When you hear the word “innovation,” words like this probably spring to mind: forward-thinking, momentum, creativity, transformation, technology. Riverside, the City of Arts and Innovation, is embracing its very definition with plans for a new “Innovation District” in the heart of the city. With institutions like UCR, and organizations like UCR Extension and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) within its boundaries, the sky’s the limit for job growth, investment, and yes—innovation.

The district was the vision of Mayor Rusty Bailey, who says, “This will be a platform to focus attention and encourage investment in areas with the potential to become economic engines. With Riverside’s proximity to established neighborhoods, schools and colleges, business districts, and other community assets, we have all the right ingredients for successful implementation. The idea is to spark innovation, inspire investment, provide quality jobs, and enhance quality of life.”

Riverside is planning an Innovation District to “lay the foundation for the city’s thriving future and continued growth”

“We are very enthusiastic about Mayor Bailey’s initiative for the Innovation District. As the only higher education institution within the district, we are well-poised to collaborate with the city on the training and professional development that a vibrant economy requires.”

—UCR Extension Dean Kevin Vaughn
relocate in California, one of the Milken Institute’s Best Performing Cities, and Time magazine’s top 25 cities where millennials are moving. Leveraging these recognitions and heightened regional business activity, Mayor Bailey has even bigger plans to enhance the city’s prosperity. Framework for the district is already taking shape.

Mayor Bailey noted, “The area will include 3 square miles between downtown Riverside and UCR, ideal for repurposing into incubator, co-working, and startup spaces. It helps significantly that we are a university town. Our Innovation District will not only create jobs we need to keep our graduates here, it will also provide training for and employment in quality technical careers.”

From citizens to area professionals and city leadership, the anticipation surrounding the vision is tangible. “It’s exciting that the Innovation District is coming to Riverside,” Andy Melendrez, city of Riverside council member and mayor pro tem, said. “We are fortunate to have so many assets located within the district, which positions us well for future economic growth.”

Looking to the future, Mayor Bailey sees “startups and coffeehouses, entrepreneurs and educators, companies and universities prospering in a space that has 21st century live, work, and play infrastructure. I envision a community that’s powered by clean energy and wired for digital technology.”

For more information about the Innovation District’s plans and development, visit the City of Riverside website. Are you interested in skill-based professional training opportunities? Email Kasey Wilson at kwilson@ucx.ucr.edu, call 951.827.1625, or visit www.extension.ucr.edu/custom.