.

Imagine #15 - Let the Games Begin! The end of the ‘Cal Expo - An Alternate Vision’ part of the concept and the beginning of its actual implementation, a fitting place to start this project - ‘Cal Expo Game’.

Imagine #16 - Electric Footsteps. Infra-structure capture and recycling of waste energy.

Imagine #17 - Design Your Own Life. Tiny Home Designs With Grand Ideas.

Imagine #18 - And The Last Shall Come First. ‘Future Life Village’ offers a responsible path to home ownership and financial security to the homeless, working poor, students and artists of Sacramento. Definitely not your parents idea of “charity”.

Imagine #19 - How Green Is Our Valley? Without a good gauge for measuring our distance from the future, there is no way to know if we are approaching it, or moving backwards in the illusions of market-spin and adjustable sign-posts.

Imagine #20 - Green Jobs for Green Minds As reported both front page and business section stories of the Sacramento Bee Newspaper (Jan 18,2010), creating a green planet is going to require a well-educated and well-trained workforce. Where is such a workforce going to come from? Traditional schooling and vocational experience will, of course, contribute their part. But something more is called for and CEAV would be ideally positioned to supply it. The foundation for the work of the future is a natural for CEAV, provided our leadership seizes the opportunity...

Three notable anchors for the educational facilities at Expo Green are:

1. A k-12 division of the Department of Education to create, prepare and distribute educational materials and curriculum on the environment and environmental sciences to all of California's public schools;
2. A California Community College engaged in the preparation and training of California's future environmental technicians and specialists that will be needed across a broad

spectrum of projects and disciplines to fill the jobs of cleaning, protecting and preserving our environment for many generations to come.

3. An advanced UC School of Environmental Science and Design would carry out advanced research and engineering projects in conjunction with environmental scientists from around the world and with California industries engaged in environmental research and development.

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PREFACE TO IMAGINING:

This is a preliminary concept and draft proposal. There are no artful drawings, engaging graphs or diagrams, economic forecasts or comforting certainties which fill the pages of most proposals for large public projects such as one which would befit a re-envisioned Cal Expo. As I suggest in the proposal and at the conclusion of this section of the documents, that is not entirely a shortcoming. There is a very strong element in the proposal that its development is, like the design outline it offers, something that should be taken as an evolving idea. That is not at all the same as one that is "incomplete" or not-ready-for-prime-time. It is to say that some parts can be realized while others are still awaiting conception; ones that are realized should be mobile and flexible enough to change without undo stress or cost as new ideas are advanced and new technologies which need to be showcased are developed.

So, rather than passing itself along as something which proclaims, "Build This!" I offer these ideas more in the spirit of a container that has been prepared to accept and make coherent the imagination of anyone who cares to put the best of their own imagination into it. A vessel, rather than a blueprint. The following remarks are just that, a few of my own imaginings as I contemplate the outline of the proposal and what I might put into it (alongside the contributions of many others) to bring a full vision of the future of Cal Expo into focus and begin the work of making that into a reality. In that spirit, then, imagine what Cal Expo might look like, might become, if we permit ourselves to put the best of our imaginations into the project. Wander with me for a bit through the eyes of my imagination, at some of the interesting things I think the Cal Expo of the future might look like:



IMAGINE #1 - GOING TO THE FAIR

Visitors to Cal Expo Green do not drive into parking facilities convenient and adjacent to the various exhibit and activity areas as they now do. There is no visitor auto traffic allowed anywhere near those areas nor, indeed, throughout most of the Cal Expo site (except for accessibility provisions for handicapped persons). Instead there are several large parking areas in relatively remote areas of the Cal Expo Grounds. These are placed at locations chosen, not for their proximity and convenience to nearby exhibits and activities, but at locations determined to have the best access from the standpoint of traffic patterns and configurations in surrounding communities and routes that would impose the least impact on them and existing roads and conditions. The sites were also chosen to keep vehicular traffic away from the most densely used pedestrian areas of the facilities and the most congested areas of the surrounding communities. Undoubtedly, there will be a lively debate when it comes time to decide whether inter-city public transport serving Cal Expo, to and from the city and region (whether by bus, light rail or other means), should have the described parking areas or the main exhibit and shopping area as their principal, and/or, only embarkation/disembarkation point. There are good reasons for either or both positions, and it will be interesting to see what result emerges.

The way people get to the exhibit and park areas that extend throughout the remainder of the Cal Expo lands is by intra-Expo (on site) travel - bus, advanced light-rail or low-speed, individualized (2-, 4-, or 6-passenger) electric vehicles which are owned and maintained by Cal Expo itself and rented to visitors. Fees for using these 'expo-mini's' will probably need to be fairly high, just to keep the user volume reasonable. There is no way Cal Expo could afford, use, store or maintain the fifty- or one-hundred thousand vehicles that might be required on a busy day if they were simply free or low cost. By the same token, at least one of the intra-Expo public conveyances should be free (emission free buses or dedicated light-rail) so that there is no cost-barrier to getting around the site for all visitors.

One can also walk to the exhibit and park areas and other venues, similar to the way visitors access the various areas at the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens in San Moreno. It may even be possible to provide some skateboard and/or bicycle-only pathways throughout the facilities that people (especially younger ones) may wish to bring or rent for their park visits. Incidentally, there are even a few very exciting skateboard parks and some scenic bicycle trails around Cal Expo that can only be accessed by those modes of transport.

In any case, the transportation modes are the most advanced, convenient, safe and comfortable that our technology can provide. The individual electric carts (a little like elegant golf-carts) are, in-fact, programmable, so that the visitor may opt-out of doing the driving and let the cart drive itself, either for point-to-point destinations of the user's choice or, on various user selected 'tour' patterns which may meander through exhibit areas and also present audible information on features as they are encountered. In addition, the carts have a compartment for storing visitor's personal items as well as small packages they may have purchased during their visit.

Needless to say, all modes of intra-Expo transport conserve energy, leave no emissions or carbon footprints and are, in a direct way, part of the exhibit of California's prowess in green-transportation. Oh, incidentally, larger visitor purchases from 'Green Village' or other venues are distributed to the visitor's particular parking area by underground conveyance - an electric belt or other advanced handling mode that will deliver the item directly there, where they can claim it when leaving Cal Expo. There is also a general 'pick-up and 'will-call' area on the eastern side of the site, convenient to Expo patrons.

In addition, by the time the parking lots are finished, most cars on California roads will be some version of electric powered or electrically supported vehicle. The parking lots will provide charging stations for visitors that are largely powered by on-site solar facilities, especially during the summer months (see below). Thanks to work at M.I.T. and elsewhere on 'fast batteries' as reported on NPR's 'Marketplace' on March 13, 2009, a full charge will take approximately 1 minute, making it possible to charge a fairly significant number of visitor automobiles at a very nominal fee.

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IMAGINE #2 - OLD FAIRGROUNDS AND NEW COMMUNITIES

While we're on the subject of traffic, parking and congestion, it was noted early in the development of the project that these matters were of major concern and would have significant impact on the city in general, with greatest impact on communities immediately adjacent to the Expo site itself. Traffic problems were serious before the project started, and Old Expo had already started spilling over into parking lots and congested areas east of Exposition Blvd. long before the project started. During the first twenty-five years that Cal Expo transformed itself into a world-class venue and destination for travelers, visitor census increased dramatically. Visitors from out-of-state increased the most, but had the least impact owing to the fact that the majority of those patrons used public conveyance during their stay in Sacramento. The fair became so popular as a destination that a consortium of local hotels ran regular free shuttles to the fair. Some of the large hotels maintained their own dedicated shuttle services. Statewide visitors, however, made significant impacts that had to be dealt with. Californians do love their cars. Of course, there was a regular shuttle between 'K' Street Mall and the fair.

Problems for the Aden-Arcade and Arden-Fair areas were particularly severe and difficult to solve. The outlying parking provisions, mentioned in the last section, took care of most of the problems of traffic coming from the south and west regions. But a good amount of northern and eastern traffic still took advantage of pedestrian access to the main exhibit-hall and performance/fairgrounds, 'Green Village' and the like, which remained clustered at the eastern side and south-eastern sides of the site. Their inclination to 'short-cut' on-site parking (and avoid parking fees and intra-Expo conveyance fees) resulted in some congestion in the adjacent neighborhoods, often filling merchant lots and residential street parking, as it had before the re-envisioned Cal Expo was built. Everyone, city planners, Expo management and neighbors in the surrounding communities have come to accept it as a fact of life and a trade-off for the numerous benefits of having Cal Expo located in their locale. To some degree, the character of those areas immediately adjacent the fairground site has changed over the years to accommodate the presence of a world-class attraction in their midst. Advantaging themselves of the opportunities presented have far outweighed the impacts and inconveniences.

One of the more interesting trade-offs, earlier on, was the agreement for the Expo developers and the city to induce a couple of types of business that had been sorely lacking in those areas for many decades. The first was having a major retail grocery store conveniently located at that end of the district (the closest formerly being Safeway near Watt and Arden Way, Trader Joe's at El Camino and Safeway at Fair Oaks and Howe) Now, thanks to the increased customer base that Cal Expo brings with it, there is a new Trader Joe's near Hurley Way, and a large natural foods store - 'a natural' - collaborative effort between The Sacramento Natural Foods Coop and Elliotts Natural Foods - located very near the main fairgrounds themselves. Add to that, "Good Eats" grocery that anchors the north end, just north of the Business 80 freeway, and the surrounding neighborhoods are no longer complaining about the lack of convenient near-by grocery

shopping. Incidentally, the 'Good Eats' deal was an interesting reward, through the city's offer of some tax-incentives, for Michael Teel's generosity and business ethic, in backing off displacing Corti Bros. from its traditional location a decade earlier. That little bit of good moral sense earned 'Good Eats' some attractive inducements to build the new store, and the residents were overwhelmingly glad their city council showed such a long memory and heartfelt appreciation about the matter.

Oh, lest we forget, the on-site Farmer's Market (now the largest in the region) is open every weekend during the summer and fall. The constant flow of people moving between there and the main fair venues unmistakably told us that, that location is perfect for Cal Expo and good for Farmer's Market shoppers alike.

The neighboring communities have derived many other benefits as the character of their business and residential areas are impacted. Some are the result of natural associations and opportunities the new Cal Expo themes of advanced environmental, resource and other technologies have brought with their development. Hardware stores, such as Emigh's and Ace, have begun to stock their shelves with tools and hardware items that support newer technologies and products (fittings and low-voltage add-ons for solar systems, drip-irrigation supplies, home water-saving and filtration items, etc.) Green Village merchants are also doing a lively business, primarily centered around the newest, larger devices and whole systems products such as solar panels, composting toilets and gray water management, emission-free fire places, those sorts of items in addition to office space for services such as architectural, legal and health service professionals concentrating on clean energy, resource friendly, advanced technology designs and offerings.

The basic philosophy of the Green Village management staff has been to generally exclude offerings that are already well-known and widely distributed and can best be handled by local merchants. It is the Cal Expo aim to showcase and promote the newest and best, rather than to compete for sales with California businesses. A natural partnership has developed that is well in keeping with the over all mission of a revitalized Exposition.

And, there is one more unique feature regarding Cal Expo's relationship to its neighbors. The site maintains a permanent Community Assistance Office and Center. There, residents and businesses in the nearby neighborhoods find expert planners ready to assist them with their concerns, help with needs to mitigate unforeseen impacts and develop programs that serve both the interest of the neighbors as well as Cal Expo. There are already annual science art and poetry fairs held on the fairgrounds and run through the auspices of Cal Expo. Jointly organized by Cal Expo and the public school districts, the science fair has already sent several children who have exhibited there on to become national contest winners, further enhancing the prestige of the work at Cal Expo.

At a table, to one side of the Center's main reception room, I notice a planner assisting a neighborhood resident with her concerns about some unsavory characters who congregate near her home after Fair closing time. Let's eavesdrop on them for a moment. Interestingly, the planner isn't merely referring her to some other agency such as the police or telling her to write her council representative. Instead, they are working together to translate her concerns into a form that will be most likely to get the attention and resolution it requires from the agencies most

related to her problem. Nor will he simply send her off with the copy and a list of phone numbers and addresses. Instead, the planner will send the materials, by email, to the agencies and individuals who can best respond to those particular community concerns, along with his own notes on the matter. The neighbor, herself, can then go on-line to track the progress of things, perhaps returning to the Center at a later time to further refine or amend her original needs.

We observe that the planner doesn't end the session when they finish work on the initial problem. He makes other inquiries - Has she noticed any increase in mosquitoes the past week or so? How does she like the new low-light-pollution street lights that have been installed on her block? Has she seen the new exhibit on car-pooling that the fair installed over at the 'Transport of the Future' area? We get the idea that this isn't just another government service counter. The planner is actively engaging the client in a discussion about the neighborhood and its various concerns and opinions. This not only adds to the Center's overall user friendliness, but gives the planner insight and valuable heads-up information about other problems and directions that may be coming in the future.

In another corner of the Center, a planner is going over next year's exhibit and events calendar with a local neighborhood merchant to see how he might be able to take advantage of particular events and exhibits to improve his business potentials. More partnering with neighborhood citizens to help Cal Expo and the surrounding communities work together.

One benefit of Cal Expo's new organization and the presence of its community affairs office, is that the neighborhood associations and other community organizations have become, over time, reinvigorated and more engaged, both in the activities at Cal Expo, and in the needs of their own communities. From the very start of the project, Cal Expo discovered that proactively informing the community of its plans and involving them in the processes of

envisioning a very new Cal Expo not only greatly reduced the misunderstandings and contentiousness that often accompanies large project development, but actually resulted in inclusions of ideas and provisions that the designers of Cal Expo hadn't even thought about. This, to the benefit of both Cal Expo and its surrounding communities. A win-win situation, all around.

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IMAGINE #3 - THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM - MAJOR FACILITIES

Briefly described in the main proposal concept pages, this section will list some major facilities envisioned for a CEAV-like Cal Expo of the future. It could take volumes to fully describe even one of these facilities. For now, that fuller vision will be left to your imaginations.

The Knowledge Transfer Center The Knowledge Transfer center is conceived as a facility where businesses and citizens may go to accelerate and amplify their own efforts to contribute to green technologies and commerce. Here, they may bring their ideas, their needs, their business plans and other materials to get expert advice; research ideas, products and practices related to environmental concerns. Trained staff will be on hand to offer specific assistance in the interests of California businesses and ordinary citizens, alike, into actual contributions towards solving serious environmental problems and issues. The Knowledge Transfer Center may examine new ideas and inventions and advise on how to raise capital or cooperatively link with similar ideas to take a new invention to its next stage of development. They may assist investors and venture capitalists to find interesting and promising new ideas and products which show promise; they may help to get important products to markets which have need and are likely to benefit from their introduction.

The Center will also have constant two-way contacts with Cal Expo exhibitors, the 'School of Green Design' (see below), businesses throughout the state and the visiting public to suggest potentials and create knowledge exchanges that will enhance the development of useful green products and practices and enhance our capability to meet the challenges ahead.

For more information see [Imagine #13](#)

U.C./CSUS 'school of Green Design' (SGD) The 'School of Green Design' is envisioned as a small campus of, perhaps, a few hundred students and faculty. However, its small size reveals little of the actual importance of its mission or its world-prestige and place in our global future. Offering advanced degrees and post-doc research in environmental engineering and science, it is anticipated that the SGD will be the world center for environmental work on the environmental problems of the future. If done correctly, one could expect there will be more Nobel prize winners and world-class scientists and teachers per student than at almost any other educational institution in the world. A premier facility where the most advanced ideas for the future maintenance of our planet can be discovered, disseminated and brought to fruition. (also see our vision for a community college based campus in [Imagine #19](#))

California Culture Center & Pavilions' California is about nothing if not its diverse peoples and cultures. Exhibits and centers throughout the state are in abundance to show the many varieties

of people and their traditional cultures and histories that are the heart and soul of being Californian. Yet, few present such diversity in any single and unifying context that relates all of these many ways of being into an overarching all. Most often that is left for the visitor to imagine by implication - that we are all workers, eaters, travelers, family members, raisers of children, etc.

However, Cal Expo, under CEAV-like transformation, offers a unique and as yet largely unexplored way of presenting the diversity of culture that not only unites us, but can demonstrate that the contributions of each culture are incredibly important to the survival and health of all.

In addition to the definition of our species as a "social animal", the 21st century is beginning to realize it is equally important to include the fact that we are a "planetary animal" within that definition as well. At first sight, this may seem so obvious a fact that it hardly requires special mention. We all live on the earth. So?

What is of special importance in that explicit inclusion is that it also implies that we are in relationship with our planet every bit as much as we are in relationship to each other. Those ways of relating, our cultural practices, methods, histories and even stories are as diverse and unique as the cultures that embody them. That uniqueness, what one culture has discovered about having a successful relationship to its particular environment is an absolute treasure trove of knowledge and experience that may yet have enormous application in our global efforts to create a healthier planet and place for all of us to live upon and within it.

A California Culture Center and Pavilion is a natural, unique opportunity to showcase the ways our diverse cultures have specially related to the challenges of environment and natural balance; how they have drawn from their own native traditions, methods to survive and flourish. It is a unifying context that can not only showcase the value of diverse cultures as interesting and entertaining presences in our society; but, as ones that may be essential for the future survival of all cultures and which may have lessons and inventions to contribute to that purpose. As something that not only values differences, but appreciates the gift that difference makes to the common purpose of all is something which, by itself, makes the CEAV Project a worthwhile undertaking. Bottom line is that the CEAV California Culture Center would not only demonstrate that we must respect and preserve other cultures for their own sake; but, why we must do so for our sake, regardless of the culture or race to which we may individually belong.

(more major facilities to be added later...)

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IMAGINE #4 - WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE...

We have arrived at our first destination, a little west of the main fairground and exhibit areas that are the anchor of all Cal Expo offerings (and the first to be developed.) Imagine yourself in an open area central to the 'Demonstration Environments Area' of Cal Expo. Down one set of paths, just beyond the scaled mountain replicas of hetch-hetchy reservoir you can just hear The Water Works! - an area, where there is a full scale giant water pump with gushing water (re-circulating, of course) and various displays (some interactive electronic ones) demonstrating aspects of how the pumps work, how and where they are used to move water around in California, side by side with large displays of the hydrology of the state and demonstrations of how water moves throughout the state, how the state varies its responses as droughts and flood seasons come and go and so on.

There is a history of the Los Angeles Basin in photos and film showing the way water has been managed to make deserts bloom since the founding of California and, ancillary exhibits on Mono Lake and Tahoe, Sacramento Delta features and other resource problem spots and efforts to reclaim and restore them. There is just about everything you might want to know about California's water, from its hydrology, to the chemistry and technology of water treatment and disposal. There are acres of 'real water' exhibits, all of them, of course, utilizing the best methods and technologies of conserving water and energy. Its an exciting place.

There are also some full-scale simulated control rooms of major water management stations such as Folsom Dam, a tertiary water treatment plant, a central flood-control facility and the like. Here, lights blink, dials monitor and the various stations permit visitors to adjust (virtually) functions as they might be managed in the real-world stations. They can simulate increasing water flows, balancing water-treatment options, even releasing fish from a hatchery and viewing what the results of their action might be. Most of the seats at these (computer) stations are occupied by kids, who really get the hang of things pretty quick. But, there are a few adults, equally absorbed in a few minutes of playing 'control room'. You can spot them later in the day, as they wander through other exhibits, clutching the hardcopy of a print-out that shows how they did during their brief stint as 'effluent control engineers' or ' dam systems operators.'

Water Works! has water, water everywhere and just about everything and every aspect of California's management of water to view, learn and think about. It is a very large and interactive walk-through area; which could consume many hours or days of a visitor's time if they wished to see everything it had to offer.

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IMAGINE #5 - ENERGYSCAPES:

There are other directions that lead away from the central Expo Touring area (different from shops and exhibitors area which are to the east, adjacent Exposition Blvd.). Some are wide boulevards, the one to the EnergyScapes area for example, with its sidewalk cafes; solar, wind, ocean and other advanced-mode exhibits lining both sides of the street which leads to another large area displaying full scale alternative energy exhibits - wind generators, a working solar farm (which also supplies a fair amount of Expo's energy during the bright summer months), simulated power-grid management stations (similar to those found in the Water Works! area) and all manner of devices and exhibits related to the conservation and capture of non-fossil based energy resources. There are also educational exhibits about oil and fossil fuel dependency and resources and similar subjects to enlighten and entertain the visitor about these important matters. Oh yes, during the summer, you can buy a beanie with a little solar powered fan attached for about five bucks; a real bargain on a triple-digit day in Sacramento! You'll find it right next to the cool-drink and frozen yogurt stand. Yes, you can buy soda pop (glass bottles or biodegradable cups only) if you insist. But mostly the drinks are vegetable and fruit juices, ice-cold and absolutely refreshing. You can also get a cup (biodegradable) of solar-power cooled ice-water (and, I might add, it's one of the few concession offerings that is absolutely free, and remains so well into the 22nd century!)



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IMAGINE #6 - A LITTLE DIRT, A LITTLE WATER,... AN EXHIBIT!

There are also some little trails and pathways that lead off in still other directions; to the river conservation area and the demonstration wetlands, with guides and exhibits about the ecology and features of these environments. The wetlands area also serves as a biological research station and many interesting things can be discovered there. Not least are some of species of bird and small animal life, which have not been seen in the Sacramento area for some time, but which the biologists working there have managed to coax back into the area and which are now thriving on the Expo Wetlands.

If you like, visit the research station. One of the students there may hand you a little test-tube for you to fetch a sample of wetlands water and bring it back where you can view it in a station microscope while they explain the various features you are viewing. Perhaps they will teach you how to test it for various qualities and properties if it's a relatively slow day. The other 'lab coats' (some Nobel laureates among them), wandering around the facility, probably will not stop to answer questions. They are much too distracted by their work. You see, the wetlands exhibit, originally intended just as a side-attraction to the main venues at Cal Expo (and to appease some environmental activists who were getting rather noisy about whether the site was really 'green' or not), has gradually developed a reputation as a world-class biological research facility. Researchers and scholars from all over the world come to visit and study at the Expo Wetlands Station. It's not just-another-roadside-attraction anymore. And, there is the usual complement of interactive exhibits, educational presentations and even video-games, all to excite your curiosity and show you the latest and best work California is doing to preserve these important environments and draw innumerable benefits from them.

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IMAGINE #7 - MASTER GARDENERS IN DESIGNER OVERALLS

There are several other areas to wander about - demonstration farms and horticultural areas, a xeroscape garden and home landscaping area, a desert and native plants section - oh, way too many things to detail here, covering acres and acres of the Cal Expo lands.

One of my favorite areas is over there, to the right, down that twisty little path and though that stand of covering trees (themselves, part of a demonstration of new choices for fast-growing, sustainable natural woods for building materials). As you emerge from the grove, there is a surprise waiting. What? It looks like nothing much, a bare area, some weeds (well, some different kinds of grasses anyway) a few chickens wandering around, a little chicken-wired vegetable garden and even the obligatory front-yard car (a '52 Chevy, I think), sitting on blocks with its hood up. What on earth is this place, a 'demonstration blight' area? The little shack that sits at the back of yard looks like it was built by a backyard gardener with a sore, rather than green, thumb. Even the Cal Expo management balked at that one. Thankfully, they agreed to go along for a limited time, just to humor the university students who proposed the outlandish "architecture". Don't kid yourself, look again. That is the "Cal Expo Master Gardener's Shack" (or, just "The Shack," to insiders), another venue established by the University of California and the California Dept. of Food and Agriculture. It looks pretty crude, but behind that facade it's another story. Beyond its wooden porch and 'just-this-side-of-run-down' front door is a fairly large room; a pellet burning, pot-bellied stove and some comfortable overstuffed chairs in one corner, a small library on some built-in shelves, a perpetual coffee pot and a rather tired looking front desk. But that's about all you find of "country homey" at The Shack venue.

The master gardener who works at the desk knows just everything you might want to know about gardening and farming. What he doesn't know can be found just on the other side of those glass doors at the back of The Shack. They open onto a subterranean, rammed-earth, 12,000 volume library covering just about every imaginable subject about gardening and agriculture that you could name. It is one of the most modern facilities on the entire Cal Expo site, a zero-energy facility completely heated, cooled and lighted by rooftop biomass and sundry energy technologies that have been either built onto it or into it. Computer stations and other features of a modern library complement its function as a place for the public to get their questions answered on anything related to growing plants and farming. There is also a modern, 300-seat auditorium to one side of the library where presentations, symposia and panels are held throughout the year. Anything from home-canning to Organic farming and certification may be on the public calendar.

Contrary to Expo management's initial reservations, over time, The Master Gardener Shack has become one of the most visited sites in the entire complex. People from all over the valley, as well as other areas of the state stop by "The Shack" to get their questions answered, swap garden talk and information, exchange seeds and, sometimes just get-away-from-it-all for a few minutes. Master Gardeners, from U.C. are on duty during all hours Cal Expo is open. There is a noticeable increase in visitors during the winter (when most other venues scale back a little). This, it has

been found, is owing to the fact that this is often the only time farmers and gardeners have time away from the chores that keep them much too busy the other three seasons. When there is some kind of county/valley-wide event, such as the detection of a new pest or announcements of arial spraying, etc., the visitor census to The Shack jumps dramatically. Oh yes, the operation is partially supported by seed and plant sales, though the bulk of its budget is managed through university funds, state agriculture grants, endowments and private grants and donations. The bulk of its labor needs are drawn from students and volunteers, which keep operating costs to a very modest sum.

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IMAGINE #8 - THE CALIFORNIA GAME

By far, the most popular and well-attended area of Cal Expo is "The California Game". There are nearly double the visitors to that section as there are to all the other venues combined. The California Game is huge, several acres, upon which is a walk-through scale model of California with its most important features and sites represented; its rivers, dams, power plants, major roads and freeways (which serve as walking paths to view the model), wind and solar farms, larger towns and cities and so forth. At one end of the model there is a giant electronic screen that shows the model in perspective along with its main features. To one side, with a view of both the screen and the model, there are twenty (perhaps fifty) computer workstations. Each of these stations controls one or more aspects of the model. There may be a station that controls aqueduct flows, several that controls regional power grids, another perhaps for air-quality management in the Sacramento area, another for agricultural pest monitoring and response, and so forth.

Playing the California Game is simple. Each station automatically controls the functions in its area of interest, using as much real-time data as possible to simulate actual conditions. However, once you sit down at a station and play the game (for the price of a ticket), you are in control. You use the computer to monitor what is happening, to make adjustments and decisions according to the conditions you encounter. Dams may release water, factories in a certain area may have to shut-down their smokestacks, an earthquake may interrupt part of the power grid. Anything can happen (is programmed to happen) and you must respond in some way. Many of the actions one takes are not only reflected on the big-screen but, will change the data at other stations (and make little things move on the scale model).

It's 'The California Game', and the object is to keep us from disaster. Of course, sometimes things get too wild, and the system must reset. You get points if you keep your area balanced; you lose points if you make things worse. If you actually improve things (over the status quo) you get big bonuses. Perhaps, someday, there may even be talent scouts from state agencies who visit the California Game to see if they can spot any visitors who are exceptionally good at managing one of our resources. On those days, the electronic billboards for Cal Expo might say - 'PLAY THE CALIFORNIA GAME - IT MIGHT LAND YOU A JOB!'. Oh, and there is a 'California Governor's' workstation that manages a bunch of stuff. But, I wouldn't try to get that station. The lines for it are always way too long and, besides, no one ever scouts that station for potential job applicants.

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IMAGINE #9 - OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES...

One of the puzzles for a transformed Cal-Expo and the next generation of fair goers will be the kind and place of diversions and venues that were prevalent in the 20th century; rides and amusements, cotton-candy and promenades, barkers and hawkers that have lost much of their luster and appear to be one their way to the curiosity division of nostalgia. While the current planners of the "next Cal Expo" still like to think in terms of fantasy promotion and carnival excitements (calling their open space, for example, "The Midway" - a quaint leftover from circus and carnival days); Such enclaves seem to be less interesting to 21st century minds as the public becomes more educated and sophisticated about the wonders of the real world and less seduced by the glitter of 'roadside attractions'.

Even so, some so-called "traditional fair" activities, may have lingering appeal and some may be worth preserving in one form or another. How to package and integrate them into the concept of Cal-Expo as a global hub and world-class showcase present problems. Undoubtedly some of that will remain, but of what part and how it should be presented will need to be decided by the actual interest expressed by the fair-goers of the future.

For now, CEAV will leave the matter as an exercise for the 'Cal-Expo Game' (See Imagine #13) and your imagination to describe what might be worth preserving. Another demonstration of the value of inviting the public to participate in the design of its future commons rather than turning the matter entirely over to developers and other special interests to decide on our behalf.

There remain some things for which there is still a special interest niche with vocal numbers and passionate enthusiasts who insist their interests are worthy of inclusion on a world stage. Horse shows and equestrian enthusiasts, for example, along with racing fans, have already put some pressure on the current Cal Expo management to retain those facilities, though even the narrow vision being promoted by Cal Expo seems ready to downplay or eliminate those venues.

CEAV's position on the matter is that they probably are too specialized and out of keeping with the future and a CEAV-like presentation to be included in the CEAV concept. Rather, such interests would do far better to be relocated to regional and county exhibitions and fairs where they can probably do more to boost interest at those places, receive better and more intimate oversight and be more successfully managed. A well-phased transition should make such a move both satisfactory and successful for all parties.

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IMAGINE #10 - IMAGINATION IS A PUBLIC THING

We've only briefly touched upon a few of the 'main events' (see 'Imagine #3) which will include facilities such as exhibitor halls, performance venues, pavillions, 'Green Village' shops and, most of all, the many open and accessible commons areas which we hope will be intimately woven into the CEAV concept. Many of these may be clustered on the eastern edge of the Expo grounds, as they are today. Where the current Cal Expo contemplates a single, football-field sized exhibit warehouse, for their only new, major facility, CEAV contemplates clusters of well-sited main exhibit facilities such as the 'California Culture's Center' the 'Technology Transfer Center', a major performing arts facility and exhibit hall, along with generous public commons and supportive facilities, temporary and permanent exhibits and support facilities to compliment those activities. As noted in the proposal, 'Green Village' might host any number of retail shops all focused on products and services geared to next generation environmental technologies and resource conservation and other products and services relevant to the mission and focus of the site. It will also be a likely candidate to site close to the general entrance area.

As we visit these exhibits and facilities, we might also note that there are numerous places along the way that seem to invite people to stop and watch seemingly spontaneous and ad hoc events. These 'earthwork' performance areas present unique opportunities for the public to participate and put their own imaginations on display. 'Idea Boards', in various places are posted with pictures and notices and ideas about the environment and things of importance in their world. Yes, there's some 'clean up' the grounds people must do to keep the boards relatively free of offensive or off-topic-materials, but on the whole, visitors seem respectful of the purpose and have quite a few really interesting things to say. Here is one about someone's efforts to clean up a creek in their hometown; and there, another, an artist's drawing of his impression of an exhibit that they saw at the Culture Center.

There also are several small mini-park 'enclaves' on the periphery, with interesting little 'sculpted stages' scattered about. Over in one small grassy enclave, we watch a small troupe of dancers performing in front of a dozen people or so. We approach a 'stage' in a nearby area where someone is speaking to a few people who have gathered to listen. She is speaking about her experiences with herbal remedies or some such, we are a little too far away to hear exactly what she is saying. At another 'stage', closer to us, someone else is holding up illustrations for his idea of floating icebergs down to Los Angles to take care of their water supply. Sounds a little nutty to us, but who knows? He stops for a moment, and we ask him how one gets permission to speak from one of these 'stages'? His answer was that you didn't need permission, as long as you kept the volume down and don't rant in a hateful or offensive ways. He added that there was a time limit of twenty-minutes for any single speaker, but on slow days, the Fair stewards didn't enforce the the rule. "Aren't there a lot of problems?" I asked. "Oh," he said, "once in a while, someone 'goes over the top', but mostly, the Fair people are respectful and even encourage public expression so, in turn, we are respectful and appreciate the opportunity for presenting our ideas. It works to everyone's advantage to keep things in bounds."

Well, that is certainly a far cry from the day I was stopped by the Cal-Expo police, outside the old Cal Expo Administration building, and prevented from distributing written copies of a speech I was about to make to the Board of Directors that was meeting inside. "I needed a permit to do that," their chief of police said. I thought better than to argue with him. The new Cal Expo, it seems has found public participation and imagination to be more of an addition to their mission rather than a threat. An obvious adjunct to a mission that sees the public as part of the mission, rather than simply as attendees and gate receipts. There are many more ways the public is included in fulfilling the mission of the transformed Cal Expo, but I see its time to move on.



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IMAGINE #11 - CAL EXPO, THE REALIZATION

The NBA-centered proposal identifies four major types of venue in its vision - fairgrounds, sports-complex, retail shops and housing. It can be presumed that these are intended to be relatively permanent, fixed architectural locations which, once built, define the character and environment of the site for generations to come.

The CEAV proposal entertains neither the vision nor the need for such fixed and inflexible arrangement. It strives to not impose on future generations a single vision for potentials which must be accepted year after year as the permanent motif of the state exposition and fair.

[note: in a recent 'change of plans' Cal Expo is now proposing that the land simply be swapped for another parcel and its current holdings turned over entirely to private development. In this new, Expo/NBA scheme, there are no restrictions on development and no need to bother about the site as a Fair or even as public land. It will be an 'anything-goes' land-grab - whatever the private development communities wish to do and can wave enough money in front of City Hall to get past those who would put the public interest first. Nothing changes, except that the scale of destruction would be far greater and quicker than in its previous scheme. For more information see our [Land Swap Editorial](#) - rs]

In contrast, the nature of the themes proposed in a CEAV-like project, the future and most advanced of California's offerings, argue strongly for a very mobile and flexible design that can be readily changed as new advances and new visions emerge. This is not to say that the look and feel of the sites should convey something 'temporary' or 'insubstantial'. Quite the contrary. It should have a character and ambiance every bit the equal in stature and reputation of a well-designed World's Fair, or modern Olympics venue. The central idea is that the California Exposition ('to expose the best that California has to offer') should be as much evolving in its design as it is in its vision; and, itself, be the best that California has to offer.

This is not so difficult or strange to imagine as it may seem at first sight. That is exactly what the prize-winning architect, Piano Renzo, set about doing, and did, for the California Academy of Sciences and their new building. It is a building, as Piano notes, that is intended to lend itself to 'reshaping' as the vision and mission of the enterprise itself evolves over time. The proposal that has been drafted here suggests that, instead of fixed-mode venues, the entire enterprise be designed and constructed with the same capacity to evolve over time.

We have and are still developing new technologies and new approaches to designs that are not only efficient and harmonious, but have a certain suppleness both in concept and functionality. That will permit them to transform themselves as yet newer ideas and needs grow from within their own vision and from changes in the society around them.

That is what this proposal is shooting for; something that will present the very best of today without creating unnecessary obstacles to the imagination, needs and desires of tomorrow.

Like the concept that has been offered here, the proposal itself should be taken as an evolving document. It is, from this point, a call to the true "exhibitors", the imagination of the people of

California, to fill it with the spirit of imagination that has served as the foundation of our state and has taken us as far as we have come. It is for all of us to imagine something that not only excites and attracts the multiple generations that will come to visit on a given day; but to imagine a vision that embraces our citizens across a multiplicity of generations yet to come. To accomplish that, I believe we need only reach out to the citizens of California and ask them to lend their imagination to a vision worthy of the best that California has to offer and, to lend their energy to making that vision real. I think we will find, if we do that, California will build a Cal Expo for the 21st century; and, they will come.

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IMAGINE #12 - VIRTUAL CAL EXPO

As a 21st century facility, it doesn't take much imagination to realize there will also be a 'Virtual Cal Expo' right alongside the actual Cal Expo. Online, its acreage will be unlimited, its exhibits and activities innumerable and it will not only engage the viewer in interactive and exciting ways, but capitalize on their imagination to expand the vision of an ever evolving Cal Expo both in its virtual form and, sometimes, in its physical form.

Cameras, monitors and sensors of various kinds will be everywhere around the re-envisioned, real Cal Expo. They will convey to any online visitor the various sites, exhibits and presentations in real-time as well as special productions, archival material, reference documents and the like. Through that medium, for example, one may view the real data of, say, some solar energy experiment being conducted by the U.C. School of Green Design or, test new energy applications in fusion-cell vehicles. There will be participatory projects where virtual visitors may be found actually counting birds in some part of the Wetlands area and relaying the data to the Wetlands Station or, adopting a plant at the experimental farm and following its progress through a season of growth.

Commercial exhibitor's, too, may use onsite and online 'Virtual Cal Expo' offerings to greatly extend their exhibit range and offer additional materials and information concurrent with their on-site exhibits. Moverover, commercial and educational exhibitors who are not, for one reason or another, exhibiting at the real Cal Expo, may find it well worth their time and money to exhibit at the Virtual Cal Expo, right alongside real Cal Expo exhibits. 'Virtual Cal Expo' offers an unlimited number of possibilities to extend the reach of commercial participants and the mission of the project.

Real visitors may choose to visit another very popular venue not far from the area where the Master Gardener Shack is located (See above) popularly referred to as "The Wine Cellar" (and, we suspect, the Master Gardeners wanted it nearby) -. This area includes a demonstration vineyard, a small demonstration wine-making and processing plant using the latest technology and, of course, the Cal Expo Wine Tasting Room (one of the few 'adults only' areas at Cal Expo). Even so, virtual visitors can watch the vintners at work in various stages of the wine-making process. They can even view the insides of wine casks as they go through changing states of fermentation and aging, calling up in-vivo slides to reveal the microscopic details of grapes in transition.

Incidentally, this year's production of Cal Expo wine, which the "Wine Cellar" produces and sells on site, is expected to be a particularly good vintage when it matures. Do other California vintners mind that yet-another-competitor is operating, with the help of public underwriting and assistance? Not at all. For one thing, the Cal Expo label is only produced in very limited quantities. For another, "The Wine Cellar" is, like other venues, also a research station where many experiments in viticulture and wine-making are conducted and shared with the rest of California's wine-making industry. Indeed, it is that industry which largely underwrites the Cal

Expo "Wine Cellar". Of course virtual visitors will miss out on the real delight of visiting Cal Expo's wine-tasting room, but even 'virtuality' has its limits.

Nor will virtual visitors be able to play "The California Game" (though its easy to imagine an online version that presents many of the educational and game-playing experiences of the 'real' game). They will be able to visually roam through the Cal Expo offerings at will, even having two-way interactions with exhibitors, viewing demonstrations and presentations in various venues, participating in some of the projects and, of course, making online purchases directly from the site.

It is frankly, hard to imagine a sports facility, some townhouses and a retail shopping area offering much to really excite the imagination of virtual visitors or lend to the many creative uses of virtuality, such as those described. Perhaps we will be able to view a few basketball games on line, though I am hard pressed to see the advantage of that over watching them on T.V. Virtuality, in this proposal, not only brings visitors to Cal Expo, it brings visitors to Cal Expo in a variety of exciting ways; and, importantly, it brings Cal Expo to many who cannot visit in person. It puts Cal Expo in the world and on the map. But, in order to do that, Cal Expo, itself, must be every bit the world-class presentation it can be and ought to be. It is that, and only that, which promises both short-term and long-term security and lasting value for the citizens of California for generations to come.

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IMAGINE #13 - WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD

Interestingly, a march 12th story on public radio's 'Market Place' (http://marketplace.publicradio.org/display/web/2009/03/12/pm_state_innovation/) concerning centers for technology transfer that are starting up around the country, expressed a potential for the Alternate Vision of Cal Expo that would not only be in keeping with the concepts presented, but would complete and fulfill them in a way never anticipated by the original founders of Cal Expo. It suggests the inclusion of a 'Center for Technology Development' that would facilitate the actual development of new technologies and the processes of bringing them to market.

This facility could work with new concepts and assist their creators to find useful applications to which they might be directed. It could work with businesses and individuals to locate potential sources of venture capital, government underwriting and other supports which might be used to bring promising new applications to market. And, it could work with existing products and technologies to advise on ways they might advantage themselves of newer technologies and information to become more successful and greener products.

In this way, Cal Expo could move from being a 'passive showcase' of new ideas and products to an active partner in helping to advance them, facilitate their potentials for success and, perhaps, significantly shorten the time it takes to find, implement and ready for market the next generation of products and technology.

Of course, there are certain legal and ethical limits to which a public entity can engage in the processes of private enterprise. Still, given the many things that it might do in this regard, the Cal Expo of this model could very well become a world-nexus for the advance of future technology and the solution to many serious world problems in partnership with private enterprise. The Alternate Vision quite naturally positions itself to embrace such a role in shaping the future of California and the world.

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IMAGINE #14 - THE CAL-EXPO GAME

As suggested throughout these documents this proposal, itself, is intended to evolve over time. Not simply until the time that money changes hands and cement is poured but, for the lifetime of Cal Expo itself. Given that the concept proposes the use of advanced, more flexible and mobile designs, there is no reason that the proposal itself cannot change and evolve right along side the physical reality it represents.

Welcome To the Cal-Expo Game! The 'Cal Expo Game' has only one requirement to play, your imagination. If you have ideas, thoughts, visual walk-throughs and such to contribute, things you would like to see included or added to the concept, you need only email them (CEAV (at) ceav.us) and we will gladly add them to the 'Imaginings' section of the proposal.

Everyone wins - there are absolutely no losers in The Cal Expo Game. Its a win-win situation. Read on, if you have some ideas and would like to participate.

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IMAGINE #15 - LET THE GAMES BEGIN! - ADDED REALIZATIONS:

The preceding set of 'walk-throughs' (through Imagine #13) were completed prior to submitting the original concept to the Cal-Expo Board of directors on March 27th, 2009. However, one of the unique elements of the proposal is that public input, the ideas and imagination of the general public, is built into the actual design concept. As an 'evolving design' public contribution is not something that is merely tacked on to proposals to be heard in three-minute renderings at some officially scheduled meeting (usually after most of the important decisions have already been made). Instead, this process - the 'Imagine' sections you have been reading, and those following - are intended to be an integral an open part of the process by which comments and new ideas may be continuously received and attached to the design package for review and consideration throughout the development phases, and beyond.

"Why not," CEAV asked, "invite public contribution now, even before any official interest or review has been initiated?" Often, it is in these stages of project design that many of the basic and persistent ideas of a concept are presented. Normally, this does not take place in public view but, rather, in private work groups, at developer's meetings, in banker's Board Rooms, in architect's and planner's offices, on napkins over lunch and so forth. CEAV can see no good reason to exclude the public from the very outset of the design activities, when the intial sketches from which our projects eventually take shape and are created. On the contrary, we could see any number of good reasons to include them; and, the earlier the better.

From here on out, then, the list of "Imagines" represents 'post-submission' ideas to the original sketch that will be included in the main documents package and with any future submission at such time that CEAV is formally recognized as serious contributor to the plans for Cal Expo's future. As of this writing, Imagines #14-#20 were also generated by CEAV. We expect, and hope, that this will change as others begin to present their own ideas and that the sole-source character of 'Imagine' will change to present many terrific ideas from many sources.

[That invitation was made during the original introduction of the concept in 2009. The call for suggestions is not open at this time.]

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IMAGINE #16 - ELECTRIC FOOTSTEPS

For a long time I have wondered why, given advances in our technology and concerns about energy, we have not yet brought to market pedestrian and roadway construction that includes embedded transducers converting the force of our footsteps and traveling vehicles into electrical energy that would feedback into our power grids. In the floors of our commercial buildings, in sidewalks and plazas, throughout our downtown shopping areas, on our freeways and streets, the energy we expend for mobility could be captured and recycled into our existing power systems. All of the problems we have about energy have a single, original source - we use it. It stands to reason, the more energy we expend can be captured and reused, the less we will need, and the smaller our problems will be. This is even more fundamental than conservation.

I imagine, the Cal Expo of the future - all of its buildings, malls, plazas, trails, exhibit halls and the like - will employ such devices to capture and reuse the energy that its visitors expend in walking or riding to the various venues. I imagine that the earliest designs, if they are not quite ready to implement such plans, will at least keep them in mind in the design plan so that good choices and provisions are made to provide for their future implementation. I Imagine the Cal Expo of the future as having as nearly a net-zero sum as possible in supplying its energy needs. - rs, 3/16/09

(added 11-10-09): NPR's marketplace recently feature a manufacturer who is marketing a device that recharges an ipod from the mechanical energy captured when walking. A small step in the right direction).

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IMAGINE #17 - DESIGN YOUR LIFE

Imagine there is a small area, an acre or so, nicely landscaped with a variety of native plants and trees, a feeling of separateness, but not isolation, from the other busy fair activities and venues to the north. When one enters this area, by way of a nicely paved garden path of attractive patterned-brick, lined with fragrant smelling herbs and attractive shrubs and flowers, they come upon a small collection of houses built to a scale that makes one wonder if they have arrived at some tiny Lilliputian village. It is quiet and peaceful here and, save for a few very normal-sized people working at various projects around the grounds, there is relatively little traffic. A kind of 'space away' from the busy crowds elsewhere at Cal Expo.

One of the workers looks over as you enter the area and breaks away from his work collecting a sample of seeds from an endangered species of native California plants which he will later test for viability and genetic resource banking. He approaches and asks if you would like to tour the collection of demonstration 'tiny homes' and see some of their features. You accept his invitation, and follow as he leads you toward one of the nearby houses. You notice, on the way, that each house is quite different in design from the others. Some are ultra-modern, of glass and steel design; some are very rural and rustic; still another seems altogether ordinary in a conventional but attractive stucco exterior with a familiar, though small-scale, front lawn and porch. Each facility seems to accentuate a different concept using different construction materials and methods.

The worker, turned guide, explains that every one of these homes has been designed to maximize efficiency and the use of resource conserving technologies. These are, indeed, 'greenhouses', in a very new application of the term. They are comfortable dwellings that can accommodate people with a variety of life-styles and needs; they do not skimp on features people might wish in their homes and they do not create feelings of being cramped or confined, a common myth about 'tiny houses'. They are demonstration models of how we might live well, yet with a smaller footprint, on the lands we occupy.

When we enter the first house, the guide points out various features which we'll not detail here. We do notice this one is occupied by several mannequins mimicking occupancy by two adults, two children and a dog. It presents a picture of fairly comfortable and adequate living-space for a family of 4 (and a half).

The other homes, each quite distinct in style and features, is occupied by other staff of Cal Expo engaged in very special kinds of work. One is a horticulture station where seeds, like the ones our guide was sampling, would be taken for further analysis, grow-outs and tests which help to maintain the health of plants around a number of venues at Cal Expo. Another of the houses has a couple drawing tables and a desk at which staff and some architects seemed to be discussing possibilities for some new 'tiny home' designs that might be tried next year.

Yet another was occupied by staff going over some kind of billing and real estate accounting

procedures they are implementing for their project. In still another, there is a classroom setting where we saw several staff members learning basic task skills used by people who work in the Sacramento County Planning Department office.

The tour is over. We take our leave and a whole lot of knowledge and pamphlets about new possibilities for living choices available in this age of consciously constructed life-styling. We have much to think about, later when we travel home from the fair.

However, we really haven't even seen the "Future Living" venue of the new Cal Expo. It is over there, to the south of the small compound we visited. There is an abundance of vegetation that serves as natural barrier to Cal Expo visitors and, if you happen to venture into that area, signs and staff are there to remind you that it is a 'Cal Expo Staff Only' area and visitors are not allowed. Privacy is important those who are authorized to be at the 'Future Living' site. In a Moment you will see why.

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IMAGINE #18 - AND THE LAST SHALL COME FIRST

Beyond the barriers, just described, is a reserved section of Cal Expo. Quite a sizable chunk, about twenty to thirty acres. On about a half-dozen acres is sited an entire village, about one-hundred and fifty 'tiny homes' of a variety of shapes and styles. What would otherwise be very cramped high-density space, is instead relatively roomy and open, owing to the scale of the houses. The character of each house is quite unique, though the entire village blends into a harmonious and consonant whole. It is a marvel of design orchestration that took considerable effort on the part of some very capable and imaginative architects.

Surrounding this area of homes are a variety of features: public commons areas and open spaces, cooperative community gardens and farms, outdoor and indoor daycare facilities and children's play parks. There is even a village general store, a hardware and a small movie theater. There are no automobiles, of course, but there is ample parking for the small electric vehicles the residents use for travel within the Cal Expo boundaries, along with fast-charging stations that provide free recharging these 'mini-cars'. Future Life Village is something to see, the best technology and the best design that modern ingenuity can provide. But these descriptions, wonderful as they may be, are not the real wonder of the place. It is the people who live there.

'Future Life Village' as we shall dub it here (in reality, the people who first lived there chose their own name for the place), is a project organized and created by a consortium of local, regional and national organizations. Housing and advocacy groups, city and regional redevelopment agencies, local academic institutions, HUD, foundations and businesses of many types and, various other entities all lent their expertise, effort and money to make the project a reality; and, still do. The real creators of the project, however, are the people who live in Future Life Village. They come from a variety of places. Some are students from local universities. Some are relatively low-income workers who could not otherwise afford to buy a home. Some are local artists. Yet another group, largest source from which residents are drawn, are the homeless people of Sacramento; some families, some single individuals; some younger, some older; some casualties of the economic downturn, some chronically stuck in a life situation which they themselves do not desire. A few (from any of the above sources) may even have some emotional and mental health issues that have barred them from improving their circumstances (though these are constrained to problems that would not impact their chances of success, nor result in undue disturbances to the community). In short, the people of 'Future Life Village' are about as diverse and varied in their interests and needs and character as those in any community in Sacramento. They are no different than any of our neighbors; except that circumstances do not permit them, at present, to be our neighbors.

What all of these populations have in common is 1) they all are in circumstances in which there is little prospect of buying a home (the student-drawn population may be an exception to this general idea, but there are special reasons and goals set aside for them); 2) they all have a strong desire to change their circumstances, to re-join the general society and to join in sharing in its responsibilities as well as in its rewards (again, for the students and artists, this would be framed

somewhat differently though, there are similar features in their life-designs as well.); 3) they are all committed to working on their own and with the other members of the community to make the Future Life project a success.

Once qualified, the new Future Life Village resident is explained the details of the project. They will be able to own a home, a 'Future Life', small-footprint home. They will also have employment. Employment leading to advancement, career development and, most of all, employment tailored as much as possible to the kind of work they are most interested in doing and for which they appear to have an aptitude and good chance of success. They may have to try several job development paths before finding the one that really suits them, but that is to be expected.

Residency in Future Life Village is not free. The first group of residents who came to Future Live Village didn't even find houses there. They lived in tents, trailers and improvised temporary dwellings for quiet some time. It was their job, along with assistance from architects, builders, landscapers, farmers and others who had professional experience and know-how to offer, to create the first set of homes and other amenities that would come to take shape as 'Future Life Village'. There were meetings and discord and complaints and, yes, even a few who did not choose to stay in the project. But, as time passed, things did take shape and a very tired but inspired and hopeful group of people started to meld themselves into a community that today, though generally out of public view and, which deliberately avoids media attention, takes substantial and well-deserved pride in what they have accomplished.

How does it work? Well the home building part was relatively easy and had a good deal of experience to draw upon, namely from models such as that developed by "Habitat for Humanity" and similar organizations using 'sweat equity' and similar means to turn over home ownership to people who otherwise were left out of the home buying market. But there is one very special condition of living at 'Future Life' which other models had never attempted. To begin with, residency in the village is not permanent. It is limited to say, five or ten years. It was never intended that residents would live out their lives at the village. The village is a starting place; but, it is always considered a launching platform that, once erected, the individual will have sufficient resource, knowledge and motivation to move out into the larger society and continue to improve their lives well beyond the limits of what "Future Life" can offer them.

It is the various kinds of equity that "Future Life" offers that permits this to happen. First, for the original group of residents, there was the initial 'sweat equity'. Added to that is that a certain and reasonable sum is extracted from their salary each month and put into an equity savings fund which will be turned over to them at the end of their residency (with interest). The salary comes from various kinds of employment at Cal Expo, some quite challenging and interesting, some entry-level work; but, always, the jobs offered to the residents of 'Future Village' have clear opportunities for advancement; require continuing education and development on the part of the worker and, above all, are useful and worthwhile jobs that one can take pride in and Cal Expo can benefit from having done. There are no 'charity' or 'make work' jobs. We met a few of those workers as we toured the demonstration 'tiny houses' just outside of the village proper. All of the regular staff at that venue, incidentally, including its managers, are village residents.

Residents work elsewhere at Cal Expo, as well; in the offices, in the exhibit and demonstration venues, in the sales and marketing divisions, on the demonstration environments and, just about everywhere else on the Cal Expo site. During the limited time that one can participate in the project, some have even risen to managerial positions; an achievement that is really quite remarkable, considering the time it takes to accomplish a similar advancement out in the general business world. Some residents find that they simply like gardening or plumbing or other trades positions and have no desire to 'advance' in the ordinary sense - the work, they find, offers its own status and reward for them. This is fine too, as long as it leads to financial stability, developed skills and a suitable stake when they enter life beyond the boundaries of the project; their own 'Future Life'.

Additional equity might derived from certain grants and other financial instruments offered by HUD and other sources. One Foundation, for example, found the project so extremely valuable that it offered to put up matching funds upon a resident's successful completion of the project in an amount equal to the amount a resident had set aside from his salary. No resident who complied with requirements of the project is compelled to leave before they have accumulated enough equity to find a suitable home in their new location.

The one radical change from the ordinary home markets we are all familiar with is that Future Life homes can be owned but they cannot be bought or sold. There is no 'cash value' assigned to the value of a village home and none of the homes or facilities there can be converted into cash. People need homes and the homes are for occupancy, not investment. There are 'housing credit' values which are assigned to each home and, from which cash equivalents can be calculated. These equivalencies may be used to determine the mustering out equities that are due a parting resident; for the sweat equity in building the home, for sweat equities that later occupants might invest in making improvements or in maintenance they elect to do themselves or, in some other related manner. But, the homes themselves remain outside of the cash markets. The one exception to this is that some of the housing credit value of village homes can be "cashed in" to purchase materials or services for improvements and repairs as needed. However, even this must be reconverted into housing credits (paid back) by the resident either from sweat equity arrangements or from payments from their salary, made over time.

There are other sources of equity income. Everyone does some work at the village itself, in addition to their regular employment. Some, such as the daycare specialists, farm or garden managers, store clerks and other essential positions are full-time and fulfill the employment requirements, as well as equity investments for the project. Others, such as farm and garden work, general village upkeep, daycare aides, and such, are part-time, equity-fulfillment jobs done on week-ends or at other available times. There are many types of work that people do in maintaining the necessary elements of village life. Some offer equity payment in return; some are simply voluntary and non-paid tasks that people do because it is needed and because it is good for their community. Thus, a fair number of formerly homeless people and working poor, who could not have hoped to gain entry into a reasonably secure and sustaining middle-class life, gain that passage by designing their own future lives; the way they had imagine it might be, but had never dared hope for it before.

There is much, much more to be seen and learned about the "Future Life Village Project", but

there is not time or place in this paper to cover it all. The students and artists, for example, are special classes of residents (though indistinguishable from other residents in their community roles and other activities). Their inclusion adds some needed “class/goal” diversity and energy to the general character of the residents, in that, unlike the other people of Future Life Village they do not share in the common experience of difficulties that qualifies other residents for participation.

Students and artists come to the project already engaged in a substantial positive life/work-choice commitment, prior to qualifying for the project. They are already hopeful and engaged in the process of building the portfolios of their lives through the application of creative energy. Both populations are also very skilled in how to find and apply resources that the poor have generally been excluded from acquiring. They are, also and generally speaking, groups that are less likely (though not always) to be conditioned by mythologies and prejudices that create barriers to forming mutual relationships with people of other classes and life circumstances. And, there is one other very important advantage that students and artists bring with them to the Future Life community.

There have been innumerable studies demonstrating that positive role models have a direct bearing on the future successes of the children of a community. One, very early, study (cit.?) had shown that an overwhelming number of children who lived within a mile of a major airport facility eventually had careers related to the airline industry (pilots, stewards, aircraft designers and engineers, mechanics and air-traffic controllers and the like). The inclusion of artists and students in the makeup of Future Life will undoubtedly contribute greatly to modeling healthy accomplishment and ambition to the children of the village. They, the students and artists, need not do anything special; by virtue of their presence they impart messages of the value of education and the rewards of hard work and application simply doing what they do.

Artists, in particular, add another quality of role modeling that is quite essential and upon which no price can be set. In their choice of life-design, artists, more than most people, understand that there is far more to a satisfying or productive life than simply financial success. Knowing that art-making will not likely result in getting wealthy or even making them financially comfortable, artists have had to consciously face the choice, do I wish to make money or, do I want to do what I want to do? They can dream about money, but most of them know they are making a sacrifice when they choose to become artists.

While it is true, one of the objectives of the project is to insure that everyone in it can eventually leave with the benefit of having gained a measure of sustainable economic security and the capacity to purchase a home, it is equally important that the achievement of that goal does not overshadow a more important underlying purpose. Gaining wealth at the cost of personal satisfaction and self-expression with what one does and in their life is a terrible price to pay for security. Artists, on the whole, are not a wealthy class. Most do not own their own home and few can afford to do so. But, they do model that even modest circumstances can be filled with creativity, resourcefulness, joy, useful productions and other qualities that money cannot buy. The success of the project, especially for the children, will depend on that knowledge being available to other residents.

Which naturally leads to one final observation. The project, as a whole, has one source of modeling under the alternate proposal that is of enormous value. That is, their proximity to the realized vision of Cal Expo as outlined in the proposal. Recall that Cal Expo is envisioned here as a world-class venue and showcase for the most advanced technologies, products and activities of the 21st century. The people and venues of Cal Expo, to which the residents of Future Life Village will be exposed on a daily basis, are at the leading edge of discovery and success in the modern world. There is even a campus of a major university and a variety of research stations like the one at 'Wetlands', mentioned earlier, included in the alternate vision. And, there are people working at Cal Expo from all walks of life who have achieved successes, both material and spiritual, that most people hardly imagine.

At Future Life, the dreams and the possibilities of achieving that success are but a very short distance from one's doorstep. They will work and play, in their everyday lives, among Cal Expo's vision of the future and people who are actually bringing that future into existence. Whatever the price-tag might be for building and sustaining the Future Life venue, the rewards to those who participate in the project will certainly be of far greater value. Indeed, the Future Life project, as outlined here, gives new meaning to the phrase, "And the last shall come first."

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IMAGINE #19 - HOW GREEN IS OUR VALLEY?

CEAV can easily imagine that the State and Federal agencies responsible for setting standards and assuring that the quality of ‘greenness’ - in our products, our foods, our environmental services, and other concerns for restoring planetary and personal health - remain consistent with the latest discoveries of science and technology. It will mean little to have such services and products, or even the discovery of them, if the standards by which we measure such things as the true safety of a product, or the actual degree of reclamation that will assure future sustainability are lacking or faulty. It would be quite natural for the State and Federal agencies responsible for drafting those definitions and monitoring our standards of achievement to be located on a site that also showcased those achievements.

We find it ironic that, even now, there are those who argue that information about their products or services should be kept from public view or otherwise concealed; in our labeling of additives to food or paint or other products, in potential hazards and in other aspects of our commercial activity that may adversely impact upon us and our environment. Their argument is that, the ‘public may be unnecessarily frightened or mistaken about the safety of some process or additive and would, thus, be falsely dissuaded from buy such products or services.’ That is, that the “ignorance” of the people is required to prevent damaging the potential markets for a product. We have always thought the antidote for ignorance was education, not concealment or deception. Perhaps we are too early into the 21st century to understand that the only legitimate reply to skepticism is knowledge and high quality data with which to respond convincingly to those make doubtful assertions or unwarranted fears. Perhaps exploding the myth that nature will be fooled by overzealous marketing also remains an educational task for next generation?

We do expect that the gap in our policies will pass in time, along with our other false ambitions. Where we think we may have a lively debate is on the locating of the new ‘Bureau of Green Standards’. Some will think the ‘watchers’ over the quality and practice of our projects to restore a healthy environment should be best removed to some quiet corner of Cal Expo, so as not to overly remind visitors that there remain missteps and mistakes to be made in our quest for creating a better place to live. Others will equally argue that such activities not only should be front and center where the public can view them but are, themselves, an important part of the educational processes necessary if we are ever to achieve our goals. Personally, CEAV favors the latter choice. Still, like the debates over whether inter-city transport should drive up to the ‘front-door’ of the main events and facilities (Imagine #1), this one should also provide much lively entertainment for those who care to follow its discussion.

CEAV does envision that the architecture of this facility will be as unimposing and inviting to the public as is humanly possible. The exhibits and activities one can imagine for a ‘Bureau of Green Standards’ are not only important for the public to see, but will probably draw a fairly good number of visitors as a venue of key importance to the success of all other projects. The place where the very definitions of a ‘healthy 21st century’ are to be carefully weighed and measured.

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IMAGINE #20 - GREEN JOBS FOR GREEN MINDS

In addition to the proposed U.C./CSUS graduate and advanced training campus for a 'School of Green Design' an advanced community college campus for preparatory studies in environmental science and green vocational training (PSE) will also be hosted at the new Cal Expo. The curriculum will be focused on preparation for careers and vocations in green jobs and environmental sciences.

There are two ways that we have imagined the PSE campus may integrate with the standard higher education formula for degrees:

1. It would offer an AA degree in environmental sciences and include a strong element of vocational training leading to entry level jobs in environmental work of all types. This plan would be similar, except for curriculum and emphasis to the traditional structures of California's community college system.
2. It would accept the best and brightest students from throughout the state who have completed their community college AA work and offer an additional two years specializing in environmental science (again, with some emphasis on developing green vocational skills) and offer a bachelor's degree in environmental science (B.E.S.). Internships in the ongoing activities and work in the surrounding Cal Expo venues would be a natural training and support opportunity for its students.

In any case, we also suggest that the school accept a certain number of students from other states and countries to add to the mix of California students. This would offer a mix of students from a variety of native environments and with exposure to diverse approaches to environmental issues, solutions and jobs. Clearly, such diversity of exposure would enormously enrich the learning experience.

We also suggest such a facility could accept a limited number of exceptionally talented, local high school students to pursue preparatory and advanced course work in environment-related subjects.

There are also two ways in which we have imagined a PES campus might be structured:

1. It represent an expansion of the local Sacramento Community College Districts current offerings and campus facilities.
2. It could also be structured as a venue of the statewide community college system and operated by a consortium of California community college districts.

We favor the later structure as it affords a few opportunities which might be facilitated from a statewide perspective. The PES campus could serve as a teacher training institute and certification center in environmental education. Teachers from throughout the community college (or even high school) districts of California could take courses or receive advanced certification and degrees in environmental sciences education. The campus could also serve as an environmental education and knowledge-transfer center serving community college districts throughout the state. This aspect of the project could supply educational materials, resources and other support materials for environmental science and vocational programs for individual community college districts.

Such a campus would certainly put California in position as a global leader in environmental science and education. In a relatively short time, it could begin to supply the high-quality, well-trained workforce that will be needed to make California second to none in advancing the work and goals of environment-related work, commerce and invention for the remainder of the century. Imagine - THE CAL EXPO GAME!.... The real future of Cal Expo waits to be invented. This is where we all get into the 'act'. CEAV is more than a conceptual proposal for a single site at a single moment in history. It is a call to change the way we think about designing the world we live in. Left to traditional processes, it is doubtful that a world we can imagine we want to live in could ever be realized. CEAV suggests alternatives to those processes, and it employs some of those alternatives within its own design.

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IMAGINE THIS - PLAY THE CAL EXPO GAME - HERE'S HOW:

[This invitation is no longer open]

You've read the concept, you've meandered around some of the 'walk-throughs', so you've got a good idea of what the underlying concept of CEAV is about. We're also betting that you've got a few good ideas of your own; things we haven't thought of (perhaps no one has ever imagined.) This is the place to make your ideas known. If they relate to the general focus and idea of the CEAV Project, and are not already on the list, they will be added. CEAV will not edit your They will be added to this list and begin the implementation of the design phase of CEAV - where your ideas count and the 21st century idea is that 'public input' means a whole lot more than simply some 'dog & pony' show at city hall.

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