



February 27, 2007

Board of Trustees
c/o Carolyn Mitchell, Honors & Awards Coordinator
American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Members of the Board of Trustees,

It is our great pleasure to nominate the Great Valley Center of Modesto, California for the 2007 Olmsted Medal. This nonprofit think tank is dedicated to the environmental, economic, and social quality of life in California's Heartland—its Great Central Valley. The Valley stretches across 19 counties and covers the most productive agricultural land in the nation. With the Valley's population set to double within the next 40 years, the research, communication, and planning measures we take now are of critical importance. By sponsoring forums for change, building frameworks for strong local and regional leadership, and creating new impetus for innovation, the Great Valley Center addresses issues that are central to our region and, indeed, to much of the world. Recognizing that the Center furthers the issues central to the Olmsted Medal—those of environmental leadership, vision, and stewardship—will help to bring its research and insight to the rest of the nation.

While both public agencies and private interests can sometimes be politically partial or narrow in focus, the nonprofit Center provides a neutral body that addresses the region holistically. Building and maintaining a strong network of individuals, nonprofit groups, universities, and state and federal agencies is the answer to meeting our challenges in this most populous state of the Union. As a tireless facilitator for regional research and planning, the Great Valley Center absolutely embodies the ideals of the Olmsted Medal, and is highly deserving of the recognition and support it confers.

Since its founding in 1997, the Center has served as a prolific force, publishing data and reports that drive planning and decisions at local, state, and national levels. The Center's reports study major issues in the region. The Environment, the Economy, Community Well-being, Public Health and Access to Care, and Education and Youth Preparedness are assessed and analyzed annually. Among other institutions, the Congressional Research Bureau has extensively referred to Great Valley Center information.

The Center hosts and facilitates events and conferences throughout the region which bring citizens and policymakers together. Center-sponsored events range from the annual "Our Place in the World" conference, held in Sacramento each May, to local agricultural conservation forums, land trust council summits, growth-planning forums, and even solar home tours.

Special projects and partnerships, too many to detail, include:

The San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Planning Process

CA Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley

GreenStop Design Competition (an international competition for the design of sustainable, off-the-grid roadside rest stops)

Housing the Next 10 Million

Highway 99 Task Force

Indicators Reports & Database (accessible data searching through all of the Center's studies and reports)

Pixley Connect Project (improves rural access to technology)

Rural Telecommunications Summit

Great Valley Solar Partnership

The Valley Futures Project (teams analyze a dozen thought-provoking future scenarios for the Valley's three regions)

There is a diversity of ongoing programs at the Center. Agricultural programs spread information about conservation and land trusts to all involved parties, and establish the Center as an impartial point of contact for effective communication between them. CATAPULT Youth Leadership programs get teenagers involved in their region and its future—now. The Central Valley Digital Network helps to bring technology to rural areas. The Community-based Assistance Program provides support to nonprofits. The Grant Advisory Board for Youth teaches philanthropy through leadership. The Great Valley Fellows Program guides college graduates and local professionals as they pursue careers in public policy. Similarly, the Institute for the Development of Emerging Area Leaders (IDEAL) helps area professionals develop greater public policy leadership skills. The Great Valley Leadership Institute helps local public officials gain experience from national leaders. The Center's LEGACI Grant Program helps allocate funding to grassroots programs of all kinds. New Valley CONNEXIONS is a program which supports collaboration between the huge diversity of people and agencies working to better the quality of life in the Valley. The Great Valley Center's Renewable Energy Program works to educate about and facilitate for smarter growth and better technologies.

There is also a diversity of publications authored and co-authored by the Great Valley Center. Among them is *Our Valley, Our Choice*, which examines our land-use and transportation decisions. Other selections include *A Clean Energy Roadmap for the Greater Fresno Area*, *Population Projections for the Sacramento Valley (2000-2050)*, *AgInnovators: A Guide to the Business Models that are Working for Agriculture in the Sacramento Valley*, and *Good Medicine: Making Healthcare an Economic Priority for the San Joaquin Valley*. These issues, though diverse, are remarkably interconnected.

California's innovations and new policies are frequently looked to by other regions of the country. Yet beneficial change doesn't begin at the national level. The Great Valley Center advocates action at grassroots, county, and Valley-wide levels. The Center's programs encourage emotional and educational investment in our region in everyone

from students to professionals to civic leaders. The research it distributes generates discussion and strengthens ever-new methods and passions for stewardship of our Great Central Valley.

We hope that you will join us in our admiration of the Great Valley Center's efforts to better the quality of life in California's Great Central Valley through research, education, policy, and cooperation, and find it deserving of this high honor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel F. Machado". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "M".

Daniel F. Machado, ASLA
Vice-President, California Sierra Chapter ASLA
On behalf of the members of the California Sierra Chapter